

Writing 109ST: Assignment #4

Cover Letter

Description of the Assignment

A cover letter is submitted along with other materials to tell the recipient(s) what is attached (for example, a resume or a report). It tells the recipient why you are writing and what you want them to do with the attached materials. For this exercise, you will write a cover letter to accompany your resume or CV. Its primary purpose is to motivate the reader to read your resume/CV and grant you a job interview. It should summarize your strengths in one page and set you apart from other candidates. Finally, your cover letter should be written in simple, easy-to-understand language that makes sense to the reader, telling them who you are, what position you are applying for, and why they should consider you for the position.

Tasks

For this assignment, do the following:

- Locate a company and job that you are interested in applying to. The job can be one that you actually intend to apply to, or it can be “notional” (i.e., you have no real intention of applying to but might someday).
- Write a one-page cover letter for a company and job that you have selected.
- Format your letter with 1–1.5” margins and clearly separated paragraph breaks. NOTE: For your first draft, double-space your letter, even if it exceeds the one-page limit. Later drafts can be single-spaced. (It is much easier for me to edit double-spaced copy.)
- Your letter should include a proper heading, date, salutation, introduction, body text and closing.

§ Your heading should include your name, address, phone number, and e-mail; the recipient’s name, title, and street address; and, the date. A letterhead design is optional.

§ Your salutation should be simple and respectful. Whenever possible, try to address your letter to a specific person. If you cannot locate a specific person, address your letter to “Dear Sir or Madame,” or “Manager, Human Resources.” (Avoid using, “To Whom It May Concern.”)

§ In your introduction, tell them who you are and what position you are applying for. Many companies also like you to tell them where you saw their job advertisements or learned about the job opening. If the position has a job number associated with it, be sure to reference the number.

§ The body text should be limited to a paragraph or two. Explain to your reader why you are a good match for the position. Highlight any special experience or talents you have that bear favorably upon the job you are applying for. Let them know in the most concise way possible that you understand and meet the job requirements.

§ Your closing should inform your reader that you intend to contact them by phone within 7–10 days to follow up on your application. Thank them for their time and consideration.

- End your letter simply and don't forget to sign it! Endings might include, for example, "Respectfully yours," or "Yours truly."
- Include an attachment notation (e.g., "Encl. resume," "Resume enc.," etc.) at the very bottom of the page to let your recipient know that you are enclosing your resume with the cover letter.

Supplemental Materials

Please refer to the UCSB Career Manual (available at the UCSB Career Services) for help with your cover letter. Helpful links are also available via the course "Help" web page.