



## *Writing a Cover Letter*

A cover letter is a business-style letter written to a hiring manager in order to be considered for an interview. In a cover letter, you explain why you want a job AND why you are a great fit for the job. An effective cover letter inspires the employer to read your resume. Whenever you send out your resume it should be accompanied by a cover letter.

Here are some of the basics of cover letter writing. A standard layout can be found on the next page.

### THE DO'S & DONT'S

#### Do.....

- *Match your abilities with the job description* - will you be good at this job?
- *Show your awesome skills and experiences* - why should someone hire you over another student?
- *Re-read and edit your cover letter* - don't be that person who has grammatical errors in your cover letter!

#### Don't.....

- *Express that the hiring manager needs you* - likely, many people are capable of doing this job
- *Use slang or colloquial language* - again... a cover letter is a formal letter and requires proper writing
- *Re-state your resume* - talk about your past experiences in a way that is different from your resume

### FOR MORE INFO...

Visit Clark's Career Services website: [www.clarku.edu/offices/career](http://www.clarku.edu/offices/career)  
(Look at the How to Guide on Cover Letters)

During the academic year Career Services offers drop-in hours for resume and cover letter critiques from 12-4pm every weekday.

## COVER LETTER LAYOUT

Your Street Address  
City, State Zip Code

Date of Writing

Name of the person who is hiring  
Title of that person  
Department  
Clark University  
950 Main Street  
Worcester, MA 01610

Dear Mr. or Ms. Last Name: (*never use "To Whom it May Concern"; "Sir or Madam"*)

**Opening Paragraph:** State the position for which you are applying. Include the position name and the department. Explain why you are interested in this position and how you are good fit. (Keep it brief- *three sentences* is sufficient).

**Middle Paragraph(s):** Talk about your qualifications. Do not directly repeat information from your resume and do not simply list jobs. Focus instead on the **skills** you have developed from the experiences listed on your resume. Indicate why you should be considered as a candidate, focusing on how your skills can fulfill the needs of the organization. Mention specific results or achievements. You should directly tie your experiences to the qualifications described in the posting. This is the key paragraph that differentiates you from the next candidate. The person hiring you wants to know what you can do for them, not what they can do for you.

**Closing Paragraph:** Close by making a specific request. Usually this means a request to discuss your qualifications further in person. Mention how they can reach you (email and phone). Finish with a polite closing sentence (Example: Thank you for considering me for ... / I look forward to meeting with you to discuss this position).

Sincerely,

Your Name