

When applying for a job, a cover letter compliments a résumé by introducing you to the employer and highlighting your qualifications. The cover letter is the employer's first impression of you; therefore, you must demonstrate effective communication skills and your interest in working for the company.

## FUNDAMENTALS

- Unless it discouraged, include a cover letter with every résumé
- Use 1" margins and 11- to 12-point professional font that matches the formatting on your résumé (Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri)
- Format it like a one-page formal business letter
- Use the same contact information as your résumé header to create a letterhead
- Add the word "Enclosure" at the end of the document to invite the reader to review your enclosed résumé or other career documents.
- Address the cover letter to a specific person and avoid impersonal statements like "To Whom it May Concern" or "Dear Search Committee." If a name is not listed in the job posting or if there is no job posting, contact the company's human resources department or search the company's website to find the name of the department head.
- Use accurate spelling of the employer's name and use appropriate salutation (Mr., Ms., Dr., etc.).
- Focus on what you can offer the company instead of what you hope to gain from the job
- Write a new cover letter for every position/application
- Print on white or ivory résumé paper and use black ink only

## HIGHLIGHT YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE COMPANY AND JOB TITLE

- Research information about the company using the internet and by speaking to employees
- Discuss specifics about the company to demonstrate your interest and address how you meet the employer's needs
- Use the job description and O\*NET (<http://online.onetcenter.org>) to research the job title and identify the important skills you have, including those involving technology, and include this information in the cover letter

## AVOID

- Do not restate information included on your résumé; elaborate on your most relevant qualifications
- Avoid spelling or grammatical errors. Be sure to proofread and visit Career Services for additional assistance

## WHEN APPLYING FOR A POSITION VIA EMAIL

- Give your contact information in the subject line as "(Your First and Last Name)– (Position you are applying for)" in case there is a problem opening the documents
- Save the Microsoft Word document as a PDF with the title "(Your Full Name). Cover Letter"
- Attach as a separate document from your résumé

- Write a brief email that is addressed to the person you are emailing. You may use this email as the cover letter if the employer does not specify cover letter requirement—in this case, do not attach a PDF of your cover letter.
- Identify the position for which you are applying for.
- When attaching your cover letter to the email, include a sentence or two that summarizes your qualifications to invite the reader to review your cover letter and résumé. Do not copy and paste pieces of your cover letter within the email.
- Inform them of all your attached documents
- Conclude your email with your signature block, which consists of your contact information (full name, phone number, email address, and your e-portfolio link (optional)).



Use one-inch margins

# COVER LETTERS



CAREER SERVICES

First and Last Name  
Your Return Street Address  
City, State Zip Code

Use 1 line spacing

Date

Dr./Mr./Mrs./Ms. Jackie Employer  
Job Title of Person  
Company/Organization Name/University Department  
Street Address  
City, State Zip Code

Greetings Dr./Mr./Mrs./Ms. Jackie:

**FIRST PARAGRAPH:** The introductory paragraph should entice the reader to continue reading. State clearly your reason for writing, identify the position or area of employment in which you are interested, and briefly mention how you learned of the position or organization. State your interest in the position and demonstrate your knowledge of the organization.

**SECOND PARAGRAPH:** Highlight those qualifications that are relevant to the position. Do not repeat the information from your résumé. Instead, elaborate on significant details. Describe your academic preparation and explain how it qualifies you for the position. Focus on highlighting your experiential learning experiences, class projects, relevant courses, relevant activities/organizations, etc.

**THIRD PARAGRAPH:** Continue highlighting relevant qualifications by identifying relevant work/volunteer experience (skills, extra training), explaining how your experience has prepared you for the job you are applying for, and include specific details about your previous work experience. Refer the reader to the enclosed résumé and any other enclosures.

**FOURTH PARAGRAPH:** Request a plan of action. Ask for an appointment with the employer; provide your telephone number and the best time to reach you; and suggest possible interview dates. For example, if the employer is out of town, state the date in which you will be in town and ask for an appointment for that date. Finally, make sure you thank the employer for his or her consideration for the position.

Sincerely,  
\*Insert your physical signature here\*

Use four spaces here  
between the closing and  
your signature block

Grizz Bear/Full Name  
Grizz@missouristate.edu  
Phone: 417-123-4567

ENCLOSURES: 3 (this is the number of career documents enclosed)

Use 1 line spacing between each paragraph