**How to Write a Cover Letter**

Before you start writing, gather information that will help you write your cover letter. Include:

* Job advertisement and/or job description
* Public information about the organization (e.g. website, brochure, news story)
* Private information about the organization (e.g. informational interview)
* Your resume and/or portfolio
* Reference letters and any performance reviews from current or past employers

**First Paragraph**

Introduce yourself in the first paragraph, including:

* Your reason for writing (“I need an income” is not a valid reason)
* The position you’re applying for and competition number, if appropriate
* Why you are interested in the position and in the company?
	+ How you heard about the position
		- Was the job advertised? Were you referred by someone?

\*Note: It can be risky to use a friend or colleague’s name to open doors because sometimes that person may not be respected by the future employer. If it seems clear that your contact is in a position of respect, it’s likely a good idea to mention the specific name.

**Second Paragraph**

Highlight your skills and qualifications, including:

* Elements from the job advertisement
	+ Highlight the skills and qualifications that the employer has requested
	+ Ensure you cover all key points from the job ad
* Elements from the job description
	+ Highlight how your experience matches the skills, duties and job responsibilities
	+ Include information about relevant soft skills (e.g. great team player)
* Other relevant highlights from your experience that fit for this position
	+ Use real examples of accomplishments
	+ Mention courses and training
* Clearly describe how the company would benefit from hiring you

\*Sometimes it is better to split your second paragraph into two. Use two paragraphs if you have too much information to put into one paragraph (greater than seven lines), or two or more types of information to include, such as highlights of education, work experience, or community/volunteer activities.

**Third or Closing Paragraph**

Use the third, or closing, paragraph to finish your cover letter. Mention:

* Your appreciation for the reader’s time and attention
* Your interest in meeting the employer to discuss the job
* The best way to contact you

**Formatting Your Cover Letter**

Use this page as a reminder of all the pieces to include in your cover letter.

**Your Name**

**Your Address**

**Your City, Province Postal Code** (two spaces between province and postal code)

**Telephone Number with Area Code** (press enter twice after telephone number)

\*Use the same formatting on your cover letter as you did on your resume. It looks more professional and saves space.

**Today’s Date** (press enter twice after today’s date)

**Name of Individual to Whom You are Writing**

**Title Name in Organization** (e.g. Manager)

**Address**

**City, Province**

**Re:** (Identify the position and competition number OR include it in the first paragraph)

**Dear** (Name of individual. You may have to make a phone call to find out whom to address this to. If you absolutely cannot find a name, use “Hiring Manager of X Position,”etc.)

**First Paragraph**

Indicate why you are writing. Begin with a strong opening to catch the reader’s attention. If you don’t have a reference line (“Re:”), identify the position (you can type it in bold to make it stand out) or the type of work you are applying for, and how you learned of the opportunity.

**Second Paragraph (It’s possible that this section will take more than one paragraph)**

Identify your skills and experience that are relevant for this position. If specific qualifications or requirements have been requested, address them all. If you are missing something essential (e.g. a driver’s license), provide a solution (e.g. “My driver’s test is scheduled for one week from today”)

**Third Paragraph**

Express in a positive way that you look forward to meeting. Thank the reader for considering your application.

**Closing** (e.g. Sincerely,)

**Your Name Typed** (If you are handing in your resume, sign the letter)