

The objective of a cover letter is to land an interview for a position by persuading the hiring manager that you are more professional and qualified than competing applicants. Of all the materials submitted in job hunts, cover letters are your best chance to sell yourself to potential employers.

Traditional Cover Letter

Sender's Information – In the upper right, give your name, address, telephone, email, and date.

Skip 4 lines

Insider's Address – Include the name and address of the person you are sending the cover letter to.

Skip 2 lines

Salutation – State “Dear” and the person who will be reading the letter. Use “Dear Sir or Madam” and not “To Whom It May Concern” if you are not sure who will be reading the letter.

Skip 2 lines

Opening Paragraph - Begin with a sentence naming the job and job title you are applying for. Then explain where you heard about it and the general qualities that make you the right person for the job.

Middle Paragraph 2 - Align your skills with the job requirements. Describe relevant skills acquired from work or internship experience. Soon-to-be or new graduates can point out any course work, volunteer work, or certifications that relate to the position and the company's needs. Then explain why you want to work at the company, making sure to state its name.

Closing Paragraph – State how the person can contact you to further discuss your qualifications. Emphasize that you can be an asset to their company and look forward to the opportunity to meet them in person to explain more. State that you look forward to hearing from them.

Skip 2 lines

Complimentary Closing – “Sincerely,”

Skip 4 lines to allow for handwritten signature

Type your name under signature.

Helpful Tips for Your Cover Letter

- ✓ When describing skills, provide specific examples.
- ✓ Integrate words from the job description's required skills and qualities.
- ✓ Research the company online and incorporate your knowledge when explaining how your skills match their needs.
- ✓ Don't focus on what the employer can offer you; instead, focus on what you can offer them.
- ✓ Avoid use of informal contractions (e.g., isn't, don't, I'll, it's, I've).
- ✓ Cover letters are usually single spaced and left aligned, with paragraphs separated by blank lines.
- ✓ Proofread, proofread, proofread!
- ✓ Bring your cover letter and the job description to the NSU Writing Center or NSU Career Services for further assistance.

WRITING A STANDOUT COVER LETTER



Resumes

There are many ways to organize a resume. A common approach is to present education and work experience chronologically. Such resumes include contact information and sections for “Education,” “Work Experience,” and “Skills.” Applicants with little work experience often include an “Objectives” section.

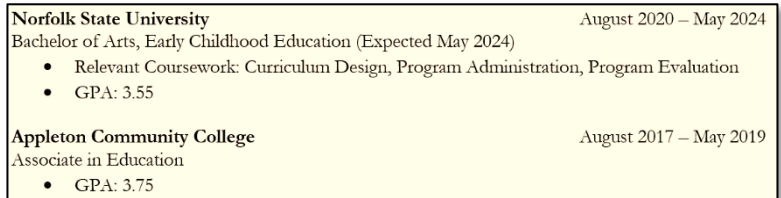
Contact information – Put this at the top.

- Your name should be on its own line in a larger font larger than any text on the resume.



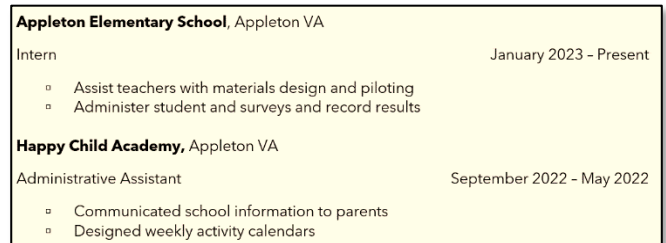
Education – This focuses only on college education.

- List each college you attended chronologically (most recent to oldest).
- Give the school’s name, the degree you’ll earn, and your graduation date (or expected).
- Include awards, scholarships, and achievements.
- If there’s room, list coursework relevant to the job, your GPA (if over 3.0), clubs, and extracurricular activities.



Work Experience – Write this section keeping the company’s desired skills in mind.

- List each job and internship chronologically.
- Include your most common duties but highlight your most impressive and relevant work:
 - Did you take charge of any projects? Did you work as part of a team? Did you write reports? Were you especially efficient or effective?
 - Quantify accomplishments where possible (e.g., “Decreased processing time by 20%”)?
- Separate duties using bullet points:
 - Limit bullets to a single line if you can.
 - Begin with verbs and use correct tense: present for current jobs and past for past jobs.
 - Use various “action” verbs (e.g., designed, produced, supervised, improved, etc.).



Skills

- List relevant professional skills gained from work or study (e.g., computer, technical, laboratory, etc.).
- You may also list soft skills, such as communication, leadership, and problem solving.

Formatting – A hiring manager should be able to scan and understand your resume with ease.

- Formatting for headings, names, and dates should be consistent:
 - If the heading font for “Work Experience” is 12-point Arial bold, then the other headings should be the same.
 - If square bullets are used for one list, use square bullets for all lists.

Proofread – Employers treat resumes as a test of potential employees’ professionalism.

- Your resume should be free of errors (spelling, punctuation, grammar, or formatting).

