No matter your career field, you will at some point be asked to write a cover letter to accompany your resume. A cover letter is your opportunity to show the potential employer how your experience and skills make you an ideal fit for the position. Here is what you need to know to write your first cover letter.

**Formatting**

A traditional cover letter has a particular format that:

- Is single-spaced
- Is aligned to the left margin
- Uses block organization with space between paragraphs
- Has one-inch margins on all sides

In general, each paragraph looks like a block completely aligned to the left, which looks unlike a standard essay. What a cover letter and essay do have in common is using one main idea per paragraph with supporting details for each.

**Organization**

A traditional cover letter typically includes multiple parts, including a/an:

- Heading
- Introduction
- Argument
- Closing
**Heading:** The heading includes your name, address, phone number, and email address. The heading is above the body of your cover letter. Here is an example:

Gabrielle Raymond  
5678 Run-On Road  
817-515-5678  
Gabrielle.raymond@yahoo.com

**Introduction:** The introduction should include a salutation addressing the contact name of the employer, such as Dear Mr. Walker. If no contact name is provided in the job posting, use a generic salutation such as Dear Potential Employer. If you do not know the gender of the contact person, refrain from using “Mr.” or “Ms.” Instead just use the person’s full name.

The introduction will also include
- Why you are writing
- How you learned about the position
- Why you are interested in the position

Here is an example:

Dear Mr. Sanchez

I am writing to express an interest in the instructional associate position advertised on the tutoringincollege.com website. Based on your new focus on tutoring high school students, I believe my background in math and science tutoring will help move your company forward in that area. At this point in my career I am looking for experience working with tutoring technology, and your company has excelled in that area. Overall, I am a solid fit for this position.
**Argument:** Your argument is the middle section of your cover letter, and will likely include multiple paragraphs. In this section, you should:

- Carefully select information from your resume to emphasize, rather than merely repeating everything in your resume
- Show the potential employer that you are a good match for the position in that you possess the important skills necessary to do the job
- Include a clear reason in each paragraph about why the potential employer should hire you
- Include how the potential employer will benefit from hiring you

Here is an example of ONE paragraph from the argument section of the sample cover letter:

Your website states that first-year tutors need to have at least one year experience tutoring either high school or college-aged freshman. In addition, it states that some experience working with ESL students is preferred. At Valley View High School, I tutored my junior and senior year in calculus, geometry, and advanced trigonometry. Several of the students I worked with every week were native Spanish speakers, and I found ways to engage them beyond their speaking skills. Through this experience, I have become familiar with tutoring a wide range of students with varying abilities, which will no doubt contribute to the wide range of students who use your services.

Note: Notice how the paragraph does not merely restate or list experience from the resume. Instead, the applicant includes what she actually did on the job, as well as the type of students she worked with. This is information therefore goes into detail about relevant information beyond the resume.

**Closing:** In your closing you will briefly restate the skills and experience that you will bring to the position. You should also include your phone number and email address. Finally, make sure to thank the readers for reading your materials and for their consideration. If you have additional materials, you can also include a final note, such as Resume Enclosed.

Here is an example:
I believe my tutoring background, as well as my desire to learn more about tutoring technology, will help your online tutoring company attain its goals of branching out to high schools. I look forward to meeting with you to further discuss the position. If you wish to contact me, please do so at 817-515-5678 or Gabrielle.raymond@yahoo.com. Thank you for reading my materials and considering me for the tutoring position.

Sincerely,

Gabrielle Raymond

Below you will find a sample cover letter with appropriate formatting, organization and content.
January 6, 2017

Mr. Matthew Gomez, General Manager
Goodacre Tire Company
245 Lupe Avenue
Fort Worth, Texas 76132

Dear Mr. Gomez:

I am writing to apply for the repair technician position advertised on the Goodacre company website. Having worked as a mechanic for nearly 10 years, I am skilled in both auto repair and maintenance. My skills as a mechanic, as well as my customer service skills, would certainly contribute to your team at Goodacre.

A dependable and technically skilled auto mechanic, I offer well-rounded diagnostic and repair expertise and a reputation for quality, honesty and integrity. I recently relocated to the Fort Worth area from San Marcos, and have been searching for a position in a full-service shop. I am very excited about the prospect of joining your team.

As an auto mechanic for San Marcos Engine Repair, I did maintenance and repairs on automobiles and trucks including most major makes and models. I performed diagnostics, maintenance and repairs on engines, brakes, steering/suspension systems, powertrains, fuel injectors, transmissions, and electrical systems. At my former employer, I developed a reputation for delivering high-quality work on every job.

At SMER, I was also known for my strong customer service. During my ten years at the company, I built a solid, loyal customer base and formed relationships with the Austin area and surrounding community. My efforts both in terms of ability and customer service were frequently cited by my employer as integral part of our growth during those years I was employed. Many customers returned because they experienced quality service while being treated fairly and honorably.

I am confident my mechanical skills would benefit your customers, team members and bottom line if I am selected for this position. You can call me at (817) 262-9008 or Jackie.mcmahon@yahoo.com to set up a meeting. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Jackie McMahon

Enclosure: Résumé