

# Cover Letter Guide

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## Your Cover Letter

Your cover letter is a powerful tool to grab the employer's attention. This is a professional letter that links your resume to the position you are applying. The purpose of a cover letter is to and provide more depth than your resume.

Sometimes entry level positions and some service industry job applications may not require a cover letter, but it certainly won't do any harm to include one with your resume.

### Tips for an Outstanding Cover Letter

**Review the job posting** and the "about us" page as well as any social media pages (LinkedIn, blogs, etc). Why are you moved to apply for this job? Why do the company values align with you? Be honest and give your letter heart without coming off too cheesy and desperate.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- What is your Unique Selling Point (USP) – anything memorable that relates to the work?
- How can you express enthusiasm?
- Do you have shared any values with the company?
- Do you have testimonials from previous clients or employers?
- Is there specific job-related history you can highlight?
- Are there any personal relatable stories or connections you can share?
- What work experience do you have that sets you apart?
- How will you address the needs of employer?

Brainstorm. Why you are an excellent candidate?

**Create clear, engaging and powerful statements that highlight the value that you offer, matching your skills and qualifications to the needs of the employer, align your values, show passion and warmth.**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their brainstormed responses to the question above.

Need further inspiration? Answer the following questions:

How you will use your experience and accomplishments to benefit the organization?

Do you have any connections with the company or affiliates?

What are the values of the company? How do you align with these values?

What is your USP – something memorable about your work or life that relates to the job?

## Writing Your Letter for Impact

1. Make each word count. Do not use phrases like: “Enclosed is my resume...”
2. Offer evidence of why you are a great fit for the company and job.
3. Communicate your message in a logical manner – e.g. chronological work history
4. Use short paragraphs and sentences, avoiding complex sentences.

## Solicited and Unsolicited Cover Letters

### 1. Solicited:

These letters are when an employer advertises a position. Is it addressed to a person rather than just to the company (ideally, the person should be addressed by name.). Can't find the name? Then address the letter to the position title e.g. Personnel Manager, or Director or Hiring Manager etc

- Is it attractive and easy to read?
- Does it convey the fact that you know something about the company and the industry?
- Have you made sure you have the correct spelling of the employer and company?
- Does your cover letter complement what you resume says?
- Have you created a firm, positive impression?

### 2. Unsolicited:

These letters are when the employer HAS NOT advertised for a position. If you have been recommended to apply – be sure to mention the person's name in the letter and do some research prior to applying.

Ask the questions that will enable you to write an informed letter and allow you to be specific about the position(s) you are seeking:

- What type of position(s) does the employer hire for?
- What qualifications are required for each position?

## How to Format a Your Cover Letter

There are three sections to a cover letter: the introduction; the middle build; and the closing statement.

### Introduction - Opening Statement

- Brief & informative
- Creates interest in you.

EXAMPLE #1: [Re job at Selkirk College - Faculty Assistant & Employment Services](#)

#### **This opening summary statement has a DIRECT work experience hook**

*I am applying for this position with over 20 years proven expertise in youth work and group facilitation, most recently as a Facilitator, Employment Specialist and Job Coach at Kootenay Career Development Society (KCDS). With my group facilitation skills, extensive experience in youth work and teaching, along with business and employment services knowledge, I would be a great fit for this position.*

EXAMPLE #2: [Re job at Whitewater Ski Resort – Sales and Marketing Director](#)

#### **This letter opens with a CREATIVE hook to grab the hiring manager’s attention**

*While staring at penguins on a windswept beach in Patagonia, I expressed my desire to travel to Canada for a ski season. My companion in the tour group did not hesitate. “You gotta go to Nelson!” Finally, in 2004 I made it to Nelson to experience a season at Whitewater Ski Resort and to soak up the Kootenay mountain culture. I never looked back and I have been a dedicated season holder ever since.*

EXAMPLE #3: [Re job at Slocan Community Services – Youth Coordinator Position](#)

#### **The letter opens with RELATABLE work experience hook**

*I am excited to apply for the part time Youth Coordinator position with over 20 years’ experience in outdoor education, including coordinating a youth program and running an adventure tourism business. My skills as an outdoor leader and facilitator extend to programming and office administration with over 10 years’ experience running a wilderness guiding company. Also, my experience designing, promoting and coordinating a youth outdoor leadership program makes me a great fit for this role.*

CREATE YOUR OPENING STATEMENT:

## Middle Build – Evidence and Highlights

- Details and any shared values
- Relevant experience and/or education

### EXAMPLE #1: [Re job at Selkirk College - Faculty Assistant & Employment Services](#)

#### This middle build provides UNIQUE personal background and RELATED work history

*My 20 years of instructing and coaching in a variety of formats has developed excellent interpersonal communication skills. As an entrepreneur in adventure tourism I have an ability to work independently, with proven skills in writing content for marketing and social media platforms.*

*My role at KCDS for the last 2 years is facilitating workshops covering various employment topics, with a focus on labour market information, job search skills, resumes and cover letter writing, mock job interviews, transferable skills, employment strengths and local employment related resources.*

*At Community Futures Central Kootenay as Program Coordinator for a successful youth entrepreneurship program, I was responsible for marketing and outreach activities, client recruitment and events. Prior to this I worked as an online teacher for the SelfDesign Learning Foundation and have extensive experience with remote service delivery.*

### EXAMPLE #2: [Re job at Whitewater Ski Resort – Sales and Marketing Director](#)

#### This middle build includes highlights of matching VALUES and STRENGTHS

*After quizzing my friend ##### about her job with the Whitewater Sales and Marketing team, I realized that with over 20 years' experience in the outdoor industry and 10 of those years running my own tourism business, I have a lot to offer the position.*

*The best part of running my own business was networking and engaging with people. From trade shows to cold calls I thrive when I am outreaching to promote a product that I believe in. I always loved networking with tour operators and travel agents while providing a high level of customer service.*

*My strengths of working with people and my broad knowledge of the tourism industry are transferrable to multiple work environments and would be an asset to Whitewater Resort.*

### EXAMPLE #3: [Re job at Slocan Community Services – Youth Coordinator Position](#)

#### This middle build includes RELATED WORK HISTORY and matching SKILLS

*Since 2001 my work experience has included leading youth expeditions to developing countries. I also owned and operated an adventure tourism business for over 10 years. These experiences have gifted me with a wide range of transferable skills that will be a great value in the community, to support and develop engaging youth programs. I am excited by this opportunity to consolidate my broad skills to support the local community and collaborate to identify priorities for youth engagement.*

*In 2015 I used my business experience and leadership skills to develop and coordinate a youth entrepreneurship program with Community Futures in Nelson. While following policy and procedures I was able to identify and support a wide demographic of young entrepreneurs' needs.*

**CREATE YOUR MIDDLE BUILD:**

Closing Statement - Final Summary

- Brief & courteous
- What's the next step? Follow-up phone call, etc.

EXAMPLE #1: [Re job at Selkirk College - Faculty Assistant & Employment Services](#)

*The Faculty Assistant would be a natural progression from my employment services role at KCDS and other recent relatable work history. I would welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss further. I can be reached by cell phone \*\*\*\*\* during work hours 8.30am – 4.30pm or my e-mail \*\*\*\*\* during evenings and weekends.*

EXAMPLE #2: [Re job at Whitewater Ski Resort – Sales and Marketing Director](#)

*With my natural ability to connect with people, a creative mind for strategic planning and a desire to work as part of a team, this would be a great role for me. With 6 years' experience volunteering with ski patrol, I know the hill, I love the Whitewater family and I'm a dedicated member of the winter community. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss in person. Thank you for your consideration. I can be reached on my cell ##### between these times ##### or email \*\*\*\*\**

EXAMPLE #3: [Re job at Slokan Community Services – Youth Coordinator Position](#)

*In running my own tourism business for 10 years I have a creative and attentive mind to planning and budgeting. I enjoy the more mundane administrative tasks and work well independently with good time management skills. This coordinator position would be an excellent fit for me and I am excited to have the opportunity to discuss with you further. Please contact me on my cell ##### or e-mail \*\*\*\*\**



## CREATE YOUR CLOSING STATEMENT:

### What to include:

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- Include your contact information
- Include the company's name and address
- Include the date
- Use an appropriate greeting
- Address your cover letter to a named individual
- Mention the position you're applying for
- State where you saw the job posting
- Express interest in the company and position
- Explain why you would be a valuable employee
- Ensure each paragraph has a strong opening
- Group your points by theme
- Repeat key phrases and skills from the job posting
- Highlight your strongest qualifications
- Include only information that is relevant to the job
- Use examples to illustrate your points
- Demonstrate that you have researched the job
- Encourage the hiring manager to contact you
- Project confidence and enthusiasm
- Use simple business language
- Use action verbs
- Keep your cover letter to one page in length
- Format as a standard business letter
- Vary your sentences (e.g. don't use "I" statements)
- Proofread carefully for spelling mistakes

## TEMPLATE #2

**Your name**  
**Your address**  
**Contact information**

**Date**

**Hiring manager's name and job title**  
**Company name**  
**Company address**

**Re: Job title and/or reference number**

**Greeting** (addressed to the hiring manager, if possible),

### **Introduction – Opening Statement**

- Grab the readers' attention
- Why you want to work here?

### **Middle Build – Evidence and Highlights**

- Concise examples of your skills and experience
- Relevant experience and/or education
- What you will contribute to the organization? Strengths, shared values etc.

### **Closing Statement – Courteous Summary with Follow Up**

- Confident statement of why you are suited to the job
- Contact information and availability

**Sincerely,**

*Signature*

### **Optional – Try Using Bullet Points**

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Utilize bullets instead of the second paragraph to highlight key accomplishments or skill and really grab the attention of the reader!

EXAMPLE: [Re job at Volusia Fire Services – Fire Fighter](#)

## **CLINT RILEY**

230 Sumpterhavon Drive ■ DePlan, AK 98087 ■ (202) 335-4322 ■ fire\_fighter\_riley@yahoo.com

July 01, 2008

Mr. James G. Tauber  
Director – Fire Chief  
125 W. New York Avenue, Room 220  
Deland, FL 32720

Dear Mr. Tauber:

Volusia County Fire Services is committed to protecting life, property, and the environment throughout the 16 cities of Volusia County. As a highly competent Fire Fighter / Emergency Medical Technician, my extensive training and educational background will support your dedication to providing the local community with emergency personnel that possess high quality training.

With a documented history of exceeding expectations through performance, my background and core values reflect your mission statement:

- Continuous Improvement
- Highest Level of Customer Service
- Respect for Citizens and the Organization
- Commitment to Protecting Life, Property and the Environment

Please expect a call next Thursday to discuss your current requirements and how I can contribute to Volusia County Fire Services. For further information, I may be reached at (202) 335-4322. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Clint Riley

Enclosure: Résumé

## Optional - The Table Cover letter

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This is an effective lay out for the 'middle build' section when you possess most of the qualifications for a job. The format clearly demonstrates that you are qualified in many areas.

### EXAMPLE TEMPLATE:

What your organization is seeking	What I can offer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Take from the job posting qualifications that you can sell the employer (you can "cut and paste" and use the exact words in the posting</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Match up the posting requirements with your skills and remember to quantify where necessary</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Assist with the organization of Special Events when needed</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sat on the committee that organized Streetfest for 3 years</li><li>• In charge of the volunteer committee for the festival, organized over 500 volunteers successfully</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Minimum 3 years office experience</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 5 years in an office administrative position in a large veterinary hospital</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Proficiency in Windows based computer applications</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fluent in all applications of Microsoft office including Word, Excel and</li></ul>