

# Cover Letters

• APU Writing Center • (626) 815-6000 ext.3141 • apu.edu/writingcenter • apu.mywconline.com •

A cover letter, also known as an application letter, is a chance to make a great first impression and an opportunity to inform your reader of your achievements, strengths, experience, availability, and contact information. You can also use your letter to request an interview and refer to your résumé and other application materials.

Before you start, think about what you want this letter to accomplish: Do you want an interview, referral, application, more information, or some combination? Make your objective clear.

**YOUR ADDRESS**

**DATE**

**NAME, TITLE, AND ADDRESS OF RECIPIENT**

**SALUTATION**  
If you know them, use the title. Dear Ms. Smith:  
Title unknown? Use the full name. Dear Barbara Smith:  
Name and title unknown? To Whom it May Concern:

**OPENING PARAGRAPH**  
Identify the position and how you heard about it. Your degree can go here or in the next paragraph.

**BODY PARAGRAPH(S)**  
Remember that you're writing an argument for what you want. Support your argument with persuasive points (like experience and strengths), back up your points with evidence (like results and statistics), and explain how each point is relevant. Get to your point quickly and concisely. Think about tone. You want to come across as confident (but not conceited), professional, pleasant, and intelligent.

**CLOSING PARAGRAPH(S)**  
This is your opportunity to discuss your availability and outline any other enclosed application materials. You can also give your contact information, invite an interview, and thank the employer for his or her time.

**SIGNATURE**  
Close with "Sincerely," leave four lines, and then type your full name. Sign the space in black or blue ink.

1234 Cougar Lane  
Azusa, CA 91702  
October 27, 2014  
Barbara Smith, President  
God First Publishing  
76543 Footpath Way  
Worthington, OH 45322  
Dear Ms. Smith:  
I am writing to apply for the editorial assistant position recently advertised on your website. I will be graduating from Azusa Pacific University in May with a degree in English and a minor in Religious and Culture. I am eager to join your publishing firm's team because of your combination of creative fiction and Christian publications.  
While at APU, I have worked as the editor of the student newspaper, "The Clause," where I was responsible for assigning articles to the staff and editing what they produced. I also wrote several hard-hitting reports, including one on the importance using helpful campus resources such as the Writing Center, which was entitled "Working and Writing in the Center." Based on my article, the Writing Center saw an influx of students making appointments and increased their overall use by 7%. I am also actively involved in my church where I manage the website by updating the events calendar and writing pieces about each service.  
I spent last summer working for the Yosemite Sierra Summer Camp as a counselor, which gave me the opportunity to work with middle school children in a variety of capacities. Among other responsibilities, I was in charge of a poetry workshop, and I led several backpacking trips. At YSSC, I learned that I thrive in leadership positions but also that I am also good at being a part of a team, which was especially apparent when I served as part of the Sunday Worship Service Team. Since your job post states that you are looking for a leader who works well in team settings, my strengths should serve you well.  
I will be available to begin any time after May 15, when the spring semester at APU ends. My resume, references, and transcripts and two writing samples are enclosed. I am available via email at sstudent@apu.edu or phone at 626-815-6000.  
Thank you for your consideration.  
Sincerely,  
*Sally Student*  
Sally Student

## Tips for Writing an Effective Cover Letter

- Try to find out to whom the letter should be addressed. Visit the company's website. Call them. Do some investigating. Use Ms. instead of Mrs. or Miss. If you aren't sure of the employer's gender, use the first and last name without the courtesy title. For example, Dear Pat Thompson:
- Learn something about the company you're applying to; show them that you've done your homework and understand what they're looking for. Read the job description carefully; consider using its language.
- Edit: Vary your sentence lengths. Replace dull and vague words with active language. Use examples.
- Proofread: Go backwards through your letter one sentence at a time and check each for spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors. Read your letter out loud.
- Write several drafts. Ask friends and mentors to read your letter for you and revise, edit, and proofread until it is something you are proud to send to a potential employer. Ask yourself, would you hire you?