

How to Write a Cover Letter – by Sally J. Phelps, Director, Post-Graduate Planning

A cover letter brings context to your resume. It provides more specific information about what you have done as it relates to the company/position you are applying to. Once you write a few cover letters, it'll be a piece of cake and you'll get better and better with each one. Save them and modify them according to the company you're applying to.

Here is the basic outline of a cover letter. Probably three paragraphs (4 if you have more to say):

1st - Hi, I'm a mechanical engineering student at Olin College of Engineering. I heard about your company through XX [give a name if you have one!] and I was super excited to hear about XX position (job or internship, state specific position) and here's WHY. Make a connection between you and their company that will compel them to keep reading (I'm intrigued by your new product/technology, my roommate worked there last summer and loved it, I have a personal interest in what your company does etc.)

2nd - Here's where you want to show them more specifically where your experience/interests and the skills they're looking for CONNECT. The closer the match here, the more they're going to want to talk to you. Go beyond what your resume says - tell them something new or go deeper in an area that establishes this connection. How can you help THEM? This may take two paragraphs, depending on how much experience you have or your year in school.

3rd - Wrap it up. Brief paragraph, something like "It would be amazing to be able to work with your team this summer. I will bring value to your organization with my X, Y and Z skills, attitude, experience.

I am best reached by email at XXX OR I will be in your area on these dates and would love to bring you coffee some morning. I hope to hear from you soon!

Sally J. Phelps

Be excited but be yourself. If this is your dream company tell them. Be sure you let them know BOTH how you can help them AND what you will get out of the experience. **You've got this!**