

# Cover Letters

**You should always include a cover letter when mailing, e-mailing, or faxing a resume.**

- A cover letter serves two basic purposes: as an introduction and as a marketing tool. Your cover letter should describe specific reasons why the employer should consider you as a viable candidate for a job opening. Those reasons may include your educational training, your work experience, and/or personal qualities and attributes.
- Address your letter to an identified person, as opposed to "To whom it may concern." (Call the organization and ask to whom your letter should be addressed). If you are responding to a "blind ad" (PO Box only), you may use "To whom it may concern" as the salutation.
- Tailor your letter to the position being filled or to the organization itself. This means that you will have to write a specific letter for each resume you mail. Generic cover letters look like just that (what do you do with mail addressed to "occupant?") and have a very poor success rate because they are attributed to a lack of genuine interest on your part. You will be able to use essentially the same structure in most of your letters, but personalize each one and emphasize how your training and experience relates to that specific job.
- When printing hard copies, use good quality paper. The paper should match that of your resume. A cover letter should never be handwritten. Keep the cover letter to one page.
- The cover letter conveys a great deal about your writing skills. Use clear, concise language and proofread carefully! The letter should be free of any errors.

## COVER LETTER OUTLINE

Your Street Address  
City, State, Zip Code  
Date

(Space down four spaces)

Ms. Betty Wilson  
Director of Recruiting  
Jefferson Industries, Inc.  
1234 Broad Parkway  
Greenville, SC 29602

Dear Ms. Wilson:

The opening paragraph should state why you are writing and why you are interested in the organization. If you are writing a letter of application, you should name the position for which you are applying and tell the employer how you became aware of the position. A letter of inquiry should provide evidence of your career-mindedness; it helps to refer to specific job functions, if not the job title. If you were referred to the employer by another person, this is the best place to mention that person's name, and point out that he or she suggested you write.

The middle paragraph is where you highlight specific skills you possess that are relevant to the job or employer. This paragraph should strongly outline your strengths for the position and your motives for seeking employment with this organization. Remember to be concise and give specific examples of your skills. If you have qualifications noted on your resume, this is the opportunity to discuss how they relate to this particular position or employer, but do not just repeat information that is on your resume.

The closing paragraph states what you will do next (such as calling to arrange an interview at the employer's convenience), or what you would like the recipient of the letter to do next. An assertive statement explaining what you plan to do and what you hope the employer will do is harder to ignore than a vague request for consideration. Also, here is where you thank the employer for considering you for this position.

Sincerely,

(Space down four spaces and sign your name here.)

Your Name Typed

Enclosure (This indicates that your resume is enclosed)

### SAMPLE COVER LETTER

18 Central Street  
Charleston, SC 29402  
March 20, 2005

Mr. John Dow  
Editor  
The Upstate Magazine  
2448 Oak Street  
Spartanburg, SC 29093

Dear Mr. Dow:

I am writing to express my interest in the Assistant Copy Editor position advertised through the College of Charleston Career Center. My previous work experience, educational background, and strong writing, organizational and research skills make me an ideal candidate for this role. Your magazine has an excellent reputation for award-winning design and creativity, and my skills, abilities, and desire to excel will make me an asset to this stellar publication.

In May, I will receive a Bachelor of Arts in English from the College of Charleston. My coursework emphasized the critical elements of writing for the mass media, as well as the fundamentals of proper grammar and composition. In addition, I recently completed an internship with Lowcountry Living Magazine, where I edited and proofread articles and features on a variety of topics. Working in this position afforded me the opportunity to participate in the layout and design of the magazine, which enhanced my knowledge of various computer programs used in the publishing industry, such as QuarkXPress and PageMaker. Furthermore, my experience includes working for a large Charleston law firm, where I created a wide variety of documents that were both easy to read and error free.

Visiting Spartanburg for a personal interview would be a welcomed opportunity to learn more about The Upstate Magazine. I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss with you how my capabilities and personal qualities may be of benefit to your organization.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Danielle McKay

Enclosure

### SAMPLE THANK-YOU LETTER

18 Rutledge St.  
Charleston, SC 29402  
April 3, 2005

Alice Kimsey  
Human Resources Director  
ABC Company  
1 Company Drive  
Anywhere, SC 12097

Dear Ms. Kimsey:

Thank you for taking the time to interview me Wednesday morning. Our meeting served to confirm my strong interest in an entry-level position with your company.

As we discussed, my education and background have provided me with an understanding of business operations that will prove to be an asset to your organization. Additionally, I have always been considered a conscientious and hard worker. I am confident that I could make a valuable contribution to ABC Company.

Again, thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you very soon.

Sincerely,

Art Vandeley