

**eDay LESSON 3-SENIORS**  
**Cover Letters**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_

**OVERVIEW:**

This lesson focuses on the basics of composing a cover letter.

**DIRECTIONS:**

**STEP ONE**

**Please read the following.**

What should your cover letter do for you? The cover letter needs to grab the employer's attention and should answer why the company should hire you over all of the other applicants. You could write the best resume in the world and be highly qualified for a job, but if your cover letter is poorly written or overly generic, chances are you will not get your foot in the door. The cover letter is your first opportunity to grab an employer's attention and let the company know why your resume is worth reading. Take a look at these tips:

**Cover Letter Tip #1** Don't send a resume without a cover letter.

**Cover Letter Tip #2** If you have a connection at the company or if someone suggested you apply to the company, make sure to mention that on your cover letter.

**Cover Letter Tip #3** Don't make the reader guess what you are asking for or why you are sending your resume. Be specific! Do you want a summer internship opportunity or a permanent position at graduation? Research the company and the specifics about the position so you can tailor your letter to the needs of the organization.

**Cover Letter Tip #4** Convince the reader to look at your resume by calling attention to elements of your background that are relevant to the position like your education, leadership skills, or work experience. Be as specific as possible using concrete examples.

**Cover Letter Tip #5** Provide or refer to any information specifically requested in a job advertisement that might not be covered in your resume such as an availability date or a reference to an attached writing sample.

**Cover Letter Tip #6 PROOFREAD! Make Your Letter Professional**

- Spelling, grammar, or punctuation mistakes are out of the question! Cover letters are a reflection of your writing skills, so make each cover letter an example of your best work.
- Avoid using too many sentences that start with "I" or writing in the passive voice (ex. "This experience enabled me to..." or "Through my internship, I was

responsible for...”). Use active descriptions (ex., “In this internship, I demonstrated sound judgment and problem-solving skills on a daily basis.”).

- Do not use contractions (I'd, didn't, it's).
- Be sure to sign your letter (black ink). If sending it electronically, try signing it in

a font like *Lucida Handwriting* or *Bradley Hand*.

- Use a font style for the letter that is simple, clear, and easy to read like Times New Roman. The font on your cover letter should match the font used on your resume. Font sizes from 10-12 points are generally the most appropriate. If you are having trouble fitting a document on one page, sometimes a slight margin and/or font adjustment can be the solution.

**The following are the main components of your cover letter.**

- Your address and contact info
- The date
- The specific person who does the hiring at the company where you are applying (if you don't have a name, try to find it!). Also, note that you should refer to males as Mr. and females as Ms. If he/she is a doctor, please refer to that person as Dr.
- That person's job title
- The company name
- The company address

**FIRST PARAGRAPH of the cover letter:** This is the “why I'm writing to you” paragraph which immediately tells the employer the position you want to be considered for in the company. This paragraph is short and usually only two to three sentences.

Points to cover:

\*Why you are writing and which position you want. It's also a good idea to mention how you heard about the position particularly if it was through a specific person.

\*Show from your research why you are interested in this position or organization. The goal is to make a connection.

**SECOND PARAGRAPH of the cover letter:** This is the “why I'm qualified” paragraph. Highlight some of your most relevant experiences and qualities as they relate to the position for which you are applying. Choose two or three points you want to make about specific experiences/ accomplishments or about general qualities you have exhibited by providing specific examples of how you have exhibited those qualities. This paragraph will change according to the job/employer to which you are applying and is usually the longest paragraph of the letter.

- The body of the paragraph should provide evidence to back up what you have just claimed. Cite specific jobs, internships, training, or accomplishments associated with those experiences. Use your resume to come up with some specifics, but NEVER copy passages from your resume word for word.

**FINAL PARAGRAPH of the cover letter:** This is a short two to four sentences paragraph. You should refer to the enclosed resume and it is imperative that you thank the reader for his/her time and consideration.

**Here is a sample of how your cover letter should look and what should be included.**

Your Street Address  
City, State Zip Code  
Telephone Number  
E-mail Address

Month, Day, Year

Mr./Ms./Dr. First Name Last Name  
Job Title  
Name of Organization  
Street or P. O. Box Address  
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. Last Name:

Opening paragraph: State why you are writing, how you learned of the organization/position, and basic information about yourself.

2nd paragraph: Tell why you are interested in the employer or in the type of work the employer does. Simply stating that you are interested does not tell why and can sound like a form letter and be overly generic. Demonstrate that you know enough about the employer or position to relate your background to the employer or the position. Mention specific qualifications which make you a good fit for the employer's needs. Focus on what you can do for the employer, not what the employer can do for you.

3rd paragraph: Indicate that you would like the opportunity to interview for a position or to talk with the employer to learn more about their opportunities or hiring plans. State that you would be glad to provide the employer with any additional information needed. Thank the employer for her/his consideration.

Sincerely,

(Your handwritten signature on hard copy)

Your name typed

In the case of e-mail, your full contact info appears below your printed name instead of at the top (as for a paper copy) and, of course, there is no handwritten signature; however,

you might opt to include it in a font like *Lucida Handwriting* or *Bradley*

*Hand.*

**STEP TWO**

Please compose and submit your own cover letter according to the specifications listed in this packet and mimicking the sample cover letter's style and format.