

### Introduction

#### What is a Cover Letter and When Do You Use It?

A cover letter is how you introduce yourself to the employer. It contains contact information, an introduction, a paragraph on why you should be interviewed, and a thank you paragraph that restates your contact information. If you cannot hand your resume directly to the employer and introduce yourself, use a cover letter!

So, for example, if you are attending The University of Texas at Dallas Career Expo, you will not need a cover letter; you are going to hand your resume directly to the recruiters! Instead, you would be your *own* cover letter. Introduce yourself!

### The Format of the Cover Letter

#### Above the Letter:

As shown in the following examples, you need to provide contact information and the date. You may use the same header format from your resume for consistency. The employer's contact information should also be included at the top of the cover letter. If you do not know the employer's information, try to research it on your own. If there is no information available at all, write what you do know.

#### The Introduction Paragraph:

The very first paragraph in the cover letter is an introduction. Try to bury the "I" in your cover letter; start off with introductory phrases. This paragraph is useful for explaining **where you found the job posting, what job you are doing now, and what job you are seeking** (including the specific job title and company name.) It is up to you which of the above examples you want to talk about in your introduction paragraph.

#### The "Sell Yourself" Paragraph:

The central paragraph of the cover letter is unique for each person. It does not even have to be a paragraph; the second cover letter sample shows how you can use bullet points instead. But the premise is the same: **sell yourself!** There are three possible things you can use this section for: expanding what you have talked about on the resume (do not just repeat yourself - expand), providing additional information not on the resume, or describing how you fulfill the job's requirements. Whatever you do, **KEEP IT SHORT AND SIMPLE!**

#### The Conclusion Paragraph:

Be strong in this paragraph! Do not say that "I hope to hear from you." Instead, use a phrase such as "I look forward to hearing from you in the near future." Make sure to thank them for their time and provide your email address and phone number again.

#### Enclosure:

If you are sending anything besides this cover letter (a resume, for example) use "Enclosure" after your name so the employer knows to expect documents in addition to the letter.