COVER LETTER

PURPOSE OF A COVER LETTER
• To clarify for the employer your reason for contacting them.
• To make the connection between your skills, interests, academic background, and the need of the employer (as stated in the advertisement and/or determined through your research on the company).
• To serve as your “sales pitch” to the employer, clarifying through specific examples what you can contribute to the company/organization.

PREPARING TO WRITE A COVER LETTER
• Research the employer. See how your skills and background meet the organization’s needs, and how well your values match those promoted by the organization. Visit their website, perform a Google search, and/or talk with professors or other professionals in the field who may have information about the organization.
• Analyze the job description. Identify the job responsibilities and qualifications required. If there is no description, or if it is vague or unclear, research similar jobs to infer what skills and background would be required.
• Review and analyze your background. Think about your background in relation to the job responsibilities and qualifications. Consider courses taken, academic projects, past work and internship experiences, summer jobs, volunteer experiences and extracurricular involvement.

TIPS
• Cover letters should be 1 page, 3-4 paragraphs
• Individualize letters for each job you apply to – DO NOT USE A FORM LETTER
• Address the letter to an individual e.g. “Dear Mr. or Ms.____”
• Focus on the positive! Do not focus on areas where you are lacking in experience.
• All letters should be single spaced, flush left, with each paragraph followed by a blank line.
• Don’t start every sentence with “I”.
• Proofread your letter carefully to make sure that there are no typos or grammatical errors.
  DO NOT RELY ON SPELL CHECK!

SENDING YOUR COVER LETTER VIA E-MAIL
Some recruiters prefer a word attachment and others prefer the letter to be the body of the email. Be sure to note their preference and always follow instructions.
• Maintain a professional/formal tone as if you were mailing the letter.
• Include the title of the position you are applying for in the subject line

LETTER OF INQUIRY
A letter of inquiry can also be known as a prospecting letter or a letter of interest.

THE BASICS
• Similar to a cover letter, but used when there is no specific position that you may be applying to
• Should be used to ask about internship or job opportunities
• Needs to contain information about why the specific company is of interest and what skills/knowledge you could bring to them
• Be sure to include contact information and desire to follow up
NETWORKING LETTER

Networking letters are used to make connections with people in your career field or who can make an impact on your job search. It’s not always what you know but who you know! A strong networking letter can help uncover hidden job opportunities.

THE BASICS

• Unlike a letter of inquiry, a networking letter should not ask about jobs specifically, but rather to ask for assistance in a job search.
• Anyone can be good networking contacts. Friends, family, roommates, coworkers, coaches, etc. can all either assist you in your job search or know someone who can.
• Be casual and friendly in your letter, but always professional
• Know what you are asking for. Have a clear message about your goals/ambitions and how they can provide assistance
• Keep it short.
• Ask for leads on other networking connections.
• Great for following up after an event with an employer or connection who you asked for a business card from.

THANK YOU LETTER

THE BASICS

• Always send a thank you letter after your interview. This can be the difference that sets you apart.
• Be brief. While there is no “rule” about the length of a thank you letter, a paragraph or two is generally sufficient.
• Open with the obligatory thank you and include how and why you enjoyed the meeting (e.g. something about the staff, philosophy of the organization, etc.)
• Refer to something that took place during the interview which particularly pleased and interested you. Say what it was, and tell them why (e.g. “I was particularly pleased to learn that your company/the opportunity/your management style…whatever”).
• Discuss a particular aspect/s of the job that you find appealing and reiterate what you could contribute to the organization.
• Reiterate your interest and express your enthusiasm.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A THANK YOU LETTER?

• Reminding the prospective employer that you are still available and still interested in the position.
• Showing them that you are an effective communicator.
• Proving that you have good business etiquette.
• Giving you a slight edge over your competition since the other applicants may not write.
• To express ideas you forgot to include in the interview.
• To highlight specific information about your experience.

It's always important to say thank you after a job interview and after a second interview as well. It's also important to thank everyone you interviewed with and everyone who assisted with your job search. Here are some tips on who you should thank and the best way to thank them.
TIPS:

• Send out your thank you letters promptly. (Preferably within twenty-four hours). If time is of the essence, you may send your thank you in an email but it is best to follow up with a letter or note card.
• If you were interviewed by more than one person, send each person you interviewed with a thank-you letter.
• If there was something that you wish you had mentioned during the interview, here's your chance to say it by including it in your thank you letter.
• Thank you letters can be handwritten, typed or sent via email.
• Keep your thank you letters short and simple, but do use the letter to reiterate your interest in the job, your enthusiasm for the company, and to sell yourself as the ideal candidate.
• Spell check and proof your thank you letter. Then ask someone else to proof it for you. That way you will be sure it's perfect.

*If you are not interested in the position after going through the interview, employers appreciate it if you convey this in your thank-you letter. This will save the employer valuable time as they review their list of possible candidates.*

LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE

This letter is an exhilarating letter to write! It means your job search was successful and you will be moving on to your new career.

• Refer to the letter, email, or call you received offering you the position and accept the offer.
• Confirm and outline your understanding of the terms of your employment. Refer to any items which have not yet been determined.
• Express your appreciation and pleasure at joining the organization.
• Use standard business letter formatting.

LETTER DECLINING THE OFFER

When you have decided to reject a job offer, you may want to let the employer know in writing that you are declining. Your letter should be polite, brief, and to the point. You don’t want to burn any bridges and this employer may have a better offer for you down the road. You should include the following:

• Thanks and appreciation for the offer
• Written rejection of the job offer

Address the letter to the person who offered you the position. Include your contact information and phone number. Make sure that your letter is well written and does not contain typos or grammatical errors. Even though you are declining the job, you want to make sure all your correspondence is professional.
COVER LETTER OUTLINE

Your Mailing Address  
City, State Zip  

Today’s Date  

Employers Name  
Title  
Name of Organization  
Street Address  
City, State Zip  

Dear Mr. or Ms. last name:  

OPENING PARAGRAPH: State why you are writing. Name the specific position, or type of work for which you are applying. If there is a job number or reference code, be sure to include this as well. Also mention the resource used in finding out about the opening or organization (classified ad, job listing, placement center, friend, faculty, etc.)  

BODY OF LETTER: Explain why you are interested in working for this particular employer and/or specify your reasons for desiring this type of work. Point out relevant work experiences and/or education by giving specific examples. This needs to do more than reiterate information that is on your resume. Emphasize only those qualifications that are most relevant for the position or type of work for which you are applying. The job posting/description can guide you in deciding what to include. Using your own examples highlight the requirements, keywords and terminology listed in the ad.  

CLOSING PARAGRAPH: Keep this short. Thank them for their time and indicate when you will follow up (unless the posting requests no calls). Also indicate your desire for an interview and list a phone number that they can use to reach you.  

Sincerely,  

(WRITTEN OR ELECTRONIC SIGNTURE)  

Your Name Typed
701 N C St.
Indianola, IA 50125

(Date)

Ms. (Name)
Superior Graphic Design
331 Anywhere Street, Suite 17
Anytown, IA 00000

Dear Ms. (Name):

I am writing to apply for the summer Graphic Design Internship position that I read about on the Simpson College CareerPaths site. I am inspired by your style and impressive work and I believe my education, successful design projects, and extensive work in layout make me an excellent fit for your agency. My capabilities to contribute to your projects and desire to learn from this experience make me an enthusiastic applicant.

As you can see from my enclosed resume, I am an Art major with an emphasis on graphic design. In my work with student organizations and with the Simpsonian Newspaper, I have developed the skills needed to be a valuable asset to your organization. I created flyers which were distributed across campus and developed copy for articles and advertisements.

The skills that I will bring to this position include excellent written and verbal communication skills. Working with customers to understand their needs and fulfilling them through design has been an excellent opportunity for growth. These skills combined with my coursework and past work experience make me a good fit for this opportunity.

Thank you for your consideration. I hope to meet with you soon to learn more about the internship and to further discuss my qualifications. To schedule an interview, I can be reached at 555-000-0000.

Sincerely,

Ginger GraphicDesigner
February 17, 20xx

Ms. Sally Smith  
123 Associates  
0000 Anywhere Street  
New York, NY 10010

Dear Ms. Smith:

I just completed reading the article in Business Today on 123 Associates. Your innovative approach to recruiting minorities is of particular interest to me because of my background in public relations and minority recruitment.

The possibility of learning more about your company and of joining your team of highly qualified professionals is of interest to me. Please note my relevant qualifications:

- Conducted research on minority recruitment
- Helped to write grants for minority projects
- Worked as an undergraduate assistant to the multi-cultural office on campus
- BA in English

I will be in Anytown during the week of March 10th. Perhaps your schedule would permit us to meet briefly to discuss our mutual interests. I will call your office next week to see if such a meeting can be arranged. In the meantime, I am enclosing my resume for your review. I can be reached at 515-000-0000.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Molly Manners
SAMPLE NETWORKING LETTER

701 N C St.
Indianola, IA 50125

February 17, 20xx

Ms. Sally Smith
123 Associates
0000 Anywhere Street
New York, NY 10010

Dear Ms. Smith:

I was referred to you by Jane Doe from ABC Company in Des Moines. She recommended you as an excellent source of information on the communications industry.

OR

It was nice meeting you at the Simpson Career Fair last week. I feel that you could be an excellent source of information in the communications industry.

My goal is to secure an entry-level position in the field. Any advice you could provide me on career opportunities in the industry, job searching tips, and how best to find job leads would be greatly appreciated.

Thank-you, in advance, for any insight and advice you would be willing to share. I look forward to contacting you early next week to set up a telephone informational interview. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Name
Dear Ms. (Name),

Thank you for meeting with me on Thursday to discuss the Customer Service position with ABC Corporation. The position you described sounds both interesting and challenging. ABC Corporation appears to be a dynamic and exhilarating place to work. As I mentioned during the interview, my internship experience with IBM Corporation has given me insight into the operations of a large corporation and the interdependence of the various departments. I am eager to apply the knowledge I gained through my internship and education and begin a career with ABC Corporation.

I look forward to hearing from you regarding possible employment. Please feel free to contact me at 515-000-0000 if you would like more information on my portfolio. It was a pleasure visiting with you. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Terry Niceguy
701 N. C St.  
Indianola, IA 50125  

June 15, 20xx  

Ms. (Name)  
Human Resources Manager  
ABC Corporation  
Address 1  
City, State Zip  

Dear (name):  

Your letter brought wonderful news. I am delighted to accept the position of assistant advertising manager of Southern Outdoorsman.  

As you suggested, I will report to the publishing building at 9 a.m. on July 21 and then proceed directly to your office. I also understand that I will be meeting with the Human Resources department to finalize the paperwork.  

I thoroughly enjoyed meeting you and the others on your staff, and I really look forward to joining you.  

Sincerely,  

Fred Fisherman
701 N. C St.
Indianola, IA 50125

August 15, 20xx

Ms. (Name)
Human Resources Manager
ABC Corporation
Address 1
City, State Zip

Dear (name),

I appreciate your letter offering me the position of Systems Analyst which I recently applied for.

It was a difficult decision to make but after much consideration I have accepted a position with another company. It is an excellent opportunity (which came as a complete surprise), and one that I feel I cannot pass up. Therefore, I must decline your generous offer.

Thank you for all the courtesies extended me. I enjoyed my brief visit with you.

Sincerely

Susie Bitbyte