

# COVER LETTER WRITING

## WHAT DOES YOUR COVER LETTER SAY ABOUT YOU?

Your cover letter does not repeat the content in your resume; instead, it should be an opportunity to tell a story in a way that your resume does not allow. The cover letter shows more about your personality, drive, purpose and goals. It allows you to tell the reader why you are a good fit, and why you are interested in their particular company, working for their specific department/division and in that specific position. The cover letter also demonstrates your ability to write effectively and succinctly.

## FORMAT

- Length: One Page
- Font Style: Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri or Verdana  
*Tip:* Use same font style on resume
- Text Size: 10, 11 or 12  
*Tip:* Full page of text, minimize white space at top and bottom
- Format: All information is left justified; single-spaced with a double space between paragraphs  
*Tip:* Do not indent paragraphs

## COVER LETTER SECTIONS

- Heading: Copy and paste resume heading (name and contact information) to the top of cover letter  
*Tip:* Brand your application
- Employer Information: Include recruiter name, title, department, mailing address  
*Tip:* Utilize contact information provided in job/internship description; research employer web site for recruiter contact if not provided in application instructions
- Opening Paragraph: Reference job/internship and employer and how you learned of the opportunity; discuss your education, relevant coursework; explain your interest and motivation to pursue this position  
*Tip:* Target the letter to the employer; discuss learning objectives for the internship or job
- Middle Paragraphs: Include 2-3 middle paragraphs focused on a specific experience and/or skill; discuss paid, volunteer, leadership, student organizations, classroom/course, and internship experiences  
*Tip:* Connect your experience to the employer and opportunity; provide detailed examples and quantify information; use language and keywords used in the job description
- Concluding Paragraph: Restate your interest in the opportunity; include a follow-up statement when you will contact the employer; end document with a thank you statement  
*Tip:* Only use a follow-up statement on applications that permit contact and/or if you have the employer contact information
- Valediction/Close: Sincerely, Your Name

## COVER LETTER STRATEGIES & CONSIDERATIONS

- Position Description: Review the job/internship description for clues on the skills and information to emphasize
- SWOT Analysis: Complete a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats analysis of your application and ability to perform the position responsibilities  
*Tip:* A SWOT analysis is also a great way to prepare for an interview, explore SWOT at: <http://goo.gl/XfPrzs>
- Business Writing: Active style of writing  
*Tip:* Limit use of passive voice, being verbs

## LACS HELP

Explore our online cover letter help and templates at: <http://goo.gl/xY2S3a>.

Craft your first draft and bring it to LACS for personalized help; learn how to make an appointment at: <http://goo.gl/T2hXVg>.

# COVER LETTER SAMPLE

Review the example below to develop your cover letter. Use the tips when creating your content and determining which experiences to highlight.

**ERICA RHODES** Use same header as resume

500 Bevo Lane, Austin, Texas 78705 • 214.444.3333 • er0123@utexas.edu Professional email address

April 4, 2016 Date of application

James Hitchcock  
Manager of Operations  
Boys & Girls Club of Arlington  
608 N. Elm Street  
Arlington, TX 76011

Dear Mr. Hitchcock: Personalize when possible

Tell how you learned of position I write to express my interest in the Academic Success Program Manager position with the Boys and Girls Club of Arlington. I learned about this opportunity through your posting with Liberal Arts Career Services at The University of Texas at Austin. I am a senior at UT Austin, graduating in May 2017 Graduation date with a B.A. in Spanish and a minor in sociology. The Boys & Girls Club's mission to enable young people to reach their full potential and lead healthy, fulfilling lives resonates with my passion for working with youth in need. In addition, I am a Dallas area native and thrilled about the opportunity to return and use my education and professional experience to help Arlington youth achieve their academic goals. Reference position Reference employer Motivation for applying

In my current role as a peer educator with UT Austin, I lead alcohol and drug intervention and education programs for young adults. Working closely with UT and community leaders and students, I present interactive workshops that provide a safe space for students to discuss issues such as binge drinking and overdose. To ensure the presentation information and materials are accurate and effective, I conduct thorough research and work closely with my team's leadership. In addition, I received training on substance abuse prevention and intervention work with youth and young adults. Detailed examples Relevant skills

Prior to becoming a peer educator, I worked as an academic coach at the Sanger Learning Center, UT Austin's primary academic support resource. As a coach I tutored a diverse group of undergraduate students as they worked towards improving their English proficiency. Working with ESL students proved to be a galvanizing experience, and I changed my major to Spanish in order to focus on improving my Spanish in order to better help and advocate for bilingual populations. My academic coaching work also taught me how to tutor each student according to his or her learning style. With a more individualized learning plan, English proficiency scores increased by at least 25% each quarter. Equally important, I learned to fuse cultural values into education to better reach diverse student populations. Quantify Relevant skills

In addition to my professional experiences, my community service experiences have revolved around mentoring and helping young people meet their full potential. Through my volunteer experiences at City House and Girl Advocates!, I have learned how to create recreational, educational, flexible outreach programs for youth of all backgrounds and varying skill levels. My volunteering experience at Plano-based City House after my freshman year was a formative experience that honed my interest in helping improve the lives of young people. Four years later, this interest remains intact, and I look forward to returning to the Dallas area to work hard on behalf of Arlington youth. Show enthusiasm Connect experience to employer

I am excited about the prospect of becoming a part of Arlington's Boys & Girls Club to help each student achieve success. I believe my professional experiences as a peer educator, academic coach, and youth-focused mentor have helped me understand the key issues and barriers affecting youth today, as well as provided me the experience and tools to create and implement a program focused on increasing young people's academic success. I strongly believe in the positive influence that the Boys & Girls Club has on the youth through the relationships that are fostered between the youth and adult professionals, and I hope that I'll be able to contribute to this mission as the Academic Success Program Manager. Thank you for considering my application, and I look forward to speaking with you soon. Reaffirm your match with position

Sincerely, Follow-up End with appreciation

Erica Rhodes