

A photograph of two people shaking hands over a wooden desk. In the background, there are two laptops and a smartphone. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent grey filter and a yellow border.

Writing a Cover Letter and E-Note



by Kristine Knutter

INTRODUCTION

What you should convey in a cover letter:

- You have a clear understanding of the company
- You have a clear understanding of the job you're applying for
- You're enthusiastic about the opportunity
- You have have impressive credentials

LEARNING OUTCOMES

In this lesson you will learn:

- The purpose of a cover letter
- What employers are looking for in a cover letter
- What makes a cover letter stand out

LEARNING TAKEAWAYS

After this lecture, you will be able to:

- Draft a cover letter that is effective and will help you to get a job
- Make your cover letter concise and to the point
- Select and present relevant experiences & achievements that make you stand out
- Identify important information about the company and job to mention in your cover letter

COVER LETTER PURPOSE

- To introduce yourself to an employer
- To demonstrate to the employer that you understand the job requirements
- To explain your value and how you intend to apply your skills to meet company needs
- To show your personality and enthusiasm
- To entice the employer to read your resume



COMMON MISTAKES

- There are grammar or spelling mistakes
- The cover letter is dull
- It's addressed to the wrong person or nobody
- It has a lot of repetition from the resume
- It's not tailored for role
- The tone is inappropriate
- It makes the applicant seem self-absorbed
- It makes it seem the applicant doesn't understand the role



THE DECLINE OF THE COVER LETTER

Many employers don't require or read cover letters. They vet candidates through:

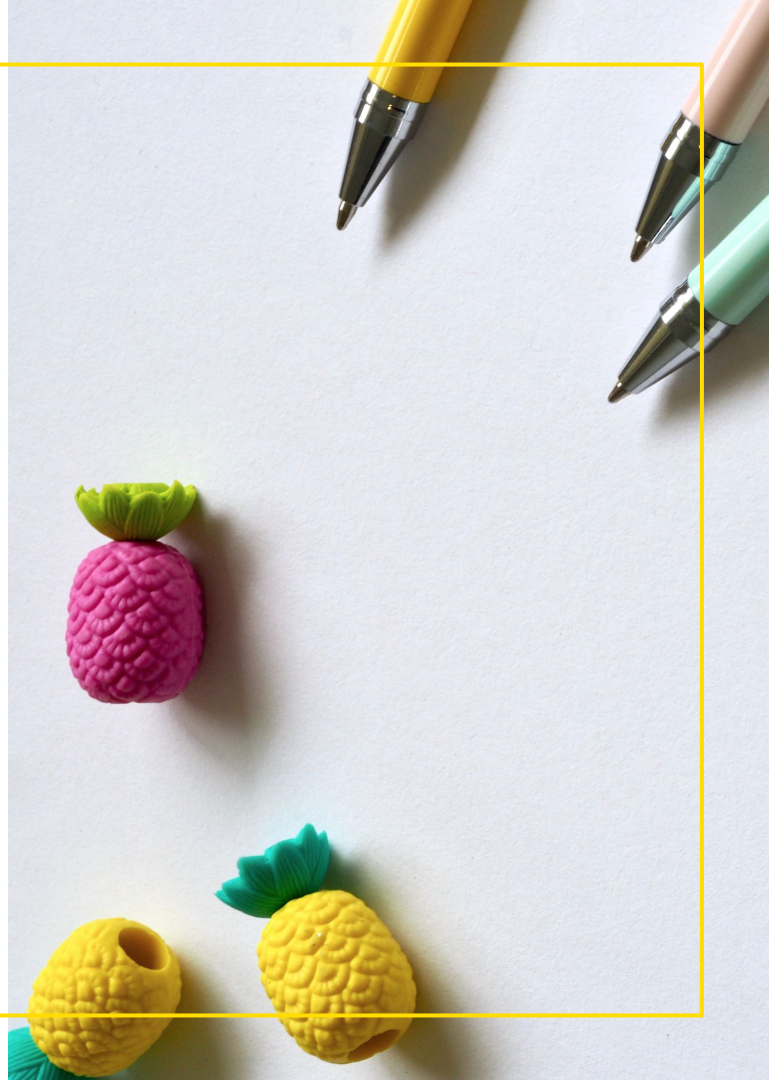
- Applicant Tracking Systems
- Professional summary on the resume
- Professional online presence

**THE COVER
LETTER**

IS NOT DEAD YET

WHEN TO USE A COVER LETTER

- It is requested
- For jobs that require writing
- Some of your actions need an explanation



WHEN YOU SHOULDN'T USE A COVER LETTER

- You must respond to a job opportunity quickly
- An employer says you shouldn't send one
- It's impossible to upload one to an online application platform



CONTENT

- Address job experience and culture fit
- Show an understanding of the employer's core values and culture
- Indicate relevant values, skills, experiences, and qualities the employer wants

DESIGN & FORMAT BASICS

- **Font:** Use one standard font like Arial, Calibri, or Sans Serif
- **Font Size:** Use 10-12 font size
- **Length:** Limit to one page
- **Spacing:** Make single-spaced and add a space between each section
- **Indentations:** Don't indent any of your paragraphs
- **Margins:** Set between .75 and 1 inch
- **Typographical Emphasis:** Avoid bold, underlining, capitalization, and color

DESIGN & FORMAT BASICS

- **Bullets and Graphics:** Avoid
- **Numbers and Percentages:** Include them throughout to quantify your work. Spell out numbers one through nine, and write 10 and higher
- **File Name:** Include first name, last name, and cover letter
- **Header and Footer:** Do not add information here
- **Paper:** Use 8.5" X 11" white paper
- **Format:** Create your cover letter in Microsoft Word



DESIGN & CONTENT: HEADER

Your Name*
Your Address*
Your City, State, Zip Code*
Your Phone Number*
Your Email Address*

Date

Hiring Manager Name
Company Name
Company Address
Company City, State, Zip Code

Subject: Application for [Your Name]*

* Indicates the item is optional

DESIGN & CONTENT: INTRODUCTION

Dear [First Name Last Name] [Mr./Ms. Last Name],

Introduce yourself and explain why you are applying for the job. Tailor this paragraph once you know the specific job. Tell why you are excited about the job and company and how it aligns with your career goals. Mention your referral and mutual contact with the hiring manager, if applicable.

DESIGN & CONTENT: BODY

Introduce your most relevant experience and talk about the specific qualifications and skills that make you the perfect candidate. Make a connection between your previous accomplishments and your readiness for the role. You can also express technical and behavioral skills you would bring. Pick one to three transferable qualities you have that you could apply in the new role and share an example that demonstrates your expertise in that area. This content can take up two paragraphs.

DESIGN & CONTENT: CLOSING

Reiterate what you can do for the company or clarify anything that may be a red flag in your resume. For example, you may explain a gap in your employment history or why you are applying for a job that differs from your prior experience. Thank the reader for their time and consideration and include an action statement to continue to the next stage of the hiring process. Explain your availability and how the employer can reach you. Mention your resume is attached.

Closing such as regards, sincerely, or respectfully,

First Name Last Name



STYLE

- Write in the first person
- Keep your message concise, avoiding long and winding sentences
- Write in a way that sounds natural and fluid
- Vary your word choice and sentence structure
- Correctly capitalize titles and company names

WHAT TO EXCLUDE

- Salary requirements or expectations
- Negative comments about employers
- Information not related to the job
- Qualifications you don't have
- Interest as a stepping-stone
- Personal Information
- What you want or don't want
- Inappropriate language and tone
- Buzzwords and too many instances of the same word



ADDRESSING YOUR COVER LETTER

- Address your letter to the person mentioned in the instructions or a hiring manager, but never a recruiter
- Show respect where it's due when addressing a person E.g., Dr., Prof., Rev., or Sgt.
- Investigate to whom you should address your letter if necessary
 - Try emailing or calling the company to ask for the name of the hiring manager
 - If this approach doesn't work, search online

IF YOU DON'T KNOW THE NAME OR GENDER

1. Do not use the old fashioned and generic “To Whom it May Concern”
2. Address your letter to a high-level department head instead
3. If the gender is not clear from the name, search for the person on the company’s website and LinkedIn
4. If you are unable to find the gender of the person, do not include a title
 - a. Write their full name instead - For example, “Dear Taylor Garcia.”

PAUSE THE VIDEO TO
OPEN THE GUIDE

A GUIDE TO FINDING YOUR WRITING MISTAKES

How to Proofread Your Application Materials

Once you finish writing your text, step away from it for a full day and return to it with fresh eyes. Then, follow these steps to uncover your written errors:

- ❑ **Print the text**
Having a printed copy will allow you to read and follow along with your finger, word by word so that you are focused and deliberate.
- ❑ **Read the text out loud**
Reading the text aloud will slow your pace so you can hear words that sound awkward, unnecessary, or outright wrong.
- ❑ **Read the text backward**
When you read normally, your eyes see what the brain expects, and it's easy to miss your mistakes. When you read backward, your brain won't know what to expect, and it will see the words as they truly are.
- ❑ **Mark the text**
Mark places that don't sound right but don't fix them immediately, which is a different stage in the editing process.
- ❑ **Change the text**
Revisit the places you marked and fix each problem, one by one.
- ❑ **Use grammar checking, spell checking, and plagiarism detection software**
The free versions of Grammarly, Ginger Software, and Language Tool are excellent, with the first two offering more features with paid subscriptions.
- ❑ **Ask someone you trust or pay a professional to proofread your text**
If writing is not a strong point for you or if English is not your native language this step is critical. You can contact the course author at kristine.wemanscareer@gmail.com or find freelance editing professionals on [Upwork](#) or [Fiverr](#) to check your writing.



customer no.001 What do you think so far? ...
customer (no subject) ...
me.customer we want some ...
me.customer (2) Re: company info ...
email (no subject) ...
me.friends (8) Re: 2 new notifica ...
customer no.249 Re: company info ...
me.customer (2) Re: company info ...
me.customer Meeting today ...
Join us New Sign-in on Computer ...
me.customer (1) Re: On 11 Sep at 11:00, ...
email What do you think so far? ...
customer no.001 company info ...

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I believe luck is preparation meeting opportunity. If you hadn't been prepared when the opportunity came along, you wouldn't have been lucky.

- Oprah Winfrey, Media Entrepreneur

