

Create an Effective Cover Letter

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Format

- Use business format
- Clear, concise writing
- Correct grammar and spelling

Paragraph 1

- Identify the position you are applying for
- If possible, name a referral or contact
- Create interest or solve a problem / need
- Link your education and work experience to the job

Paragraph 2

- Identify your strongest qualifications as they relate to the job
- Elaborate on applicable work, education or service accomplishments
- Include results-oriented success statements – use data and numbers
- Can be paragraph or bullet point format

Paragraph 3

- Thank the employer
- Request an interview
- Discuss how and when you will follow-up

Example - Web Developer

Start with the same **HEADER** found on your resume

Virginia Dare

VDare@mymail.com • (435) 888-8888 • St. George, UT 84790 • LinkedIn URL

(Company Address)

Tech Company
1234 Computer Road
St. George, UT 84770

(Address letter to a specific person. If you are UNABLE to address your cover letter to a specific person, use a subject line in place of the salutation)

Dear Mr. Wilcox, (person) **OR**

RE: WEB DEVELOPER POSITION (subject line)

1

The web developer position posted on Handshake at Dixie State University matches my ability to create and implement dynamic web content using a variety of software and design tools. In December 20xx I will complete my Bachelors of Science degree in Computer Science with a minor in Informational Technology.

2

My course work and related experience has refined my skills in Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop, ezPlug, and HTML. My experience as a departmental computer consultant gave me exposure to both PC and Macintosh OSX platforms, while troubleshooting repairs on more than 40 work stations. Additionally, my summer internship in computing operations for a major city newspaper enhanced my knowledge of enterprise systems, content management, and e-commerce operations.

3

I will contact you next week to schedule an interview to discuss my qualifications as they relate to this position. Should you need to reach me before then, please feel free to contact me at the phone number or email listed above. Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to talking with you.

Sincerely,

(Omit handwritten signature if emailing or applying online)

Virginia Dare

What should I include?

Questions you need to answer in the cover letter



Why them? What are you applying for and how did you find it?

Why you? What are the employer needs and what can you offer to solve these needs?



Tips

- Write a unique cover letter for each position
- Demonstrate you've done employer research to show how you're the best candidate and how you will be a fit for what their company needs
- Identify the top 3-4 skills from the job description. Give specific examples where you demonstrated those skills from your previous experience
- Demonstrate professional, simple, and direct writing style while also expressing personal interest and excitement
- Keep to one page
- Proofread content for grammatical and spelling errors, and typos
- Find out to whom you're writing and make your cover letter Applicant Tracking System (ATS) optimized

Cover Letter Paragraphs

1 First Paragraph - GRAB ATTENTION! (Two to four sentences)

Grab the hiring manager's attention by telling him/her why you are writing. Name drop if relevant to the position and explain how you heard about the position. For example:

- "I would like to apply for the Teaching Assistant position I saw advertised on Handshake."
- "I am interested in learning more about career opportunities for administrative staff at your company."

2 Second and/or third paragraph - ROUSE INTEREST & CREATE DESIRE (Can be one or two paragraphs or bullet points)

Rouse the hiring manager's interest by explaining what makes you uniquely qualified for the position and then state how you are qualified for the position by mentioning three or four of your specific major accomplishments.

For example:

- "I have five years of experience working as an Graphic Designer at DesignYourLogo."
- "I have recently graduated from Dixie State University with a degree in Business Administration."
- "I know how to create documents, spreadsheets and presentations using the latest Microsoft Office software."
- "I have excellent people skills and I am able to communicate clearly and get along well with my coworkers, colleagues, supervisors and clients."
- "I have data analytics and programming experience including...(list tech skills)."
- "I have served as manager on a number of projects requiring team work and sensitive deadlines."

3 Third paragraph - ACTION (Two to four sentences)

Don't be afraid to ask the hiring manager for a job interview and follow up with a phone call. Be sure to thank them for their time and consideration and end your letter on a positive note that is a call to action. Close your letter with one of the following examples:

- "I would love to interview for your IT Support position. You can reach me anytime at 435-121-1212."
- "I would like to interview for your Accountant position. I hope you won't mind if I call in a few days to see that you received my resume and to schedule an interview."