



## Sample Cover Letter Content

For an example header, please refer to page 4

Dear Ms. Rohrer,

### **Create Interest and briefly state why you are writing**

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me regarding the Magazine Division at Acme Publishing. I was impressed to learn that Acme is the United States' largest magazine publisher. As we discussed, I am interested in following up on the upcoming available staff writer position in your department. You mentioned this would be a great way for me to get started at Acme. From your description, it sounds like a great match with my background and qualifications.

### **Make a connection between their job requirements and your experience**

As you can see from my resume, I have experience in writing and publishing. As an intern with Graphic Arts Publishing, I learned about and assisted in the process of the design and publication functions of the 2010 Oregon Scene Photography Guide. My interaction with our diverse team of designers, writers, publishers, and marketing personnel provided great insight into the whole process, from design concept to the final product publication. As an assistant to Dora Meister at Linfield College, I was charged with the editing and graphic design of the Linfield College Academic Catalog. This valuable experience increased my knowledge, skill base, and interest in the writing profession.

### **Call to action!**

I am very interested in becoming a staff writer at Acme Publishing and will follow up with you next week to ensure you have received my resume and talk about the next steps in the hiring process. If you need to reach me before then, please contact me via phone at 503-838-0000 or email [sbecker@gmail.com](mailto:sbecker@gmail.com).

Sincerely,

### **SIGN YOUR LETTER**

Sophia R. Becker

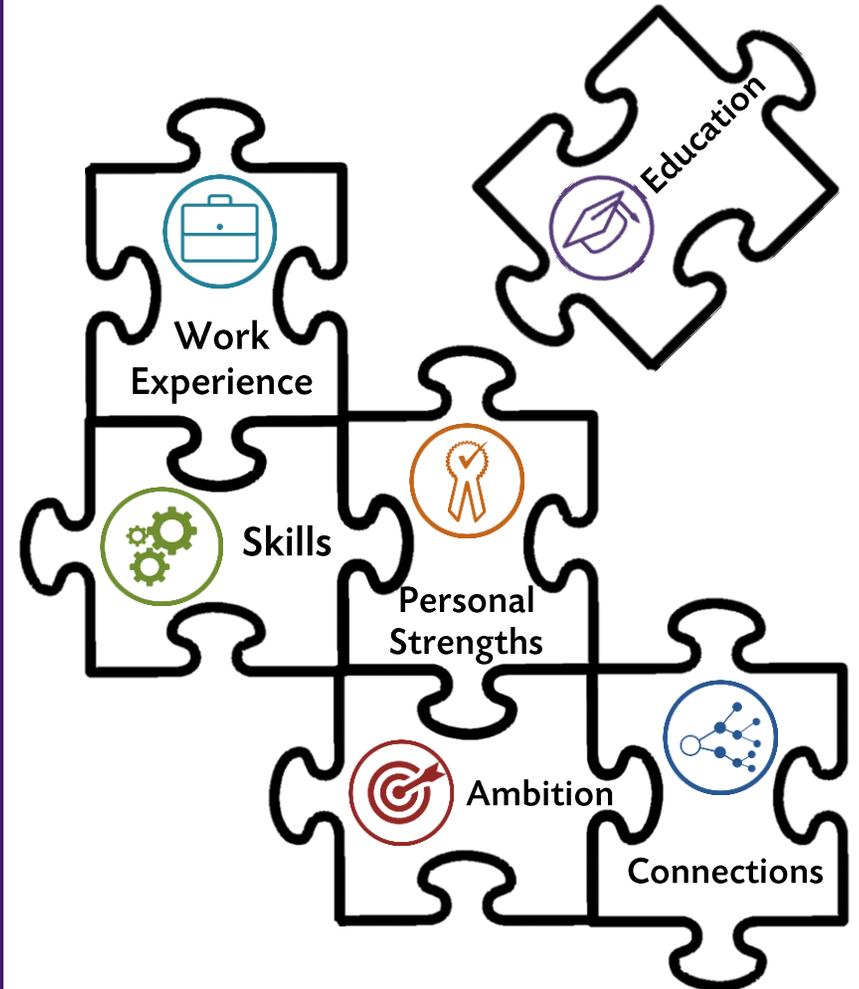
Encl: Resume



Melrose 010  
career@linfield.edu  
(503) 883-2733  
[www.linfield.edu/career](http://www.linfield.edu/career)



## Cover Letter



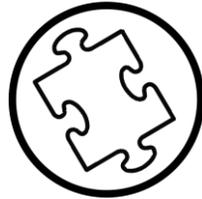
**Cats to Careers:**  
Pursue **YOUR** Path!



## What is a Cover Letter?

A cover letter is an introduction in its most fundamental and basic form. This is the document at the front of your application that may determine whether you get called in for an interview. Think of this as your **elevator speech**. You have one page to explain to an employer who you are and why they should hire you.

A cover letter is **not** optional. It has as much importance, if not more importance, than a resume. Your resume is the bare bones, the dry “here it is, this is what I’ve done,” and the cover letter is an expression of yourself. It is your opportunity to write your story. It is often times the first and only impression of you that the potential employer has. When done right, the cover letter leaves a lasting, positive impression that makes an employer want to learn more about you.



### SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Purdue online writing lab

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/549/1/>

Myfuture.com

<http://www.myfuture.com/careers/articles-advice/creating-your-cover-letter>



## Research

Take time to thoroughly **research** the company and the position for which you are applying. Browse through their website to understand their mission statement/goals. Make sure you read the job description and qualifications **completely** –this will help you to know if you are qualified for the position. If you are missing a particular qualification, the cover letter is the place to explain that, and why you are still a great candidate for the position.

## Essentials (Continued)

7. **Be honest!** This is not the time to exaggerate. Present yourself in the best possible way, while staying honest and accurate.

8. **Be confident** in your skills and abilities! This is your time to shine. Write actively and let your personality show through!



9. Use the opportunity to explain any negatives on your resume (such as a lower GPA than what they prefer).

10. Remember that your cover letter is a story of yourself and is a reflection of who you are. Put as much time and effort into writing it as you would for writing a paper or studying for a final exam.



## Common Mistakes

### DON'T

1. **Lie.**
2. Forget to **sign your name** or **attach your resume**.
3. Write to a department or use a generic greeting, if possible, try to find the name of the person in charge of hiring. If you can't, it is okay to use their job title (i.e. “Dear Hiring Manager”).
4. Overuse the word “I”. Illustrate to them that their needs and goals matter as much as your own skills and experiences.
5. Forget **contact information**. If you want that interview, you better make sure they know how to tell you about it.
6. Forget to **keep copies** of the cover letter so that you can reference it and remember exactly what you have told them, and therefore what they are likely to ask you about.

## Content (Continued)



Thank them, to show appreciation for their willingness to read your entire letter. Provide your contact information again (yes, it is at the top of the page, but you want to make it easy for them to contact you). Finally, mention that you will follow up (make sure that you **ACTUALLY** follow up with them).



## Essentials

### DO:

1. **PROOFREAD** –This is the most important step. Typos and mistakes will get your application thrown in the trash. Read it over and over at different times so you can catch mistakes.
2. Have your friends, professors, coworkers, and family read it too. They may be able to give advice or tips that you may not have considered. (Bring it in to Career Development and have them look it over as well!)
3. **Personalize** and individualize every cover letter you send.
4. Print with high quality ink and resume paper (stop by the Career Hub – Melrose 010 – to use our resume paper).
5. Single space your cover letter, keep it one page, leave one line space between sections, and have nice equal margins.
6. **Be direct!** Use clear expression and say what you actually mean. Sometimes using metaphors or flowery language does not translate well to a hiring manager.



## Pre-Writing

A cover letter should answer the following questions:

- Why am I a valuable asset for this company?
- Why are my skills, abilities, and experiences right for this position?
- What can I bring to the table that sets me apart from other applicants?
- What do I want the employer to know about me?
- What are my goals for both this company/position and myself?
- What story do I want to tell?
- Who am I writing to?
- How did I hear about this opportunity?
- What do I know about the company?



## Format

Cover letters follow a straightforward format that shows professionalism. The heading with your name and contact information should match your resume header. The rest of the letter should be in the standard business letter format (see page 8 for the cover letter body example):

- Left-aligned
- Date of submission
- Company information (name of hiring manager, title, company name, company address)
- Greeting (Dear...)

(Keep Reading →)

## Format (Continued)

- Content
- Sincerely
- Signature
- Your name typed out



A cover letter **MUST** be typed, should be **no longer than one page**, and should have wider margins (1 inch margins are fine).

### Sample Header:

<p><b>Sophia R. Becker</b>        888 N. Craven Drive #22        McMinnville, OR 97128        503-838-0000        sbecker@gmail.com</p>
<p>August 2, 2012</p>
<p>Ms. Elaine Rohrer        Vice President, Magazine Division        Acme Publishing        P.O. Box 3030        Portland, OR 97208</p>
<p>Dear Ms. Rohrer,</p>



## Content

### The Opening Paragraph

The first line of a cover letter should **grab the attention** of the reader. This is especially important with cover letters: if it doesn't create enough interest, your letter might just be thrown in the trash. Your opening line should be noteworthy so it can pull the hiring manager in. If you met with the person before, (perhaps at a career fair or networking event) mention it! Possibly include a memory jogger that will help them to remember you. Be sure to include how you heard about the opening, what specific position you are applying for, and

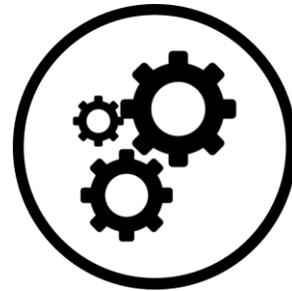
## Content (Continued)

your educational background (i.e. "I am writing to you as a recent graduate from Linfield College"). The final sentence(s) of your opening statement should be a **claim** as to you are uniquely qualified for the position and what you can bring to the table. This claim should then be the basis of the rest of the cover letter.



### The Body Paragraph(s)

The body of your cover letter should expand upon those top qualities you listed in your opening paragraph. You don't want to just tell them that you have those skills, but you want to **show** them. Provide examples of how you have demonstrated the qualities they're looking for (special projects you've worked on, awards, accomplishments, etc.). Take **key words** from the job description and use them to guide your writing. Explain how you exemplify those qualities and why you are a good fit/match for the position. Add what you know about their company (perhaps their volunteer work or philanthropy) and why that interests you.



### The Closing Paragraph

Your closing paragraph needs to be strong and leave the reader wanting to know more about you. Briefly **summarize** what makes you qualified and why you are a good match with the position. Mention that your resume is enclosed and give a little lead into it (i.e. "to read more about my previous experience, please see attached resume"). Be sure to **request an interview**, as this will give them incentive to read your application thoroughly.

