

**Cover Letter Template for Internships and Jobs**

1. Find the right ***mindset***. The person you’re writing about isn’t you. Depending on how you like to look at things, the person you’re writing about is a character or subject you’re presenting to the world, or a brand you’re managing. It’s best to have some distance from your subject you’re writing about, even when the subject is yourself.
2. Look over the position announcement. ***Highlight*** every qualification they’re after and exactly what sorts of things they say the candidate would do if hired. Don’t just “highlight,” actually highlight!
3. Your ***introductory paragraph*** should be short and sweet. If you’re going after an administrative position you should merely state who you are and what position you’re after. If you like you may add a sentence or two about why you’d be a good fit. If you’re going after a gig as a journalist or writer then you should take a different approach and begin with a strong lead, something that will both grab the reader’s attention and set the tone. If you’re a particularly strong writer you may also use this approach when going after an admin gig.
4. The next one-to-three paragraphs are the most important. They should demonstrate why you’re the best candidate for the position. The content should not be about your needs, desires and ambitions, nor should it be about how passionate you are or how much you love and admire the organization to which you’re applying. Rather these paragraphs should be about ***what you can do for the organization*** and what skills, knowledge and experience you bring to the table.

Look at the highlighted position announcement and directly address the most important qualifications and duties. These paragraphs should consist of ***claims backed up by examples*** or anecdotes. They say the qualified candidate should have a strong work ethic? You have a strong work ethic and here’s the proof, e.g., once when I worked for so-and-so I enthusiastically put in the extra hours it took to bring the big project in on deadline… big success… immensely satisfying. *The more specific you can be about your accomplishments and in your anecdotes and examples, the better.*

If you wish, you may use all or a portion of your penultimate paragraph to speak about how much you admire the organization and why, and you may say something about your level of interest and passion. This information is okay to present only after you’ve proven that you have the skills, knowledge and experience that will contribute to the mission and operation of the organization.

1. In your last paragraph, ***remind your readers why you’re such a good fit for the position***, thank them for giving your application careful attention and let them know that you’re looking forward to hearing from them soon.
2. When finished, read the entire letter out loud. Seriously. If you stumble over any words or phrases, consider making an adjustment to simplify your prose. Your cover letter should be an***easy read****.*

***Proofread***. Then proofread again. Then give your letter to peers and mentors for ***feedback***. Make adjustments as necessary, or repeat steps 1 – 5.