

# Cover Letter Workshop



Brought to you in cooperation with the Purdue Online Writing Lab



## Agenda

- Cover Letter Basics
- Preliminary Research
- Header
- First Paragraph
- Middle
- Conclusion
- Language
- Extra Tips



## Cover Letter Basics

- A cover letter expresses interest and qualifications for a particular position
- Personal but professional
- Tailored to position/company
- Explains how you fit with organization and how you will help them
- Expands main points from your resume
- “Sells” qualifications to the prospective employer



## Preliminary Research

Make sure you know:

- General job information
- Desired qualifications and skills
- Key values and words

Research helps you tailor your cover letter

- Look for mission statements, organization  
“vision,” goals, etc.

## Student Address

Stacy Lolkus  
222 Harrison Dr  
Apartment 5  
West Lafayette, IN 47906  
765-450-7583  
slo@purdue.edu

## Date

October 16, 2006

## Salutation

Jenny Lock  
Uline — HR Recruiting Center  
2105 S. Lakeside Drive  
Waukegan, IL 60085

## Employer Address

Dear Ms. Lockridge:

## First Paragraph

After speaking with Emily Richards about her past summer in the internship program, I am very interested in your Human Resources Summer Internship position. I worked with employee benefits this past summer and became very interested in the human resources aspect. I have obtained many leadership opportunities while working as a Business Writing Consultant Assistant Coordinator at Purdue's Writing Lab that would be valuable in a career at Uline.

## Middle Paragraph

As Business Writing Consultant Assistant Coordinator at Purdue's Writing Lab, my primary role is to help train new tutors for the Writing Lab. I work directly with the Business Writing Coordinator teaching classes and participating in mock tutorials to allow students to obtain hands-on experience tutoring business documents. I also organize educational workshops to refresh the skills of current Business Writing Consultants. My position as a Boiler Gold Rush Team Leader also challenged me to use my enthusiastic personality to motivate incoming freshmen to be involved in campus activities. As a Human Resources Intern at Uline, I could use all of these leadership skills while learning more about recruiting and hiring practices.

## Conclusion

Thank you for considering me for this position. I would love to discuss these and other qualifications with you. If you have any questions, please call me at 765-450-7583 or e-mail me at slo@purdue.edu.

Sincerely

*Stacy Lolkus*

,  
Stacy Lolkus

Enclosure: Résumé

## Closing



## Header

- Make sure you address the letter to a specific person if possible (preferably the interviewer)

Your Street Address

City, State, Zip Code

Date

Name of Contact Person

Title

Organization

Street Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear Ms., Mr., Dr., (etc):



## More Examples

Date

October 4, 2006

Name of Contact Person

Stacy Lo

Title

CEO

Organization

Lo Labs

Street Address

300 State St.

City, State, Zip Code

Chicago, IL, 60611

Dear Ms., Mr., Dr. (etc):

Dear Ms. Lo:



## First Paragraph

### **Purpose:**

- Get the reader's attention
- Introduce yourself
- Explain purpose of letter
- Explain why interested in the position or the company
  - Culture?
  - Approach?
- Explain how you will help the organization
- Preview the rest of the letter





## First Paragraph (Sample 1)

**Dear Ms. Lo:**

**After speaking with Emily Richards about her past summer in the internship program, I am interested in your Human Resources Summer Internship position. I worked with employee benefits this summer and became interested in the human resources aspect of the position. In addition to the leadership opportunities I obtained while working as a Business Writing Consultant Assistant Coordinator for Purdue's Writing Lab, I have also developed my communication skills during my summer internship. I believe my skills will help your Human Resources department maintain its excellent track record.**



## First Paragraph (Sample 2)

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing to apply for the position of part-time sales associate in the women's department at Macy's. My resume is attached.



## Middle Paragraphs

- Highlight skills and benefits to the company
- Emphasize interest in the company
- Provide concrete evidence
  - Show don't tell (use information from resume)
  - Include specific, credible examples of qualifications for the position
- Begin paragraphs with topic sentences



Middle Paragraph  
(Sample 1)

As a banking representative at Chase, I provided quality customer service while promoting the sale of products to customers. I also handled close to \$20,000 each day and was responsible for balancing the bank's ATM machine. My experience with customer relations and money management can help your accounting firm expand its Middle East division located in Dubai.



## Middle Paragraph (Sample 2)

As my resume shows, I have worked for the past two years as a sales representative for Forever 21. I also possess excellent skills in communication and demonstrate the motivation to learn more about the clothing industry.

- Conclude with next step
- Provide contact information

*SAMPLE 1*

I would like to discuss these and other qualifications with you to further explain how I can contribute to your Middle East operations. I look forward to meeting you soon. If you have any questions, please call me at 555-555-5555 or e-mail me at abcd@purdue.edu.

*SAMPLE 2*

I would like to meet with you to learn more about the position and to discuss my qualifications. Working for Macy's would be a great opportunity for me. I can be reached at the phone number indicated on my resume. Thank you for your consideration.



## Closing Formats

Sincerely,

Simon Smith

Enclosure: Resume

Sincerely,

Simon Smith  
5886 Tunbridge Crossing  
Fort Wayne, IN 46815  
ssmith@purdue.edu

Enclosure: Resume



Look for:

- Language:

### **Weak Language:**

I worked as a ramp agent at Comair.

### **Strong Language:**

As a ramp agent, I assisted in loading baggage, oversaw fueling the aircraft, and stocked commissary items on the aircraft.





- Unprofessional language
- Length
  - Letter should only be one page
- Strongest and most relevant qualifications should be highlighted
  - Limit to a few qualifications
- Easy to read
  - Begin with topic sentences



## Extra Tips

- Appeal to company values, attitudes, goals, projects, etc.
- Explain how you will help organization
- Elaborate on the information in your resume
- Provide evidence of your qualifications
- Proofread carefully for grammatical and typographical errors



Where can you go to find  
extra help

Purdue University Writing Lab

Heavilon 226

Check our website

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu>

Email brief questions

owl@owl.english.purdue.edu



The End

## Cover Letter Workshop

By: Stacy Lolkus and Allen Brizee.

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