COVER LETTERS 101



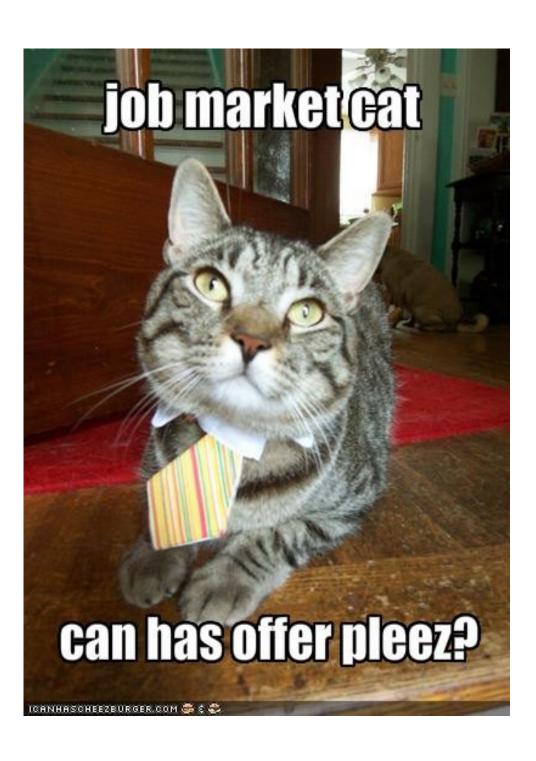
ENGL 308
Northern Illinois University
Prof. K. Kaiser Lee

WHAT CAN COVER LETTERS DO?

The cover letter lets you tell your story.

It shows your writing abilities (compared to the bulleted list that is the resume).

It lets you show off things about yourself that may not show up on a resume.



WRITING THE COVER LETTER

COVER LETTER ORGANIZATION

- Heading (your name & contact info email & cell only is good)
- Date
- Potential employer's name, address
- Salutation
- Introductory paragraph
- One-Two persuasive paragraphs
- Final paragraph
- Closing

If your resume has this style header, use the same style for the letter

Look how amazing this looks!

It's like your own personal stationery!

Kate Gerrigan

4539 North Abby Lanc • Austin, KY 60001 347.840,3439 • kate@aol.com

March 21, 2006

BBC Label Group 23889 Reynolds Atlanta, GA 29293

Dear Mr. Jones:

As an administrative/operational guru, and as someone passionate about Christian music, I'm extremely intrigued by the Executive Assistant position within the BBC Label Group.

I'm one of those people who simply loves getting things done. Whether it's everyday administrative tasks, coordinating work for large groups, or planning and executing events and projects, I truly thrive in a fast-paced environment.

I also am practically addicted to Christian music. I'm a street rep on my campus for several labels, and have coordinated music at retreats throughout the country. In fact my friends describe me as a Christian music junkie!

I genuinely hope to have the opportunity to speak with you more about this Executive Assistant position, and I will plan to contact you in a week.

Regards,

Kate Gerrigan

ADDRESSING THE LETTER

Sending your employment documents to a specific person increases the chances that they will be seriously reviewed by the company.

ADDRESSING THE LETTER

If you must, you may address your letter to "hiring professionals" - such as "Dear Hiring Professionals" "Dear Human Resource Professionals"

NOT "To Whom it May Concern" or "Dear Sir or Madam"!!

Two Options: **A Formula** or **A Story**

OPTION ONE:

FOUR PARAGRAPH COVER LETTER FORMULA

COVER LETTER FORMULA

Opening - in the first paragraph explain why are you writing, who are you, which job or ad are you responding to; this paragraph can be brief.

Be confident! "I am writing to apply for..."

not "I read with interest your advertisement..."



First Paragraph:

Dear Mr. Hagrid:

I am writing to apply for the Assistant Game Keeper job you recently advertised in the *Daily Prophet*. I am a sixth-year student at the Durmstrang Institute where I have studied care of magical creatures in depth. My experience with these creatures makes me a strong candidate for this position.

COVER LETTER ORGANIZATION

2nd & 3rd paragraphs explain your qualifications in more detail than your resume lets you.

2ND PARAGRAPH:

"At Durmstrang I passed the Ordinary Wizarding Level in "Care of Magical Creatures" with a rating of Outstanding, and am on track to complete the Nastily Exhausting Wizards Test on the subject next year."

3RD PARAGRAPH:

"I have also completed an internship with with Gringots Bank, where I learned goblin accounting practices, while also tending to the red dragon that guards the underground vaults there. By the end of my internship, I was fully responsible for the dragon's daily care."

COVER LETTER ORGANIZATION

Ways to close, choose at least one:

- Say you will contact them on a certain date
- Ask that they contact you
- Restate your specific interest in the position

Always thank them for their time, consideration

CLOSING PARAGRAPH MODEL

"My resume is included along with this letter. I will send my owl to your place of business within a fortnight to request a response. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Antonin Dolohov"



Option Two: Tell A Story About Yourself

Another approach to writing a cover letter is to do something unusual or unexpected.

something unusual or unexpected

Dear [Hiring Manager],

I knew that I was destined for greatness when I was slimed on Nickelodeon. Nothing like being covered in green goo to help you realize your potential. "How does this apply to the open internship at Airbnb?" you may be wondering.

Because I am collaborative, creative, and tenacious enough to get a bunch of smelly slime dumped on me and still keep smiling.

Example above from Grammarly's "Six Captivating Cover Letters and Why they Work" - Link

- USE THIS APPROACH WITH CAUTION
- When I am hiring someone, the number of applicants is overwhelming.
- I just want to know if the applicant can write, and understands the job.
- I teach writing so you would think these creative approaches would be effective on me
 but they aren't.
- That doesn't mean other people won't like them!
- Remember, employment documents are personal, and you should listen to your gut when composing them. Do what feels right for you.

What NOT To Do in Your Cover Letter

The following discusses examples of what NOT to do

Read Carefully

EXAMPLES OF clichés - AVOID THESE!

Rhetorical questions

"Are you looking for the best person to hire?" (Duh)

In-Your-Face

"Let's cut to the chase. You need someone like me who can help you turn a shoddy operation into a well-oiled machine, not one spurting along on watered-down diesel fuel, but one running on high-octane jet fuel" (irritating to work with)

DON'T FOCUS ON YOUR NEEDS

- Do not focus on your needs
- Focus on the employer's needs
- O DO NOT:
 - "Your position suits me perfectly, so I'm sending my resume for consideration. I enjoyed studying basketweaving while I was working on my degree..."
 - "I will use your job as a stepping-stone to further my career..."

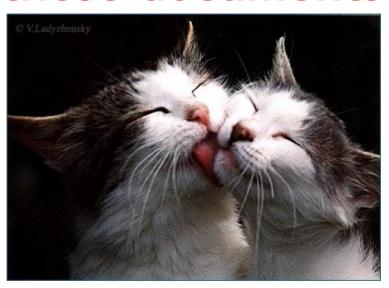
EXAMPLES OF CLICHÉ APPROACHES TO AVOID:

In Your Face

"Let's cut to the chase. You need someone like me who can help you turn a shoddy operation into a welloiled machine, not one spurting along on watered-down diesel fuel, but one running on high-octane jet fuel"

 See http://gawker.com/5883684/the-awful-cover-letter-allof-wall-street-is-laughing-about

Be careful when using the word "love" in these documents



To me, it seems off-putting to talk about how you feel about someone close to you personally and the workplace.

Brainstorm to come up with other ways to show your deep interest in the job (other than the words "interest" and "interesting", if possible) –

"I have been a fan of underwater basketweaving since I was 10 and I have been on three competitive underwater basketweaving teams..."

Proofread twice and have someone else proofread for you



General formatting of business letters Single-space

MICHELLE HLOOM

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Today's Date Ms Gill Cooper OslAD 123 Mort Sheet New York, NY 1801

I wish to apply for the past of Fundrasing Officer which I saw advertised on the Catard University Corsens Service website. I am in my final year of Oxford University, studying Mathematics. I have a long-transling interest in chairty wark and believe that I have the qualifies and experience required to the assumption.

My enflusiosm for pursuing a career in this area plems from my interest in working with disadvantaged young people, and my desire to make full use of my skits in motivating people to make a difference. DisAD has established its anderficit working in some of the most challenging areas of social old and the government funding recently awarded to the arganization is recognition of the success of its philosophy. After my experiences with Jacost I orn artisacted by the apportunity to help offere young people and to develop my fundaring skills in such an environment.

Mativating people to work with me lowards a common, worthwhite-goal is something that I find hugely enjoyable and rewarding. As Marketing and Publicity Officer for the College Ball ket year I was exhantely pleased that we had more applicant to factor. If the eves before, I believe that he marketing pack that I put together for potential sponsor played its part in attracting record levels of sponsorable.

One of the most rewarding aspects of being of Owland has been the work i have done with Jacak. During my first on the committee the number of volunities; involved in the paper has increased by 50% and I have enjoyed both the challenge of rating the profile of the society and my work with young propile themselves.

I would welcome the apportunity to discuss my application with you and look forward to hearing from you.

Your sinderely. Your name Don't indent paragraphs

Blank line space between paragraphs

Left-aligned

