

# COVER LETTERS

## GET STARTED

- Create a well-written, tailored cover letter targeted to a specific job, field or organization.
- Entice the prospective employer to review your resume by highlighting major points relevant to the position you are seeking. Do not rehash your resume.
- Set a professional, yet engaging tone. Get to the point soon after the salutation. Be brief, pertinent, and accurate.
- Illustrate the qualifications and skills that make you unique and a good fit for the position. Avoid generic language.
- Focus on how you can contribute to the employer, not how they can help you.
- Hone your sentences so each word counts and keeps the prospective employer's attention.

## CONTENT

- Greeting. Address your cover letter to a real person. If you do not know the name of the person to address, use their title. Do not use "To Whom It May Concern". A little research goes a long way toward a positive first impression.
- First paragraph. Refer to the position and how you learned about the opening. If you were referred to the position by a mutual acquaintance, this is the place to use it. Include the formal title and location.
- Middle paragraph(s). Draw a connection between your qualifications, experiences and the employer's requirements for the position. Researching the organization and analyzing the job description will help you tailor this section. Use examples of how you have demonstrated skills they need.
- Closing paragraph. Establish your next step. Take a proactive approach and ask when an interview can be arranged. State you will contact them within a specific time frame. Thank them for their time and consideration.

## FORMAT

- Keep your cover letter to one page.
- Use the same header from your resume. Use the same font style and size as your resume.
- Customize your letter to include the company name, job title, and industry.
- Use clear, concise phrases and avoid vague descriptions.
- Vary the sentence structure. Do not begin every sentence with "I".
- Maintain correct verb tense and a consistent voice.
- Do not include personal information such as age, marital status, health status, etc.
- Do not state salary requirements unless requested in the job announcement.

## MAKE IT HAPPEN

- Double check for grammar and spelling errors. Review for consistency.
- Make sure there are no misrepresentations and you have authored an authentic cover letter.
- Schedule an appointment with a Career Services professional for review or additional assistance.
- When sending a printed copy, print on quality resume paper and sign your name in blue or black ink.
- When sending electronically, do not attach your cover letter to an email; use your cover letter as the body of the email.

Nelson Hall 314 • 601.925.3901  
Website: [www.mc.edu/career](http://www.mc.edu/career)  
Email: [career-services@mc.edu](mailto:career-services@mc.edu)  
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CAREER SERVICES

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## COVER LETTER EXAMPLE

Robert Smith

15 Brick Street • Clinton, MS 39056 • 601-555-5555 • rsmith@mc.edu

January 15, 2011

Mr. Dan Jones  
Human Resources Director  
Trustmark National Bank  
111 Capitol Street  
Jackson, Mississippi 39201

Dear Mr. Jones:

I am writing to express my interest in the Management Development Associate position posted on Mississippi College's online job board. I am confident that my education and leadership experience provide me with the necessary skills to meet or exceed your expectations in this role.

As my enclosed resume indicates, I will receive a bachelor's degree in business administration from Mississippi College in May. I have gained practical leadership and client service skills through leadership positions with campus organizations. As Vice President of the Student Government Association, I was responsible for planning student events, facilitating meetings, and managing a budget. I also served as President of Mortar Board, an interdisciplinary honor society for the top 50 seniors at Mississippi College. These leadership roles required effective planning and communication to reach our goals. I learned how to accomplish tasks within a team and create positive results for the organization.

The combination of my practical experience and educational background has prepared me to make an immediate contribution to Trustmark. I have enclosed my resume for your review and thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Robert Smith

Enclosure