

"Believe you can and you're halfway there." — Theodore Roosevelt

A **COVER LETTER** is a one-page document submitted as part of a job application. It complements your resume or CV, adds a personal touch, and targets a specific position. A well-written cover letter commands attention and increases your chances of landing an interview.

PURPOSE

Demonstrate Interest: Shows enthusiasm for the job and organization, and introduces you as a professional.

Highlight Experience: Connects your background and accomplishments to what the employer needs.

Secure an Interview: Your cover letter, like your resume, is designed to help you land an interview.

When NOT to Include a Cover Letter

If the job posting explicitly states not to include a cover letter, follow directions and do not submit one. Otherwise, always include one to give yourself a competitive edge.

GUIDELINES

- ✓ **Instructions:** Always follow the employer's instructions. If format is unspecified, submit your letter as a PDF.
- ✓ **Address It Professionally:** Use a specific name (first and last) and title whenever possible, "Dear Sally Employer". If you do not know the person's name and title, research them via LinkedIn or on the company's site. Use "Dear Hiring Manager" or "Dear Search Committee" if you are unable to name a name.
- ✓ **Research and Tailor:** Learn about the organization's mission, vision, values, and the role, then tailor your letter to the job description. Each cover letter should be original/unique and targeted to the specific position – employers will take notice.
- ✓ **Mind Your Voice:** Be professional, and genuine, let your enthusiasm for the opportunity shine through.
- ✓ **Show Your Impact:** Whether it's a number, a skill you strengthened, or a difference you made on a team or project—share what happened because of your involvement.
- ✓ **Keep Formatting Clean:** Use business letter format. Match the font and style of your resume.
- ✓ **Know Your Industry:** Creative fields may allow more dynamic formatting. When in doubt, keep it classic.
- ✓ **Hyperlink for Digital Submissions:** Embed hyperlinks to LinkedIn or portfolios.
- ✓ **Avoid Common Pitfalls:**
 - ✓ Don't use the same cover letter
 - ✓ Overuse personal pronouns
 - ✓ Include personal info, or lie



COVER LETTER FORMAT

A cover letter usually includes four distinct elements, which can be designed in four paragraphs.

FIRST PARAGRAPH - *The Greeting*

Draw in the reader, capture their attention, set the tone, and state your purpose; that is what's included in the first paragraph.

Below are possible approaches:

- *A Personal Contact:* "Margaret Hamilton suggested I contact you regarding ..."
- *Specific Company Knowledge:* "I read a recent story concerning Champion Corporation's contribution to the carbon neutrality of..." or "A colleague of mine has told me of your excellent reputation..."
- *General Interest:* "My goal is to be part of a strong IT team, like the one at Champion Corporation..."

SECOND PARAGRAPH - *Knowledge of Employer*

Why Them: Show the employer you have done your homework. Research the organization, identify areas that appeal to you, and discuss your interest in them. Exemplify how their goals and mission align with your own.

For instance, you can begin the paragraph with similar language to:

- "Your organization interests me because ..."
- "Your organization's efforts to _____ attract me because ..."
- "In researching the _____ Company, I was thrilled to see that..."
- "I have fond memories of exploring the outdoors with my grandmother, and still have the boots..."

THIRD PARAGRAPH - *Relevant Skills and Qualifications*

Share with the employer why you are a strong candidate for the position and how you intend to contribute to the organization. Highlight 2–3 top skills or experiences, using language from the job description.

Examples include:

- "The position of _____ would allow me to"
- "My skills, qualifications, and experience include ..."
- "The experience I have gained in the accounting field ..."

FOURTH PARAGRAPH - *The Closing*

Be confident and proactive! Restate your interest, propose a meeting to discuss the position and your skills, state how they may contact you with questions, and thank them for their consideration. End the letter with a closing salutation and your name.

- "I look forward to discussing my experience and qualifications with you. If you have any questions regarding my candidacy, please contact me at _____. Thank you for your time and consideration."
- "I welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss how I can contribute to your organization. Please feel free to contact me at _____ to set up a time to meet or if you have any questions. I appreciate your consideration."



EXAMPLE:
A Personal Contact

SAM HUSKY

Rockport, ME | (207) 780-5555 | shusky@maine.edu | linkedin.com/shuskys

May 30, 2024

Sally Employer
Director, Marketing and Communication
Best Organization Ever
Anywhere, ME 01010

Dear Sally Employer,

When my advisor, Professor Champion, mentioned Best Organization Ever, I lit up—I've been following your brand on Instagram for a while now. The way your posts capture the heart of Maine's communities with warmth, creativity, and purpose is exactly the kind of work I aspire to do. You've built a voice that's authentic and engaging, and I'd be thrilled to contribute to it as your next Digital Marketing Specialist.

What sets Best Organization Ever apart is your mission-driven marketing. You don't just promote products—you tell stories that reflect community values and inspire action. Your partnerships with local nonprofits, commitment to employee well-being, and consistent recognition as a Best Place to Work in Maine show that your brand isn't just strong—it's trusted. That alignment between internal culture and public voice is rare, and it's what draws me to your team.

I bring the strategy and the spark. While interning at Rock Star Company, I created and managed a multi-platform campaign that increased engagement by 48% in six weeks. Using tools like Hootsuite, Canva, and Google Analytics, I tracked performance and presented insights directly to leadership. I also led an online fundraising push for a local nonprofit—turning small ideas into scroll-stopping content with measurable impact.

I'd love to bring my voice—and my vision—to your team. Feel free to reach out at shusky@maine.edu or (207) 780-5555. Thank you for the opportunity, and I hope to connect soon.

Warmly,
Sam Husky

EXAMPLE:
Specific Company Knowledge

SAM HUSKY

Rockport, ME | (207) 780-5555 | shusky@maine.edu | [linkedin.com/shuskys](https://www.linkedin.com/shuskys)

May 30, 2024

Sally Employer
Director, Business Administration
Best Organization Ever
Anywhere, ME 01010

Dear Sally Employer,

Best Organization Ever stands out not just for its operational excellence, but for how you lead with purpose—balancing business growth with community partnerships and sustainable practices. As a Business Administration major at the University of Southern Maine, I'm eager to apply for the Business Operations Internship and be part of a company that reflects the kind of thoughtful, forward-looking work I hope to do in my career.

What draws me to Best Organization Ever is your ability to grow while staying grounded in local partnerships and sustainability. Your recent efforts to streamline operations with eco-conscious logistics and support for Maine-based suppliers reflect a long-term commitment to both business and community. As someone who cares about efficiency *and* impact, I'm inspired by how your team puts values into action in practical, everyday ways. That balance is something I'm striving to build in my own career.

My academic and on-campus experiences have focused on learning how to identify and improve operational systems. In a recent class project, I worked with a small team to analyze the supply chain of a regional distributor. We researched common inefficiencies and proposed ideas that could improve coordination and reduce delays—giving me hands-on experience in problem-solving and process thinking. My part-time role at USM's Office of Sustainability also helped strengthen my skills in organization, cross-functional collaboration, and using tools like Excel and Google Workspace to track and report progress.

Thank you for considering my application. I'd be glad to discuss how I can support your team's continued success while gaining real-world experience in values-driven operations. You can reach me at shusky@maine.edu or (207) 780-5555.

Sincerely,
Sam Husky

EXAMPLE:
General Interest

SAM HUSKY

Rockport, ME | (207) 780-5555 | shusky@maine.edu | [linkedin.com/shuskys](https://www.linkedin.com/shuskys)

May 30, 2024

Sally Employer
Director, Technology Department
Best Organization Ever
Anywhere, ME 01010

Dear Sally Employer,

Best Organization Ever's forward-thinking projects and reputation for supporting early-career professionals stood out to me during my search for companies that value both innovation and integrity. As a Computer Science major at the University of Southern Maine with a strong interest in software development and ethical tech, I'm excited to apply for the Software Development Intern position.

I was particularly impressed by your recent work on open-source collaboration tools and education-focused applications. Your commitment to accessibility and user-centered design reflects the kind of thoughtful engineering I strive for in my work. The way Best Organization Ever blends technical problem-solving with real-world impact makes it a place I'd be proud to learn and contribute to.

Through coursework and personal projects, I've gained experience in Python, Java, and front-end frameworks like React. Last semester, I helped lead a team project that created a budgeting app for college students—my role focused on developing the back-end functionality and integrating third-party APIs. I've also contributed to open-source projects on GitHub, which helped me strengthen my skills in version control, documentation, and collaborative development.

I would appreciate the opportunity to grow alongside your development team and contribute meaningfully to your mission. Please feel free to reach out to me at shusky@maine.edu or (207) 780-5555. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Sam Husky