

# **The Cover Letter**

- **Cover Letter/Letter of Application**
- **Cover Letter Practice**
- **Sample Cover Letter**
- **Cover Letter Check List**

# Cover Letter

## (Letter of Application)

The purpose of the cover letter is to interest the prospective employer in reading your résumé, which should further interest that employer to give you an interview. The cover letter should not be a repeat of the résumé, but rather, it should highlight qualities that make me prospective employer want to invest the time to read your résumé.

### There are three basic parts to a Cover Letter: The letter should...

1. **begin with an interesting first paragraph that gets attention** and tells why you are writing. **Identify the position for which you are applying and explain why you are interested in joining the company.** Also, you may mention how you learned about the position.  
Example: *I am enthusiastic, hard working, thorough, a quick learner, and committed. These are words my teachers (or employers use to describe me. I would like the opportunity to use these qualities in the administrative assistant position at Community Hospital.*
2. **briefly summarize your qualifications** for the job, describing relevant training or experience you have had; refer them to your résumé.  
Example: *I am skilled in Microsoft Word, Windows, Excel, and Access. My office skills are excellent, and I am familiar with the basic operation of a business office. I am eager to learn, enjoy a challenge, and continually strengthen my skills. The enclosed résumé gives more details about my background.*
3. **end with a closing paragraph that asks for an interview appointment.**  
Example: *On Friday, January 15, I will call to see if an interview can be arranged at a time that is convenient for you.*

### Guidelines: (Always spell check your document and proofread carefully!)

1. **Address the letter to an individual** whenever possible. Be sure you have correct address information, names, titles, etc. If you are writing to a woman, it is safe to use Ms. if marital status is unknown.
2. **Use the “you” approach.** Tell them what you can do for their company, not what they can do for you!
3. **Be honest, confident, and enthusiastic.** Do not be boastful, negative, or too modest. Do not call attention to weaknesses. Be specific about what you can do.
4. **Be concise** - keep it short, one page maximum.
5. **Refer them to your résumé**, since it gives facts.
6. **Be professional.** Avoid appearing aggressive, overbearing, familiar, or cute. Remember, you are writing to a stranger about a subject that is serious to you both.
7. **Make action easy.** Instead of “may I hear from you,” say “I will call you Friday morning to arrange an appointment at your convenience.”
8. **Give the letter eye appeal.** Use business letter format and good quality stationery that matches your résumé—color could be white, cream, or gray, and avoid fluorescent colors. Print it on a laser printer. Hand deliver letter and résumé if possible. If you must mail them, use a large envelope to avoid folding them.
9. **Use proper English and action verbs.** Avoid abbreviations except for Mr./Miss/Mrs./Ms. and two-letter state abbreviations.
10. **Keep a copy** of each letter you write for future reference.

# Cover Letter Practice

*Return address may be typed here or at the bottom as shown.*

Date (Full name and title) \_\_\_\_\_  
(Mr./Miss/Ms./Mrs.) \_\_\_\_\_

(Company name) \_\_\_\_\_  
(Company street address) \_\_\_\_\_  
(City, state, zip code) \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Ms. \_\_\_\_\_

Paragraph One: (Write a statement that captures the reader's attention. State your reason for writing, identify the position for which you are applying, and explain why you are interested in joining the company. Also, you may mention how you learned about the position.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Paragraph Two: (Briefly summarize your qualifications for the job, describing relevant training or experience you have had. Refer them to your enclosed résumé.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Paragraph Three: (End with closing paragraph that asks for an interview appointment.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sincerely,

(your signature)

Your typed name  
Your street address  
City, state, zip code  
Phone number  
E-mail address (if you have one)

Enclosure

*Formatted in block style with open punctuation*

# Sample Cover Letter

Return Address at Bottom

January 18, 20\_\_

Ms. Kathy Taylor, Director  
Human Resources  
Community Hospital  
234 Tenth Street  
Riverside, CA 91720

Dear Ms. Taylor,

I am enthusiastic, hard working, thorough, a quick learner, and a committed individual. I would like the opportunity to use these qualities in the administrative assistant position at Community Hospital. Mrs. Sundeen, your accountant, told me about the opening and the qualifications needed for the job. I am interested in the medical field and would be pleased to be part of the Community Hospital team.

I am skilled in Microsoft Windows, Word, Excel, and Access and familiar with the basic operations of an office. Through the Regional Occupational Program, I have earned a Computer Information Systems Certificate. I am eager to learn, enjoy a challenge, and continually strengthen my skills. In addition, I am a team player with a strong work ethic. The enclosed résumé gives more details about my background.

I would like to work for Community Hospital and would welcome an opportunity to meet with you to discuss this further. On Friday, January 22, I will call to see if an interview can be arranged at a time that is convenient for you.

Sincerely,

Mary Ann Waiting  
3879 South Fourth Street  
Riverside, CA 92507  
(909)785-3281  
E-mail: mawaiting@yahoo.com

Enclosure

*Formatted in block style with open punctuation*

# Sample Cover Letter

## Return Address at Top

*(Could be formatted with return address as your own letterhead or as shown below.)*

3879 South Fourth Street  
Riverside, CA 92507  
January 18, 20\_\_

Ms. Kathy Taylor, Director  
Human Resources  
Community Hospital  
234 Tenth Street  
Riverside, CA 91720

Dear Ms. Taylor:

I am enthusiastic, hard working, thorough, a quick learner, and a committed individual. I would like the opportunity to use these qualities in the administrative assistant position at Community Hospital. Mrs. Sundeen, SS your accountant, told me about the opening and the qualifications needed for the job. I have long been interested in the medical field and would be pleased to be part of the Community Hospital team.

I am skilled in Microsoft Windows, Word, Excel, and Access and familiar with the basic operation of an office. Through the Regional Occupational Program, I have earned a Computer Information Systems Certificate. I am eager to learn, enjoy a challenge, and continually strengthen my skills. In addition, I am a team player with a strong work ethic. The enclosed résumé gives more details about my background.

I would like to work for Community Hospital and would welcome an opportunity to meet with you to discuss this further. On Friday, January 22, I will call to see if an interview can be arranged at a time that is convenient for you.

Sincerely,

Mary Ann Waiting  
(909)785-3281  
Enclosure

*Formatted with return address above the date  
Block style with mixed (standard) punctuation*

# Sample Cover Letter

## Response to a \*Blind Ad in a Newspaper

January 18, 20\_\_

*Press Enterprise*  
P.O. Box 792  
Riverside, CA 92503

To Whom It May Concern:

Ad Reply No. 3759

Your ad stated your need for an administrative assistant skilled in Microsoft Word, Excel and Windows. I have earned a Computer Information Systems Certificate through the Regional Occupational Program. I am skilled in Microsoft Windows, Word, Excel, and Access and am familiar with the basic office operations. Your job description in the *Press Enterprise* sounds like just the position I am interested in securing.

In addition to my computer skills, I am organized, possess a strong work ethic, and am a team person. I enjoy a challenge, am eager to learn, and continually strengthen my skills. The enclosed résumé gives more details about my background.

I welcome an opportunity to meet with you to discuss this further. Please phone me at (909) 785-3281 to arrange an interview at a time that is convenient for you.

Sincerely,

Mary Ann Waiting  
3879 South Fourth Street  
Riverside, CA 92507  
E-mail: mawaiting@yahoo.com

Enclosure

*\*A blind ad is one that doesn't list the company name, address or phone number, but rather, an Ad Reply No. at the newspaper address.*

*Formatted in block style with mixed (standard) punctuation.*

## Cover Letter Check List

- Is the letter dated?
- Is your letter addressed to an individual? (if possible)
- Do you have the correct spelling of the name?
- Do you know the person's correct title?
- Do you have the correct address?
- Does your letter include your skills and abilities as they apply to the job in question?
- Does the cover letter express an interest in the specific job and a desire to work for the particular company to which you are corresponding?
- Is the cover letter neatly and perfectly typed?
- Is the letter well-organized?
- Did you spell check and proofread thoroughly?
- Is the letter grammatically correct?
- Is your address included and accurate?
- Did you include your current phone number and area code?
- Did you print on a laser printer?
- Did you use good quality paper?
- Does the letter state how you will follow through for setting an appointment for an interview?
- Is the letter signed?