



# Career Search Letters

- Cover Letter
- Thank You Letter
- Salary History/Request Letters

A cover letter (also referred to as a letter of inquiry or a letter of application) is a necessary business letter that accompanies your resume whether you mail, email, or fax your application and/or resume. Its purpose is to:

- Introduce your resume.
- Express your personality and enthusiasm for the position.
- Provide support for your candidacy that is not covered by your resume.

*✓ Customize your cover letter for every position and employer you are applying to.*

Writing a cover letter can be a time-consuming task, especially when you must customize it towards each organization. The following suggestions are offered when writing a cover letter:

*(Visit: <http://resource.educationamerica.net>)*

1. If sending via snail mail, make sure that each letter uses the same font and high quality paper as the resume.
2. If printing your cover letter use at least 1 inch margins all the way around (or use the same margins that you have set for your resume), and print on high quality resume paper (8" x 11") using a laser printer.
3. Please be sure to proof your letter for grammar and spelling errors! Or have someone else proof it for you. There's nothing worse than a spelling mistake or typo on a job application!
4. Be brief and concise; the cover letter/e-mail should be approximately 1 page in length. Expand on your resume, rather than repeat the resume's content.
5. Individualize and target each cover letter to the position you seek; remember you are trying to convince someone why you're the best person for that particular job.
6. Be sure to market yourself. Explain what you can offer the company; not what the company can do for you. Always include a cover letter with your resume, whether it is mailed, e-mailed, or faxed!
7. If mailed or faxed remember to sign the cover letter.
8. If e-mailing your cover letter remember to "attach" your resume and any other documentation as outlined by the employer in their application instructions. If they want your resume as an ASCII text file then send it that way. If you can't follow their instructions, they probably won't hire you.

Your cover letter should explain why you are sending your resume. Again, never send a resume without a cover letter, unless you are explicitly asked not to by an employer's application instructions. Don't make the reader guess what you are asking for - be specific!

Tell the employer you are writing about the part-time summer opportunity or the permanent position advertised on their web site. Or are writing because you didn't see any positions posted, but you would like to know of any upcoming opportunities.

Always state specifically how you learned about the position or the organization – the employer's web site, your university academic advisor or Career Center, your neighbor Mrs. Blake. It is always appropriate to mention the name of someone who suggested that you write.

Remember you are trying to convince the reader to look at your resume. The cover letter is the first impression - there are no second chances for a first impression! The cover letter must be well written and targeted specifically to the employer you are writing to.

## Your Cover Letter Should:

- ✓ Call attention to the highlights of your background -- education, experience, leadership roles -- which are relevant to the position you are applying for. Be specific and use examples.
- ✓ States exactly what is enclosed or attached -- resume, practicum report, list of references, transcripts forthcoming etc., so that the employer knows what you included in your application package.
- ✓ Provides additional information not referred to or requested in the application such as when you will follow up via mail/e-mail or telephone.

## Example 1: Sample Cover Letter

### **Steven Schenk**

2727 Street Avenue, Apt 99  
Chicago IL 60600-0123  
555-777-1000  
[sschenk@wowwee.com](mailto:sschenk@wowwee.com)

Date of Letter

Individual's Name

Title

Employer

Street Address

City, State, Zip

Dear Mr./Ms.:

First Paragraph: In your initial paragraph, indicate the reason for writing, the position or type of work for which you are applying, and how you learned of the opening (newspaper, placement center, friend, family member, employment service).

Second Paragraph: Mention why you are interested in the position, the organization, its products or services; above all, indicate what you can do for the employer. For a recent college graduate, if you have had some practical work experience, point out the specific achievements or unique qualification(s) of that experience. Also, explain how your academic background makes you a qualified candidate for the position. Try not to repeat the same information the reader will find in your resume. Cite specific work examples, but remember to be brief.

Third Paragraph: Mention other information such as relevant course work, certifications, foreign languages and/or professional affiliations, which may strengthen your candidacy for a position. If a prospective employer is requesting a salary history or asking you to include your salary requirements, this issue can be addressed in this paragraph.

**\*NOTE: Paragraphs 2 and 3 can be combined if very short.**

Closing Paragraph: State your interest in the company/job again. Then, indicate your desire for a personal interview. You may want to suggest alternative dates and times or simply advise the employer of your flexibility as to the time and place. Repeat your phone number in the letter and offer any assistance to help in 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 to set up an interview. Or, ask if the company will be recruiting in your area, or if it desires additional information or references.

Closing Statement: Simply worded, "Thank you for your time. I look forward to talking with you."

Sincerely,

*(Your Handwritten Signature)*

Steven Schenk (Your Name Typed)

Enclosure(s): (Denotes resume, application, etc., which are enclosed)

**Example 2: Sample Cover Letter – DO NOT COPY VERBATIM**

**Susan Schenk**

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2727 Street Avenue, Apt 99 • Jonesboro AR 72467-0123 • 870-972-1000 • [sschenk@astate.edu](mailto:sschenk@astate.edu)

September 7, 2007

Tom Success, Director  
Human Resources Department  
Wonder Woman Electronics, Inc.  
1000 Gear Drive  
Anywhere AR 88888

Dear Mr. Success:

I am writing to apply for the position of Short Circuit Electrician. I learned about this position through speaking with Jim Recruiter at the Arkansas State University-Jonesboro Spring 2009 Career Fair.

I will be graduating this December with a Bachelor of Science in Engineering (BSE) degree. While here, I have learned a great deal about electrical design from my courses in Electric Circuits II, Digital Electronics II, and Power Systems. I am very interested in how your company uses current ideas in flexible and programmable manufacturing systems while adhering to environmental waste and hazards regulations. During my internship with Amazing Wires, I worked with electrical systems development. Also, as you can see from my resume, I have had extensive experience with the use of electrical/electronic systems. My communication skills are excellent, and I have experience working effectively with a diverse group of people. I am fluent in Spanish. This combination of academic and professional experience makes me an ideal candidate for Wonder Woman Electronics.

I am excited about the possibility of working for your company. I would like to have an opportunity to talk with you about my qualifications. My phone number is (870) 972-4444 and my email is [student@astate.edu](mailto:student@astate.edu). I will follow up this letter with a phone call to see if I can arrange a time to meet with you.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

*(Written signature)*

Susan Schenk (Your Name Typed)

Enclosures:

- Resume
- List of references
- Design Project Report

**Example 3: Sample Cover Letter – DO NOT COPY VERBATIM**

**Susan Schenk**

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2727 Street Avenue, Apt 99 • Jonesboro AR 72467-0123 • 870-972-1000 • [suschenk@wowwee.com](mailto:suschenk@wowwee.com)

September 7, 2007

Professional Staffing  
PO Box 7777  
Bangor, ME 04401

RE: Field Finance Manager Position, #23234

Please accept this letter and enclosed resume as an application for your opening which I saw advertised in the Sunday, September 4, 2009, *Arkansas State Journal*.

As a May 2009 graduate of the Arkansas State University, I have over three years of business and financial analysis experience in addition to my Bachelor's Business Administration and minor in Accounting. My work experience includes two years of domestic and international travel as a Financial Intern for the European-American Center for International Education, and one year as an Internal Auditor Intern for Mayfoods, Inc. Since my graduation, I have been working for a local company, Tri-State Corp., as a Business Analyst in the areas of real estate and hotel management.

The enclosed resume provides details of my solid career and academic experiences. The following highlights some of my achievements:

- Participated in the financial reviews of students applying for acceptance in the international education programs; provided financial counseling to students who did not meet program requirements.
- Planned, coordinated, and initiated productivity audits while at the European-American Center and at Mayfoods, Inc.
- Researched, developed, and implemented an internal management audit that, when completed, will save \$120,000 in the first year of use.

Based on my job experience and educational qualifications, I am confident I can make an immediate contribution to your firm. I would appreciate the opportunity to further discuss my credentials with you in person. Please contact me at the above address or by phone at (870) 777-1000 or via email at [suschenk@wowwee.com](mailto:suschenk@wowwee.com).

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

*(Written signature)*

John Brewer *(Your Name Typed)*

Enc.

# Thank You Letters

**Writing a thank you letter after an employment interview is a must.** In fact, some employers think less of those interviewees who fail to follow-up promptly. Plan to send out your thank you letters as soon as possible (preferably within twenty-four hours, no later than a week) after your interview.

**Like any piece of writing, it is best to keep your audience in mind.** Address their issues and concerns. In general, typed letters are recommended. Consider the "personality" of the organization and the rapport you felt during your interviews. If your interview was a fairly informal process and/or you achieved an immediate rapport with your interviewer, a handwritten note/letter might be fine.

**In addition to thanking the person you talked with, the thank you letter reinforces the fact that you want the job.**

Note: Even if you do not want the job, write a thank you letter respectfully withdrawing your application, because you never know what the future holds so why burn your bridges?

**You may also view the thank you as a follow-up "sales" letter.** In other words, you can restate why you want the job, what your qualifications are, how you might make significant contributions, and so on. This letter is also the perfect opportunity to discuss anything of importance that your interviewer neglected to ask or that you neglected to answer as thoroughly, or as well, as you would have liked.

**What if you spent an entire day being interviewed (and taken to lunch) with several people?** Are individual letters appropriate or should you write a "group" letter? Choose your approach based on what you think will be most in keeping with the "personality" of the organization. Also, consider whether the interviews had very much in common with one another. If there was a great deal of similarity (i.e., shared concerns mutually voiced by your interviewers), perhaps a "group" letter will suffice. If so, address all the people on a master letter, have the letter reproduced on your own stationery and add a personal note to each.

**What if you suffer from writer's cramp?** Time takes precedence - get a simple, appreciative letter in the mail or send a thank you by email without delay; save your creative efforts for another time. If you're not sure what to write, review the following "Thank You" letter sample in this packet or refer to the article "Art of Writing Job-Search Letters," in the 2005 Job Choices Magazine available at the Career Center, Ullsvik Center. **\*NOTE:** do not copy the samples verbatim!

**Remember to proofread:** check spelling, grammar, typos, formatting, and overall appearance. If in doubt about the correct names, spellings or titles of your interviewers, call the reception desk (main telephone number) of the organization where you interviewed and ask for confirmation. Your extra effort will be worth it!

## Need More Help



All Majors: <http://jobsearch.about.com/library/weekly/aa082398.htm>  
[www.jobweb.com](http://www.jobweb.com)

Education Interest: <http://resource.educationamerica.net>

☛ Resources Available in at Career Management Center:

- Job Choices Magazines
- 202 Great Resumes
- Damn Good Resume Catalog
- Your Career and Live Plan Portfolio
- Career Power!
- Visit <http://careers.astate.edu/>



**Example 5: Sample Thank You Letter – DO NOT COPY VERBATIM**

**FREDERICK BRYAN**

543 North Water Street  
(870) 972-0012

Jonesboro, AR 72467  
fbryan@astate.edu

September 7, 2000

Ms. Julia Edmonds, Manger  
Eat All You Can Eat  
Tired Feet Corporation  
1220 Two Step Avenue  
Jonesboro, AR 72467

Dear Ms. Edmonds,

I want to thank you very much for interviewing me yesterday for the assistant manager position. I enjoyed meeting you and learning more about your corporation and the many opportunities for growth and advancement in the Tri-State area.

My enthusiasm for the position and my interest in working for TFC were strengthened as a result of the interview. I think my education and related work experiences fit nicely with the job requirements, and I am sure that I could make a significant contribution to the company over time.

I want to reiterate my strong interest in the position and in working with you and your staff. You provide the kind of opportunity I seek. Please feel free to call me at 870-972-0012 if I can provide you with any additional information.

Again, thank you for the interview and your consideration.

Sincerely,

*(Written signature)*

Frederick Bryan

\*For additional *thank you* letter samples, go to: [www.susanireland.com/thankyouletters.htm](http://www.susanireland.com/thankyouletters.htm)

**The Thank You Letter: 3-Basic Parts:**

1. Start by thanking the interviewer for taking the time to talk with you. It is generally a good idea to include the actual date on which the interview occurred.
2. Reaffirm your interest in the firm by pointing out particular issues brought during the interview that appeal to you. Try to personalize the letter by referring to some topic or common interest you discussed during the interview.
3. Close the letter with another word of appreciation, an offer to provide more information and a statement that you look forward to hearing from them.

Resist the temptation to sell yourself by reiterating your resume strengths. Keep it short and to the point. If you receive a call back interview, you should send another thank you letter.

([www.law.stetson.edu/Career/](http://www.law.stetson.edu/Career/))

# How To Handle a Salary History Request

By Sally Kearsley

When an employer requests a salary history to be submitted with a resume, don't panic. If you're a student and your employment "history" is primarily part-time, co-op, internship or volunteer positions, this question doesn't exclude you from consideration for opportunities.

Obviously, you want to make considerably more in your full-time job! No job seeker wants to price him- or herself out of a job, but most do not want to give the employer the opening to offer less than the going rate for the position.

Your response to a request for a salary history is best handled in your cover letter:

- Respond to the question well toward the end of the letter.
- After you've highlighted your skills, experience, and interest in the position (which are far more important to your consideration as a candidate).

The following are some tips.

## Do...

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### 1. Respond to the question positively without stating specific amounts:

- "I'm earning in the low 30s."
- "As a student, my jobs to this point have been geared toward gaining experience and making money to cover my educational costs."

**2. Mention your desired salary:** Either saying that salary is negotiable depending upon the position or giving a \$3-5,000 range (if you know the market value for the position and for someone with your skills and background). You may also use terms like "competitive" or "open" if you are responding to this question on an application form.

**3. Know your salary requirements:** Also know what you hope to make. You shouldn't mention these in your response to the salary history question, but you need to give this some thought for when you get to the negotiating stage.

**4. Be prepared to respond to a request for previous salaries in an interview:** This can be handled by responding without stating specific amounts (see tip #1). Avoid specific amounts if at all possible.

**5. Prepare a list of your positions** (in reverse chronological order): Mainly for your own reference and just in case an employer, in which you are very interested, is absolutely adamant. (This will not happen often!) The list should include name of each company or organization, your position title, your compensation, and a brief synopsis of your position.

## Don't...

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- ✓ **Include your salary history on your resume.** What you did in a job is much more important than what you were paid.
- ✓ **Lie about your previous pay rate.** Employers can often verify your salary history through your reference checks.

If it is any consolation, this is a difficult question for all job searchers to handle, not just new college grads! The key is to shift the focus, politely but firmly, from what you made in the past to what you expect to make in the future.

**Example 6: Salary History Letter – DO NOT COPY VERBATIM**

**FREDERICK BRYAN**

543 North Water Street  
(870) 972-0012

Jonesboro, AR 72467  
fbryan@mymail.net

September 7, 2009

Dr. Julia Edmonds, Director  
Technical Design Group  
Atlantic Engineering Systems, Inc.  
1220 Warwick Avenue  
Newport News, VA 23607

Dear Dr. Edmonds,

Thank you for contacting me regarding my salary history.

My salary is negotiable depending on the requirements of the job and benefits [Company Name] offers. In lieu of providing my salary history, may I schedule an interview with you to learn more about the job? After I learn more, I'd be happy to discuss my salary requirement.

Again, thank you for contacting me. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

[Sign here]

Frederick Bryan

### **Do You Know the Difference?**

**Salary History:**

Is a written record of your past, annual salary range for each employer you've listed on your resume.

**Salary Requirement:**

Is the minimum, annual figure or range you will accept. Employers ask for it verbally or in writing. You will want to do your homework first, as your minimum requirement might become the employer's maximum offer.

### **What Are You Worth?**

Visit the following web sites for more information on salary and cost of living reports and calculators:

[www.salary.com](http://www.salary.com)

[www.wageweb.com](http://www.wageweb.com)

[www.homefair.com](http://www.homefair.com) (Salary Calculator)

<http://coli.org> (ACCRA Cost of Living Index)

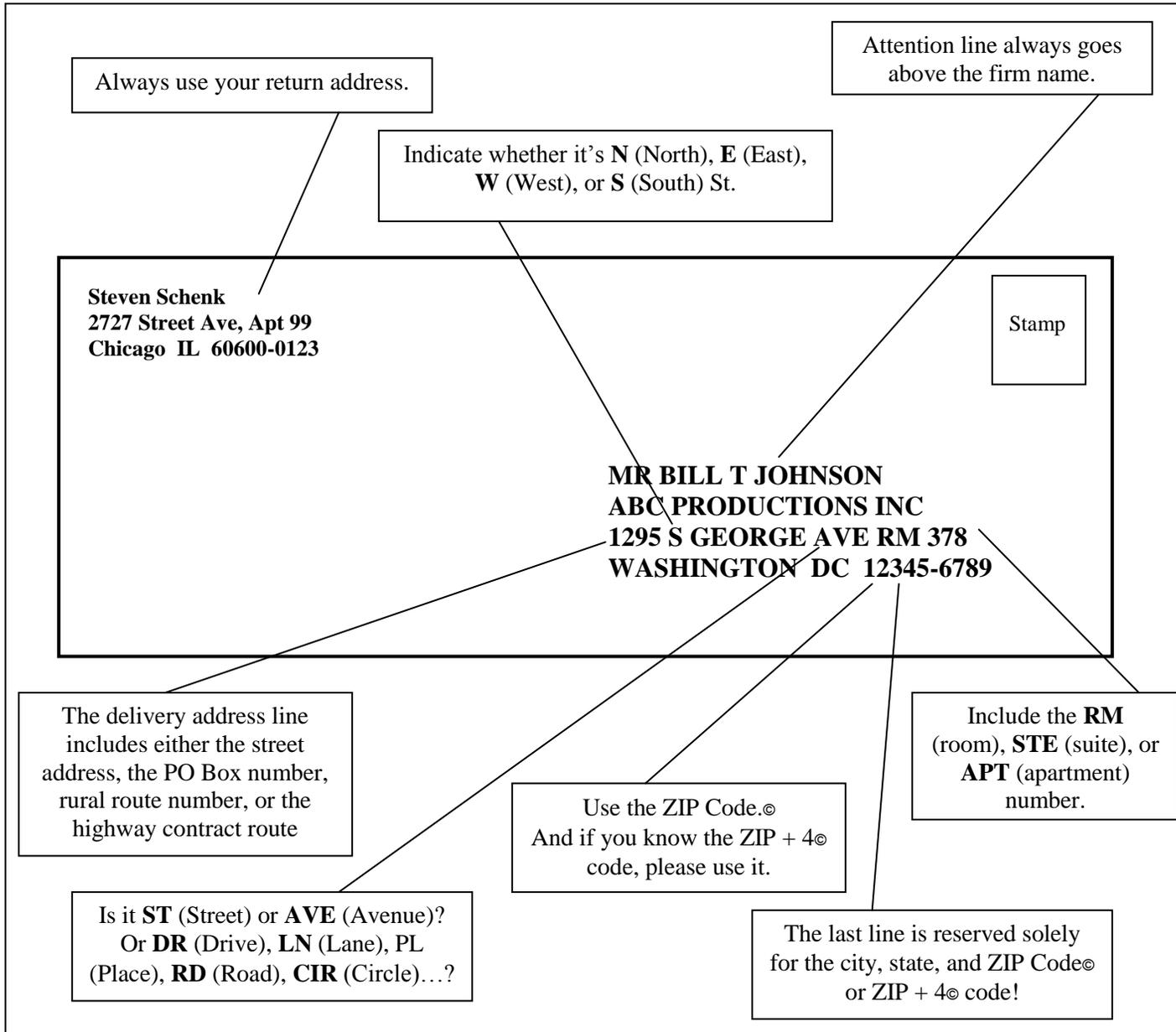
[www.quintcareers.com/](http://www.quintcareers.com/) (Salary Wizard)

[www.jobweb.com/SalaryInfo/](http://www.jobweb.com/SalaryInfo/)

# HOW TO ADDRESS ENVELOPES

## Completely and Correctly

**Official USPS Abbreviations:** [www.usps.com/ncsc/lookups/usps\\_abbreviations.html](http://www.usps.com/ncsc/lookups/usps_abbreviations.html)



### STATE ABBREVIATIONS

ALABAMA	AL
ALASKA	AK
AMERICAN SAMOA	AS
ARIZONA	AZ
ARKANSAS	AR
CALIFORNIA	CA
COLORADO	CO
CONNECTICUT	CT
DELAWARE	DE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	DC
FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA	FM
FLORIDA	FL
GEORGIA	GA
GUAM	GU
HAWAII	HI
IDAHO	ID
ILLINOIS	IL
INDIANA	IN
IOWA	IA
KANSAS	KS
KENTUCKY	KY
LOUISIANA	LA
MAINE	ME
MARSHALL ISLANDS	MH
MARYLAND	MD
MASSACHUSETTS	MA
MICHIGAN	MI
MINNESOTA	MN
MISSISSIPPI	MS
MISSOURI	MO
MONTANA	MT
NEBRASKA	NE
NEVADA	NV
NEW HAMPSHIRE	NH
NEW JERSEY	NJ
NEW MEXICO	NM
NEW YORK	NY
NORTH CAROLINA	NC
NORTH DAKOTA	ND
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS	MP
OHIO	OH
OKLAHOMA	OK
OREGON	OR
PALAU	PW
PENNSYLVANIA	PA
PUERTO RICO	PR
RHODE ISLAND	RI
SOUTH CAROLINA	SC
SOUTH DAKOTA	SD
TENNESSEE	TN
TEXAS	TX
UTAH	UT
VERMONT	VT
VIRGIN ISLANDS	VI
VIRGINIA	VA
WASHINGTON	WA
WEST VIRGINIA	WV
WISCONSIN	WI
WYOMING	WY