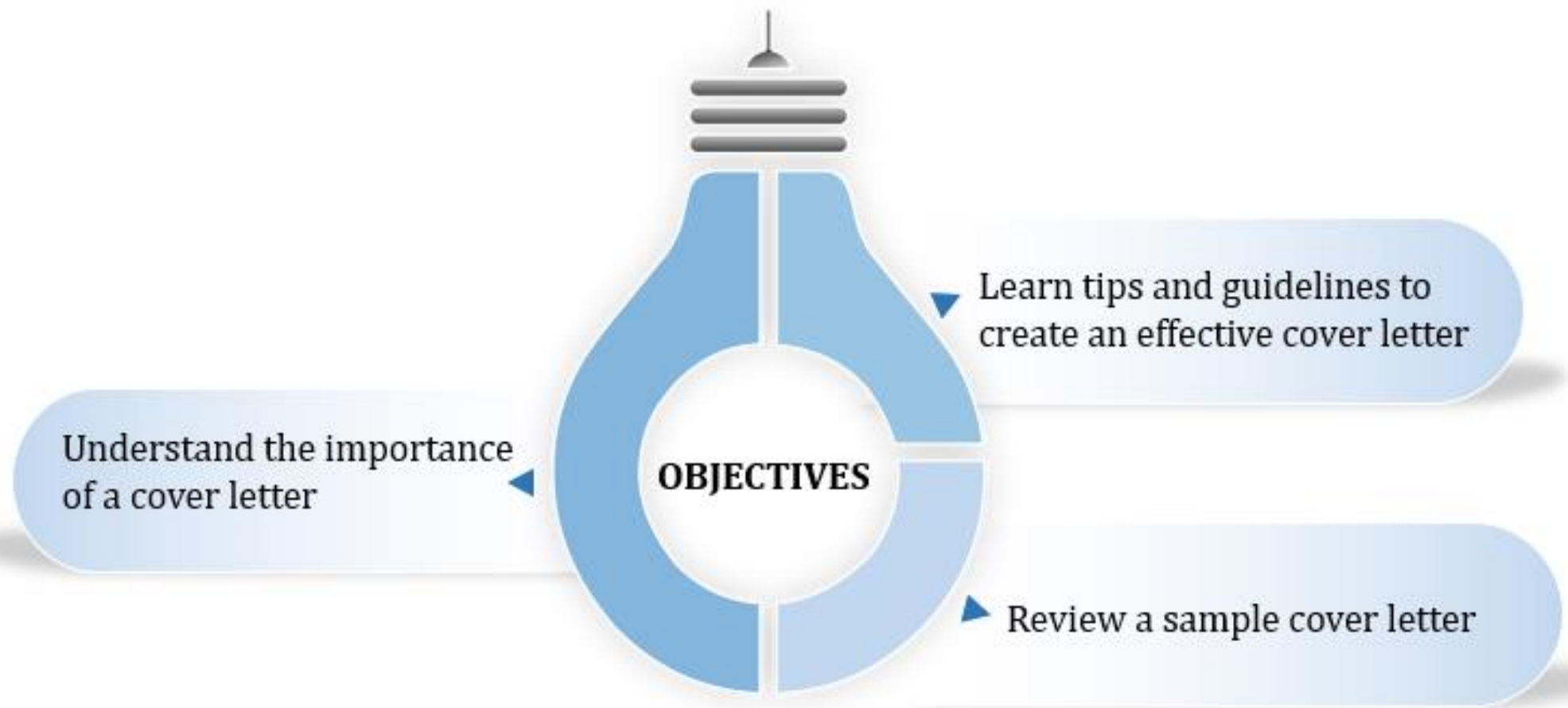




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Writing Effective Cover Letters



What is a Cover Letter?

A **cover letter** is an introductory letter that is included with your resume that provides additional information about your skills and experience.

A cover letter can also be used as a writing sample.

The cover letter provides the employer with detailed information regarding your skill set and qualifications as they relate to the job description.

A cover letter can be viewed as an opportunity to speak directly to the employer and explain why you are the right person for the job.

For all these reasons and more, it is recommended to include a cover letter with **each** resume and application you send out.

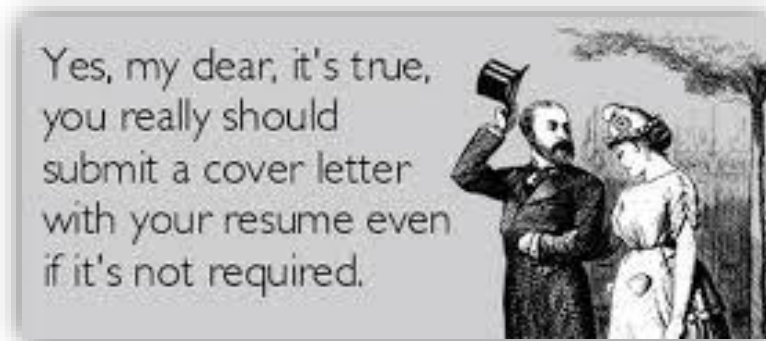
Why is a Cover Letter is Important?

Employers use cover letters to screen applicants for available positions and to determine which candidates they would like to interview.

If an employer requires a cover letter, it will be listed in the job posting.

Even if the employer doesn't require a cover letter, it's recommended to include one with your application.

It might be the one thing that sets you apart from other applicants.



Your cover letter may make the difference between obtaining a job interview or having your resume ignored, so it makes good sense to spend the necessary time and effort on writing effective cover letters.



What's the Difference Between Cover Letters & Resumes?



- A cover letter should **complement**, not duplicate, your resume.
- Its purpose is to interpret the data and facts from your resume as they relate to the position, while adding a personal touch.
- A cover letter is often your initial contact with a potential employer, creating a **critical first impression**.

What to Include in your Cover Letter

- An effective cover letter explains the reasons for your interest in a specific company and position, as well as highlights your most relevant and applicable skills and experiences as they relate to the job.
- The first step is to carefully read the job description, evaluate the skill requirements, and match them to your own skill set.
- Review your previous job duties and identify where you have used those skills, as well as how you would be effective in the position.

Each Cover Letter Should Include:

- Which job you're applying for
- How you learned about the job (and a referral if you have one)
- Why you are qualified for the job (be specific)
- What you have to offer the employer (match your skills to the job description)
- Thank you for being considered for the job

Cover Letter Writing Guidelines

Here's an outline of the items that should be included in every cover letter:

- Header
- Date
- Salutation
- Introduction
- Body
- Closing
- Signature

Header

A cover letter should begin with both you and the employer's contact information (name, address, phone number, email) followed by the date.

If this is an email rather than an actual letter, include your contact information at the end of the letter, after your signature.



Salutation

Begin your cover letter salutation with "Dr./Mr./Ms. Last Name".

If you are unsure if your contact is male or female, you can write out his or her full name.

If you do not know the employer's last name, simply write, "Dear Hiring Manager".

Introduction

Begin your introduction by stating what job you are applying for.

Explain where you heard about the job, particularly if you heard about it from a contact associated with the company.

Briefly mention how your skills and experience match the company and/or position; this will give the employer a preview of the rest of your letter.

Your **goal** in the introduction is to get the reader's attention.

Body

In a paragraph or two, explain why you are interested in the job and why you make an excellent candidate for the position.

Mention **specific** qualifications listed in the job posting, and explain how you meet those qualifications.

Do not simply restate your resume, but provide specific examples that demonstrate your abilities.

Closing

In the closing section of your cover letter, **restate** how your skills make you a strong fit for the company and/or position.

State that you would like the opportunity to interview or discuss employment opportunities.

Explain what you will do to **follow up** and when you will do it.

Thank the employer for his/her consideration.

Signature

Use a complimentary close, and then end your cover letter with **your signature, handwritten, followed by your typed name.**

If this is an email, simply include your typed name, followed by your contact information, after the complimentary close.

Editing Your Cover Letter

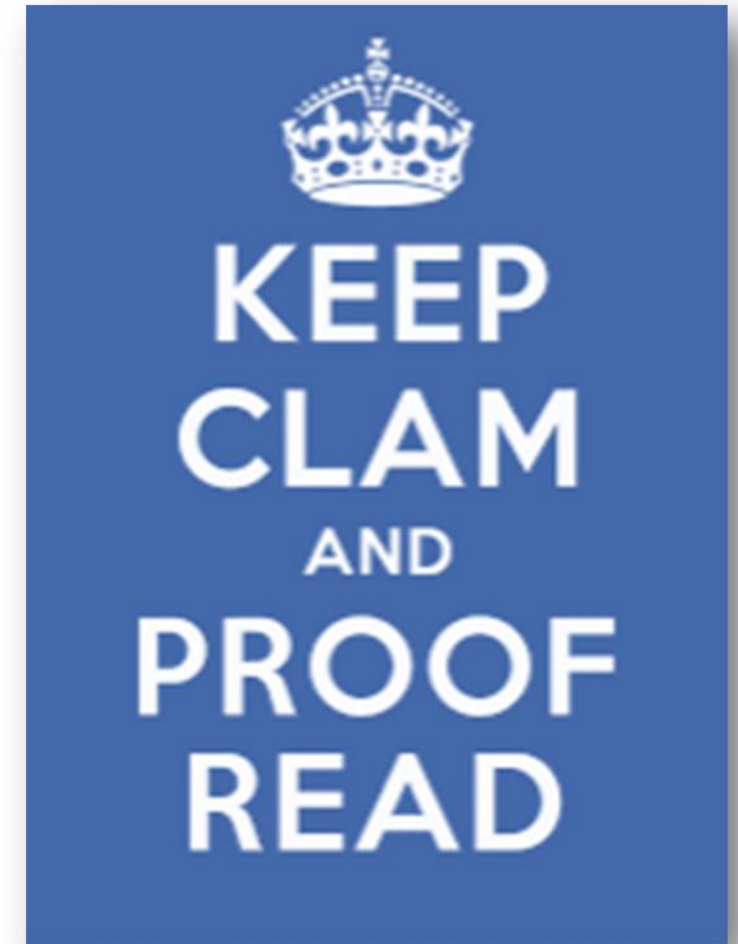
Remember to **edit and proof** your cover letter before sending it.

Make sure you include the correct employer and company names - when you write multiple cover letters at once, it is easy to make a mistake.

Read the letter out loud to check for small typos, such as missing words, misspelled words, punctuation flaws, etc.

Always double-check the spelling of your contact's name, as well as the company name.

Remember the cover letter is a first impression to the employer!!!



Keep It Short!!

Keep in mind that your cover letter doesn't need to be long.

One page is plenty!



Summary

- Make sure your cover letter is customized to each job you are applying for.
- Make sure your cover letter contains all the sections described in this workshop.
- Be concise – make sure your cover letter is proofread and error-free





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Thank You

