



# Employment/Job Application Letters

**Employment /Job application letters** (commonly referred to as “Cover Letters”) are an important component of most employment application packages, along with resumes, reference letters, and other pertinent documents. The function of the letter is basically to explain why you feel that you are suitable for the job/position you are applying for, and how you believe you can contribute to the company or organization. The following are some general guidelines for writing and formatting a job application letter.

## Before You Begin...

**Many sources offer different views** on what constitutes a “good” cover letter. When planning your letter consider the following:

- Does the company or organization have specific content, format, or length requirements? *If not...*
- What type of letter or style of writing would be most appropriate for your anticipated audience? Would a “traditional” approach be the most effective?
- What style of writing best reflects who you are as a person? What kind of impression do you want to make? How do you want to be perceived?

These factors will help shape the letter you write.

## Format

**Job application letters** are generally formatted as business letters (see Page 2, Figure 1). They are typically not long, often just ½ of a single-spaced page, but the length may vary depending on your own specific needs or application requirements.

## Organization

Typically, a letter will include 6 components:

1. The heading
2. The greeting
3. The introduction
4. The body
5. The conclusion
6. The sign-off

See Page 2, Figure 1.

## Content Details

**1. The heading section** contains:

Your Full Name  
Your email address  
Your phone number

The date

The name of the person to whom you are writing  
Their position or job title (if known)  
The name of the company or organization

**NOTE:** The heading often appears on the *top-left side* of the page, although some designs put the applicant's name and contact information on the *top-right* side of the page; other designs *center* the information across the top margin of the page. The format you choose depends on your own style preferences.

**2. The letter** should begin with a polite **greeting** to the person who will read the letter. Greetings are often written as Dear Mr. or Ms. + the person's last name followed by a comma , or a colon : For example: *Dear Ms. Smith:*

**3. The introduction** paragraph briefly explains the purpose of your letter, i.e. *the specific job or position you are applying for*. Traditional introductions include:

- Your full name as part of the opening statement (optional, as this will also appear at the end of the letter).
- Your student status (if you are a student): your year of study, your major/minor, and when you expect to graduate.
- Where you saw the job advertisement (some companies ask for this information in their job advertisements).
- **NOTE:** Many current sources recommend making the introduction more interesting with an attention-grabbing opening statement. Make your decision based on what you feel would be most appropriate or effective.

**4. The body** section explains *how your education, experiences, skills, and abilities qualify you* for the position. This may be done in one paragraph; or it may require two or more paragraphs depending on how much information you wish to include.

**NOTE:** Do not just repeat information listed on your resume. Instead:

- Explain how your previous experiences have prepared you for the type of work you want to do, i.e. the job you are applying for.
- Explain your personal abilities in terms of how they would make you a good employee for the company or organization.
- Include a brief explanation of *why you want to work for that particular company or organization*; how working there would benefit you or enhance your skills and abilities.

**5. The conclusion** brings the letter to a close. Typically, the conclusion will:

- Re-state your interest in the position (or why you are interested).
- Mention your interest in having an interview and when you are available (provide days and times).
- Finish with a polite closing remark (e.g. *Thank you for your time or I look forward to hearing from you, etc.*).

**6. The signoff** is just a standard way of ending the letter. Some common signoffs are:

- *Regards*
- *Kind Regards*
- *Sincerely*
- *Yours Sincerely*
- *Respectfully*
- *Respectfully Yours*

Followed by *your full name* on the next line.



## Additional Format Details

### Visual Layout:

- Single line spacing can be used for application letters.
- Application letters often use block format (paragraphs separated by a space), though the traditional “indentation” style is also used.
- Page margins should be about 2.54 cm on both sides of the page (i.e. “normal” margins in MS Word).
- The letter should appear centered between the top and bottom of the page

### Length:

- Application letters can range between 250 and 400 words (depending on your needs) usually consisting of 3 to 5 short paragraphs.

### Font Style & Size:

- Any “readable” font is acceptable, but standard fonts for application letters include Times New Roman, Cambria, Arial, or Calibri.
- Font size 11 or 12 are recommended, but 10 can be used for larger font styles such as Ariel
- Avoid colored fonts. Standard black is recommended.

### Language & Writing Style

Application letters should be clear, concise, and to the point.

- Do not include unnecessary information: focus on the purpose of the letter and the information needed to achieve that purpose.
- Do not use slang, technical jargon, abbreviations, or references that might confuse the reader.
- Do not try to use humor, make jokes, or try to sound clever or witty – this can be easily misunderstood.
- Do not include highly personal or “emotional” content (unless it is to make a unique and necessary point).
- Do not use meaningless phrases like “*I have always loved economics...*” or “*your company is the best in its field*”. Give real information that is meaningful and relevant to the application.
- Be sure to mention the name of the company or organization at strategic points in the letter.

## Important Notes

- Before writing your letter, *research the company or organization* to which you are applying. Learn about the work it does, the people who work there, and the type of work you would be doing if hired. This will help you write a better-informed and more meaningful application letter.
- *Always address the letter to someone* (another reason to do your research). If you cannot find the name of the person to whom you are writing, you can use their job title instead (i.e. *Dear Personnel Manager, Dear Human Resources Manager, etc.*) Alternatively, you can greet them as *Dear Sir or Madam*.
- *Always proofread your letter several times* before sending it. Spelling and grammar mistakes on an application letter look careless and unprofessional. This could have a negative impact on your chances of getting an interview.

Figure 1: Structure of a Cover Letter

John D. Jameson  
Tel: 010 2345 6789  
Email: j.d.jameson@email.com

June 15, 2015

Sandra Smith  
General Manager  
Goods Company

Dear Ms. Smith:

I am applying for the position of Assistant Marketing Director at Goods Company, as was posted on your website June 1, 2015. I am currently completing a Bachelor's Degree in Marketing at Kyungpook National University (KNU), and I will be graduating this August.

I am quite familiar with Goods Company. As a consumer, I appreciate the company's vision and efforts to address market trends and demands; and as a professional who is interested in creating innovative solutions to problems and facilitating the achievement of company objectives, I believe I am well-suited for the position you advertise.

Much of my recent work experience has centered on public relations. In my junior year I served as a Student Ambassador for KNU, wherein I helped organize international events and maintained lines of communication between the University's administration and student body. This experience allowed to meet and interact with all sorts of people, and to develop strong interpersonal skills; not to mention good verbal communication, presentation, and organizational skills as well.

Volunteering has also been an important factor in my personal development. Traveling and working abroad as a volunteer; and taking part in local programs such as the Korean-American Friendship Circle has taught me how to adapt to diverse intercultural settings and work with people in a professional, effective, yet friendly manner – skills that I would bring with me to your company.

I am confident that with my training and abilities I can make an immediate and valuable contribution to Goods Company. I believe my experiences and knowledge would benefit your marketing department, and my personal attributes make me a good candidate for this position. I would be happy to meet with you in person to discuss my qualifications in more detail, and I am available for an interview at your earliest convenience.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
John D. Jameson

## Sources Consulted

The following were consulted in the making of this WCP Essentials Guide:

Harvard Business review.org: How to Write a Cover Letter

<https://hbr.org/2014/02/how-to-write-a-cover-letter>

Novoresume.com: How to Write a Cover Letter in 2020 [https://](https://novoresume.com/career-blog/how-to-write-a-cover-letter-guide)

[novoresume.com/career-blog/how-to-write-a-cover-letter-guide](https://novoresume.com/career-blog/how-to-write-a-cover-letter-guide)

Resume Genius.com: How to Write a Cover Letter for a Job Application

<https://resumegenius.com/blog/cover-letter-help/how-to-write-a-cover-letter>

The Balance careers.com: Cover Letter Examples for Different Jobs and Careers <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/cover-letters-examples-listed-by-type-of-job-2060173>

The Muse.com: How to Write a Cover Letter: The All-Time Best Tips

<https://www.themuse.com/advice/how-to-write-a-cover-letter-31-tips-you-need-to-know>

Zety.com: How to Write a Cover Letter in 8 Simple Steps (12+

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Original Resource Researched and Designed by  
Shane Ellis Coates (UPDATED May 22, 2020).