

Cover Letter Basics

Before you start writing, you MUST determine the purpose of the letter and THREE specific skills that align with the position you are applying.

COVER LETTER:

This letter is used **ONLY** when you know there is a specific job or internship opening. The purpose of the letter is to express interest in the position and give three reasons why you should be considered. The cover letter should be catered towards each role which means, no template letters! Cover letters are not one size fits all.

Follow the outline below to create a cover letter.

MOST IMPORTANTLY – ALWAYS REMEMBER YOUR AUDIENCE. What are they looking for? Not sure? Read the internship or job description for more info.

FIRST PARAGRAPH:

- Opening Line – Catches the reader’s attention with a REFERENCE or an ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENT.
- Purpose – Give purpose for writing and mention the specific position you’re applying for
- Transition – Prepare reader for next ¶

As lifestyle editor of The Daily Orange, I’m familiar with the frenetic pace of the newspaper business (accomplishment statement). I truly enjoy this high pressure environment (purpose) and am interested in applying for the reporter position (position) at the New Times. My familiarity with the daily operations of a newspaper combined with my writing skills makes me an excellent candidate (Transition).

SECOND PARAGRAPH:

- Cite your experience to demonstrate **three qualities** that you possess that were listed in the job description. Use a sentence or two for each example. Hint: A résumé tells the reader what you have done. The cover letter tells the reader what you *learned* from what you have done (qualities).
- Always ask yourself “How will this benefit the company?” rather than how you would enjoy or benefit from the position. Make it about the employer and how you can be an asset.

I meet daily deadlines at The DO (I have yet to miss one!) and am comfortable with the stress and high pressure of the industry. My writing skills recently won me the “NYS’s Most Promising Newswriter” honor this past winter. Having to oversee a staff of 11 writers has made me a proven team player and my “whatever it takes” attitude has helped me to be successful working alone or with the team. This combination of skill and attitude make me ideal for...

LAST PARAGRAPH:

- The Ask – What do you want to happen?
- The Action – What are you going to do about it? (It’s always the same idea – “I will contact you.”)

*Thank you for your consideration. I would like to speak with you about my qualifications (**the ask**) and will follow up in the next few days to see when an interview can be arranged (**the action**).*

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