

Cover Letter Assignment

Intro: A good resume won't get you an interview for your dream job (or any other job) if you write a poor cover letter. I have served on multiple hiring committees in higher education, in retail, and for community organizations; I have reviewed thousands of cover letters and resumes.

The MOST important advice I can give you from this experience is this: MAKE IT PERFECT!

I will tell you that probably 6 out of every 10 cover letters (and therefore resumes) ended up with an immediate NO next to their name on my list. Why? Because they were poorly written, looked sloppy and/or had errors. When I say errors, I mean if I saw one error, I rejected it. That may sound harsh, but I wasn't alone—this is standard practice.

If an applicant does not make the effort to produce professional communication, then why would we want to work with that person? Or want them to teach? Would they bring that same sloppy attitude toward their paying work? I wouldn't take the chance, especially not since there were others who did take the time to "look" good. They're getting the call for an interview. You want to be the person who makes it to the interview!

Goal: The goal of this assignment is for you to write a persuasive cover letter for a *real* job or internship.

Details: Research a real job or real internship—that means one that currently exists for which you are qualified and write a cover letter persuading the hiring manager/committee to hire you for that job (or internship). Focus on the qualifications, not the logistics as you select the job/internship. That means if the opportunity is in Seattle but you can't move there, or if it requires travel and you can't travel, apply anyway. That part, for our purposes, is not as important as having something real and current that you can focus your work on. Do not ignore qualifications though—if the job requires that you speak Japanese and you don't or if the internship requires a degree you do not have, don't select job/internship for your focus. When in doubt, ask me.

Organization: Follow AIDA: Your first paragraph (attention) should include the job/internship you are applying for and where you saw the advertisement; the second paragraph (interest) (and the following) should provide concrete and specific details regarding your experiences, skills, and knowledge as it relates to the job/internship. The desire section of your letter should focus on demonstrating how you have the personal qualities the employer is looking for—this is the personal part of your letter (pathos) as opposed to logos (which is your interest paragraphs). Finally, end with tactful action. See chapter 10 for details

Attach: your assignment AND the job/internship advertisement as a word doc.

Grading: this assignment is worth 100 points. See rubric following the assignment for grading details.

Format: Follow block letter format

The following rubric will be used to grade your assignment:

Grading Rubric: Cover Letter

	Excellent	Average	Approaching Average	Failing
Format and Structure	-block format with appropriate spacing is employed without error -return address, inside address, greeting, and closing (sender's name and title) are present, appropriately punctuated, and professional	-block format with appropriate spacing is employed with minimal error -return address, inside address, greeting, and closing (sender's name and title) are present, appropriately punctuated, and professional with minimal error	-block format is employed with multiple error - return address, inside address, greeting, and closing (sender's name and title) are not all included and/or appropriately placed or punctuated	-does not employ block format -- return address, inside address, greeting, and closing (sender's name and title) are not included
Content	-expertly calls attention to the position you are seeking and source of advertisement -appeals to logos by including specific and concrete details regarding experience, skills, and knowledge related to position -explains sophisticated and specific connection to personal qualities employer is looking for -ends with tactful and courteous action	--adequately calls attention to the position you are seeking and source of advertisement -includes appeals to logos but may not be concrete or as specific as an excellent response regarding experience, skills, and knowledge related to position - makes adequate connection to personal qualities employer is looking for -ends with general and courteous action	-generic opening regarding position you are seeking -location of advertisement may be confusing or absent -logic may be confusing or unclear -includes vague details regarding experience, skills, and/or knowledge related to position -ending is vague	-opening and location of advertisement may be confusing or absent --ideas and details are minimal, confusing, or not connected to assignment -logic is flawed - personal qualities are absent or unclear -ending is absent
Language	-uses professional and formal language throughout -demonstrates control of the conventions with no errors	-uses professional and formal language throughout -demonstrates basic control exhibiting occasional errors that do not hinder comprehension	-language is informal or inappropriate -demonstrates emerging control, exhibiting frequent errors that make comprehension difficult or indicate a lack of understanding of conventions of grammar	-language is informal or inappropriate -demonstrates minimal or no control of conventions