



Cover Letter

A Young Leaders Council resource.

Cover Letter:

A cover letter is a written document that is submitted with an application that outlines the applicant's credentials and interest to the open position being applied for. Since a cover letter is one of the two documents that is sent to a future employer or recruiter a well or poorly written letter can impact whether or not an applicant gets called for an interview.

Building a higher quality cover letter

Action Verb + What + How/Why/Impact

For example:

- Basic bullet: Developed interpersonal skills
- Bullet plus: Developed interpersonal skills *by facilitating conversations with Best Buddies and Model UN members* (how)

- Basic bullet: Created an interest on mental health
- Bullet plus: Created an interest on mental health to train members *on the best practices to further educate and converse with students and members of our community* (why)

- Basic bullet: Presided over chapter members
- Bullet plus: Presided over 10 chapter members and managed fundraising events *attracting 100+ non-members to the events* (Impact)

Option #1 - Answer the three WHYs

Opening:

- Mention why you are applying to this position. Identify unique reasons for why you have developed interest in the organization. Don't hesitate to mention specific leaders or projects that sparked your interest.
- Introduce yourself and your enthusiasm.

Body Paragraphs:

- **Why** you are a great candidate - explain how your skills and experiences are a good fit for the job and how you would add value to the company.
 - Tell interesting/qualifying stories by highlighting three major accomplishments from your resume or elsewhere to convey consulting ability, comfort, and enjoyment. Also, fill your story with specific facts to avoid vagueness.
- **Why** this position is the right fit for you - confirm that aspects of the position are things you will enjoy by using examples from similar experiences.
 - Think about what led you to believe that you could be successful and why you have chosen to apply to this position rather than to other organizations

Closing Paragraph:

- Restate why you believe you would be a great candidate and how you can be of value to the organization.
- Thank them for their consideration of your application.

Signature Line

Option #2 - Write stories about characteristics the organization desires.

Opening:

- Briefly mention why you want to apply for this organization and what position you are applying for

Body Paragraphs:

- Write three compelling stories that highlight characteristics the firm is looking for. Look at the organization's values and hiring criteria to know what characteristics to write stories about.

Closing Paragraph:

- Briefly thank them for their consideration of your application.

Signature Line

Tips:

- Make sure you've addressed your cover letter to the right firm and person. Label and save each cover letter by organization, and double check to ensure the organization name, address, and position applied for is correct before submitting.
- Your cover letter should make a well-structured, evidence-based argument for why the organization should interview you. Similarly, your cover letter brings your personal voice to the recruiting process.
- The format should remain easy to read. It should fit with size 12 font and 1-inch margins.
- Demonstrate your ability to write in a clear, concise, and compelling manner.

Don't do the following:

- Only focus on your skills, qualifications, and interests to communicate how a job would benefit you. Instead, demonstrate how you can become a valuable employee that will benefit the organization.
- Use a template you find online without customizing it for your application.
- Go over one page OR make the cover letter too short. (i.e. 2 short paragraphs)
- Use super small font or super small margins to fit everything onto one page.
- Have any typos or grammatical errors.
- Name drop someone in the organization if you've never talked with or met the person.
- Overly elaborate on your educational or experience background
- Be overly enthusiastic with too many exclamation points.
- Rely on yourself – send your letter to others and receive feedback.
- Sound overly confident or arrogant.