

# Quick Tips for Writing a Cover Letter in 15 Minutes

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Cover letters are an essential component of your job search. During your search and transition, you will write many different letters or e-mails to “cover” your resume. In essence, cover letters tell your readers why you are contacting them. Often they are your very first opportunity to make an impression on a hiring decision-maker. They offer you the golden opportunity to link your unique set of skills, experiences, talents, and interests with a particular company or job opportunity. They are your formal introduction to people who can be extremely influential in your job search, and they prepare your reader for all of the details, experiences, and accomplishments you have highlighted in your resume.

In your experience working with all levels of job seekers in hundreds of professions, we have found that writing cover letters is perhaps the greatest stumbling block to an efficient job search. The resume has been written, polished, and is ready to go. Now faces with writing an individual cover letter each time they want to send out a resume, job seekers struggle to find the right words and tone. They worry about not including enough information or the right information. They debate whether they need to point out a match for every qualification listed in a job posting. And they tell us they spend far too much time in all of this struggle, worry, and debate time that they could better spend expanding their network or following up on leads or preparing for interviews.

Here are the eight start-to-finish steps to write and send your own cover letter:

- Step 1: Create your format
- Step 2: Add the Basics
- Step 3: State Why You’re Writing and Get the Reader’s Attention
- Step 4: Add Relevant, Compelling Information
- Step 5: Close with an Action Statement
- Step 6: Proofread and Polish
- Step 7: Choose the Transmission Method (Mail or E-mail)
- Step 8: Send and Follow Up

