Cover Letter Guidelines

THE COVER LETTER

Cover letters tell employers which job you are seeking and why you are the best fit. They also provide a great chance for you to sell yourself to the hiring manager.

An appropriate cover letter should always accompany a resume, and should complement, but not duplicate, your resume information. Make sure it is professional, concise, friendly, error free, personally typed, and sent to the person named in the job posting.

"Dear Hiring Professional" may be used **if** a contact name is not given.
Tip: Try calling the employer directly or conducting internet research.

Cover letters are meant to be read first and should be on the same type of paper as your resume.
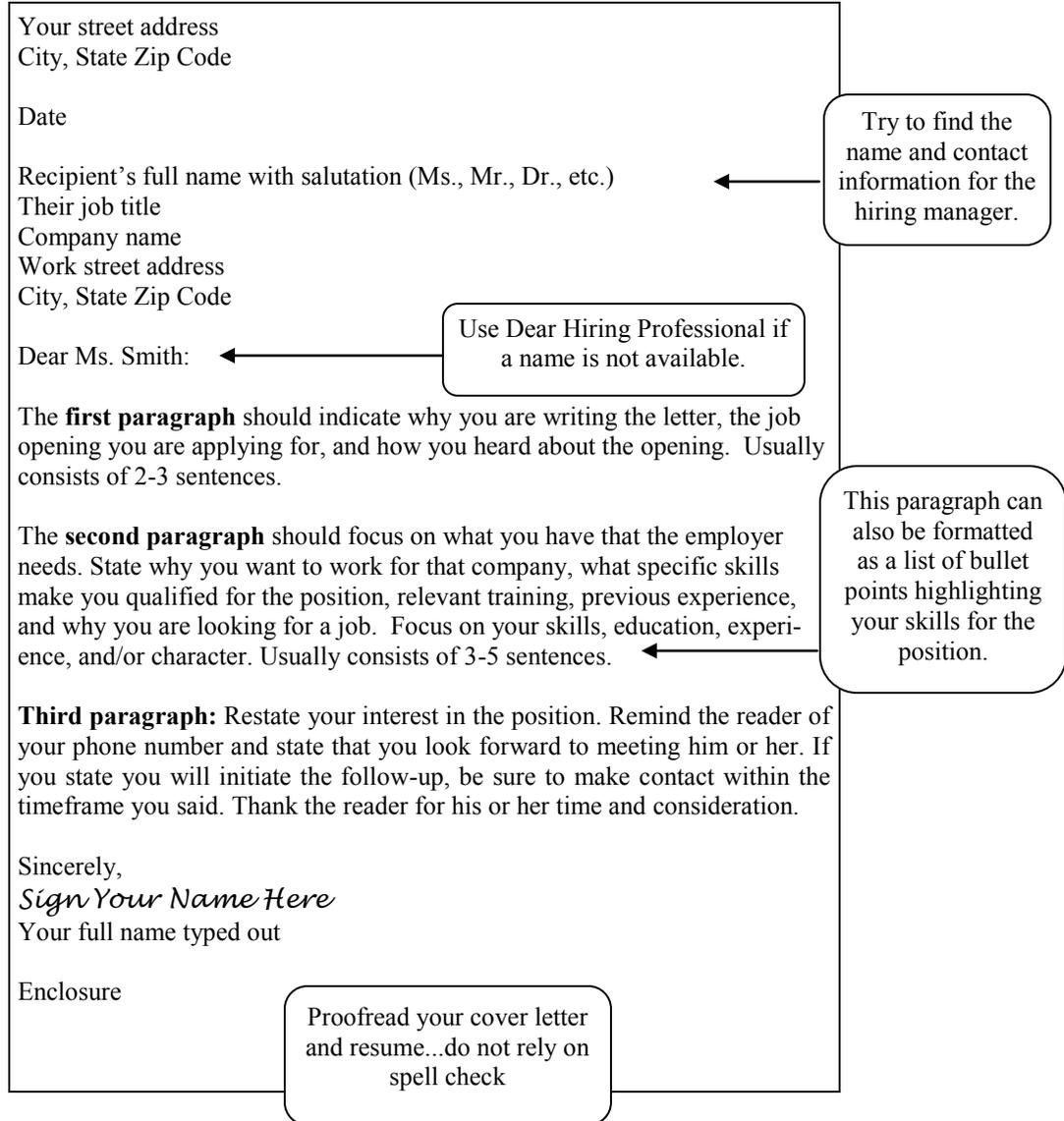
A well-written cover letter adds to the focus of the resume. It should address the following questions:

1. Why are you writing?
2. What will you bring to the prospective company as an employee?
3. What past work experience and skills would be important for the position?
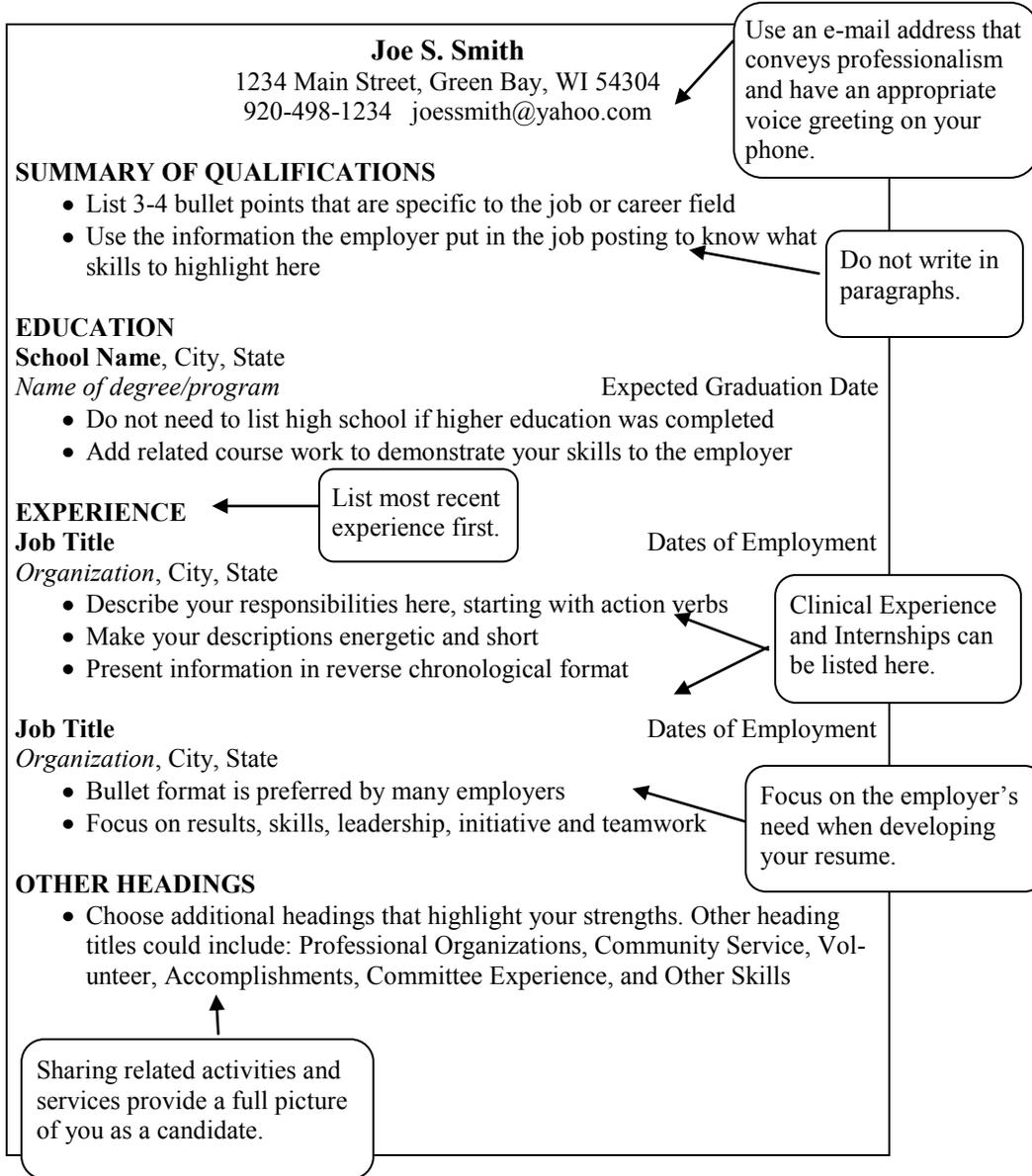4. What response do you expect to obtain?

If you have a gap in employment due to downsizing, layoff, or any other reason, be sure to use a positive tone and language in your cover letter.

If the resume is sent via email, the cover letter can be used as the body of the email. You do not need to sign the cover letter if used in an email.

Your street address
City, State Zip Code

Date

Recipient's full name with salutation (Ms., Mr., Dr., etc.)
Their job title
Company name
Work street address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Ms. Smith:

The **first paragraph** should indicate why you are writing the letter, the job opening you are applying for, and how you heard about the opening. Usually consists of 2-3 sentences.

The **second paragraph** should focus on what you have that the employer needs. State why you want to work for that company, what specific skills make you qualified for the position, relevant training, previous experience, and why you are looking for a job. Focus on your skills, education, experience, and/or character. Usually consists of 3-5 sentences.

Third paragraph: Restate your interest in the position. Remind the reader of your phone number and state that you look forward to meeting him or her. If you state you will initiate the follow-up, be sure to make contact within the timeframe you said. Thank the reader for his or her time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Sign Your Name Here
Your full name typed out

Enclosure

> Try to find the name and contact information for the hiring manager.

> Use Dear Hiring Professional if a name is not available.

> This paragraph can also be formatted as a list of bullet points highlighting your skills for the position.

> Proofread your cover letter and resume...do not rely on spell check

Resume Guidelines

Employers spend less than a minute evaluating your resume. Tailor your resume to meet their needs and catch their eye.

Joe S. Smith
1234 Main Street, Green Bay, WI 54304
920-498-1234   joessmith@yahoo.com

> Use an e-mail address that conveys professionalism and have an appropriate voice greeting on your phone.

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS
- List 3-4 bullet points that are specific to the job or career field
- Use the information the employer put in the job posting to know what skills to highlight here

> Do not write in paragraphs.

EDUCATION
School Name, City, State
Name of degree/program   Expected Graduation Date
- Do not need to list high school if higher education was completed
- Add related course work to demonstrate your skills to the employer

EXPERIENCE
> List most recent experience first.

Job Title   Dates of Employment
Organization, City, State
- Describe your responsibilities here, starting with action verbs
- Make your descriptions energetic and short
- Present information in reverse chronological format

> Clinical Experience and Internships can be listed here.

Job Title   Dates of Employment
Organization, City, State
- Bullet format is preferred by many employers
- Focus on results, skills, leadership, initiative and teamwork

> Focus on the employer's need when developing your resume.

OTHER HEADINGS
- Choose additional headings that highlight your strengths. Other heading titles could include: Professional Organizations, Community Service, Volunteer, Accomplishments, Committee Experience, and Other Skills

> Sharing related activities and services provide a full picture of you as a candidate.

APPEARANCE:
- *Templates:* Do not use resume wizards or software templates. They are difficult to edit and do not allow you to present yourself most effectively.
- *Length:* Use a one-page resume; with more than 10 years direct experience, a two-page resume is acceptable.
- *Font:* Choose a basic, easy-to-read font such as Times New Roman or Arial in 11-12 point size. Use black ink.
- *Spacing:* Margins should be 1 inch on all sides.
- *Layout:* Use bullets, **bold**, CAPITALIZATION, *italics*, and underlining sparingly to call attention to the most important information. Leave some white space to create an uncluttered look.
- *Format:* Present information in reverse chronological order.
- *Professionalism:* Eliminate all typos by asking others to proofread.

FUNCTION:
- *Content:* Focus on qualities you possess that the employer is looking for, and highlight these through your skills and accomplishments.
- *Style:* Start sentences with action verbs to convey enthusiasm and achievement. Examples include: Advised, Created, Developed, Implemented, Increased, Maintained, Organized, Presented, Researched, Trained, Wrote.
- *Avoid:* Do not list personal or confidential information such as age, family status, social security, driver's license or credit card numbers on a resume.

FEEDBACK:
- Consult NWTC Career Services, instructors, and professionals in your field.

ELECTRONIC RESUMES & TECHNOLOGY:
- E-mail text resumes: If copying the text of your resume into the body of an e-mail, use left-hand justified, avoiding the use of tabs, bullets, underlining, bold and graphics.
- E-mail attachment resumes: If e-mailing your resume as an attachment, use your name in the document title, not just resume.doc. Attach your resume as either a PDF document or a Word document.