CUSTOMIZE YOUR COVER LETTER FOR EACH POSITION, AND EMPLOYER, YOU ARE APPLYING TO.

A cover letter (also referred to as a letter of inquiry, a letter of application or a letter of interest) accompanies your resume whether you mail, e-mail or fax your application and/or resume. Its purpose is to:

- Introduce your resume.
- Express your personality and enthusiasm for the position.
- Provide support for your candidacy and what you have to offer that is not covered by your resume.

RESEARCH THE EMPLOYER

The following suggestions are offered when writing a cover letter:

- Mail: Make sure that each letter you send out uses the same font and high quality paper as the resume. Always include a cover letter with your resume, whether it is mailed, e-mailed or faxed. If mailed or faxed, remember to sign the cover letter.
- Margins: Use at least one inch margins all the way around (or use the same margins that you have set for your resume), and print on high quality resume paper (8.5 x 11 inches) using a laser printer.
- Typos: Be sure to proof your letter for grammatical and spelling errors! Or have someone else proof it for you.
- Length: Be brief and concise; the cover letter/e-mail should be approximately one page in length. Expand on your resume, rather than repeat the resume’s content.
- Customize: Individualize and target each cover letter to the position you seek; remember you are trying to convince someone why you’re the best person for that particular job.

- Sell: Market yourself! Explain what you can offer the company; not what the company can do for you.
- E-mail: When e-mailing your cover letter, remember to attach your resume and any other documentation as outlined by the employer in their application instructions. If they want your resume as a PDF then send it that way. If you can’t follow their instructions, they probably won’t hire you.

Your cover letter should explain why you are sending your resume. Again, never send a resume without a cover letter, unless you are explicitly asked not to by an employer’s application instructions.

Always state specifically how you learned about the position or the organization – the employer’s website, your university academic advisor or Career Center, your neighbor, Mrs. Blake. It is always appropriate to mention the name of someone who suggested that you write.

Remember you are trying to convince the reader to look at your resume. The cover letter is the first impression and must be well written and targeted specifically to the employer, and job, you are writing to.

YOUR COVER LETTER SHOULD

- Call attention to the highlights of your background, education, experience and leadership roles, which are relevant to the position you are applying for. Be specific and use examples.
- State exactly what is enclosed or attached, resume, practicum report, list of references and transcripts forthcoming, so that the employer knows what application materials you have included.
- Provide additional information not referred to or requested in the job posting such as when you will follow up via e-mail, telephone or mail.
Example 1: Sample Cover Letter Outline

Steven Schenk

2727 Street Avenue, Apt 99 • Chicago IL 60600-0123
Cell: 555-777-1000 • sschenk@wowwee.com

Date of Letter

Individual’s Name
Title
Employer
Street Address
City, State, Zip

Dear Mr./Ms.________________________:

First Paragraph: In your initial paragraph, indicate the reason for writing, the position or type of work for which you are applying, and how you learned of the opening (newspaper, website, career center, friend, family member, professor).

Second Paragraph: Mention why you are interested in the position, the organization and its products or services. Above all, indicate what you can do for the employer. For a recent college graduate, if you have had some practical work experience, point out the specific achievements or unique qualification(s) of that experience. Also, explain how your academic background makes you a qualified candidate for the position. Try not to repeat the same information the reader will find in your resume. Cite specific work examples, but remember to be brief.

Third Paragraph: Mention other information such as relevant course work, certifications, foreign languages and/or professional affiliations, which may strengthen your candidacy for a position. If a prospective employer is requesting a salary history or asking you to include your salary requirements, this issue can be addressed in this paragraph.

*NOTE: Paragraphs two and three can be combined if very short.

Closing Paragraph: State your interest in the company/job again. Then, indicate your desire for a personal interview. You may want to suggest alternative dates and times or simply advise the employer of your flexibility as to the time and place. Repeat your phone number in the letter and offer any assistance to help in a speedy response. Finally, close your letter with a statement or question that will encourage a response. For example, say you will be in the city where the organization is located on a certain date and would like to set up an interview. Or, ask if the company will be recruiting in your area, or if it desires additional information or references.

Closing Statement: Simply worded, “Thank you for your time. I look forward to talking with you.”

Sincerely,

(Your Handwritten Signature)

Steven Schenk (Your Name Typed)

Enclosure(s): (Denotes resume, application, etc., which are enclosed)
Steven Schenk

2727 Street Avenue, Apt 99  •  Chicago IL 60600-0123
Cell: 555-777-1000  •  sschenk@wowwee.com

November 21, 20xx

Mary Success, Director
Human Resources Department
Machines and Stuff, Inc.
1000 Gear Drive
Anywhere, WI  55555

Dear Ms. Success:

I am writing to apply for the position of Wonder Machine Designer. I learned about this position through speaking with Tom Recruiter at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville Fall Career Fair event.

I will be graduating this December with a bachelor’s degree in Mechanical Engineering. While here, I have learned a great deal about machine design from my courses in Mechanical Systems, Automatic Controls, and Engine Design. I am very interested in how your company uses current ideas in flexible and programmable manufacturing systems while adhering to environmental waste and hazards regulations. During my internship with Amazing Gadgets, I worked with programmable systems development. Also, as you can see from my resume, I have had extensive experience with the use of personal computers in engineering design and analysis. My communication skills are excellent, and I have experience working effectively with a diverse group of people. Plus, I am fluent in Spanish. This combination of academic and professional experience makes me an ideal candidate for Wonder Machine Designer.

Your position states that extensive domestic and international travel are required in the first two years of employment. Please know that I thoroughly enjoy traveling and this component of the position provides the career experience I am seeking as a new professional. Once again, I am excited about the possibility of working for your company. I would like to have an opportunity to talk with you about my qualifications. My phone number is (555) 777-1000 and my e-mail is sschenk@wowwee.com. I will follow up this letter with a phone call to see if I can arrange a time to meet with you.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

(Written signature)

Steven Schenk (Your Name Typed)

Enclosures:
• Resume
• List of references
• Design Project Report
Example 3: Sample Cover Letter – DO NOT COPY VERBATIM

Susan Schenk

2727 Street Avenue, Apt 99 • Chicago IL 60600-0123 • 555-777-1000 • suschenk@wowwee.com

October 24, 20xx

Professional Staffing
PO Box 7777
Bangor, ME 04401

RE: Field Finance Manager Position, #23234

Please accept this letter and enclosed resume as an application for your opening which I saw advertised in the Sunday, September 4, 20xx, Wisconsin State Journal.

As a May graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, I have over three years of business and financial analysis experience in addition to my degree in Business Administration and minor in Accounting. My work experience includes two years of domestic and international travel as a Financial Intern for the European-American Center for International Education, and one year as an Internal Auditor Intern for Mayfoods, Inc. Since my graduation, I have been working for a local company, Tri-State Corp., as a Business Analyst in the areas of real estate and hotel management.

The enclosed resume provides details of my solid career and academic experiences. The following highlights some of my achievements:

- Participated in the financial reviews of students applying for acceptance in the international education programs; provided financial counseling to students who did not meet program requirements.
- Planned, coordinated, and initiated productivity audits while at the European-American Center and at Mayfoods, Inc.
- Researched, developed, and implemented an internal management audit that, when completed, will save $120,000 in the first year of use.

Based on my job experience and educational qualifications, I am confident that I can make an immediate contribution to your firm. I would appreciate the opportunity to further discuss my credentials with you in person. Please contact me at the above address or by phone at (555) 777-1000 or via e-mail at suschenk@wowwee.com.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

(Written signature)

Susan Schenk (Your Name Typed)

Enc.

“Adams Cover Letter Almanac” available for review at the Career Center, UW-Platteville
January 21, 20xx

Lee Smith, Superintendent
Anyplace School District
0101 Booksmart Ave.
City, State 12346

Dear Mr. Smith:

Please consider me as an applicant for the high school language arts opening currently available by Anyplace School District. I learned of this position from WECAN. In December, I will graduate from the University of Wisconsin-Platteville with a major in English and a minor in mass communication. I believe Anyplace School District fits well with my teaching philosophy and, in reviewing your district webpage, I can't agree more with your statement, “Maximized to its full value, a free public education also builds a sturdy foundation for success, opening up a world of great opportunities.”

As the enclosed resume indicates, I will have completed a full semester of student teaching at City High School working with a diverse student population in grades nine through 12. In addition to my classroom experiences teaching British Literature, 20th-century American Authors, and ninth-grade Basic English, I volunteer to work individually and in small groups with the school’s newspaper staff. I am particularly interested in your advertised opening because of the specific teaching responsibilities and opportunity to serve as advisor to the student magazine and to work with other student publications. Additionally, I have experience with the Skyward Grading program, the district-wide software currently used in your schools.

Per the position announcement, I have completed the appropriate online application form and have enclosed an unofficial copy of my transcript. In addition, I have enclosed three letters of recommendation and my credential file (student teaching evaluations). Because I am currently completing my student teaching assignment, I do not have a Wisconsin teaching license to enclose. However, I have submitted my license application to the certification office at UW-Platteville, and I have enclosed a photocopy of it. If your district prefers a more formal confirmation of my application, please let me know, and I will arrange for the certification staff to verify my status for you.

“A teacher is the key that unlocks the door for young people.” For my complete philosophy of education and other relevant items, please refer to my website at www.sherryschenk/portfolio. I would welcome the opportunity to interview with your selection team and learn more about your district and the families it serves. Please contact me at the above address or by phone at (555) 777-1000 or via e-mail at shschenk@wowwee.com.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

(Written signature)

Sherry Schenk (Your Name Typed)

Enc.

*View more examples of educational cover letters at: resource.educationamerica.net *“101 Grade A Resumes for Teachers,” by R. Anthony and G. Roe
E-MAIL EXAMPLES

EXAMPLE 1: SAMPLE E-MAIL
To: employer@abccompany.com
From: Janedoe@uwplatt.edu
Subject: Civil Engineering Position: Jane Doe

Dear Ms. Clark:

This e-mail is in response to the ad posted in the UWPlatteville Career Network system for the Civil Engineering position at ABC Company (Position Reference Number: 333). Please accept my attached cover letter and resume as my application for this position. My education, skills, and experience closely fit the job description, and I hope to hear from you soon.

Thank you,

Jane Doe
888-888-8888
janedoe@uwplatt.edu

EXAMPLE 2: SAMPLE E-MAIL
To: employer@abccompany.com
From: janedoe@uwplatt.edu
Subject: Marketing Associate Job Application: Jane Doe

RE: Marketing Associate Position

Attached is my cover letter, resume, and references in application for the position of Marketing Associate as advertised in the Wisconsin State Journal on July 8, 20xx.

I may be contacted by phone anytime after 5 p.m. during the week or anytime on the weekends if you should need any further information.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe
888-888-8888
janedoe@uwplatt.edu

THANK-YOU LETTERS

Writing a thank-you letter after an employment interview is a must. Send out your thank-you letter(s) as soon as possible (preferably within 24 hours, no later than a week) after your interview. In fact, some employers think less of those interviewees who fail to follow-up promptly.

Like any piece of writing, it is best to keep your audience in mind. Address their issues and concerns. In general, typed letters are recommended. Consider the “personality” of the organization and the rapport you felt during your interviews. If your interview was a fairly informal process and/or you achieved an immediate rapport with your interviewer, a handwritten note/letter might be more appropriate.

In addition to thanking the person you talked with, the thank-you letter reinforces the fact that you want the job. Note: Even if you do not want the job, write a thank-you letter respectfully withdrawing your application, because you never know what the future holds so why burn your bridges?

You may also view the thank you as a follow-up “sales” letter. In other words, you can restate why you want the job, what your qualifications are, how you might make significant contributions and so on. This letter is also the perfect opportunity to discuss anything of importance that your interviewer neglected to ask or that you neglected to answer as thoroughly, or as well, as you would have liked.

What if you spent an entire day being interviewed (and taken to lunch) with several people? Are individual letters appropriate or should you write a “group” letter? Choose your approach based on what you think will be most in keeping with the “personality” of the organization. Also, consider whether the interviews had very much in common with one another. If there was a great deal of similarity (i.e., shared concerns mutually voiced by your interviewers), perhaps a “group” letter will suffice. If so, address all the people on a master letter, have the letter reproduced on your own stationery and add a personal note to each.

What if you suffer from writer’s block? Time takes precedence - get a simple, appreciative letter in the mail or send a thank you by e-mail without delay; save your creative efforts for another time. If you’re not sure what to write, review articles in the annual Job Choices magazines available at the Career Center, Ullsvik Hall. *NOTE: do not copy the samples verbatim.

Remember to proofread: Check spelling, grammar, typos, formatting and overall appearance. If in doubt about the correct names, spellings or titles of your interviewers, call the reception desk (main telephone number) of the organization where you interviewed and ask for confirmation. Your extra effort will be worth it: Other resources for proofreading:

- Career Center, 0200 Ullsvik Hall
- Writing Center, 303 Brigham Hall
**NEED MORE HELP?**

**WEB RESOURCES INCLUDE:**

- Education Majors: resource.educationamerica.net
- All Majors: jobsearch.about.com/od/thankyouletters/a/thankyouletters.htm
  www.jobweb.com

Resources Available in the Career Center (Ullsvik Hall):

- Job Choices Magazines
- Adams's Cover Letter Almanac
- Best Keyword for Resumes, Cover Letters, and Interviews
- Cover Letter Magic
- How to Prepare Your Curriculum Vitae
- Military Resumes and Cover Letters
- Write Source 2000

**THE THANK-YOU LETTER, THREE-BASIC PARTS:**

1. Start by thanking the interviewer for taking the time to talk with you. It is generally a good idea to include the actual date on which the interview occurred.

2. Reaffirm your interest in the firm by pointing out particular issues brought during the interview that appeal to you. Try to personalize the letter by referring to some topic or common interest you discussed during the interview.

3. Close the letter with another word of appreciation, an offer to provide more information and a statement that you look forward to hearing from them.

Resist the temptation to sell yourself by reiterating your resume strengths. Keep it short and to the point. If you receive a call back interview, you should send another thank you letter.

**STATE ABBREVIATIONS:**

Official USPS Abbreviations:  www.usps.com/ncsc/lookups/usps_abbreviations.html

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FREDERICK BRYAN
543 North Water Street • Platteville, WI 53818
(608) 345-0120 • bryan@mymail.net

September 30, 20xx

Dr. Julia Edmonds, Director
Technical Design Group
Atlantic Engineering Systems, Inc.
1220 Warwick Avenue
Newport News, VA 23607

Dear Dr. Edmonds:

I want to thank you very much for interviewing me yesterday for the associate engineer position. I enjoyed meeting you and learning more about your research and design work.

My enthusiasm for the position and my interest in working for AES were strengthened as a result of the interview. I think my education and cooperative education experiences fit nicely with the job requirements, and I am sure that I could make a significant contribution to the firm over time.

I want to reiterate my strong interest in the position and in working with you and your staff. You provide the kind of opportunity I seek. Please feel free to call me at (608) 345-0120 if I can provide you with any additional information.

Again, thank you for the interview and your consideration.

Sincerely,

(Written signature)

Frederick Bryan

*For additional thank you letter samples, go to: www.susanireland.com/thankyouletters.htm*