



Hi my name is Joan Kang, and I am a Senior Career Services Advisor at Santa Monica College in the Career Services Center, and this presentation is focused on cover letter writing for those wanting to go into RT.

COVER LETTER

PURPOSE

- Your brief but personal introduction (academic, professional, and personal qualifications) to a prospective employer and a way to fill in any informational gaps
- Opportunity to market yourself and share how you are a good match with what they are looking for and how you would add value to their organization (based on your research)

To begin, people have different thoughts on cover letters. Some hiring folks say they are critical to an application, while others might not even read them. Some recruiters say you need to grab their attention with a unique introduction versus others say, stick to the straight-forward introduction. Therefore, unless an employer explicitly states do not include a cover letter in the application process, why not include one. The risk is greater in not writing one because:

Cover letters allow applicants the opportunity to provide a brief introduction of who they are academically, professionally and sometimes personally.

Through your letter you can market yourself. Share how you are a good match with what the employer is looking for and how you would add value to their organization. It also a great way to demonstrate your effective written communication skills, a skill valued by all employers.

Through cover letters you can tell your story. Weave experiences together. Fill informational gaps.

COVER LETTER VS. RESUME DIFFERENCES

RESUMES

- Lists the ways you meet the job requirements
- Focuses on your present and past achievements

COVER LETTERS

- Points out a few qualifications and explains how you are prepared for that position
- Focuses on the future and what you can do for them
- Discusses your interests in the job

So now that you learned a little bit about cover letters, let us chat about the main differences between cover letters and resumes.

Resumes list the ways you meet the job requirements while your cover letter explains and highlights a few ways you meet the requirements and especially how you are prepared to take on that new position.

Resumes also focus on your past and present accomplishments while a cover letter speaks on what you can do in the future and why you want to work for that organization.

COVER LETTER TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS

- “Why you?” and “Why them” (Connection)
- Do your research/Make notes
- Tailor your letter to each job. No one size fits all.
- Focus on the future
- Watch your tone
- Keep it to under a page, business letter format
- Use the same formatting as your resume (contact header information and font)
- Proofread it
- Provide a PDF copy

And to begin your cover letter writing experience, here are some initial tips and suggestions.

Tell them, why you. Share the most relevant and compelling qualifications you have. Share what you will bring to their organization, if hired. This is not the time to tell them what you want or can gain from them bringing you on board.

Share with the employer the reasons you are interested in them. Why them. This is a way you can target your cover letter to the company and position. Cover letters are not one size fits all. It is just as important to target your cover letter to the position/company as it is your resume. It shows that you have done your research on the organization.

Lastly, make sure the language and tone you use for your cover letter matches that of the organization. Always keep your tone positive and keep your cover letter to 1 page, business format and following the same font and contact header as your resume. And finally, make sure to proofread your cover letter and remove any grammar and spelling errors.

COVER LETTER

MAKE A CONNECTION

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- Share
 - A story that connects with their company, brand, mission, value, etc.
 - Tell them how you came to learn about their company (personal or through research)
 - Why you value them and the work they do.

So, let's talk a little bit more on connection and why making a connection is important. Like everyday life, you initially gravitate to people who are like you. Employers do the same with their application process. They look for candidates that have things in common with their organization (skills, values, interests, etc.). They invite candidates who have successfully made a connection with them to the interview portion of the hiring process.

And here are 3 examples showing how you can make a connection with an employer.

- A story that connects with their company, brand, mission, value, etc.
- Tell them how you came to learn about their company (personal or through research)
- Why you value them and the work they do

COVER LETTER BUSINESS FORMAT

- Your contact information
- Date
- Company Information
 - Hiring manager's first and last name
 - Hiring manager's job title
 - Hiring manager's department
 - Company name
 - Full address of the company
- Salutation/Greeting
- Opening introduction paragraph
- Middle body paragraph(s)
- Closing paragraph
- Closing Salutation, signature and typed full name

Now that I have shared with you the purpose of cover letters and have also given you an idea of what to include in your letter, let's focus on the formatting of it, specifically following a business formatted standard.

You will want to include the items noted on this page and here are some additional things to note:

Using the same heading as your resume is helpful especially if you want to withhold providing your full address to an employer. You should however use the same font/size as your resume for consistency purposes.

As far as the name of the hiring manager goes. Sometimes finding this information is difficult. If you are not able to obtain that information via the job description and you are unable to reach someone at the company, some people like to search through company websites, social media, etc. However, note that sometimes information can be outdated. Therefore, you chance listing the incorrect hiring manager. I might lean towards stating "Dear Name of Job Title Hiring Manager:" or "Dear Name of Job Title Hiring Selection Committee:" Do not write "To whom it may concern:" as this phrase is too general and does not show that you are targeting your cover letter. Also use a colon ":" as the punctuation following the greeting.

Avoid using gender pronouns. Unless you are aware of the gender pronoun a person identifies with, listing the hiring manager's first and name is acceptable.

Your opening paragraph is your introduction. Let the employer know who you are, what job position you are applying to, how you heard about the position and why you are interested in working for that employer. If you were referred to the position, the opening paragraph would be a great place to share who specifically referred you. This paragraph also provides an outline/preview to what you will be sharing in the body of the letter, the next paragraph or two. It persuades the reader to continue reading the rest of your cover letter.

The 2nd and/or 3rd paragraphs are considered the body paragraphs. They connect your specific skills, qualifications, etc. to the position and to the company but in more detail than your resume. You can also continue highlighting more things that interest you to them, while weaving in how your major and degree fit the job as well as how your experiences (paid jobs, volunteer, clinicals, research, internships, etc.) fit the job. Again, why them.

The closing paragraph is you reaffirming your qualifications and interests in the position. It is also you providing your contact information again (phone and email). Make sure you have a working voicemail you check regularly. Don't expect an employer to text you a message. Also make sure to check your email regularly.

Then, end your letter formally with your salutation (Sincerely, Best Regards, etc.), signature, and name typed.

EXAMPLE of BUSINESS FORMAT

Applicant Heading (Same as the resume)

Today's Date (i.e., Month Day, Year)

Hiring Manager's Full First and Last Name (Do not assume gender pronouns)
Hiring Manager's Job Title
Hiring Manager's Department
Organization's Name
Organization's Street Address
Organization's City, State and Zip Code

Greeting:

Introduction Paragraph

Body Paragraphs

Closing Paragraph

Salutation,

Applicant' Signature

Applicant's Name

So, here is an example of the structure of a traditional business formatted letter.

ADDITIONAL HELP

CAREER SERVICES

Major and Career Exploration | Employment Resources | Workshops
Phone: (310) 434-4337
Email: careerservices@smc.edu
Website: www.smc.edu/careerservices

PEER NAVIGATOR PROGRAM

Peer Mentoring | Workshops | For 1st Year Students
Email: peernavigator@smc.edu
Website: <https://www.smc.edu/student-support/academic-support/counseling/special-support-programs/peer-navigator/>

ACADEMIC COUNSELING

ED Plan | Transfer Assistance
Website: <https://www.smc.edu/student-support/academic-support/counseling/>

HEALTH SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

Respiratory Care / Nursing / Allied Health Professions

Contact Information:
<https://www.smc.edu/academics/academic-departments/health-sciences/rta-application.php>
RT Website: <https://www.smc.edu/respiratorytherapy>

STUDENT GOVERNMENT AND CLUBS

Student Government (AS) / Clubs and Organizations
Website: <https://www.smc.edu/community/office-of-student-life/student-government/clubs.php>

GAINING EXPERIENCE

Website: <https://www.smc.edu/student-support/career-services/career-interest-areas/health-and-wellness-career-interest-area/health-and-wellness-experiential-list-of-opportunities/>

CAREER GUIDES

Website: <https://www.smc.edu/student-support/career-services/career-interest-areas/health-and-wellness-career-interest-area/health-and-wellness-career-guides/>

Finally, for RT students, here are some valuable resources.