

Cover Letter Guide



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Phone: 641-422-4292
Office: Administration Building 106A

The Purpose of a Cover Letter is...

- To tell the employer what type of position you are seeking and support your resume objective.
- To entice the employer to learn more about you by reading your resume.
- To impress the employer by showcasing your knowledge about the company and/or its goals.
- To show the employer how well you can express yourself.

Getting Started...

Address the letter to a specific individual. Use online company directories or contact the company and ask for the name and title of the hiring manager for the position you are applying for.

Write an attention getting introduction. Remember, you are trying to entice the reader to want to get to know you better, and ultimately hire you.

State the position you are applying for and point out your relevant qualifications. Do not merely repeat the contents of your resume. Select specific experiences relevant to the job and discuss them. Fill in the blanks your resume leaves open. Tell the employer why you are uniquely qualified for the job. Avoid using "I" to start every sentence.

Tailor your letters to the needs of the company and the requirements of the position. How will the employer benefit from hiring you? Want ads and company publications offer clues about what to stress. Get inside information about workings of your chosen industry and let them know that you are aware of—and possess— exactly what it is they are looking for.

Always send a cover letter with your resume. Your cover letter does not need to exceed one page.

Don't forget to sound positive and confident!

Cover Letter Layout & Content

Current Date **Top Margin set at 1.5 inches (4 returns)**

Contact Person's Name & Title
Company Name
Company Address
City, State Zip Code **(2 returns)**

Dear Contact Person's Name: **(2 returns)**

Introductory Paragraph: State why you are writing; name the position or type of work you are applying for; and mention where you learned of the position or organization. Give specific dates if you have and specific conversations with a person. **(2 returns)**

Body: The next **one** or **two** paragraphs should be your sales pitch. Explain why you are interested and how you best fit this position. "Tease" the reader enough to read your resume. Emphasize particular skills or duties that are part of the job description. As a recent graduate, you may want to use a paragraph to address specific academic qualifications and another to highlight experience and skills. Illustrate in this section that you have knowledge of the company's needs and of the position to demonstrate you have done your "homework." Be confident! **(2 returns)**

Closing Paragraph: Be short and to the point. Indicate what steps you would like to happen next-if you want an interview, ask for it! Passive approach: Results from you saying "I look forward to hearing from you," and places responsibility on the employer to make the next move. Active approach: Puts you in the position to initiate contact with the employer. State a specific date in the near future when you will verify receipt of the letter and/or seek to arrange an appointment. If you say you will contact them, do! Finally, thank the employer for their time and consideration. **(2 returns)**

Sincerely, **(4 returns)**

Always Sign Your Name In Black Ink

Your Name (typewritten)
Your Address
City, State Zip Code
Telephone Number (with area code)
E-mail **(2 returns)**

Enclosure (s) (indicates that your resume and/or additional materials are enclosed)

Cover Letter: Sample

February 11, 20xx

Jane Employer, Manager
ABC Company
123 4th Street
Mason City, Iowa 50401

Dear Ms. Employer:

Gary Smith suggested I contact you regarding a Customer Service Representative position. Please accept this letter and the enclosed resume as my application for employment.

Having worked directly with customers in person and on the telephone for the last two years, I know how important good communication skills are. I can deal with people in a friendly, direct, and efficient manner in a variety of situations.

I would appreciate an opportunity to arrange an appointment with you at your earliest convenience to discuss my qualifications. You can contact me at the phone number listed below or by leaving a message at (641) 243-1110. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Judith M. Todd

Judith M. Todd
3658 Cutler Avenue
Charles City, Iowa 50616
(641) 228-0000

Enclosure

Sample: Response to Newspaper Advertisement

February 11, 20xx

Ms. Martha Jones, Manager
American Mutual Life
904 Liberty Building
6th and Grand
Des Moines, Iowa 50307

Dear Ms. Jones:

I am writing to apply for the position of Administrative Assistant as advertised in the Kensington Ledger on May 25th.

For the past year, I have worked as an Administrative Assistant in Royer's Hospital in downtown Kensington. My responsibilities are diverse and include receptionist duties, bookkeeping, word processing, and file management.

At the end of this month, I will graduate from Kensington Community College with a degree in Administrative Office Specialist. I would like to use my skills acquired at Royer's combined with my degree from Kensington, in an interesting, challenging position.

Enclosed is my resume. It details the skills I could bring to American Mutual Life in the position of Administrative Assistant. I look forward to hearing from you and exploring this opportunity further. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John L Bach

John L. Bach
7842 South East 18th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50320
(515) 285-6945
jbach@isp.com

Enclosure

Sample: Response to Blind Newspaper Advertisement

February 11, 20xx

R# 172
Globe Gazette
315 West State
Mason City, Iowa 50401

RE: Customer Service Position

I am writing in response to the employment advertisement your company placed in the Globe Gazette for a Customer Service Employee on May 2nd. Please accept this letter and the enclosed resume as my application for employment.

Having worked directly with customers in person and on the telephone for the last two years, I know how important good communication skills are. I can deal with people in a friendly, direct and efficient manner in a variety of situations.

I would appreciate an opportunity to arrange an appointment with you at your earliest convenience to discuss my qualifications. You can contact me at the phone number listed below or by leaving a message at 641-243-1110. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Judith M. Todd

Judith M. Todd
3658 Cutler Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50312
515-287-8810
Judithtodd@isp.com

Enclosure

Sample: IowaWorks (formally Iowa Workforce Development) collecting application materials

July 5, 20xx

IowaWorks
600 South Pierce
Mason City, Iowa 50401

RE: Customer Service Position

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the position your company listed with IowaWorks for a Customer Service Representative, job order number IA 8341547. Please accept this letter and the enclosed resume as my application for this position.

Having worked directly with customers in person and on the telephone for the past two years, I know how important good communication skills are. I can deal with people in a friendly, direct and efficient manner in a variety of situations. I received the "Customer Service of the Year Award" for 2009 as a result of my demonstrated customer service skills.

I would appreciate an opportunity to arrange an appointment with you at your earliest convenience to discuss my qualifications. You can contact me at the telephone number or email address listed below. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Ina M. Working

Ina M Working
123 Main Street
Mason City, Iowa 50401
641-555-5627
inaworking@isp.com

Enclosure

Sample: Lead from a telephone conversation

January 11, 20xx

Mr. Charles Lee, Human Resources Manager
National Life Insurance Company
1400 Collins Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

Dear Mr. Lee:

Thank you for the opportunity you gave me to discuss my employment interests with you on the telephone today. I would like to apply for the position of receptionist with National Life Insurance Company. As you requested, enclosed is my resume for you to review.

Since I have previous experience in a business office, I am familiar with office routine and know that a receptionist must be courteous and efficient. I am eager to put my skills to work for you.

I would appreciate the opportunity to arrange an appointment with you to discuss my qualifications, and look forward to hearing from you soon. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Patricia M. Simmons

Patricia M. Simmons
3200 Des Moines Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50317
(515) 289-8810
psimmons@isp.com

Enclosure

Thank you letter: Layout & Content

Current Date Top margin at 1.5 inches down (4 returns)

Contact Person's Name
Company Name
Company Address
City, State. Zip code **(2 returns)**

Dear Contact Person's Name: **(2 returns)**

Express your thanks for the interview referring to the date and position which you interviewed.
(2 returns)

Use the second paragraph to stress your qualifications. The purpose of this letter is to remind the employer who you are and to reinforce or expand the positive image you want to project.
(2 returns)

Close your letter by anticipating further contact. **(2 returns)**

Sincerely, **(4 returns)**

Sign Here

Your name (typed)
Your Address
City, State zip code
Telephone number (with area code)
Email

Sample: Thank You Letter

February 12, 20xx

Ms. Martha Jones, Human Resource Manager
American Mutual Life
904 Liberty Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50307

Dear Ms. Jones:

Thank you for the opportunity to interview for the computer operation position currently available with American Mutual Life on February 11, 20xx.

After listening to you, learning more about your company and the position, I am very confident about my ability to perform the job. Of particular interest was your emphasis on an employee's ability to work independently and their willingness to learn new skills that will benefit the company. My work history shows I am that kind of person, and I feel that these are important characteristics of a good employee.

I am anxiously awaiting your decision and the opportunity to put my training and skills to work for your company.

Sincerely, **(4 returns)**

John L. Bach

John L Bach
7842 South East 18th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50320
515-285-6945
johnbach@yahoo.com