Cover letters do matter! These letters are your opportunity to introduce yourself to a decision maker and explain why you are the employee that they need. Each employer is reading and wondering, **“Why should I care?”** Here are some questions your letter needs to answer:

**Who is this letter for?**

* Nobody likes spam. Address the letter to the name of the appropriate person if at all possible. Other options include “Hiring Manager” or “Human Resources”.
* Provide evidence that you have some understanding of the position and the company.

**Why are you sending this letter?**

* What do you want to happen? Are you answering an ad? Inquiring about any openings? Requesting a meeting to learn more about the company?
* What motivates you to apply to this position?
* How or where did you find out about this opening? Did someone refer you?

**How can you help me? What is the proof?**

* Don’t just repeat what’s in your resume; instead add value by giving useful extra information.
* Confirm any requirements mentioned in an ad, and explain how you will overcome any gaps.
* Explain how your experience/training has developed **abilities that the employer needs**. Use concrete numbers if possible. “Thanks to five years of experience in …. I am confident that I can . . .”, “During my time as … I demonstrated the ability to …”, “My former employer recognized my skills in . . .”, “I have learned the importance of …”, “For example, I …”

**Will you fit in with our team?**

* Be friendly but professional - aim for an authentic, conversational tone. Using industry specific language can increase your credibility, but avoid slang, acronyms, and overly formal language.
* Demonstrate enthusiasm, energy, and a positive attitude.
* Be confident but not arrogant; this is not the place for false modesty *OR* for stretching the truth.

**Can you communicate clearly?**

* Use the standard business letter format.
* Absolutely no spelling, grammar, or punctuation mistakes.
* Your first draft is going to have too many sentences that begin with “I”. Rework some of the sentences for a better flow.
* Match the font and design of your resume.
* Save electronic versions with your name, i.e. “Janet Johnson Cover Letter”.

Date

Mailing Address

City, Province, Postal Code

Matches the heading on your resume

Phone

Email

Name of Decision Maker

Position

Company

Mailing Address

City, Province, Postal Code

Re: Job Name/Competition Number

Dear ----,

**First paragraph:** Introduce yourself with a confident, interesting opening sentence. Explain why you are contacting them, including which position you are interested in. Use the name of this company, and a detail or two that shows you understand the position and the company. Express confidence in your ability to provide value to the company.

**Second paragraph:** Explain specifically what you have to offer, including examples and proof of your accomplishments. Confirm that you can meet any requirements identified by the employer. Talk about the employer’s needs, not about how you would benefit from this job.

**Third paragraph:** Offer thanks for their attention and time, state how and when you can be contacted, and close with a positive and enthusiastic sentence about meeting with them to discuss the position.

Sincerely,

Hand written signature

Typed Signature

(For electronic versions, you can either scan a copy with your signature, or just use the typed signature.)