

YOUR COVER LETTER

A cover letter is a business letter that accompanies each resume you send to a prospective employer. The cover letter serves as an introduction; it tells an employer who you are and why you are sending them your resume. The cover letter should complement, not duplicate, your resume. Its purpose is to create context and bring your data-oriented, factual resume to life and add a personal touch. It may not circulate with your resume to all interviewers so the resume must be able to stand on its own.

Cover Letter Benefits:

Your cover letter provides a storyline and valuable context about your experience and interests. Although some employers do not request cover letters, you should embrace the opportunity to submit one whenever possible because it can persuade an employer in ways a resume alone cannot.

- Tells the story a resume can't: *Articulates why this company, job, career path*
- Convinces reader you can excel in the job: *Connects skills & experience to job needs*
- Distinguishes you from other candidates: *Can express passion for company, how you'll add value, fit with the culture*
- Persuades reader to champion you: *Demonstrates communications skills, amplifies accomplishments, and puts resume in context*

Creating a Cover Letter:

Step 1: Match your skills to the job description

Read through the job description, pulling out:

- Key responsibilities
- Skills (required/preferred)
- Experiences
- Attributes
- Specific, unique language or buzzwords

Step 2: Connect 3-4 job requirements with your skills and experience

Identify where your experiences, skills, and interests match key elements of the job description. For the strongest matches, note specific examples, and where there are no direct matches, identify experiences that demonstrate comparable skills. Select the job's 3-4 most important elements and your strongest stories to include in your letter.

Step 3: Create an outline for your cover letter

A cover letter consists of 3 parts – the Hook, the Sell, and the Ask – so create an outline answering the following questions for each section.

1. Opening: The Hook (Keep Them Reading)

- Who are you, why are you writing, which job?
- Attention-grabbing, hard-hitting, entice readers to learn more - what do you know about them from your research?
- Leverage company enthusiasm, research, people you spoke with
- Share qualifications, results, anecdote, connections

2. Body: The Sell (Connect Job Needs with Your Qualifications)

- Layout: Succinct with either 1 longer or 3 shorter bulleted paragraphs (see Cover Letter Guide samples)
- Select 3 job requirements & tie them to your skills, experience, attributes - show them how you did it
- Illustrate accomplishments and lessons learned by quantifying your contributions and value
- Make the case for switching industries or functions - show your transferrable skills

3. Close: The Ask (Request Action)

- Add what you are doing at Yale to position yourself to this employer/industry
- Recap what you can CONTRIBUTE, reiterate your interest
- Your follow-up next steps and/or specific ask (e.g., call interview)
- Thank you and call to action

Step 4: Develop key sentences of your cover letter

Using your outline information, write key sentences for each section of your cover letter.

Hook examples:

- *“With my deep management consulting experience, passion for healthcare and Yale MBA, I am delighted to apply for the Consultant position.”*
- *“My experience across professional services, marketing, and sales operations differentiates me from traditional candidates, as I bring a unique perspective and ability to see patterns in data that support actionable growth strategies.”*

Sell examples:

- *“As a Senior Analyst at ABC Company, I applied rigorous quantitative methods to assess the economic value of dozens of products. Handling multiple cases simultaneously, I successfully managed teams of analysts, never missing a deadline.”*
- *“Prior to Yale, I worked in a range of roles at the XYZ Bank, where I initiated and managed loans for small, medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and start-ups that some commercial banks avoided, but our sophisticated models identified companies with solid value propositions, and which later became successful.”*

Close examples:

- *“I am very interested in learning more about this opportunity and discussing the leadership expertise and results I can bring as your strategy consultant.”*
- *“The enclosed resume demonstrates my track record of consistent high achievement, strategic abilities, analytical skills, team leadership, and ability to deliver results. I look forward to discussing how my skills and experience would benefit your organization.”*

Step 5: Finalize cover letter.

Complete writing your entire cover letter, and review against Cover Letter Checklist.

Formatting Guidelines

- Length: 1-page maximum, be as succinct as possible
- Header: consistent with your resume, professional stationery look, can create your own
- Salutation: formal if have contact info, otherwise omit or Dear Hiring Manager / Hiring Team

YOUR COVER LETTER RESOURCES:

- Cover Letter Template
- Cover Letter Worksheets