"Above all, a cover letter is a sales pitch and it is the single most important page an unpublished writer will ever write. It’s the first impression and will either open the door or close it. It's that important, so don't mess it up. Mine took 17 drafts and two weeks to write".

~ Nicholas Sparks

There are two common cover letter styles. The broadcast cover letter and the targeted cover letter.

**BROADCAST COVER LETTER**

The purpose of a broadcast cover letter is to share your availability to multiple employers in your field without composing a separate letter for each employer. Keep in mind that this type of letter is not usually used to pursue a specific job lead.

**Examples:**

“I am writing to highlight my qualifications for a position as an account executive....”

“I am aware of the changing roles of a nurse in today’s hospital environment, and I believe that I would contribute to patient safety and satisfaction by offering (insert skills you have).”

**TARGETED COVER LETTER**

A targeted cover letter is used when applying to a specific job lead. Remember to thoroughly read and reread the job advertisement in order to slant the skills that you have to what the employer is looking for.

In a targeted cover letter it is appropriate to refer to specific information you discovered through conversations with an employee from their company, or by doing research about the company.

Remember that the primary purpose of the letter is to get you in the door for the interview. Make sure the letter has an impact by writing specific information that you have gathered about the company. This will show that you feel the company is a quality match for your personality and skills set.

**Examples:**

“My academic background, together with my work experience, has prepared me for the teaching position currently advertised with ACME School.”

“Through researching ACME I have found that your mission aligns well with my educational background, and that I am excited for an opportunity to become a part of the team.”

**DECIDING WHICH COMPANIES TO SEND A COVER LETTER & RÉSUMÉ TO**

Compile a list of companies that advertise the positions you seek, and that align with your interests and education.

Remember, similar to preparing for an interview, it is important to research the company so that you can highlight the skills that you possess that will contribute to the overall success of the company.
**BE SURE TO:**
- Apply for the job posting as soon as possible after it appears, however don’t rush through the process of tailoring your cover letter.

  The extra time spent on ensuring that the skills you highlight in your cover letter match the needs of the employer could make the difference between earning an interview and being passed over.

- Follow the instructions carefully regarding where your cover letter should be directed, (i.e. the department, committee, or company employee).

- Answer all questions, if provided, with the exception of responding to a request for salary requirements. In this case, it is advisable to avoid the question and simply indicate that it is open or negotiable.

- Be brief, and specific! Letters should be individualized, concise, and factual.

- Consider what you would want to see highlighted in a cover letter if you were the employer. Would you hire you?

- Be professional, and businesslike; remember you are selling your skills.

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**ADDRESSING YOUR LETTER**

Write to a specific person within the company. If a name is not offered on the company’s website, contact the Human Resources Department and ask who you should write your letter to.

If you are unable to identify a specific person to address your letter to, it is professional to use “To Whom It May Concern”, “Dear Search Committee”, or “To Human Resources.”

**THANK YOU LETTER**

Following the interview, send a thank you letter, note or email expressing your appreciation for the interviewer’s time within 24-48 hours of your interview. Not only will this letter serve as a professional courtesy, it will also demonstrate the skill of following up.

In your thank you letter:

- State your appreciation for the time that the interviewer(s) took to interview you.

- Remind the reader of the date and time of your interview.

- Reiterate your interest in the employer by adding a statement related to conversation had during your interview; refer to information learned during the interview about the company that is not readily available on the company’s website.

- Ask questions you may have which were not answered in the original interview.

- Express appreciation for status updates on the hiring process.
Cover Letter Outline

Your name
Your address
City, State, Zip Code

Date

Name of contact
Their title
Name of the company
Company’s street address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Ms. Smith:

1st Paragraph • Tell why you are writing; name of the position, field, or general career area in which you are interested. Tell how you heard of the opening or company (this is especially important if you were referred by a mutual contact). Provide information about what you know about them and their position.

2nd Paragraph • Discuss two or three of your qualifications that you believe will be of greatest interest to the company, slanting your remarks to their point of view. Tell why you are particularly interested in the employer, locations, or type of work. If you have had related experience or specialized training, be sure to point it out. Make sure to explicitly express why they should hire you!

3rd Paragraph • Close by making a request for an opportunity to talk with the employer. Indicate that you will follow up with a phone call or email about the possibility of a meeting. If your request is not concerning an interview, but more information about the company and current job openings, you can request that the information be sent electronically, Prior to requesting this information, make sure it is not readily available on the company’s website. Thank the employer for his/her consideration of your application materials.

Sincerely,

*Sign your name here

Type your name here

Sample Cover Letter

Scott Wallace
101 West State Street
Jacksonville, FL 32202

January 25, 2015

Ms. Alexa Riverson
Hiring Manager
ACME Fabrication
1133 West Gaines Street
Jacksonville, FL 32217

Dear Ms. Riverson:

I am writing to express interest in your machinist position. I am currently in the CNC Machinist program at Florida State College at Jacksonville and will graduate this May. Upon learning of this available position I made contact with Mr. Stephen Jones in Recruiting to discuss what is required of an employee in this position.

Through my discussion with Mr. Jones, as well as researching your company, I have found that I possess the skills and professional qualities that you seek. While attending Florida State College at Jacksonville, I have had the opportunity to work closely with my instructors in order to gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of this industry which has led to my being extremely interested in a machining career with ACME Fabrication. Since enrolling in Florida State College at Jacksonville’s Machining program I have excelled in all of my classes, and mastered each project requirement of the program. My proven machining skills, in addition to being a dedicated employee, are what I believe sets me apart from other applicants.

I have enclosed my résumé and look forward to discussing an opportunity to join your team. I will follow up in the next week regarding this request. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Scott Wallace