

# Cover Letters

## Table Of Contents

- Introduction to Cover Letters
- Writing a Cover Letter - Rules to Remember
  - Using the Job Listing
  - Cover Letter Worksheet
  - Template
- Reviewing the Quality of Your Cover Letter



**FUTURES THROUGH TRAINING**

---

**UTAH FARMWORKER PROGRAM**

---

## Cover Letters - Introduction to Cover Letters

A Cover Letter is a letter that you write to go with your résumé. This letter is a way to tell the employer what job you are applying for and why you would be a good candidate for this job. It is a way of making the professional, generic résumé more personal and addressing the specific needs of the company and how you can meet their needs.

In this packet, we will help you learn what needs to go into a cover letter. We will also teach you how to write a good cover letter.



**Make a new cover letter  
every time you apply for a new job.**

# Cover Letters - Writing a Cover Letter - Rules to Remember

---

It is not appropriate to use a generic “To Whom It May Concern” Cover Letter. So, you will need to write a cover letter for every job you are applying for with a resume.

Every time you write a cover letter, there are some rules you should remember:

- 1. Type Your Cover Letter:** No business person is going to take you seriously if you turn in a hand-written cover letter. Employers expect the people who are going to work for them to be professional, and that means the work that you present must be high quality work.
- 2. Limit the Cover Letter to One Page:** People who review résumé and cover letters have a limited amount of time. Try to give them what they need to know in the shortest amount of space, and they will pay closer attention than if you write a lot. If you turn in more than one page of a cover letter, it may not get read or may be considered unprofessional.
- 3. Always Turn in a Cover Letter with a Résumé:** Even if it is not in the job listing, it is expected. Many employers will not list the need for a cover letter with your résumé in a print ad because they are charged per word, and assume you will know that they want one. If you take the time to do a cover letter, you will be a more impressive applicant than all the other people who did not.
- 4. Make Your Cover Letter Look Professional:** You are being judged by your cover letter and there are some things that you can do to make it look more professional. Spell check it. Make sure the letter looks like the template in this packet. Keep the letter unfolded, if possible and make sure you don't hand in one with stains, spills, wrinkles or other marks.
- 5. Sign Your Cover Letter:** Your cover letter is not complete until you sign it. It is standard business practice to hand sign your letters, and will show employers that you really did write this letter yourself. Sometimes you will be asked to fax your résumé and cover letter. The employer will not have an original signature, but the fax copy will still show your signature. If the employer wants the résumé and cover letter emailed to them, you will need to print the cover letter, sign it and scan it. Then send the cover letter as an attachment.

**Never use “To Whom It May Concern”**



## Cover Letters - Using the Job Listing

---



When an employer writes their advertisement for a job, they have several options on where they will publish their job listing. Some places charge by the word like print and online newspapers. Some places are free, but limit the amount of space an ad can take like a private website or community job listing. Other sites allow ads to be as long as the employer wants and don't charge, like the state employment services website.

Wherever the employer decides to list the job, or however long the ad is, you will usually find words that describe what the company is looking for.

You should use the information in the job listing to write your cover letter. That way, you can make sure you are giving the company the information they care about and it will help them make the decision to give you an interview. Here are some suggestions on ways to use the Job Listing to improve your Cover Letter and improve your chances of getting an interview:

**1. Use the Job Title Exactly as it is in the Job Listing:** Different companies have different names for similar jobs. To avoid confusion and to show respect for the company's word choices, use their job title.

**2. Apply for Different Jobs Separately:** Never list more than one job on your cover letter, not even if there is more than one job opening that you would like to apply for. Sometimes résumés for different jobs are assigned to different people. For the best chance at each job, make a separate cover letter for each job and attach a copy of your resume to each cover letter, and send them separately.



## Cover Letters - Using the Job Listing

---

**3. Use The Words in the Listing:** Employers are looking for specific things and put them in their want ad. Many employers scan the résumés and cover letters with computers or by hand looking for the skills, abilities, qualities, experience and education listed in their job listing. A cover letter that includes eight of the words from the listing is more likely to get an interview than someone who only has two. Their words are important to them, so use their words, don't use similar words to make it more interesting. If the ad says "looking for a dependable, team player with basic computer skills," – Do Not write "I am a reliable person who works well

in a group. I also have extensive experience with computers." It would be okay to write: "I am dependable, a great team player that works well in a group. I also have extensive computer experience including basic computer skills, Excel, Power Point, and Web Design"

If the job listing doesn't have any information besides the job title, and contact information, then call and try to get more information about the job requirements. If that doesn't work, then think about what the company probably would like in an employee and write about those things.



# Cover Letters - Cover Letter Worksheet

---

---

## JOB LISTING INFORMATION:

Directions: Find a job listing that you would like to apply for. Using your job listing and the internet, answer the following questions. Then, use the Cover Letter Template to type your letter.

1. What is the name of the company?

2. What is the name of the person doing the hiring?

3. What is the company's complete address?

4. What is the title of the job? Write exactly as it is in the listing.

5. Where does the listing come from?

6. What is so the company proud of? What are their accomplishments?

7. What education or training is required? Use the exact wording from the listing.

## Cover Letters - Cover Letter Worksheet

---

8. What experience does the company want their employee to have? Use the exact words from the listing.

9. What are the employee qualities and abilities that the employer wants. Use the exact words from the listing.

10. Are there any special things about you that would make you the best applicant for this job?

11. What is the best way to contact you? Cell Phone number? Message phone?

# Cover Letters - Template

---

{Indent}

Date

{Enter}

{Enter}

{Enter}

{Enter}

Company Name

Address

City, State Zip Code

{Enter}

Dear [Name of Person Doing Hiring],

{Enter}

{Indent}I am writing to apply for the [Job Title Exactly as It is Written in the Listing] job that I learned about through [Where Job Listing Came From; Or Where You Heard About The Job]. I am very interested in this job.

{Enter}

{Indent}Your company is known for [Accomplishments, Things Company is Proud of – If the company has a website, you can find out more about them there].I am impressed because [List 2 or 3 Things You Like About the Company]. [Company’s Full Name] is a good company and I would really like to be a part of the team.

{Enter}

{Indent}I would be great choice for this job because I have [Number] years experience [List Job Title if You Have Experience in this Job, OR If You Have Experience Doing Things That Would Be Helpful in This Job, List Those Tasks/Activities]. I can [List the Qualities and Abilities From the Job Listing That You Can Do.] I can learn how to [Things From the Job Listing That You Can’t Do Now But Can Learn]. I [List Any Credentials or Training Required in the Listing] Additionally, I am [List Other Qualities About Yourself That Would Make You More Impressive. Examples: Bilingual, Willing to Work Overtime and Weekends, etc.]

Please refer to my attached resume for more information on what I can offer your company.

{Enter}

{Indent} Please call me at [Phone Number] to schedule an interview.

{Enter}

{Enter}

{Indent}

Sincerely,

{Enter}

{Enter}

Your Signature

{Enter}

{Enter}

{Indent}

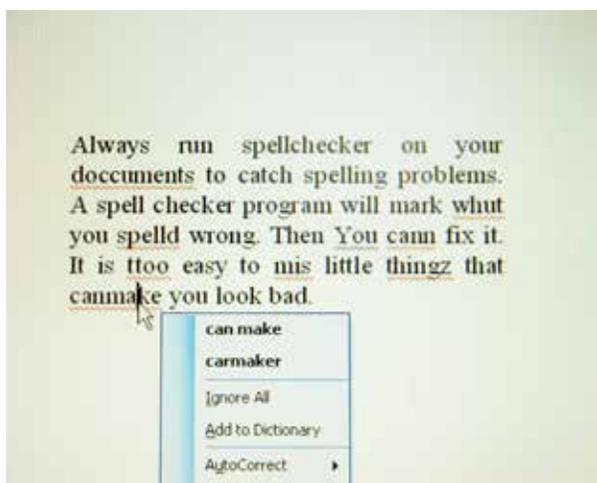
Your Name

# Cover Letters - Reviewing the Quality of Your Cover Letter

---

Before you turn in your cover letter to an employer, you need to make sure it is the best it can be. Here are some things you should do to check your cover letter's quality, catch errors and fix them. They are the same things that you do to make your résumé better.

- 1. Run Spellchecker:** Most word processors have this option. The computer will show you what you have spelled wrong, if you have put in too many or too few spaces between words, and will catch problems with grammar. Use the computer to find and fix problems before you have anyone else look at it.



- 2. Review With Fresh Eyes:** Sometimes you get tired when you've been working on your cover letter for a long time, and can't see the problems. Walk away and wait for an hour or two and then look at it again. You probably shouldn't wait a day or two, because many jobs close on the same day that they open. You will probably catch many things you overlooked and can fix them faster than you would have when you worked on it in the first place.

- 3. Ask yourself all of these questions to make sure it is ready for other people to see:**

- Does it look pretty?
- Is it only one page?
- Is everything spelled out?  
(*"September," not "Sept.;" "West," not "W"; "Worker Protection Standards Pesticide Training," not "WPS"; "English as a Second Language," not "ESL"; "Utah" not "UT"*)
- Do I have any other skills I should include?
- Do I have any other training or credentials I forgot to list?
- Is the company name spelled right?
- Is the hiring person's name spelled correctly?
- Is the job title spelled exactly as it is in the job listing?
- Are all other words spelled correctly?
- Is my phone number correct?
- Did I sign it?
- Am I proud of how this cover letter looks?

- 4. Have At Least 3 People Review & Give Suggestions:** You are too close to the work, and it makes you blind to certain things. Ask someone else's opinion, and they may see things you should fix before an employer sees it. It's always better to have an assortment of people review your work. So, choose people from different groups:

**Make the space on top match the space on the bottom of the page.**

# Cover Letters - Reviewing the Quality of Your Cover Letter

---

## ***Friends or Relatives Who Have Known You Ten Years or More:***

These people will have known you long enough to know your best qualities. They will usually be honest with you.

## ***Teachers, Trainers and Educators Who Have Taught You:***

These people usually have more experience editing. They should be able to help find spelling and grammar errors and may point out ways to make your educational experience more impressive.

## ***People You Have Worked With:***

These people will know what kind of worker you are. They will be able to tell you if you have missed any skills you used when you worked with them. Additionally, they can catch exaggerations about the work you've done.

## ***People You Have Worked For:***

These people have the perspective of employers. They have seen how you work, follow directions, and what kind of attitude you have. They know what qualities employers value and can help you include any of those qualities you may have.

## ***People Who Make Hiring Decisions:***

These people will have the most experience reviewing résumé and cover letters. They have seen different styles and layouts, and can give suggestions to make your cover letter more attractive and memorable. Also, they know what they like to see on cover letters, and what they don't like to see. They can help you avoid common mistakes and make your cover letter better than others.



## ***Strangers:***

These people don't know you, so they can make judgments based on the résumé and not their experience with you. They can tell you if your cover letter is a good introduction to you or if you need more information.

*Many people won't know what to look for or how to help you. To make the review more useful, give them a copy of the job listing and you can tell them you want them to answer these questions:*

- What errors did you find?
- Is it easy to read?
- Does it make sense?
- Did I write enough about the abilities, education, experience and other things that the job listing asks for?
- What can I do to make it better?
- Does it make me look like someone you would hire? If not, what can I do to change that?
- What did you like best about my cover letter?

"This workforce product was funded by a grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration. The product was created by the grantee and does not necessarily reflect the official position of the U.S. Department of Labor. The U.S. Department of Labor makes no guarantees, warranties, or assurances of any kind, express or implied, with respect to such information, including any information on linked sites and including, but not limited to, accuracy of the information or its completeness, timeliness, usefulness, adequacy, continued availability, or ownership. This product is copyrighted by the institution that created it. Internal use by an organization and/or personal use by an individual for noncommercial purposes is permissible. All other uses require the prior authorization of the copyright owner."

