

FIRST STEPS

- ✓ Research the company where you want to work and look at the specific qualifications listed for the position for which you are applying.
- ✓ Highlight your personal skills and experiences in a way that matches the listed qualifications.
- ✓ Construct a rough draft of your cover letter and have it reviewed by peers and advisors. Editing your draft several times will help ensure that your final copy is polished and professional.

WHAT IS A COVER LETTER?

A cover letter is intended to complement your résumé by adding a more personal touch to your application. It gives you the opportunity to...

- **Tell** the employer what type of position you are seeking and why.
- **Entice** the employer to learn more about you by examining your résumé.
- **Elaborate** on your experiences and the ways they have made you qualified for the position.
- **Impress** the employer by showcasing your knowledge about the company and/or its goals.
- **Show** the employer how well you can express yourself.

GETTING STARTED

Address the letter to a specific individual. Call to request the name and title of the person responsible for hiring applicants for the position you are interested in holding. You may direct the letter to an individual, a specific job title, or a group. Some examples may include Mr. John Doe, Human Resources Representative, or Hiring Committee. If these don't fit, simply begin the letter without a salutation.

State the position for which you are applying and point out your relevant qualifications. Do not merely list the contents of your résumé. Select one or two specific experiences relevant to the job and discuss them in more detail than the bullet points included on your other application documents. Fill in the blanks your résumé leaves open. Tell the employer why *you* are uniquely suited for the job, but try to avoid using the word "I" to start every sentence.

Tailor your letters to the needs of the company and requirements of the position. How will *the employer* benefit by hiring you? Want ads, company publications, and job descriptions offer clues about what skills and characteristics to highlight. Use this information (along with your company research) to let them know that you are aware of and possess exactly what they are looking for.

Remember!

- Match your stationery and résumé in size, weight, and shade without exceeding one page.
- When writing, avoid listing your skills and starting all sentences with "I".
- Don't forget to sound positive and confident!
- This is a professional document, so use proper spelling and grammar. Avoid abbreviations, text lingo, and slang terms.

MU CAREER CENTER

Lower Level,
Student Success Center

☎ (573) 882-6801

✉ career.missouri.edu

✉ career@missouri.edu



COVER LETTER STRUCTURE

Today's Date

123 Hitt Street
Columbia, Missouri 65201
TrumanTiger@mail.missouri.edu
(573)123-4567
(Space down four spaces)

Mr. /Ms. Recruiter or Employer's Full Name
Recruiter's Job Title
Department Name
Company Name
Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr. or Ms. _____,

While researching publishing companies online, I discovered an opening on your firm's website for an Editorial Assistant. I would like to be considered for this position at the company headquarters in Kansas City and am very excited about the opportunity to apply. This May, I will graduate from the University of Missouri with a bachelor's degree in English, and I would like to use the knowledge, skills, and experience that I have gained to contribute to Walsworth Publishing.

Through valuable experiences at several newspapers and magazines, I have found a love for all things layout, editing and feature writing. For the past year, I have been the lead copy editor for *The Maneater*, a bi-weekly campus newspaper with a readership of 30,000. In addition, I interned as a writer and editor for *Mizzou Weekly*, a faculty and staff publication, and reported on the health and science beat for the *Columbia Missourian*. By creating copy and editing, I have improved my writing skills, learned to develop engaging stories, and honed my eye for detail and accuracy. If selected, I am confident I will bring creativity, professionalism, and a unique writing style to the job.

Walsworth Publishing's commitment to young readers and reputation for excellence are compelling reasons why I would like to join your team. My communication style would fit well with the youth population your publications reach. A passion for crafting messages and captivating a reader through storytelling are values I share with your current staff. Contributing to a firm, who through content writing and graphic representation bring to life such effective publications, would be extremely motivating and exciting if given the chance to do so.

I would like to discuss my interests and qualifications with you in person and have enclosed a résumé for your review. You may reach me at TrumanTiger@mail.missouri.edu or (573)123-4567, and can reference writing samples and additional information through www.linkedin.com/in/trumantiger. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Truman Tiger
Truman Tiger

The **opening paragraph** should state **why you are writing**.

- Explain why you are interested in the organization and position.
- If someone referred you to the employer, this is the best place to mention that person's name.
- Be sure to entice the reader and make them want to know you better through your enthusiasm.

The **second paragraph** is devoted to explaining **how you are qualified**.

- Draw attention to your résumé and highlight specific skills, achievements, and qualifications related to the position.
- Talk about any relevant experiences, especially if not mentioned on your résumé.
- Avoid making this section into a list by breaking things up using short examples to expand upon and illustrate certain qualities.

The **third paragraph** states **why you are right for this job**.

- Demonstrate your knowledge of the employer and industry to show the employer that you are informed about the type of work and experience required.
- Restate why you should be considered for the position by identifying ways you fit with their mission, goals, and/or culture.
- Focus on what you can contribute to them, not what they can do for you.

The **closing paragraph** states **what you will do next** or what you would like the recipient of the letter to do next.

- Request an in-person meeting or inform the employer of a specific timeframe when you will contact them.
- Restate your phone number and email address in case this becomes separated from your résumé.
- Thank the employer for their time.

NEXT STEPS

- ✓ Come to the MU Career Center to talk with someone about your job search! Schedule a mock interview, request interview help, or have your résumé and/or cover letter reviewed.
- ✓ Visit our Handouts link on <http://career.missouri.edu/resources> to download other handouts in our Job Search series.