What is a Cover Letter?

A cover letter usually accompanies a resume, and is a vehicle to express interest in a position, career field and employer. Its purpose is to communicate to the employer a personalized message about your potential value to that organization. Cover letters may be in response to advertised positions as well as to inquire about prospective opportunities that have not been advertised.

A cover letter is your chance to answer the primary question asked by every employer: “Why should I consider this applicant, and what value will they add to our efforts?”

Cover Letter Guidelines

Cover letters allow you to express enthusiasm for a position or organization in a more natural voice than the résumé. Nevertheless, there are certain guidelines that are best followed. These include:

Make an effort to address your letter to an individual in a hiring capacity (ideally, not “Dear Sir or Madam” or “To Whom It May Concern”). This may take a little bit of time, and phone (or web) research.

Tailor each cover letter to the specific position that you are applying for. Do your research on the employer and the position and include your skills and experiences that directly relate.

Consider ending with a statement that you will be following up (i.e., not, “I look forward to hearing from you”).

Keep your cover letter to ONE PAGE. 1’ to 1.25’ margins are standard.

Highlight your résumé, but don’t merely duplicate the information already included on the résumé.

Avoid excessive use of “I.”

Use simple fonts such as Times New Roman, Calibri and Arial.

Technology Considerations

Via e-mail, include a brief note referring the employer to your attached cover letter and resume. You will save and attach your cover letter and resume as separate Word documents.

Label attached documents s with your name. Something like “M. Hanson Cover Letter, Accountant Position.”
Cover Letter Example

Date of Writing

Recruiter’s Full Name
Recruiter’s Job Title
Company Name
Company Address
City, State & Zip

Dear Mr./Ms. (Recruiter’s Last Name Only):

First Paragraph: Begin by explaining what position you are applying for, how you heard of the position opening, and a bit about how you see a strong match between you and the position/company. Researching the position and company should assist you in making that connection.

Second/Third Paragraph: The body of your letter should make clear connections between the experiences and skills that you have, and the qualifications for a successful candidate. You have a chance to tie the important threads and pieces of the resume together to make a compelling case for your candidacy. Give details of experiences that support your qualifications for the position and your specific interest and knowledge regarding the organization. Expand upon, as opposed to simply re-stating, what’s in your resume.

Closing Paragraph: State your desire to meet with the individual to further discuss the position and tell them how you plan to follow up with them. Thank them for their time and consideration of your application.

Sincerely,

Your Electronic Signature (optional)

Your Name (Typed)
Mailing Address
City, State, Zip
Phone Number
Email Address
Cover Letter Sample #1

March 15, 2019

Ms. Jo Anne Roberts  
Director of Sales  
MN Apps Inc.  
2000 Excelsior Boulevard  
Minneapolis, MN 55401

Dear Ms. Roberts:

I am very interested in the Technical Sales Representative position that is currently posted on the St. Thomas Career Development Center’s web page. I will be graduating this spring with a major in Marketing, and my hope is to work in sales. I am especially interested in working with an organization such as MN Apps that separates itself from the competition by emphasizing a collaborative approach to customer relations. (Notice: connecting interest to philosophy obtained from company research.)

As the enclosed resume indicates, I have had internship and work experiences which have given me exposure to sales as well as other environments where I have had the opportunity to develop strong communication and teamwork skills. (Notice: summarizing, more than simply restating, important qualifications and experience from resume.)

As an Orientation Leader I found guiding a group of a dozen or so incoming students through the experience of getting prepared for the college experience was both challenging and rewarding. In this position I had the opportunity to develop and strengthen strong presentation skills as well as an ability to maintain flexibility and demonstrate excellent judgment and leadership skills. (Notice: Telling a story, proving by way of specific example, connection between experience and readiness for position.)

I am looking forward to discussing the Technical Sales Representative position with you. I will call you early next week to follow-up on my application. Thank you for your time. (Notice: Indicating intention to and a general time-frame for following-up.)

Sincerely,

Sarah Z. Jones  
2525 Zager Ave.  
Saint Paul, MN 55116  
651-555-2020  
jon5055@stthomas.edu  

j5055@stthomas.edu
# Cover Letter Sample #2

## Daniel J. Huerta

1314 Berkeley Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN 55116  
651-555-2020  
Djhuert2525@stthomas.edu

April 17, 2019

Ms. Loretta Jones  
St. Paul Museum of Art  
2000 Big City Drive  
Minneapolis, MN  55401

Dear Ms. Jones,

I am writing to express my interest in the Event Assistant Internship that you have listed on the Minnesota Council of Non-Profits Job Board. I am an English major at the University of St. Thomas and am hoping to spend my summer developing skills and experience in the field of event planning. I would especially welcome the opportunity to combine my passion for the arts with my strong detail and results orientation. *(Notice: keyword match- assume “detail” and “results orientation” appear to be important in position description.)*

My interest in the arts was sparked by my first part-time job, working at the Lakes Theater. For the past two years I have also been involved as a volunteer at the Minneapolis Film Festival, which has confirmed for me that I enjoy and thrive on the excitement of creative environments and people. *(Notice: connecting values and interests to employer’s environment.)* Below is an outline of how my qualifications relate to the position:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Requirements</th>
<th>My Qualifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Past experience arranging meetings, travel and/or events</td>
<td>• Arrange travel (vehicle rental and lodging) for 20 members of the Men’s Track &amp; Field team at the University of St. Thomas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong written and oral communication skills</td>
<td>• Regularly write papers and make presentations to small and large groups as part of English major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide information and answer questions to prospective students and families in a professional manner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent time management skills</td>
<td>• Work two part-time jobs (20 hours/week), participate in a sport, and volunteer weekly while maintaining a full course load</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I hope you will strongly consider my application. I welcome the opportunity to further discuss how my qualifications for and interest in this internship could make many contributions to the St. Paul Museum of Art. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Huerta