

COVER LETTERS – Styles and Layouts

Wherever your career takes you, writing professional sounding letters will be critical to your success. Even when competing for career building opportunities, a well-written letter articulating why you should be considered and outlining the connection or fit between you and the organization can tip the scales. While business letter standards have variations, here are some formatting guidelines and alternatives to make a professional case.

Business letter styles

Components	Block	Modified Block
Return Address	_____ (i) (4 single line spaced) or (ii) (Double spaced)	_____ (i) (4 single line spaced) or (ii) (Double spaced)
Date	_____ (i) (Double spaced) or (ii) (4 single line spaced)	_____ (i) (Double spaced) or (ii) (4 single line spaced)
Inside Address	_____ _____ _____ (Double spaced)	_____ _____ _____ (Double spaced)
Salutation/Greeting	Dear _____ (Double spaced)	Dear _____ (Double spaced)
Topic/Reference Line (optional)	Re: _____ (Double spaced)	Re: _____ (Double spaced)
Body (2-3 paragraphs) • Introduction • Positioning • Next steps	_____ (Double spaced) _____ _____ (Double spaced) _____ (Double spaced)	_____ (Double spaced) _____ _____ (Double spaced) _____ (Double spaced)
Closing/Signature	_____ (4 single line spaced)	_____ (4 single line spaced)
Enclosure Notation	_____ (Double spaced)	_____ (Double spaced)

Presenting information in the body of the letter

Text Wrap Around

In full sentences, outline the way your experience and education can contribute to the employer and role.

Describe what ability, skill and knowledge relates to their on-the-job needs.

Key Bullets

Itemize key reasons you qualify for the position:

- Top achievements relevant to competencies requested
- Relevant experience (part-time, summer, volunteer or work term)
- Relevant education, training, certifications in progress/completed

Comparative

You Require

- X experience
- Needed education
- Ability to...
- Valuable skill set

I Bring

- XY experience
- Key education and training
- Relevant, specific accomplishment
- Demonstrated ability in...

RETURN ADDRESS/HEADING

Your Name
Your Address
City, Province, Postal Code
Your Telephone Number

DATE *(without abbreviations)*

INSIDE ADDRESS

First and Last Name of Employer, Title
Department
Name of Company
Address
City, Province, Postal Code

SALUTATION/GREETING

Dear Ms. (or Mr.) Person's Last Name:

REFERENCE / COMPETITION NUMBER, JOB TITLE

OPENING PARAGRAPH

Identify how you have come to be contacting them and the position or type of work you are interested in.

COMPETITIVE POSITIONING *(one to two paragraphs)*

Connect the dots between you and the position accountabilities, requirements, challenges and opportunities. This will be based on your research into the work you seek and the organization's business objectives. This demonstrates genuine interest in the company.

Share specific competencies and accomplishments directly related to the role you are competing for. Demonstrate how you are qualified for the position by emphasizing:

- Specific related experience *(summer, part-time, work-term, volunteer)*
- Relevant education and training *(theoretical and hands on school assignment)*
- A particular achievement appropriate to the work
- Competencies, abilities, skills and interests in common with needs of reader.

WRAP-UP/NEXT STEPS PARAGRAPH

Clarify specifically how/when you will follow up. Express an interest in meeting/interviewing. Clarify how/when you can be reached. Express gratitude.

CLOSING AND SIGNATURE BLOCK

Complimentary closing,

Signature *(not necessary when uploaded or emailed)*

followed by your typed name.

ENCLOSURE NOTATION *(if additional materials are attached/enclosed, such as resume or transcripts)*



Modified Block Sample

*Text Wrap Around
Proactive Proposal*

RETURN ADDRESS/HEADING

Your Name *(optional)*
Your Street Address *(optional)*
City, Province, Postal Code
Your Telephone Number

DATE *(without abbreviations)*

INSIDE ADDRESS

Mr./Ms. First and Last Name of Employer
Title, Department
Name of Company
Address
City, Province
Postal Code

SALUTATION/GREETING

Dear Mr. (or Ms.) Person's Last Name:

OPENING PARAGRAPH

From your research on the department, company and industry, position yourself as a solution to a current challenge or a strong reason why you want to be part of this team or organization. If you have been referred or worked with someone they know and respect, reference that, with their permission.

PROPOSAL OR VALUE POSITIONING

Identify what you propose to do to add value linking your specific abilities and professional interests with what is important to their business and business success. Bridge your specific related experience (summer, part-time, work-term, volunteer), accomplishments, relevant education, assignments and training to what the company would see as useful in their day-to-day business or special projects.

WRAP-UP/NEXT STEPS PARAGRAPH

Clarify specifically how/when you will follow up. Ask for a meeting to explore possibilities further. Clarify how/when you can be reached. Express gratitude.

CLOSING AND SIGNATURE BLOCK

Complimentary closing,

Signature

followed by your typed name.

ENCLOSURE NOTATION *(if additional materials are attached/enclosed, such as resume or transcripts)*

To:

CC:

BCC:

Subject:

James Smith, Manager
ABC Department, 123 Company
Calgary, AB

Dear Mr. Smith,

Sue Jones from your department suggested I contact you about the (currently vacant) position. After reviewing the posting and your website, I am very interested and expect to be able to contribute quickly.

I will be completing a degree in _____ and during my education have been working part-time and summers as assistant to (similar position) at QRS Company, another industry leader with a similar client base to yours. In that position, I have consistently been commended for my ability to do _____, and have demonstrated success at _____ and _____ which you indicated you were looking for.

Attached is my resume detailing more about my qualifications. Within the next week I will contact you to confirm that you have received my email and I look forward to answering any questions you might have. Thank you for the opportunity to connect with you.

Sincerely,

John Doe
12 - 3rd Street
Anytown, AB
T1T 1T1
403-123-4567
jdoe@mymtroyal.ca



John Doe Resume
Word document preferred,
PDF sometimes accepted



John Doe Cover Letter
Word document preferred,
PDF sometimes accepted

OR



**John Doe Cover Letter
and Resume**
In one document

CAREER SERVICES
A200 Kerby Hall | 403.440.6307
studentjobs@mtroyal.ca | mtroyal.ca/careerservices