

COVER LETTER GUIDE

The purpose of a cover letter is to **capture the attention** of the prospective employer in order to make a positive first impression and encourage him/her to read your resume. Your cover letter is an introduction to your resume and offers your own narrative of you as a candidate. A well-written cover letter can do a lot to advance a candidate to an interview offer.

- A cover letter is your first introduction and a preview to information you expand on from your resume.
- Don't repeat information from your resume, but offer insight to your skills, strengths, and qualifications.
- The cover letter should be clear, concise and convincing.
- It is **not** to exceed one page, and preferably, not more than three quarters of the page. Use the same formatting guidelines as your resume.
- Keep formatting the same as your resume, including font, margins, and heading. Use single-spacing.
- Make sure the letter flows well from beginning to end. To help with this, avoid starting too many sentences with the word "I" and avoid starting any sentence with the word "as".

The basic structure of a cover letter includes the following:

1. Your name, address, phone number, and email address

2. Date

3. Name and address of the person or organization you are contacting

It is very important to always have a specific name of the person who will be reading your resume. This information can often be acquired through a phone call to the company, or checking the company's website. If you cannot find a name, use a job title. Do not use "To Whom It May Concern."

4. Greeting

Get a name and/or position title such as "Dear Ms. Smith," "Dear Human Resource Director," "Dear Search Committee." Avoid "To Whom It May Concern."

5. Paragraph #1

This paragraph briefly explains why you are writing to them and/or how you found out about the position. If you have any personal contact(s) within the company who assisted you in finding the position opening, this would be the paragraph to mention the individual(s), assuming you have permission to use his/her name. Also, state how you resonate with the company and/or opportunity. Make a brief statement as to why you are interested and why you are a good candidate.

6. Paragraph #2 & #3

These paragraphs tell how you can benefit the organization with your education, skills and experience. Provide examples of how you have used your skills and how this relates to how you are qualified for the position.

7. Last paragraph

This paragraph indicates how **you** will follow-up and ends with a complimentary closing. If you are handing a paper cover letter to an employer, remember to always sign your name as well as type it.

Be sure that you...

Save your cover letter as a PDF and file name easy for the recipient to distinguish.

Example: Your Full Name - Position_Cover Letter

Questions? Contact the Career Center:

Mount St. Mary's University
240 Upper Level McGowan

301-447-5202

careercenter@msmary.edu
www.msmary.edu/career



Sample Cover Letter

James T. Jobhunter

jobhunter@email.msmary.edu
301-123-4567

Campus Address
16300 Old Emmitsburg Rd.
Emmitsburg, MD 21727-7799

Permanent Address
123 My Home Dr.
Home City, MD 12345

October 1, 2019

Hiring Manager
Frederick County Public Schools
191 S East St.
Frederick, MD 21701

Dear Hiring Manager,

I am applying for the Elementary Teacher position that was advertised on your website and I am trying to relocate to the Frederick area. I am attending Mount St. Mary's University in Emmitsburg, Maryland majoring in elementary education. During this time, I have completed a variety of courses, such as Reading Assessment and Intervention, Student with Exceptionalities and Diverse Learning Styles, and a Professional Seminar.

Your advertisement specified a need for someone with experience working in an elementary school classroom in a public school setting. For the past year, I worked as teaching intern at Emmitsburg Elementary School in a 5th grade classroom. In this role, I was able to supervise a class of thirty students and instruct them on daily lesson plans. This position required patience and organizational skills to promote individual growth of each student. I will be able to use these skills in the Elementary Teacher position for Frederick County Public Schools.

Upon my research on your institution, I enjoyed reading testimonials of the students' parents. Your ability to help with student growth and prepare them for the next level of their educational journey has proven that your institution excels in the advancement of student needs. As a former Frederick County Public Schools student, this will be a great opportunity to give back to students and guide them to reach their potential.

I welcome the opportunity to speak with you further about my experiences and qualifications for the Elementary School Teacher role. I appreciate your time and thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

James Jobhunter

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