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Cover Letter

While the resume gives a snapshot of relevant skills/experiences you have, the cover letter takes things a step further. This is your chance to tell a bit of the story that explains why you are a good match for the opportunity you seek, and why this opportunity is a good match for the future you seek. Like the resume, this letter should be comprehensible, legible, and compelling, but unlike the resume, you should tell a little bit of a story, not just sell a little bit of a story. This is a chance for the prospective employer to hear your voice and interpretation of a few experiences, skills, or desires that make the opportunity particularly appealing to you. Since you only have a page, this can easily take the form of a 4-5 paragraph essay (intro, body, conclusion/thank you). The intro should reveal who you are (i.e. Sophomore at Blank College majoring in Blank) and preview the key skills/qualities you want to discuss as being relevant to this opportunity. You may also indicate a thing or two you seek to gain from the opportunity.

Before you write your cover letter, do your homework. You want to have a clear understanding of how the 2-3 skills/goals you want to highlight align with what the employer is looking for. You also want an idea of why the skills/experience/network you will gain from this opportunity are valuable to you. To do this, review the opportunity's description and any supplemental information you can find. Additional information may be gleaned from a company's website, social media, or even conversations with current/previous employees. Also, make an effort to reflect on the most relevant skills you have, and how they relate to this position. Try to find out who is going to be reading your cover letter and resume, and address them directly.

Additionally, when you review the posting, try to identify language/terminology that you can incorporate into your letter. This is called mirroring and signifies that you took the time to carefully consider the posting. It also indicates that you are capable of communicating effectively with members of the organization, as you demonstrate your ability to use language they are familiar with. Be careful, however, not to use language you do not understand or are not comfortable with. The same way we want to avoid spelling/grammar errors on the resume, we want to avoid usage errors on the cover letter.

Sample cover letter near bottom of this guide from Fastweb: <https://www.fastweb.com/career-planning/articles/cover-letter-for-internship-sample>



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Cover Letter Specifics

Header: Use the same header as the resume to make it easier to recognize/remember you

Address Include name, title, and address of recipient before starting letter.

Top of letter includes date (and employer's name & contact info)

Greet recipient directly, if possible (Dear First Last,)

Length: Stick to one page or a few paragraphs. The components are intro, body, closing (which can be spread between 3-5 paragraphs)

Close: Signature is a decent way to close as long as your contact information is listed in the header, otherwise, include contact information here.

The Thank You Letter

The obvious aspect of the “thank you” letter is that it expresses gratitude for someone’s time, favor, and/or energy. Equally as important, this letter can function to promote conversation and good will going forward. This letter helps cement you in the memory of a recruiter, manager, or other superior officer, and lays the groundwork for future correspondence.

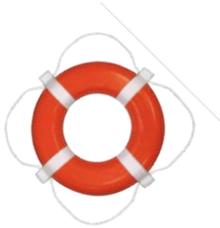
When do you typically send thank you letters? After an interview, it is great to send a thank you letter to the interviewer(s). Upon the end of a research, volunteer, or internship experience you may send a brief thank you letter which also asks for recommendation letters or to keep communications open. Asking for a recommendation letter upon departure is good timing, because your performance will be freshest in the mind of your superior officer at that time. It is also a great idea to give the recipient a sense of your major takeaways in the body of your letter, to make their writing a recommendation letter easier. This letter may also function to express desires for the future of your relationship.

Who do you typically send thank you letters? You can send letters to managers, supervisors, and anyone else who advised/mentored you. You may also send these as a follow-up to networking events, as a way to build a bridge for additional communication.

Accept/Decline Offer Letters

Standard

Again, all letters should be dated, include the addressee’s information, and include the sender’s information. The conclusion of a professional letter also routinely thanks the reader for their time.



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Acceptance

If you are ready to commit to a position, this letter is your chance to convey your delight in being selected. This also serves as a chance to request additional information if you have lingering curiosities.

If you have already taken heed to advice or action to next steps discussed during the interview, this letter also serves as a chance to reveal your initiative and zeal.

Decline

If for some reason you are no longer able to engage the opportunity, this is your chance to pull your name from the applicant pool. This does not have to be very long (it can be as short as a paragraph). The level of detail you include may correspond with your level of interest in the position you are declining. Expressing greater disappointment at qualities/experiences A, B, and C that you were “excited” or “curious” about may signal how seriously you considered the role. This may make conversations easier in the future, if for some reason you encounter the interviewer/recruiter in the future.

Resignation Letter

Occasionally, you may come to the position that it is time for you to leave an opportunity. This letter is your chance to announce your decision in a professional manner, so that all parties are in a good position to proceed amicably. The length of this letter will likely depend on the duration/depth of your involvement with a company/role.

Companies typically suggest a two-week notice be given, prior to the date of departure. Depending on the employer, this can place the employee in a precarious position, because the latter must trust the former not to terminate them prematurely during the two-week notice period. This is a fascinating dynamic, but a decent company can be trusted to conduct themselves professionally in this situation, and companies typically have the upper hand, since employees typically rely on them as a reference.



Sample Cover Letter (Exercise)

Opportunity Description:

Do you love to teach?

Are you looking for a flexible job?

Are you looking for a convenient job that you can do from your dorm or home?

Are you looking for a competitive hourly wage so you can have more time for other activities?

Are you working on becoming financially independent from your parents?

Are you looking for a job that impacts the future by empowering the next generation?

English Instructor Job description

We are looking for motivated, responsible, and patient individuals who are native English speakers and have a passion for teaching. You will teach Chinese children and teenagers spoken English using Zoom or WeChat.

Academic Instructor Job description

We are looking for motivated, responsible individuals who are great writers and have a passion for teaching. You will teach children and teenagers essay writing or PSAT/SAT strategies using Zoom or Skype and Google Docs. Please send us a sample essay with your application.

Applicant Bio:

Tyler Truth

-UConn class of 2020, Bachelor of Arts Majoring in English, Minor in Spanish, 3.4 GPA

-Staff Writer at the Daily Campus Freshman-Junior Year

-Teacher's Assistant for Freshman Writing course during Senior Year

-Played for UConn Volleyball team during freshman and sophomore years

-Summer Counselor at Camp Pete before sophomore and junior years. Helped organize and teach a series of poetry readings, workshops, and shows for participants.

-Awarded Tibbey Fellowship to spend the summer before senior year in the Atlanta, GA area reviewing 18th Century poetry literature from the region. The emphasis was on poetry that described the life and troubles of prisoners during that time. At the end of the trip, research findings were presented during the Annual Tibbey Fellow Gathering of Atlanta.



Career/Job Opportunity Resume Sample

Tyler Truth

123 Sesame Street, Anytown, CT, 06123 | 203.777.9312 | tylertruth98@gmail.com

Education

BA, English | University of Connecticut

May 2020

Major: English, Minor: Spanish

GPA: 3.4

College Engagement

***Teacher's Assistant* | Writing 110 (UConn)**

2019-2020

- Led 13 students through editing and revision of their research papers during office hours.
- Facilitated class meetings via Zoom after conversion to distance learning. Built PowerPoint slides to convert 8 lecture/discussion sections to a digital format.

***Summer Counselor* | Camp Pete**

2018-2019

- Hosted weekly poetry shows during the summer
- Held office hours to develop college application essay revision skills with camp attendees

***Staff Writer* | The Daily Campus**

2017-2019

- Published 7 articles relaying student sentiments on events impacting campus life
- Mentored two freshman reporters as they drafted and published 6 articles

Research

***Recipient* | Tibbey English Fellowship**

2019

- Surveyed 32 original works on 18th Century poetry in metro Atlanta, GA. Research focus was lamentations of prisoners as expressed by the poets of the time and region.
- Presented research at the Annual Tibbey Fellow Gathering of Atlanta



Sample Cover Letter

Tyler Truth

123 Sesame Street, Anytown, CT, 06123 | 203.777.9312 | tylertruth98@gmail.com

July 22, 2020

Name (First Last)
[Position Title]
[Organization Name]
[Street Address]
[City, State Zip Code]

Dear Name (First Last)

I am writing to apply for the English Instructor position at [Organization Name] posted on your website. I learned of the position during a conversation with Freddie Fact, who currently works as an English Instructor with your firm. Freddie spoke highly of the opportunity the role would afford me as an instructor to couple my passion for teaching with the chance to exercise great writing skills. I also understand it is a flexible role that works well for a recent graduate looking to establish financial independence, which also fits my current ambitions.

I would thrive in this role, because it would grant the opportunity to exercise the passion for teaching I found in my role as a Teacher's Assistant (TA). It was through this experience that I was able to work intensely with a baker's dozen worth of freshman writing students as they developed familiarity with literary research and writing about their work. I found helping the students refine research topics and familiarize themselves with campus research resources was a bit like taking the journey for the second time, and I enjoyed the way revisiting the practice made my ability to question and guide keener.

It was also during my role as a TA that I forged a new skill: Zoom Classrooms. As a result of COVID-19's social distancing protocols, the course instructor and I had to roll up our sleeves and learn to operate lessons via Zoom. I was forced to dive deep and familiarize myself with the various ways Zoom offers for collaboration and teaching across distances, and together we used the software to salvage a disrupted learning experience.

I am certain that my passion for English writing, zeal for teaching, and familiarity with zoom would be of the utmost benefit to students who choose [Organization Name]. I have attached a copy of my resume for your review, and I would be happy to discuss the role. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Tyler Truth



Exercise: Rank this Cover Letter

- 1.) What are its qualities? Is it:**
Comprehensible?
Legible?
Compelling?
- 2.) What evidence of Tyler's researching the opportunity/experience did you find?**
- 3.) What examples of mirroring language did you find?**
- 4.) Are there any revisions you might suggest, or are you satisfied with this draft?**