

Writing a Cover Letter:

START

IT OFF ON THE RIGHT FOOT ...

→ USE BUSINESS LETTER FUNDAMENTALS

Use a formal “block” style for both your (the return address at the top) and their addresses.

A clear subject line (i.e. **Re: Retail Sales Assistant Posting**) gets to the point immediately.

LINE	INFORMATION	EXAMPLE
1 st	→ Formal Name	→ Mr. David Stern
2 nd	→ Job Title	→ President
3 rd	→ Company	→ National Basketball Association
4 th	→ Street Address	→ 645 Fifth Ave., 19 th Floor
5 th	→ City & Province	→ New York City, New York
6 th	→ Postal Code	→ 10022
7 th	→ Country (if necessary)	→ United States

→ MAKE A GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION

Introduce yourself and communicate your enthusiasm in the position.

→ REMEMBER YOUR PURPOSE AND YOUR AUDIENCE

Purpose: “Keep your eyes on the prize.” The goal is to receive an interview. When an employer reads resumes and cover letters, they see a sea of black and white. Make yourself stand out so that the employer wants to meet you.

Audience: The employer has needs and wants from the hiring process. These are usually the requirements and expectations outlined in the job notice. Highlight skills and experiences that match the job ad. Show that you have the qualifications to be the ideal employee.

→ GET TO THE POINT

Be clear and concise. Use simple sentence structures. Avoid slang.

→ BE POLITE

Whoever is in charge of the hiring process deserves your complete respect. Literally, when they pick your letter up at the fax machine, they have your fate in their hands. Finish with a friendly final sentence and a complimentary closing.

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START & FINISH

by Coach Brock Bourgase

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→ BUSINESS LETTER CHECKLIST

Did you include the following elements?

- a “return” address (your address)
- the formal date
- an “inside” address (their full address)
- a clear subject line
- a salutation, like “**Dear Ms. Jones,**”
- the body of the letter
- a complimentary closing
- your name and contact information (phone, email, anything that may not be in the return address)
- the identification of who wrote the letter (UPPERCASE initials) and who typed the document (lowercase initials)
- any enclosures (such as your resume or any certificates)

EXAMPLES OF FORMAL DATE FORMATS

- **Thursday, September 18th 2008**
- **18 September 2008**

✗ Do not use shorthand (09/18/08) ✗

OUTLINE OF THE BODY OF THE LETTER

- Paragraph 1 is often an **introductory paragraph** that gets to the point quickly and enthusiastically
- Paragraph 2 **highlights 3-4 qualifications that match the employer’s needs**. Experiences such as co-op or interesting projects can make a candidate stand out.
- Paragraph 3 is a **respectful closing** to end the letter on a positive note

EXAMPLES OF CLOSINGS

- **Sincerely,**
- **Yours truly,**
- **Respectfully yours,**

→ RESEARCH

What did you learn about the company?

- phone or email the employer to find out the **full name** of the person in charge of the hiring process
- visit the website to get the company’s **formal business address**
- visit job boards to learn about the company’s reputation

→ BE PROFESSIONAL

Did you proof-read the letter?

- personal review (print a draft and look it over)
- Microsoft Word spelling and grammar check
- ask a friend to read a draft

... AND **FINISH** IT STRONG.