

# Sample Cover Letter Format

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## **Your Contact Information**

(Times New Roman font, 11-12 point)

Name

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Phone Number

Email Address

Date

## **Employer Contact Information** (if you have it)

Name

Title

Company

Address

City, State, Zip Code

## **Salutation**

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name, *(or Dear Hiring Manager or similar, if you cannot find a contact)*

**Body of Cover Letter** - The body of your cover letter lets the employer know what position you are applying for, why the employer should select you for an interview, and how you will follow-up.

***First Paragraph:*** Introduce yourself and state why you're writing; you are enthusiastically presenting yourself for a job, and your background makes you the best candidate. List a referral source if possible.

***Middle Paragraph(s):*** List your value to the company. Describe how you will contribute to the company from Day One. This should be based on research of the company and job. Share knowledge of the company's goals, accomplishments and opportunities. Remember, you are interpreting your resume, not repeating it.

***Final Paragraph:*** Call to action. Ask for the interview and state when (exactly) you will follow up.

## **Complimentary Close**

Respectfully yours,

## **Signature**

Handwritten Signature (for a mailed letter)

Typed Signature

# Important Cover Letter Tips

By: Teena Rose, professional resume and cover letter writer

**Tip # 1: Always include a cover letter.** An employer likely wishes to see a cover letter accompanying your resume even if it isn't stated specifically in an ad or mentioned in conversation. A resume is a fairly generic listing of what you've done, but the cover letter lets you tailor your skills and abilities to the specific job.

**Tip # 2: Cover letters are a snapshot of you as a potential employee.** The importance of first impressions is clear when it comes to cover letters. In just a few paragraphs, you must present your personality, your communication skills, your attention to detail and, most importantly, your interest in that specific company and your qualifications for the job. A good cover letter will convince the employers that you could be the right person for the job.

**Tip # 3: A cover letter sets you apart from the other applicants.** A resume by itself has limitations, telling the employer little about your professional interests and qualifications. A cover letter helps you highlight specific aspects of your experience that qualify you for the position. By knowing what is useful to the employer and calling attention to that in your cover letter, you help him or her quickly answer the question, "*Why should I hire this person?*"

**Tip # 4: Don't use a form letter.** You can find many books, websites and other guides with hundreds of sample cover letters. Use them as a starting point to help you get ideas for format and content but don't copy them. Write your cover letter in your own words so it has your voice, not that of some unknown author. Take the time to research the company and convey your own enthusiasm for the job. A bland, generic cover letter says that you didn't care enough about the position or the employer to expend any effort creating a specific and detailed letter.

**Tip #5: Cover letter should be actual letters.** A cover letter is supposed to be brief, readable and professional. The ideal cover letter will be four to five paragraphs long with each paragraph consisting of maybe three or four sentences. It is always typed, never handwritten, and never be more than one page in length.

**Tip # 6.: Don't tell your life history or repeat your resume.** A cover letter is nothing more than a sales tool designed to pique an employer's interest in you. Focus on the qualifications that best help an employer decide why you should be hired for the job.

**Tip # 7: Set the proper tone for your employment history.** If you are currently employed, you don't need to explain in the cover letter why you are looking for a new job – you'll have time to do that in the interview. If there is a gap in your employment history, give a brief explanation of the reason so that the employer isn't left wondering; again, you can elaborate in the interview. Be enthusiastic about why you want this job and why you are the perfect fit for the employer.

**Tip # 8: Humor has no place in cover letters.** Leave humor out of the cover letter, even if you're applying to be a stand-up comic. You have no idea whether the employer shares your sense of humor, and what you think is funny may be offensive to someone else. The cover letter is supposed to demonstrate your ability to conduct business professionally.

**Tip # 9: Creativity doesn't earn extra points with the employer.** Unless the job is totally based on creativity – even then, be cautious – don't monkey around with the basic cover letter. Using stick figures to illustrate your previous jobs or decorating your cover letter with graphics may seem like it will set your letter apart from all the other applicants, but it usually ends up looking unprofessional. Most employers will tell you that a basic, well-crafted letter is much more impressive than a "creative" one. Don't let anything distract the employer from the skills and qualifications that will help you get hired.

**Tip # 10: Gimmicks hurt, not help, your cover letter.** Most employers want to hire people who are professional in their business dealings and who can communicate well. Nothing highlights this more than a well-written cover letter.

**Tip # 11: Don't make demands.** Your cover letter should show what you can do for the employer, not what he or she can do for you. When an employer is enthusiastic about your skills and qualifications, he or she is more likely to work with you to meet any reasonable needs you might have.

# Writing a Resume

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A resume is an important document that professionals use to get jobs as well as promotions. Employers generally spend less than 10 seconds reviewing a resume the first time around. How do you get them to notice yours? These instructions will help you write a comprehensive and professional resume.

## **Step 1: Compile Information**

1. **Professional highlights** - one to two sentences describing who you are professionally, focusing on what you can do for the company.
2. **Skills** related to the position you are seeking - think hard about your past job duties and how they made you more qualified for this new position.
3. **Education** - Include names of schools, years graduated or anticipated date of graduation, major, GPA (if 3.2 or higher), and any certificates, certifications or licenses that are job-related, including dates awarded. Include high school information **only** if you do not have a college degree or substantial college experience and anticipated graduation date.
4. **Previous work experiences** - Include company name, your official title, start and end dates (month and year) at each job, top 3-5 duties or responsibilities, and major accomplishment or awards. **Be specific!**

## **Step 2: Select a Format**

The format should best showcase your skills, talents, experience, and education. Chronological format is the most common, but if you have gaps in your employment, you may want to choose a Functional format.

## **Step 3: Put it Together**

1. Make your resume **easy to read**. Use a font, such as Times New Roman or Arial, and size 10 – 12 point. Your name can be 14-16 point.
2. Limit your resume to a page if possible, and NEVER go over 2 pages. Make it **organized, logical and concise**.
3. A “**TAG LINE**” positioned directly under your heading is an effective way to make an initial impression. Think of it as advertising. Using a section heading here is optional.
4. **Highlight** your key experience and knowledge: use commonly known section headers that the employer can scan quickly, such as, but not limited to:
  - o *Professional Profile*
  - o *Career Summary*
  - o *Core Competencies*
  - o *Qualification Highlights*
  - o *Specialized Training*
  - o *Professional Experience*
  - o *Volunteer Experience*
  - o *Honors and Interests*
  - o *Affiliations*
5. Put the most important, relevant facts in the **top 1/3** of the page. This part must grasp the attention of the reader. Be sure your resume represents what you have to offer the employer and how they will benefit from hiring you.
6. Utilize **high-level vocabulary**, with descriptive adjectives and adverbs, but avoid pretentiousness. Lists of action verbs can be found on the internet.
7. Use **incomplete sentences** in bulleted or short paragraph format that can be read quickly. Avoid using “I” or other personal pronouns.
8. **Tailor your resume** to fit each job for which you are applying. Look for buzz words in the job posting and integrate them into your resume.
9. Be honest. It's okay to be creative, but lying or exaggerating can hurt you.
10. **Proofread carefully** and have someone else proofread it to catch all typos and grammatical errors.

- ◆ **Sample resumes and tips** can be found at:
  - [www.resume-magic.com/samples.html](http://www.resume-magic.com/samples.html)
  - [www.careeronestop.org/ResumeGuide/](http://www.careeronestop.org/ResumeGuide/)
  - [www.QuintCareers.com/resres.html](http://www.QuintCareers.com/resres.html)
  
- ◆ For extra help **creating a resume**:
  - [www.collegecentral.com/lonestar](http://www.collegecentral.com/lonestar)

## Your Name

123 West Street, Humble, TX 77777  
 231-222-5555 • cwilson123@gmail.com

### **PROFESSIONAL PROFILE**

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Motivated, professional administrative assistant with 6+ years' experience in fast-paced, corporate business center.

### **CORE COMPETENCIES**

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Microsoft WORD	Organized and efficient
Microsoft Excel	Switchboard
Microsoft PowerPoint	QuickBooks

### **EDUCATION**

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Lone Star College – Kingwood      Kingwood, TX      May 2014  
**Associate of Applied Science, Business Office Technology**  
 GPA 3.4  
 Honors: Dean's List (Fall 2012, Spring 2013, Fall 2013, Spring 2014)

### **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

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**Great Business Company**      Kingwood, TX      2012 – 2012

*Office Technologist Intern*

- Operated 12-line switchboard and provided customer service to clients
- Created all required documents and spreadsheets for three marketing managers
- Reorganized filing room to better serve managers and office personnel

**Best Clothing Store**      Humble TX      2009 – 2012

*Sales Associate*

- Arranged floor displays and tagged items for sales
- Served as department manager while manager was on vacation
- Assisted in training 15 new sales associates
- Won award for Most Productive Salesperson

## Formulating Interview Questions



### *Questions to Expect in an Interview*

“Tell me about yourself?”

Why do you want to work as a ....?

What do you like and dislike about your present (or last) job?

Would you rather be in charge of a project or part of a team?

List 5 words that would describe you.

Where do you plan to be in five years?

What are your strengths and weaknesses?

How do you resolve conflict with a coworker?

Do you have any questions for me?



### *Questions to Ask in an Interview*

How would you describe a typical workday and the things I will be doing?

How do I get trained? Do you train on the job?

Who would be my direct supervisor?

Could I have a tour of the company?

Would I need special training for this position?

How many applicants have applied for this position?

Can you tell more about the company goals?