

## HOW TO WRITE A COVER LETTER



You don't always need a cover letter -- in fact, some recruiters request you do not send one.

But the cover letter is the best way to play up the most important parts of your resume, while including information inappropriate for a resume. The letter also demonstrates your writing ability, and shows you were willing to take a little extra time with your application. Here are some tips for writing a great cover letter: **Start by introducing yourself.** Stick to what relates directly to the job. *My name is Joseph Blow, and I have 10 years experience in Advanced Widget Management.* **Mention the position for which you are applying.** Forgetting this is a common error. Chances are excellent that the recruiter is working to fill several jobs. *I am writing about the Senior Widget Manager position advertised on EmploymentCrossing.com.* **Grab the reader's attention.** Cover letters are dull. If there is anything that sets you apart from other applicants (and which applies directly to the position), mention it right off the bat. Don't bury the lede. *I am the author of the best-selling book How to Manage Widgets.* **Sell your qualifications.** Don't just recap your resume -- the recruiter already has it. Imagine if had only three sentences to convince an attractive person to go out on a date with you. Now translate that to convincing a recruiter to hire you. *I will use my training, plus years of technical and management experience at some of the best firms in the widget industry, to help make your firm the top-rated manufacturer of small-to-medium-sized widgets.* **Be specific about the position.** Read the job description carefully, and refer directly to the specific qualifications listed. *I am fluent in Microsoft Widgetware, but I have plenty of experience with WidgetPro, the software used by your team.* **Assume you will be contacted.** *I have attached a copy of my resume, and you may find samples of my work at widgetmanagerblog.com. I look forward to having the opportunity to speak to you about my qualifications in person.* **Make sure your name, address, and contact information are on your cover letter.** Yes, all that is on your resume. Be redundant. Make it easy to contact you. **Only list your salary history or your salary requirements if you are specifically asked to do so.** Let the firm get to know you, and get excited about you, before the topic of filthy lucre is raised. If you do list your past salaries, *don't lie.* **Grammar, punctuation and sentence structure must be perfect.** If you can't write, find a friend who can. **Use the same paper and print quality you would use on a resume.** Don't go cheap -- you're trying to impress people. Got any more advice? Let us know in the [comments!](#)