

Cover Letter: Definition & Types of cover letters

How to Write a Cover Letter

Writing a cover letter often seems like a particularly daunting task. However, if you take it one step at a time, you'll soon be an expert at writing letters to send with your resume.

A cover letter typically accompanies each resume you send out. Your cover letter may make the difference between obtaining a job interview and having your resume ignored, so, it makes good sense to devote the necessary time and effort to writing effective cover letters.

A cover letter should complement, not duplicate your resume. Its purpose is to interpret the data-oriented, factual resume and add a personal touch. A cover letter is often your earliest written contact with a potential employer, creating a critical first impression.

There are three general types of cover letters:

- The **application letter** which responds to a known job opening
- The **prospecting letter** which inquires about possible positions
- The **networking letter** which requests information and assistance in your job search

Your cover letter should be designed specifically for each purpose outlined above as well as for each position you seek. Do not design a form letter and send it to every potential employer (you know what you do with junk mail!).

Effective cover letters explain the reasons for your interest in the specific organization and identify your most relevant skills or experiences (remember, relevance is determined by the employer's self-interest). They should express a high level of interest and knowledge about the position.