

Here's an example of the perfect cover letter, according to Harvard career experts

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Dustin McKissen, Contributor

Found your dream job? Don't be so confident that you'll get hired: It's very likely that there are several other qualified candidates competing for that same position.

That's where the cover letter comes in. Including a cover letter to complement your resume can be an effective way to impress hiring managers: It displays your strong writing skills, sets you apart from other applicants and shows that you went the extra mile.

Linda Spencer, associate director and coordinator of career advising at Harvard Extension School, says that a solid cover letter answers two key questions:

1. Why are you the right fit for the job?
2. How will you add value to the organization?

"It takes the average employer about seven seconds to review these documents," says Spencer. "They're not reading, they're skimming. So you need to make it clear right off the bat how you can add value."

Here's an example of what a strong cover letter looks like, according to Harvard career experts:

## SAMPLE COVER LETTER

December 10, 2018

Ms. Susan Carey  
Senior Manager  
Wholesale Wine USA  
23 Green St.  
Boston, MA 02116

Dear Ms. Carey:

I'm writing to express my interest in the sales associate position at Wholesale Wine USA (listed on Crimson Careers), which I believe reports to you.

Having worked in the industry for nearly eight years, I now have a deep love and appreciation for wine and cuisine. At Shay's Pub and Wine Bar, nothing made me happier than speaking with customers about the perfect wine to pair with their orders. The result was a 25% increase in sales and 30% increase in repeat customers.

My experience at Aspen's award-winning Montagna allowed me to expand upon my knowledge of wine, locally inspired cuisine and the highest standards of service. Our weekly blind-tastings fueled my desire to further myself in this field, and I'm currently in the process of acquiring certification through both the Court of Master Sommeliers and the Wine Spirit & Education Trust.

I also just returned from France, where I worked on an organic vineyard in Beaujolais and was able to shadow the vigneron who ran the estate, the largest of its kind in the region. As Wholesale Wine USA begins to expand into international markets, I'm confident that my knowledge of the French wine industry can help contribute to your company's growth and success.

I've attached my resume and am readily available via phone or email. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing back from you!

Sincerely,  
Georgina Santiago

*Credit: Harvard University, Office of Career Services / Harvard Extension School, Career and Academic Resource Center*

Don't know where to start? The career experts share tips on how to write a cover letter that stands out:

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### **1. Address the letter to a specific person**

"To whom it may concern" is one of the fastest ways to get your application deleted. Always try to address your letter to a specific person — usually the hiring manager or department head. Include their name, title, company and address at the very top below the date.

If you don't know who to address, [LinkedIn](#) is a great place to start. Simply enter the company name and some keywords into the search bar (e.g., "Google, hiring manager, sales") and a variety of related profiles will appear.

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### **2. Clearly state the purpose of your letter**

Your opening line doesn't need to be anything extravagant. In fact, it should be the complete opposite, according Harvard's career experts.

Keep it simple and straightforward: State why you're writing, the position you're applying for and, if applicable, how you found the job listing.

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### **3. Don't rehash your entire resume**

You're not writing a 1,000-word essay that summarizes your resume. The cover letter is your chance to explain why you're genuinely interested in the company and its mission. No need to make it super formal, either. Use your own voice and add some personal flourishes to make the letter more interesting.

"If you have relevant school or work experience, be sure to point it out with one or two key examples," the [career experts note](#). "Emphasize skills or abilities that relate to the job. Be sure to do this in a confident manner and keep in mind that the reader will also view your letter as an example of your writing skills."

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#### **4. Use action words and don't overuse the pronoun "I"**

Instead of using flowery words and cliché claims like "fast thinker" and "highly creative," go for action words.

Here are a few examples of action verbs to use when highlighting specific skills:

- To demonstrate **leadership skills**: Accomplished, contracted, assigned, directed, orchestrated, headed, delegated
- To demonstrate **communication skills**: Addressed, translated, presented, negotiated, moderated, promoted, edited
- To demonstrate **research skills**: Constructed, examined, critique, systematized, investigated, modeled, formulated
- To demonstrate **creative skills**: Revitalized, redesigned, developed, integrated, conceptualized, fashioned, shaped

Avoid using too many "I" statements because it can come off as though you're mostly interested in what *you* can gain from the company. The focus should be on what *the company* can gain from you.

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#### **5. Reiterate your enthusiasm and thank the reader**

The closing of your letter should:

- Reiterate your interest in the position
  - Thank the reader for his or her consideration
  - State that you look forward hearing back from them
  - Include your signature at the very bottom
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#### **6. Be consistent in formatting**

Visual consistency makes a big difference. Keep your letter to just one page and use the same font (and size) as you did for your resume. If you're converting the letter to a PDF, make sure the formatting is translated properly.

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Source: <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/07/23/example-of-the-perfect-cover-letter-according-to-harvard-career-experts.html>