



### What's the purpose of a cover letter?

- A cover letter is a professional way to introduce your resumé or application form when you are applying for a job.
- If you have not met the employer before, your cover letter will create the all-important first impression of you and your qualifications.

### What will I achieve by sending a cover letter?

An effective, well-written cover letter will do five things:

1. Grab – and keep – the employer’s attention
2. Appeal to the employer’s interests and needs
3. Highlight your skills, experiences, and accomplishments
4. Provide information that is relevant to the particular job
5. Convince the employer that you should be interviewed

### What should I include in a cover letter?

#### Contact information

- Include your name, address, telephone number, and email address.
- Keep the format of this section consistent with your resumé.

#### Date

- State the month, day, and year (e.g., April 15, 2015).

#### Employer’s information

- Include your contact person’s name, job title, company name, address, and postal code. Whenever possible, research or telephone the company to obtain this information.

#### Salutation

- Start your salutation with “Dear” or “To.”
- Address the contact person by the last name, starting with “Mr.” or “Ms.” depending on their gender.
- If the contact’s name is unknown, try addressing the person by their job title.
- If unsure, try addressing it to “Human Resources.” Avoid “To Whom It May Concern” or “Dear Sir/Madam.”

#### Opening paragraph: why are you writing?

- Open with strong sentences that grab the employer’s attention.
- Demonstrate your knowledge of the position

by addressing why you are interested in this position.

- Mention two or three strengths that qualify you for the position.
- Mention how you found out about the job. Name your referral if possible (e.g., Joe Davis, Manager of Customer Service, suggested I write to you). If you are responding to an advertisement, refer to the ad.

#### Second paragraph: what do you have to offer?

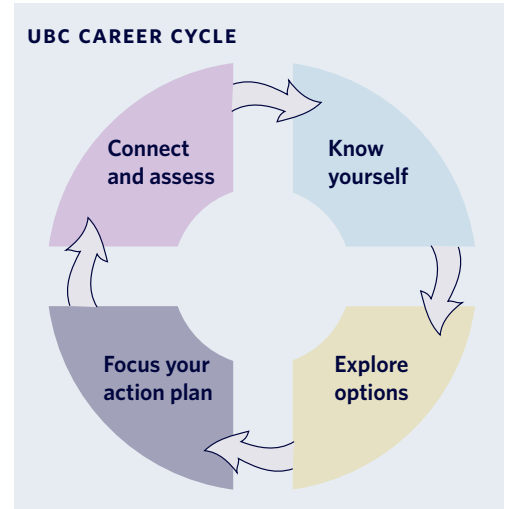
- Use specific examples of accomplishments from your past work, volunteer, and academic experiences that show your strengths.
- Target your strengths to the needs and requirements identified in the ad or from your research.

#### Third paragraph: why this company?

- Explain why you are interested in working for this particular employer. Do some research – show that you know something about the organization’s values, culture, or areas of prospective growth, and how they are relevant to you and your accomplishments.

#### Closing paragraph: follow-up

- Mention your interest in participating in an interview or discussing opportunities.
- Provide information on your availability and how the employer may contact you.
- Take a more proactive approach, when appropriate, by arranging to call the employer.



### How should I format my cover letter?

- Personalize your letter. It should reflect your personality. But be careful to avoid appearing pushy, overbearing, or too familiar. Remember that this is a business letter, so humour is generally out of place here.
- Make it brief and to the point. Your letter should be no longer than one page and printed on good quality white or off-white paper.
- Use simple and direct language.
- An 11–12 point font size is usually ideal.
- Review your letter carefully for any spelling, punctuation, grammar, or typing errors. Ask a friend to check it too. Don't rely on spellchecking programs!

*Content adapted from UBC Career Services, Vancouver campus*

## Sara January

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April 3, 2015

Owen Wheelwright  
Director  
Okanagan Ecology Society  
3478 Archway Ave.  
Kelowna, BC V1V 1R9

To Mr. Wheelwright,

As a strong supporter of environmental conservation, I am excited about the opportunity to educate children about the importance of our natural world. Therefore, I am submitting my resumé for the position of Environmental Education Assistant as advertised on your website on April 2, 2015.

My interest in the environment started during my undergraduate program at the University of British Columbia. Through my minor in Environmental Sciences, I gained awareness and knowledge of the major environmental issues facing human societies. To pursue my interest in the environment, I volunteered as an educator for Evergreen Foundation, where I played an active role in educating the public on recycling and pollution. Aside from my passion for environmental issues, I also thoroughly enjoy working with children in the outdoors. As camp counsellor at Big Cove Camp, I coordinated outdoor activities to improve the self-esteem of inner city children. Through my experience, I developed an understanding of the issues and barriers that marginalized children face every day.

The Okanagan Ecology Society's commitment to environmental preservation through the delivery of education programs will allow me to combine my enthusiasm for the environment with my skills for interacting with children. Furthermore, I feel my outgoing personality, creative nature, and love for the outdoors will be an ideal fit for your team.

I would enjoy the opportunity to meet with you to discuss my qualifications. I will call you on Tuesday to confirm receipt of my application. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Sara January*

Sara January

Why am I applying? State what you offer them.

What can I do for this company?

List how your qualifications meet each requirement in the job posting. Use action words and strong verbs as from your resumé.

Summarize how their organizational goals are the perfect fit for you.

Close with a positive statement that you would like to meet and a promise to follow up.