

Writing Cover Letters

**Century College Career Services
Room 2402W – 651-779-5774**

A **cover letter** serves as a letter of introduction to a potential employer. It should grab the employer's attention and summarize, with key points, your resume. Your cover letter should serve as your "sales pitch", while your resume covers the facts about you and your experience, education and skills and talents. If possible, use as many keywords as possible that cover the requirements/qualifications stated in the job posting/job description. A cover letter should be to the point and job specific.

Things to remember when writing a cover letter:

- Use action verbs
- Keep it brief
- Use simple language – eliminate any unnecessary words
- Make sure that someone proofreads your cover letter
- Personalize – address your letter to a named individual
- Avoid sexist language
- Speak to the requirements of a job
- Tell the employer how you can contribute to their company
- Answer the question, "Why should I hire this person?"
- Sell yourself – be positive!
- Request an interview, let them know you'll follow-up and then do it!
- Personally sign the letter

Cover Letter structure:

Return Address or "Header" from Resume

Date

Address

Salutation

Try to address the letter to a specific person (Dear Mr. Johnson), or at least to a title (Dear Human Resource Director). If you cannot get this information then you can address it as "To Whom It May Concern" but avoid this if at all possible.

First Paragraph

Explain why you are writing and grab the employer's attention right away. Speak to your strengths and be concise. (If there was an actual job posting reference where you found it.)

Second and Third Paragraph

Briefly describe your professional and/or academic qualifications. If you are responding to a specific ad address the requirements of the job.

Do your homework! Impress them by researching the company and making reference to it. Relate yourself to the company and why you would be a good fit. Let them know what you can do for them and why you would be an asset to the company.

Fourth Paragraph

Close with confidence! Be assertive and request action. Ask for an interview appointment and make sure that you follow through with this request. Follow-up is very important – make sure that you do what you promise to do.

Enclosure

Additional Resources:

Articles with tips on cover letters (as well as resumes, job search, interviewing, etc.) – www.careermag.com

Cover letter articles, samples and more – <http://resume.monster.com/articles/storeletter/>

Cover letter samples - <http://jobsearch.about.com/b/a/178444.htm>

Visit our website:

<http://www.century.edu/currentstudents/careerservices/default.aspx>

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Moundsview School District
Human Resources
350 HWY 96 W
Shoreview, MN

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for taking the time to review my resume. I would like to express my interest in the paraprofessional position at Mounds View High School. I was notified by the staff at Mounds View about the opening of this position and immediately decided to apply.

At the present time I am assisting instructors and students at Century College. This position enables me to provide the students with help learning basic English skills and the instructors help with their daily tasks. I am challenged to be creative, encouraging and most of all, patient. In addition, I am pursuing my general education credits at Century with intent to transfer to the University of Minnesota to pursue a degree in Special Education.

I am a graduate of Mounds View High School, and not a day goes by that I do not think about my time there. The people that I interacted with every day play a large part in who I am today. This is why I want to be a part of Mounds View, and this time giving back by helping the students the way that the teachers and paraprofessionals helped me.

It is my goal to combine my range of experience with my ability to be a compassionate, enthusiastic, intelligent paraprofessional. One who will make a positive contribution to your school district. I would welcome an interview and hope to hear from you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Tracy Jones