Key Elements of Successful Cover Letters

| Your present address  |
| City, State, Zip Code |

Today’s date

| Individual’s First & Last Name |
| Title |
| Company |
| Street Address |
| City, State, Zip Code |

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name:

**Introduction:** This is your introduction paragraph in which you indicate the reason you are writing this letter, the specific position or type of work for which you are applying and how you learned of the opening (career center, name of publication or website, friend, employment service, etc.). Additionally, you may choose to state your educational background in this section. You may also consider adding one or two sentences about the organization’s mission and/or values and how those relate to your personal values or background.

**Body:** (One to two paragraphs) In this section, you will emphasize what you can do for the employer. It is important to explain how your academic background makes you a qualified candidate for the position. If you have had some practical work experience, point out the specific achievements or unique qualifications. Do not just state the skills that you have but give concrete examples of how you possess those qualities or skills. Try not to repeat the same information the reader will find in the resume. You may want to highlight any special leadership experiences or language skills in this section. As much as possible, tie your qualifications to the employer’s needs, particularly those expressed in the job description.

**Conclusion:** In the closing paragraph, indicate your desire for a personal interview. Refer the reader to the enclosed resume or application, which summarizes your qualifications, training and experience. Repeat your contact information and offer any assistance that will help to promote a speedy response. Finally, close your letter with a statement or question that will encourage a response. For example, say you will be in the city where the organization is located on a certain date and would like the opportunity to speak with them. Or, ask if the company will be recruiting in your area.

Sincerely,

*(Your neatly handwritten signature here)*

Your name typed

Counseling appointments are available to discuss your cover letter with a professional career advisor.

Drop-in critiques are available at The Career Center. Bring a draft of your cover letter in-progress for review.

Our website has even more information to help with your cover letter.
In writing a cover letter, it is a good idea to carefully relate your experience to the employer’s job posting. For example, this position was posted to The University of Illinois’ online employment system and the letter that follows is in response to it.

**Please note: The underlined text is intended to illustrate the direct connections the applicant made when writing the letter and should NOT be used in writing actual cover letters.**

**Position Description from the University of Illinois’ Online Employment System**

**Job Title:** Chicago Shakespeare Theatre – Marketing Intern

**Location:** Chicago, IL

**Industry:** Arts & Entertainment – Performing Arts

**Job Function:**
Event Planning, Marketing, Public Relations

**Description:**
The Marketing Department is charged with the development and execution of strategic plans to promote the institutional image, attract attendance, and sell tickets to the plays and related programs produced by the Theater. Specific marketing, advertising, and publicity programs are directed to secure audiences for the 2015-16 subscription season in our 500-seat courtyard theater and in our Theater Upstairs at Chicago Shakespeare (a flexible, black box space that can seat up to 200 patrons).

**Desired Skills and Experience:**
Minimum two years undergraduate education with successful completion of coursework in one or more of the following: arts administration, direct marketing, communications, public relations, journalism

Effective communication skills, both written and verbal
Flexibility and ability to work with tight deadlines
Self-starter, multi-task oriented, and computer literate
Experience in sales, promotions, or media desirable
Demonstrated interest in the performing arts a plus
Website maintenance and e-marketing skills a plus

**Internship Responsibilities:**
Assist in execution of direct mail and e-marketing projects
Assist in execution of promotions
Update mailing lists
Maintain press clip and photo archives

I am very enthusiastic about the possibility of interning for the Chicago Shakespeare Theatre and have enclosed my resume for review. I would greatly appreciate the opportunity for an interview. If I can provide further details, please contact me at (123) 456-7890, or email me at jjon90@illinois.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jane Johnson

**Please note: The underlining in this cover letter is intended to illustrate the direct connections to the job description that the applicant made when writing the cover letter.**