

# The Cover Letter



## WHY DO I NEED ONE?

- The Cover Letter introduces you to the reader
- Invites the reader to learn more (i.e., read resume)
- Allows more in-depth description of "fit"

## DO's & DON'Ts

### DO:

- ...Address letter to specific person
- ...Use same font and style as resume
- ...Limit to 1 page
- ...Leave 4 blank lines between close and signature

### DON'Ts

- ...Use a generic "one size fits all" letter
- ...Exaggerate your skills or experience
- ...Write a long, wordy letter
- ...Have typos or other errors

**Date** → January 2, 20xx

**Salutation punctuated with a colon** → Mr. Great Employer:

**1st paragraph introduces purpose, states how you learned of position and expresses interest** → I am writing to express my interest in the Private Wealth Management Analyst position at JP Morgan. My interest is based on my enthusiasm to work in a fast paced environment on short-term projects for long-term clients. Also, I believe both my concentration in finance at the SMU Cox School of Business and my previous job experiences will allow me to succeed at JP Morgan.

**Close, space 4 lines, then signature line** → Sincerely,  
Benjamin Davis

**Complete contact info** → Benjamin Davis  
121 Main Street · Dallas, TX 75275 · 214-555-1212 · benjamindavis@domain.edu

**Name & address of recipient** → Mr. Great Employer  
Vice Chairman  
JP Morgan  
3684 Key Street  
Dallas, TX 75205

**Middle paragraph(s) show "fit" for position (specific skills & experience with examples)** → As a marketing analyst intern at Wyeth, a pharmaceutical and health care product company, I worked in the strategic customer group that markets a drug with over three billion dollars in annual sales. Analytical ability and communication skills were essential to contributing to the team in a short period of time. For my summer project, I was responsible for recommending and evaluating changes to Wyeth's patient rebate program to account for the growing enrollment in consumer driven health care. I interpreted and analyzed health plan data from health insurance providers' annual financial statements to deliver a quantitatively based recommendation to my team. I supported this recommendation with an enrollment forecast and cost benefit analysis. The strength of my communication within the team as well as with those outside the office was crucial to the success of my project. I believe I can leverage these skills into a successful experience at JP Morgan.

**Last paragraph summarizes qualifications, restates interest, requests action** → I am genuinely interested in pursuing a position at JP Morgan, and I respectfully request inclusion on your interview schedule to further discuss my qualifications. Should you wish to contact me, I can be reached at (303) 477-2371 or via email at benjamindavis@domain.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

**SAMPLE**

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## THE COVER LETTER CHECKLIST

You should have a check () in each box. If you don't, then you may want to make some adjustments to your letter before proceeding with your job search and submitting to an employer. If you need assistance, please attend a resume/cover letter workshop or meet with a career advisor.

- 1. I included my address and contact information on the letter.
- 2. I included the full name and address of the individual to whom I am addressing the letter.
- 3. I used proper formatting and spacing for professional business correspondence. (double-space between date and recipient's address, between recipient's address and the salutation, between paragraphs, and between the last paragraph and the close; single space lines inside paragraphs; five spaces between the close and my name.)
- 4. I used a colon for the punctuation in the salutation (e.g., Mr. Smith: ) I used a comma after the close (e.g., Sincerely,)
- 5. My first paragraph gave a brief overview or purpose for my letter and may include details on how I learned of the job or was referred to this individual.
- 6. My middle paragraph(s) demonstrates my knowledge of the company and how I fit the employer's needs.
- 7. My closing paragraph summarizes my purpose and qualification and requests an action from the employer.
- 8. I used action words (verbs) to describe my accomplishments.
- 9. I have not simply rehashed my resume but rather highlighted specific critical points.
- 10. I have tailored each letter to the specific needs of each employer.
- 11. I have kept my cover letter to one page.
- 12. I have edited and proofread each letter carefully and eliminated any typos or errors on the document.

