



## HOW TO WRITE A COVER LETTER

Think of a cover letter as your opportunity to introduce yourself, your resume, your skills and experiences, and your interest in a job to a potential employer. In your cover letter you will demonstrate why you are interested and qualified for a job. You should almost never send a resume without one. Your cover letter and resume are often a company's first impression of you. Many employers not only use cover letters to develop an understanding of why you are interested in and qualified for the position, but also to assess your writing abilities and attention to detail (nothing says "I am **not** detail oriented" like typos and spelling mistakes). While it is important not to restate everything on your resume, you should highlight and briefly expand upon those elements of your resume which you think particularly qualify you for the position. Tailor the letter for the specific job and specific company—a generic letter will not do!

Your letter should be formal and brief, about three to four paragraphs, and no more than a page. It should contain a concise description of your qualifications and interest in the job and company. It should be centered on the page, but aligned left. If it is short, start it further down the page so it looks more centered. If your resume is in 10- or 11-point font, your cover letter should be in 11-point font. It should be printed on the same quality and color paper as your resume. It should be signed using the SAME name that you use on your resume, your email address, and any other documents. When emailing a cover letter, either paste it into the body of the email or attach it to an email with your resume. If attaching both documents write a brief but formal message explaining that you are attaching documents in application for "x" position.

Your cover letter should explain how you learned about the position, why you are qualified, and why you are interested. To write a strong cover letter, follow these three steps:

- 1) **Research the employer.** Conduct research on the organization through the company website, resources such as the Vault guide and Glassdoor.com (available through the Career Center website at [www.yu.edu/career-center](http://www.yu.edu/career-center)), and industry contacts. Use the research to help demonstrate why you are a strong fit with the employer and why you are interested in working for that organization.
- 2) **Analyze the job description.** Look for the duties and qualifications of the job and design your cover letter to match these as much as you can. If the job listing is brief, draw from your research of similar jobs to infer what skills might be required.
- 3) **Analyze your background.** Think about your background in relation to the job duties and qualifications. Ask yourself, "What have I done that is similar to the duties of this job or that requires similar skills?" Consider courses, class projects, previous jobs, internships, volunteer activities, and athletics.

The following are guidelines for structuring the letter:

Your **opening paragraph** should explain what position you are applying for and how you heard of the position. Discuss why you are interested in the position, the company, and industry. If you are being referred by a specific person, write that in this paragraph including his/her full name and title.

Your **middle paragraph** is the substance of your cover letter. Give details about your background and personality that show the reader why you would be an excellent candidate for this position. Select specific items from your resume that you would like to emphasize. Be specific about the type of position you are interested in and why you feel you are qualified for the position. Discuss related experience and extracurricular activities. This is your opportunity to demonstrate to the employer that you should get an interview. This paragraph can be split into two paragraphs if the letter will read better.

In your **closing paragraph**, suggest a specific type of follow-up. Reiterate your interest in the position and emphasize your qualifications—do not simply restate things you have already said. Make sure you convey a positive attitude.

**SAMPLE COVER LETTER - INTERNSHIP**  
**DO NOT COPY and DO NOT CUT AND PASTE SENTENCES!**  
**This format and general idea can be used for any industry or any job!**

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212-222-2222  
m.jacobs@mail.yu.edu

August 12, 2015

Lily Smith  
Employment Manager  
ABC Company  
1 Industry Plaza  
New York, NY 10033

Dear Ms. Smith:

I am interested in being considered for an internship at ABC Company. Currently, I am a junior at Yeshiva University with a concentration in Finance and a minor in Accounting. My academic coursework combined with my previous experience would make me an asset to ABC Company. I am very serious about my finance education and future career and am eager to learn as much as possible.

My internship this semester at YZ Bank enabled me to make use of my education in a professional environment. I called clients, created financial models, and interacted with executives at various levels. In addition, my recent coursework has included projects where I learned financial modeling and further honed my quantitative and analytical skills. As a highly motivated individual, I enjoy the challenge of complex demanding assignments, and my well-developed communication skills would allow me to contribute to the team at ABC.

After researching ABC Company online and speaking with current employees, I believe your firm's focus on providing the best services to clients, paired with a dedication to excellence is perfectly aligned with my skills and values. I welcome the opportunity to elaborate on how I could make a substantial contribution to your organization as an intern. I look forward to speaking with you and thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,

SIGNATURE

Mark Jacobs

**SAMPLE COVER LETTER – FULL-TIME JOB**  
**DO NOT COPY and DO NOT CUT AND PASTE SENTENCES!**  
**This format and general idea can be used for any industry or any job!**

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New York, NY 10000  
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April 26, 2015

Leigh Nunn  
Director of Programs  
Help Children Succeed  
123 Third Avenue  
New York, NY 10016

Dear Ms. Nunn:

I am writing in response to your posting for a Program Coordinator on Idealist.org. I have always been impressed with the work of Help Children Succeed in fostering a positive and supportive environment for at-risk children and would welcome the opportunity to contribute my skills and experience to your team. I will be graduating from Stern College for Women of Yeshiva University in May with a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology and relevant experience gained from internships, part-time jobs, and volunteer work.

Working with children has always been my passion. My experiences include tutoring special needs children in an elementary school, working as a camp counselor, and most recently providing child care services in a parenting program for at-risk mothers and children. These experiences have helped me to develop skills in counseling, programming, event planning, and crisis intervention. I also wrote my senior thesis on developing parenting programs to build communities and foster a positive environment for children. Currently, I am an intern at Women's League Community Residence, where I develop and implement programs fostering a positive learning environment for developmentally disabled women. I work with the women in groups and on an individual basis and believe this experience combined with my several years of experience working with children would allow me to make a significant contribution to your organization.

The more I read about Help Children Succeed, the more I realize this is the perfect organization for me to begin my career in program development for at-risk children. I am extremely impressed with the broad-based approach you have to healthy living and cooperative learning. I would welcome the chance to further discuss my qualifications with you and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

SIGNATURE

Keira Eisenberg

**USE THIS FORMAT IF PASTING COVER LETTER IN THE BODY OF AN EMAIL  
(if attaching a Word document use the formal letter format)  
SAMPLE OUTREACH FOR RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY  
DO NOT COPY and DO NOT CUT AND PASTE SENTENCES!**

Dear Dr. Jones,

I am currently a junior pre-medical student at Yeshiva University studying biology and I am interested in obtaining research experience for this coming summer. I saw on Einstein's website that you are working on uncovering the mechanisms by which Ebola and Marburg filoviruses exploit their host cells to gain entry into the cytoplasm. I am highly interested in your research and eventually aspire to gain my MD/PhD in an area related to virology.

I have completed related coursework in microbiology, statistics, bioethics, and chemistry, and have some experience with aseptic techniques, culture growth in differential media, differential staining, microscopy and some biochemical testing. I have excellent Excel skills and have also worked with various databases and statistical software packages. I would very much be interested in bringing these skills to volunteer in your laboratory for the summer.

I am available to speak with you about any potential opportunities at your convenience. I look forward to hearing from you and thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Joshua Greenberg