

## 5.2.4: Writing Effective Cover Letters

### Learning Objectives

- Identify characteristics of an effective cover letter

### What Is a Cover Letter?

A cover letter is a letter of introduction, usually three to four paragraphs in length, that you attach to your résumé. It's a way of introducing yourself to a potential employer and explaining why you are suited for a position. Employers may look for individualized and thoughtfully written cover letters as an initial method of screening out applicants who may lack necessary basic skills or who may not be sufficiently interested in the position.

Often an employer will request or require that a cover letter be included in the materials an applicant submits. There are also occasions when you might submit a cover letter uninvited: for example, if you are initiating an inquiry about possible work or asking someone to send you information or provide other assistance.

With each résumé you send out, always include a cover letter specifically addressing your purpose. This purpose is to let the receiver know how well you match their needs. It is a careful blend of the direct and persuasive letters you read about earlier in this book.

### Characteristics of an Effective Cover Letter

Cover letters should accomplish the following:

- Get the attention of the prospective employer
- Set you apart from any possible competition
- Identify the position you are interested in
- Specify how you learned about the position or company
- Present highlights of your skills and accomplishments
- Reflect your genuine interest
- Please the eye and ear

The following video features Aimee Bateman, founder of Careercake.com, who explains how you can create an incredible cover letter. You can [download a transcript of the video "5 Steps to an Incredible Cover Letter."](#)

A link to an interactive elements can be found at the bottom of this page.

### Cover Letter Resources

	WEBSITE	DESCRIPTION
1	<a href="#">Student Cover Letter Samples (from About Careers)</a>	This site contains sample student/recent graduate cover letters (especially for high school students and college students and graduates seeking employment) as well as cover letter templates, writing tips, formats and templates, email cover letter examples, and examples by type of applicant
2	<a href="#">How to Write Cover Letters (from CollegeGrad)</a>	This site contains resources about the reality of cover letters, using a cover letter, the worst use of the cover letter, the testimonial cover letter technique, and a cover letter checklist
3	<a href="#">Article on Cover Letters via LinkedIn</a>	This article on cover letters posted on LinkedIn may lend some helpful professional insights on writing an engaging cover letter.

	WEBSITE	DESCRIPTION
4	<a href="#">Cover Letters (from the Yale Office of Career Strategy)</a>	This site includes specifications for the cover letter framework (introductory paragraph, middle paragraph, concluding paragraph), as well as format and style

### Contributors and Attributions

CC licensed content, Original

- Practice question. **Authored by:** Susan Kendall. **Provided by:** Lumen Learning. **License:** CC BY: Attribution

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- College Success. **Authored by:** Linda Bruce. **Provided by:** Lumen Learning. **Located at:** <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/waymaker-collegesuccess/>. **License:** CC BY: Attribution

All rights reserved content

- 5 Steps to an Incredible Cover Letter. **Authored by:** Aimee Bateman. **Located at:** <https://youtu.be/mxOli8laZos>. **License:** All Rights Reserved. **License Terms:** Standard YouTube License

---

5.2.4: [Writing Effective Cover Letters](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **14.4: Writing Effective Cover Letters** by Nina Burokas is licensed CC BY 4.0. Original source: <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/wm-businesscommunicationmgrs>.