Introducing Yourself to the Committee
(Cover letters)

Kathryn Kozak
Jon Oaks
Do I Need a Cover Letter?

• Cover letters are a narrative complement to your resume. Think of it as a chance to make a good first impression.
• Highlights your motivations in applying for the position and why you want to work with the specific organization.
• Showcases your personality and values.
Position Description

Job Board - American Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges
Quiz Time!

A cover letter or covering letter can also be called

- a resume or CV
- a CV sales letter
- a letter of application
Quiz Time!

Job applicants must send a cover letter ______ sending their resume.

- before
- when
- after
What Should the Cover Letter Contain?

Cover letters should highlight your academic, professional, and personal qualifications and address the specific the position to which you are applying - No generic cover letters.

It should not be a restatement of your resume. Instead you should select certain experiences to highlight. You might weave experiences together, telling how one experience led to another. You might tell a story from one or two experiences that bring depth and detail not covered in your resume.
Action Verbs Activity

Activity

1. Write down 3 transferable skills that you have
2. Write each transferable skill, starting with an action verb

Helpful Resource: Transferable Skills & Action Verbs List
What Should the Cover Letter Contain?

- Polite Greeting
- Name
- Contact information
- Professional email address
- Don’t assume the committee knows you or your experiences.
- Remember this is not an industry position, but is a position in academia
As individuals, when first meeting someone, we tend like people who are similar to us in some way.

A study published in Journal of Social and Personal Relationships showed these three reasons why similarity might increase liking:

**Consensual validation:** Meeting people who share our attitudes makes us feel more confident in our own attitudes about the world. If you love jazz music, meeting a fellow jazz-lover shows you that loving jazz is OK, and maybe even a virtue.

**Cognitive evaluation:** This explanation focuses on how we form impressions of other people by generalizing from the information we have. So we learn that a person has something in common with us, and that makes us feel positively about that person, because we feel positively about ourselves. We then assume that the other person, like us, has other positive characteristics.

**Certainty of being liked:** We assume that someone who has a lot in common with us is more likely to like us. And in turn, we are more likely to like people if we think they like us.

Companies “like” people who can connect with their mission, culture, and employees.
3 Ways to Make a Connection

A) Share a story that shows you connect with the institution or their culture

B) Tell them how you came to learn that they were special amongst the others

C) Demonstrate why you value them and the work they do
WHAT MAKES UP A COVER LETTER?
What Makes Up A Cover Letter?

- Formatting - applies even to cover letters sent via email
- Who to address the cover letter to
- Opening Paragraph
- Middle Paragraph(s)
- Closing Paragraph
Who To Address The Cover Letter To

- During your research, find out the name, title, and department of the person you are writing to. The more you can learn about the organization, the better you’ll be able to capture the reader’s attention and convey your desire to join the organization.
- Always try to avoid phrases such as “To whom it may concern” and “Dear Sir.” Avoid using gender-biased phrases. Try to find out the name of the person to whom you will direct your letter and use the person’s last name followed by “Dear.”
- If not possible, at least find out the job title of the person who will be reviewing your letter and résumé or the department to which it will be directed. e.g., you can say, “Dear Committee Members.”
Pam T. Catamount  
997 Western Lane  
Columbia, NC 28150

October 6, 2018

Jae Smith  
Internship Coordinator  
Allergan  
11833 W. Pennsylvania Street  
Carmel, IN 46032

Dear Ms. Smith,

I would like to apply to your summer internship for engineering students in 2019. I was made aware of this opportunity through the company’s website, as I searched for internship opportunities that would allow me to utilize my training in mechanical engineering while continuing to grow as a professional in this field.

I am currently working towards my Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering at Western Carolina University. I am also a member of the Future College for which I am conducting an independent research project in understanding Matlab and its applications to Mechanical Engineering.

My academic program at the university strongly emphasizes preparation to enter the professional workplace. Our curriculum consists of many projects that are collaborative, involve practical experience, documentation of work, and end with a presentation in front of colleagues and peers. Additionally, I have been an active participant in DegreePlus, a campus-wide program designed to teach transferable skills. As a participant, I focused on growing my professionalism and leadership skills by participating in workshops and events on campus focused in these areas. With this in mind, I have come to seek an internship at Allergan in order to utilize these skills in a workplace context.

I am eager to learn about new technologies currently being developed in the workplace, and I feel that there is no better place to do that than an internship position with Allergan. Security is a rapidly changing field and I believe I will gain the skills necessary in order to compete in the workforce.

I am very grateful you are considering my application for your internship position. If you have any questions, you can contact me at 555-359-5355. You can also reach me at my email at paw@catamount.com. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Pam T. Catamount
Quiz Time!

Which date format is best for a cover letter?

- October 9, 2020
- 9/10/20
- 10/9/20
Quiz Time!

Your name should be ______ of the letter.

- at the top
- in the middle
- at the bottom
Quiz Time!

Your cover letter can summarize a key selling point such as your

- work history
- medical history
- relevant experience
Dear Ms. Smith,

I am writing to express my interest in the Internship Coordinator position at Allegion Corporation. I recently received your email regarding the internship opportunities and I am excited about the possibility of contributing to your team.

During my time at [University Name], I have gained valuable skills in [relevant skills]. My coursework and extracurricular activities have prepared me well for the challenges of the role. I am particularly interested in [specific aspect of the position].

Additionally, I am impressed by [specific achievements or initiatives at Allegion Corporation]. I believe my background and experiences make me a strong candidate for this position.

I am available for an interview at your earliest convenience. Please let me know if there is any additional information you would like me to provide.

Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss my qualifications with you further.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]
Paragraph by Paragraph

Opening Paragraph

State the position to which you're applying, where you found it/heard about it, name drop if you have a direct connection, and close with a ‘hook.’

Middle Paragraph(s)

Here is where you make sure you address each item in the position description.

Connect your skills, characteristics, experiences, and qualifications to the position and institution as a whole.

Highlights what interests you in working with this particular institution.

Conclusion and Formal Closing

Reaffirm your qualifications and interest in the position and institution. Be sure to include your contact information. Could offer to follow up with them. End the letter formally.
Quiz Time!

Which topic isn't normally mentioned in a cover letter?

- the position
- the salary
- the company
Quiz Time!

Cover letters often begin with the applicant explaining how they

- began their education
- spend their free time
- found out about the job
Salutation,

Your Name
Typed
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOPICS</th>
<th>STYLE</th>
<th>FONT</th>
<th>CUSTOMIZE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why you? Why them?</td>
<td>Should be narrative in style. Match tone of institution and always be professional.</td>
<td>Use same font as resume for consistency across your documents</td>
<td>Tailor and customize your cover letter to each position.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlight your experiences to showcase you as the best candidate and emphasize your interest in their institution.</td>
<td>No longer than 2-3 pages and around 3-5 paragraphs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example Activity

Did this person introduce themselves?

Is this person selling themselves?

Did they research the company?

Are they asking for an interview?

John Smith
Marketing Specialist

Phone  774-987-4009
E-mail john.smith@uptowork.com

Flowerville, 06/01/2017

Ms. Katherine Bloomstein
Head of Marketing

XYZ Company
099 Peony Street
Flowerville, Ohio 55675

Dear Katherine,

As a lifelong enthusiast of XYZ’s marketing initiatives, I was thrilled to see your posting for the position of Digital Marketing Manager. I am positive I can help with XYZ’s upcoming challenges. I have experience with leading successful national online campaigns with budgets over $300,000. What is more, I have succeeded at expanding ABC’s client base by 19% since 2011.

In my current position at ABC, I have supervised all phases of our online marketing initiatives, both technical and creative. Last year, my key challenge was to design and optimize nine product websites for ABC’s most strategic products and improve our SEO results as well as enhance the UX. Here we are a year later:

- Eight of the nine websites I optimized have achieved and secured their spot in the top 3 results on Google. These are organic, non-paid results for 10+ key search terms;
- The incoming search engine traffic to all nine websites comprises 47% of the total organic traffic for key terms and phrases.

I knew that XYZ’s current plans involve developing a comprehensive online portal focused on healthcare-related issues. This project is a perfect match for my personal and professional interests and an exciting opportunity to create a unique online base of knowledge for patients and healthcare professionals. I would love to leverage my knowledge of SEO marketing and online growth marketing to achieve groundbreaking results with this initiative.

I would welcome the chance to discuss your digital marketing objectives and show you how my success at ABC can translate into digital and online marketing growth for XYZ.

Kind regards,
Jane Radlock

P.S. — I would also value the opportunity to show you how my e-detailing solutions grew the combined sales of three ABC flagship products by a record-breaking 13% in one year.
Example Activity

Did this person introduce themselves?

Is this person selling themselves?

Did they research the company?

Are they asking for an interview?

Dear Mr. Henson,

I am writing to apply for the Content Marketer position with Axel Media. I am a communications professional with a Master of Arts in Professional Writing and four years of experience writing online content for various publications.

In my current position as Content Manager for Johnson Communications I assign and edit articles, publish blog posts, and other content as well as maintain the company’s social media accounts. I am a very organized person with great attention for detail and am able to handle a number of responsibilities at once. I have supervisory experience and can manage remote writers efficiently and with a fair hand. My communication and writing skills are my greatest strength. I have been praised by past supervisors for my contributions to online content as well as my ability to keep team members on track. I would thoroughly enjoy the chance to bring these skills to the online communications team at Axel Media as your new Content Marketer.

I have no doubt you will find my credentials portfolio and references to be excellent. Please contact me at your earliest convenience to schedule an interview. I look forward to meeting with you and thank you in advance for your consideration.

Best,

Linda Moore

October 15, 2020

Axel Media
123 Main Street
San Francisco, CA 94122

(555) 555-5555
hinz@axelmia.com
axelmia.com

Dear Mr. Henson,

I am writing to apply for the Content Marketer position with Axel Media. I am a communications professional with a Master of Arts in Professional Writing and four years of experience writing online content for various publications.

In my current position as Content Manager for Johnson Communications I assign and edit articles, publish blog posts, and other content as well as maintain the company’s social media accounts. I am a very organized person with great attention for detail and am able to handle a number of responsibilities at once. I have supervisory experience and can manage remote writers efficiently and with a fair hand. My communication and writing skills are my greatest strength. I have been praised by past supervisors for my contributions to online content as well as my ability to keep team members on track. I would thoroughly enjoy the chance to bring these skills to the online communications team at Axel Media as your new Content Marketer.

I have no doubt you will find my credentials portfolio and references to be excellent. Please contact me at your earliest convenience to schedule an interview. I look forward to meeting with you and thank you in advance for your consideration.

Best,

Linda Moore

October 15, 2020

Axel Media
123 Main Street
San Francisco, CA 94122

(555) 555-5555
hinz@axelmia.com
axelmia.com
Conclusion

WHY IT MATTERS
A narrative complement to your resume and enhance your qualifications to employers.

HAVE A GOAL IN MIND
Make sure to address the two main questions of "Why me?" and "Why them?"

KEY ELEMENTS
Adds depth to your resume and always ties back to the position for which you are applying.

BE SPECIFIC
Highlight specific examples of relevant academic, professional, or personal experiences.
Edit and Proofread

- Attention to Detail
- Read Out Loud
- Style and Flow
- Spelling and Punctuation are correct
- Final check to make sure you have addressed the position description.
Announcement

May 9-10 | Graduate Students in Teaching (GSIT) Conference

Join the University of British Columbia for its annual conference serving graduate students and postdocs. This year's conference will be online and features graduate student-led sessions including research talks, roundtable discussions, and interactive sessions. The deadline to propose sessions is Friday, March 3. Registration is TBD. Read more and find proposal instructions at the conference website: https://gsit.sites.olt.ubc.ca/.
Questions?
Kathryn Kozak (kathryn.kozak@amatyc.org)
Jon Oaks (jonoaks@amatyc.org)