What goes inside a cover letter:

When you submit your resume, you will typically need to [write a cover letter](http://jobsearch.about.com/od/coverletters/a/aa030401a.htm) as well. Since it is a formal letter, there are set guidelines for what information to include in your cover letter.

The following cover letter format lists the information you need to [include in the cover letter](http://jobsearch.about.com/od/coverletterwriting/tp/writingacoverletter.htm) you submit with your [resume](http://jobsearch.about.com/od/jobsearchglossary/g/resume1.htm). Since a cover letter is a formal letter, it's important to adhere to these formatting standards.

Use the guideline below to create [customized cover letters](http://jobsearch.about.com/od/coverlettertips/qt/customcover.htm) to send to employers. Then, review [cover letter samples](http://jobsearch.about.com/od/coverlettersamples/a/coverlettsample.htm), a [cover letter template](http://jobsearch.about.com/od/coverlettersamples/a/covertemplate.htm), and tips for formatting hard copy and email cover letters you can use to write your own letters.

**Cover Letter Format**

[**Your Contact Information**](http://jobsearch.about.com/od/coverletterwriting/a/coverlettercontact.htm)
Name
Address
City, State, Zip Code
Phone Number
Email Address

**Date**

**Employer Contact Information***(if you have it)*
Name
Title
Company
Address
City, State, Zip Code

* [Cover Letter Contact Section Examples](http://jobsearch.about.com/od/coverletterwriting/a/coverlettercontact.htm)

[**Salutation**](http://jobsearch.about.com/od/jobsearchglossary/g/cover-letter-salutation.htm)
Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name,

* [Cover Letter Greeting Examples](http://jobsearch.about.com/od/coverletterwriting/a/coverlettersalutations.htm): Note: If you do not have a contact name, you can skip the salutation entirely. Or, you can use Dear Hiring Manager, To Whom It May Concern, or one of the other examples listed in the link. Ideally, you will be able to address your cover letter to a specific person. Doing research can help you figure out who is the most appropriate person to receive the letter. Note: If you do not know the gender of your contact, you can write out the person's full name, e.g., "Dear Cory Smith"or "Dear Jordan Parish."

CONTINUE READING BELOW OUR VIDEO

[**Body of Cover Letter**](http://jobsearch.about.com/od/coverletterwriting/a/cover-letter-body.htm)
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 should describe what you have to offer the employer. Mention specifically how your qualifications match the job you are applying for. Think of this section of the cover letter as where you're making a pitch for your fit as an employee and show makes you a great candidate. 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—don't 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.

[**Complimentary Close**](http://jobsearch.about.com/od/jobsearchglossary/g/complimentary-close.htm)

Respectfully yours,