Cover Letters

Cover letters are an important aspect of application materials because they are often the first impression an employer will have of you. Below are some basic guidelines to make your cover letter concise and compelling. However, always be sure to tailor your cover letter to the field and position you are applying for.

Research the Company

Cover letters should be tailored to each job; don't just write a generic cover letter and send it with every application. Research the company you are applying to. Find their mission statement. Search for the specific traits that are valued in this company or position. Consider what kind of employees they need, and address your cover letter to the person who will see it.

Explain Your Qualifications

While the resume is a general list of your skills and experiences, the cover letter is your chance to highlight the traits and tools you've developed from these experiences in greater depth. Using your research on the company, determine which of your experiences illustrate the skills, traits, and qualities that make you a strong candidate for this job.

Be Aware of Tone and Voice

Many job applicants make the mistake of sounding either too pretentious or too casual in their cover letters. You want to find a balance between a professional and a natural tone. Avoid using overly complex words to impress the reader, but also stay away from slang and other informal words. Likewise, avoid excessive jargon specific to the job you are applying for.

What to Avoid

- Mentioning anything about salary; you can address this matter later, during an interview.
- Talking negatively about yourself, even jokingly. Instead, show your potential employer that you are confident and have the required skills.
- Using vague, cliché, or over-generalizing terms. Your statement should be clear and unique.
- Listing only the same information found on your resume.
- Inflating the truth or lying about your qualifications. Be accurate in your representations of yourself and your abilities/experience.

Look It Over

After you've completed a first draft, step away from your cover letter before reading it again. When you come back to it, make sure your ideas are clear, and look for spelling and grammar errors. Then have someone else look over it; a fresh pair of eyes can help you catch mistakes you didn't see.

Formatting and Content

Cover letters have a specific look and format. Below are a few general guidelines about what content to include and different examples of what a cover letter's formatting could look like.
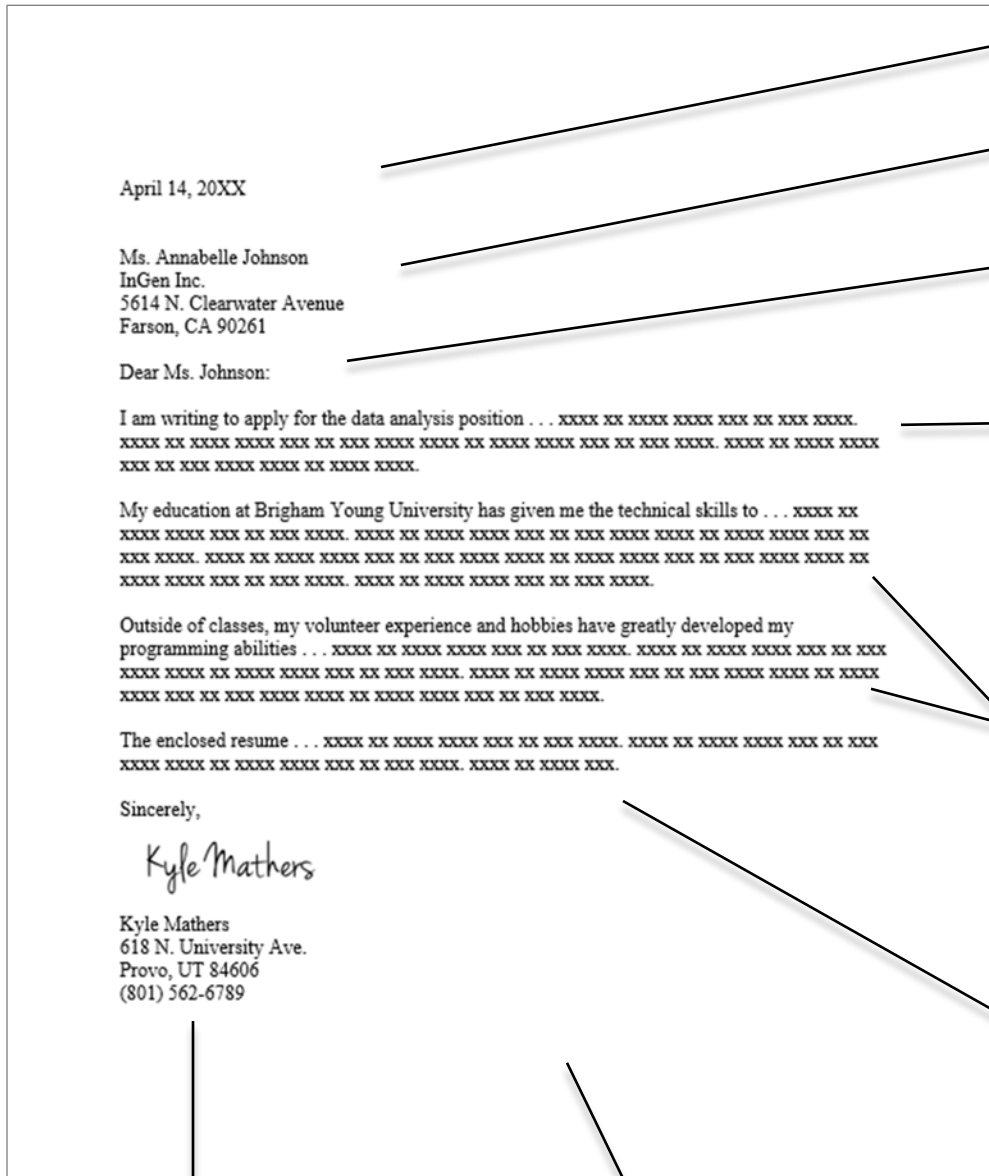
Provide the **date**.

Include the **employer's contact information**.

Address your letter to a **specific person** or group of people. Use formal titles and follow with a colon.

Focus on the company and **why you would enjoy working there**. Mention an acquaintance or something you researched about the company, if beneficial, to make connections.

Explain what qualifications you have that would make you an asset to the company. Expound on experiences that display your interest in the job you're applying for.

End confidently and proactively, encouraging further communication and an interview. Thank them for considering your application.

April 14, 20XX

Ms. Annabelle Johnson
InGen Inc.
5614 N. Clearwater Avenue
Farson, CA 90261

Dear Ms. Johnson:

I am writing to apply for the data analysis position . . . xxxx xx xxxx xxxx xxx xx xxx xxxx. xxxx xx xxxx xxxx xxx xx xxx xxxx xxxx xx xxxx xxxx xxx xx xxx xxxx. xxxx xx xxxx xxxx xxx xx xxx xxxx xxxx xx xxxx xxxx.

My education at Brigham Young University has given me the technical skills to . . . xxxx xx xxxx xxxx xxx xx xxx xxxx. xxxx xx xxxx xxxx xxx xx xxx xxxx xxxx xx xxxx xxxx xxx xx xxx xxxx. xxxx xx xxxx xxxx xxx xx xxx xxxx xxxx xx xxxx xxxx xxx xx xxx xxxx. xxxx xxxx xx xxx xxxx. xxxx xx xxxx xxxx xxx xx xxx xxxx.

Outside of classes, my volunteer experience and hobbies have greatly developed my programming abilities . . . xxxx xx xxxx xxxx xxx xx xxx xxxx. xxxx xx xxxx xxxx xxx xx xxx xxxx xxxx xx xxxx xxxx xxx xx xxx xxxx. xxxx xx xxxx xxxx xxx xx xxx xxxx xxxx xx xxxx xxxx xxx xx xxx xxxx.

The enclosed resume . . . xxxx xx xxxx xxxx xxx xx xxx xxxx. xxxx xx xxxx xxxx xxx xx xxx xxxx xxxx xx xxxx xxxx xxx xx xxx xxxx. xxxx xx xxxx xxx.

Sincerely,

Kyle Mathers

Kyle Mathers
618 N. University Ave.
Provo, UT 84606
(801) 562-6789

Make sure you include your own **contact information**. This can also be done by using the same header as on your resume. Before sending, save your cover letter as a PDF file to preserve formatting. Label the document appropriately and send it from a professional email address.

Keep your cover letter to **one page** and use **block style formatting** (do not use indentations, but include a space between paragraphs).

Cover Letter Sample 1

This is an example of a more conventional, traditional cover letter:

April 14, 20XX

Ms. Annabelle Johnson
InGen Inc.
5614 N. Clearwater Avenue
Farson, CA 90261

Dear Ms. Johnson:

I am writing to apply for the computer programmer spot that recently opened. My friend Charlie Gordon works for you as a data analyst and told me about the job opening. Your company has an impressive reputation for having high-tech facilities and is respected among other computer technology companies. Both my education and work experiences qualify me to assist InGen in the computer programming department.

My education at Brigham Young University has given me the technical skills that your company so highly values. BYU taught me how to use the most current software, such as Eclipse and Visual Studio, and programming languages like Java, Python, and C++. I finished my education in the top 5% of my graduating class.

Outside of classes, I also have valuable work and volunteer experience. I have worked part time as a programmer for local businesses, helping them get their websites working and cleaning up their software. I also volunteer as a director for my local computer programming club, helping the members prepare and create programs for national competitions. I have also created personal applications in my free time, including a DNA sequencing app that includes over 6,000 lines of code and incorporates an SQL database. Because of these experiences, I am able to provide friendly customer service, communicate and explain complex programming concepts, and develop programming skills through my own passion in this field.

The enclosed resume highlights additional skills and experiences that make me a strong candidate for this position. I look forward to discussing the position and how I might be an asset to InGen. Thank you for your time and consideration of my application.

Sincerely,

Kyle Mathers

Kyle Mathers
7500 E. Bulldog Ave. #159
Provo, UT 84604
(555) 555-5555

Cover Letter Sample 2
This is an example of a more contemporary cover letter:

Kyle Mathers

(555) 555-5555 • kyle.mathers@gmail.com • 7500 E Bulldog Ave #159 • Provo, UT 84604

April 14, 20XX

Ms. Annabelle Johnson
InGen Inc.
5614 N. Clearwater Avenue
Farson, CA 90261

Dear Ms. Johnson:

I am writing to apply for the computer programmer spot that recently opened. My friend Henry Wu works for you as a data analyst and told me about the job opening. Your company has an impressive reputation for having high-tech facilities and is respected among other computer technology companies. Both my education and work experiences qualify me to assist InGen in the computer programming department.

My education at Brigham Young University has given me the technical skills that your company so highly values. BYU taught me how to use the most current software, such as Eclipse and Visual Studio, and programming languages like Java, Python, and C++. I finished my education in the top 5% of my graduating class.

Outside of classes, I also have valuable work, volunteer, and club experience. These have helped me to excel in the following areas:

- Leading a software team in repairing and retrofitting outdated program
- Efficiently and empathetically teaching club members how to cooperate together
- Programming apps for my own use, including a DNA sequencer
- Developing a passion for creating simple yet innovative programs

These experiences have enabled me to provide friendly customer service, communicate and explain complex programming concepts, and develop programming skills through my own passion in this field.

The enclosed resume highlights additional skills and experiences that make me a strong candidate for this position. I look forward to discussing the position and how I might be an asset to InGen. Thank you for your time and consideration of my application.

Sincerely,

Kyle Mathers

Kyle Mathers