

(Use Standard Block Business Letter Format-left margin justified)

Your Address (or resume heading)

Date

Name of Contact Person

Title

Organization

Street Address

City, State Zip

Dear Dr./Mr./Ms. (last name of contact person or position title):

**Opening paragraph:**

Start with who you are, what you are applying for, and why you are applying for this position. Tell the reader how you learned about it. Mention the name of the person and what relation they are to the company (if any), who referred you to the organization and vacancy, preferably a colleague of the contact person. Show your research about the company/organization- why do you want to work there?

**Body paragraphs:** (Critical content section- acknowledge the skills required by the open position)

State the skills/strengths that you will bring to the job that parallel those needed to fill the position. Give **examples** of your skills and work experience - quantified results, accomplishments, achievements, and how they will transfer to the job. You may wish to build this section into a few short paragraphs that separate and emphasize your skills and strengths. Do not just restate what is in the resume - expand on the information; provide them with more details. This paragraph should answer this question: ***Why are you the most qualified candidate for this position?*** This may take more than one paragraph; that is fine as long as the letter is only one page long.

**Closing paragraph:** (Ask for personal contact: An interview)

Sum up the reasons you are a good fit and reiterate why you want to work for that company/organization. State that you are available for a personal interview at his/her convenience. Refer to documents enclosed with the packet, such as your resume, reference letters, reference sheet, and writing samples. Make it very easy for the person to contact you: list your phone number and email again. Yes, it is already listed on your resume but it should be repeated here.

Sincerely, (or Respectively, In Anticipation, Enthusiastically, etc.)

Your name typed

Enclosures: Resume, etc. (List everything enclosed)

## Tips for Creating a Cover Letter

Career, Mentoring, and Professional Development Center  
Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania  
career@ship.edu · www.ship.edu/career · 717-477-1484

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- A cover letter is one tool you can use to convince the employer that you are a top prospect and should be interviewed. Be enthusiastic and positive!
- Your letter should be one typed page. A few concisely written paragraphs are sufficient to include all of the necessary information. Edit your letter when you are through, leaving out unnecessary words and sentences.
- Your letter should be individually typewritten and addressed to a specific individual. If you do not know who to send it to, find out!
- Your letter should contain no spelling or grammatical errors.
- Develop a letter that is tailored to the job. It takes time, but with the high level of competition for employment, it is important for you to write a letter that reflects you in relation to the opportunity. The way you choose to present yourself should not be done haphazardly. The whole idea is to personalize your approach.
- Avoid using “I” too often. Try not to open your cover letter with the word “I.” Being repetitive becomes boring, which may result in the employer losing interest in your letter.
- The letter should not be a carbon copy of your resume. It should help to supplement information about yourself that you consider important for the position.
- Your letter should include:
  - ◇ Statements explaining why you are interested in the specific position and organization.
  - ◇ Examples of your background to support your comments and to supplement your resume.
  - ◇ A request for an interview at a mutually convenient time.
  - ◇ A request for a job description, organizational literature, and application procedures if not already obtained.
  - ◇ A clarification regarding your background information (i.e. references) if requested by your employer.
- Have someone read your letter to get ideas for improvements.
- Keep a copy of all letters sent and their replies. This can avoid confusion later.
- Always thank the employer at the close of your letter for the time and consideration given to your application.