

COVER LETTERS 101

WHAT IS A COVER LETTER?

A cover letter is a one-page document sent with your resume to provide additional information on your skills and experience. A cover letter should complement, not duplicate, your resume. Its purpose is to interpret the data-oriented, factual resume and add a personal touch to your application for employment.

It is very important that your cover letter be tailored to each position you are applying to. This means more than just changing the name of the company in the body of the letter.

WHAT TO INCLUDE BY SECTION

GREETING

Ideally, you will be able to address your cover letter to a specific person, but if you do not have a contact name, you can use *Dear Hiring Manager*. Doing research can help you figure out who is the most appropriate person to receive the letter. If you do not know the gender of your contact, you can write out the person's full name, e.g., "Dear Leslie Brown" or "Dear Jordan Jones".

The body of your cover letter lets the employer know what position you are applying for, why the employer should select you for an interview, and how you will follow-up. Organize the body of your cover letter into the following paragraphs:

FIRST PARAGRAPH

The first paragraph of your letter should include information on why you are writing. Mention the position you are applying for and where you found the job listing. Include the name of a mutual contact, if you have one.

MIDDLE PARAGRAPH(S)

The next section of your cover letter is the section most commonly left out by students, but is very important. This paragraph should include what about the company attracts you to the position. You may want to write a sentence or two about something positive that goes on in the organization. Show the employer that you have done your research on their company and the position itself.

Another paragraph should describe what you have to offer the employer. Mention specifically how your qualifications match the job you are applying to. Think of this section of the cover letter as where you are making a pitch for your fit as an employee. Keep in mind that employers will be more interested in what you can do for them, than a list of your background. Make the connection between your

qualifications and the job requirements clear. Use this section to interpret your resume—do not repeat from it verbatim.

FINAL PARAGRAPH

Conclude your cover letter by thanking the employer for considering you for the position. Include information on how you will follow-up. Optionally, you can briefly restate why you would be a good fit for the position.

SIGNATURE

Use a closing such as "Sincerely", and then end your cover letter with your signature, handwritten, followed by your typed name. If this is an email, simply include your typed name, followed by your contact information, after the close.

POINTERS

Here are some formatting tips to keep in mind when you are writing a cover letter:

- » Email versus hard copy: If you are emailing your cover letter, you will need to pay particular attention to the subject line of your email.
- » Font choices: The details count when it comes to cover letters, so choose a professional font (Arial, Calibri, Times New Roman) in a 10 or 12-point size. This is no time to break out emoticons or emojis!
- » Spacing: Your letter should be single-spaced. Include a space between every paragraph, and in general, a space between each section of the letter. (That is, there should be a space between the address and the date, and then again between the date and the salutation.) In an email cover letter, where many sections are left off, you will want to include a space between the salutation and between each paragraph, and another space before your complimentary close.
- » Proofreading: Make sure to avoid errors by carefully proofreading your letter. Use your computer's spell check to catch common errors, and then consider reading your letter aloud — or having a friend review it — to catch additional errors.

Betty Smith

234 Ranch House Road
Durham, NC 27707
(919) 234-5678
b.smith12@gmail.com

Ms. Jane Doe
Hiring Manager
123 Nursing Drive
Durham, NC 23456

Dear Ms. Doe:

I am writing to apply for the Registered Nurse full time evening shift position at Hillcrest Convalescent Center of Durham. I learned of this position through Career Services at Durham Technical Community College, where I am a recent graduate. My five year experience working in a long term care facility, certifications, and love for the elderly make me a strong candidate for this position.

Hillcrest Convalescent Center of Durham has a strong reputation in the community as a safe and warm environment for all residents, their families, and staff. In addition, Hillcrest creates an environment for their residents that allows them to feel right at home which has been unmatched by other long term care facilities. I believe Hillcrest would be an excellent place for me to continue my experience working with the elderly community.

For the past five years, I have worked as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) at a long-term care facility specializing in caring for dementia patients. Most recently, I received my Associate's in Nursing, and became certified as a North Carolina Registered Nurse in May. Through my work and clinical experience, I have been well-trained in catheter care, monitoring vital signs, blood glucose testing, and geriatric care. I truly value getting to know residents and their families in order to best serve them.

I am very interested in beginning my career as a nurse at Hillcrest Convalescent Center. I am more than confident that my love for geriatric care and my experience working in a long-term care facility make me an excellent candidate for this position.

Please see my enclosed resume. If you have any questions for me, I can be reached at (919) 234-5678 or b.smith12@gmail.com. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Betty Smith

***THIS IS A SAMPLE AND NOT
MEANT FOR REPLICATION.***

Subject Line:

Sales & Service Representative III (Teller) Job - John Doe

Email Message:

Dear Hiring Manager:

Please accept my enthusiastic application for the Sales & Service Representative III position at First Citizens Bank. I saw an advertisement for this position on indeed.com. As a Business Administration major at Durham Technical Community College, I believe my coursework as well as my work experience qualify me for this position.

As a North Carolina native, First Citizens Bank was the first bank my family and I utilized. The sense of security that First Citizens Bank gave to my family attracted me to this bank over others. Much like First Citizens Bank's values, I pride myself on working hard and with integrity to give customers the best service possible. I have done this by thinking strategically and making sound decisions to ensure customers get the service they need.

For two years, I have worked as a Customer Service Representative at OfficeTeam, a professional staffing agency. In this role, I have responded to 15-20 inbound and outbound calls from customers daily. I also served as the only Spanish speaking representative at the firm. As a fluent Spanish speaker, I believe I would be a great asset to the First Citizen Bank team by providing services that cater to Spanish speaking customers.

In my Business Administration coursework at Durham Tech, I have obtained basic accounting skills and certificates in Business Core, Management, and Marketing. I believe the Sales and Service Representative Position aligns greatly with my career goals, and First Citizens Bank would be an excellent place to further my career in customer service.

I am very interested in the Sales & Service Representative position. The values and mission of First Citizens Bank are unique and synonymous with my own as a customer service professional. Enclosed you will find my resume. If you would like to contact me please feel free to do so at (919) 123-4567 or johndoe11@gmail.com.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

John Doe

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MEANT FOR REPLICATION.***