

Writing a Cover Letter & Reference Sheet

What is a cover letter and do I need one? Cover letters preview your job application for an employer and allow you to provide additional detail about your experiences beyond what is listed on your resume, as well as your interest in the position. While not all jobs require a cover letter to apply, writing a thoughtful, researched cover letter will set you apart from other candidates.

How should my cover letter look?

- Business format, left aligned
- Same header as resume
- Same font style and size as resume
- One page in length
- Balance of text and white space

Saying hello: Address the letter to a specific person: **Dear Ms. Stephens.**

If you don't know a specific name use **Dear Hiring Manager** or **Dear organization name Hiring Manager.**

Avoid **To whom it may concern**, or **Dear Sir or Madam.**

Target your letter: It's essential to write a new letter when you apply for different jobs.

Targeting your CL means writing about your experiences as they relate to the job you're applying for. Including specific info about **org history** and **what the position entails** show you've done research to prepare and write a meaningful letter.

This also makes it less likely that you'll make a mistake writing the wrong organization or recipient somewhere in the letter.

What do I say in my cover letter?

- 1st Paragraph:
 - The position you're applying for
 - How you found out about the position
 - Why you're interested in the position
- 2nd Paragraph (usually the longest)
 - What qualifies you (skills)
 - Your relevant achievements and experiences
- 3rd Paragraph:
 - Brief closing summary
 - Desire to meet for an interview
- Handwritten signature

Cover Letter Tips

- Avoid negatives (why you left a job)
- Do not start every sentence with 'I'
- Use clear, direct language
- Be confident and assertive. Avoid 'I feel' or 'I think' statements.
- Show the employer what you can do for them
- Show writing skill and personality
- Refer to the correct organization & recipient (double check!)
- Have multiple people review your cover letter

References attest to your character and support the info on your resume and CL.

Examples of references are:

- Internship/work supervisors
- Faculty members
- Advisors or career counselors

People not to use as references:

- Family relations or friends
- Distant connection who doesn't know you
- 'Famous' person who doesn't know you

Information to include:

- Reference's name, job title
- Organization
- Email address
- Phone number
- Optional: relationship, years known

Reference Sheet Tips:

- **ALWAYS** ask before you list someone as a reference
- Tell your references what jobs you're applying for
- Use the same header and style as your resume and cover

Need your cover letter or reference sheet reviewed?

Email career@stephens.edu or book an appointment through HireStephensStars

STEPHENS A. STUDENT

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August 1, 2019

June Putnam
Missouri Marketing and Design Group
400 South Street
Columbia, MO 65201

Dear Ms. Putnam,

It is with great enthusiasm that I submit my application for the design internship at the Missouri Marketing and Design group. My career counselor, Ellen Morris, shared this internship posting with me. My experience as a Stephens College strategic communication design student as well as in multiple internships make me an ideal candidate for this internship.

While a student at Stephens College I have worked as a creative executive at the student run design firm, Creative Ink. In this position I worked with organizations on designing new marketing materials and graphics. This position required thorough communication with clients and colleagues to insure customers received quality work on time. Since starting at Creative Ink I have improved my skills using Adobe InDesign and Photoshop as well as Javascript.

During my summer internship at SJ Digital I pitched ideas to new and existing clients, as well as created visuals for client presentations. The enthusiasm and attention to detail that I've gained through campus involvement and this internship will be an excellent addition to the Missouri Marketing and Design Group. I am confident in my professionalism, communication and technical skills and look forward to utilizing them for your organization.

I am thrilled at the possibility of being involved in the new campaigns that the Missouri Marketing and Design Group is creating. Thank you for your consideration of my internship application and will follow-up with your office in 10 days to check that my application has been received. Additionally, I can be reached at 573-872-7133 or sstudent@stephens.edu.

Thank you,



Stephens A. Student