# Cover Letter Format and Purpose

Your Present Address *(This is the formal business letter format used for cover letters)*

City, State Zip Code

Date of Letter *(Note there are two blank lines between each section of this heading)*

Individual's Name *(Include Ms. /Mr. /Dr.; if unknown use Human Resources)*

Job Title

Employer Name *(Call employers for correct spelling of name, title, etc., if necessary)*

Street Address *(Employer address, city, state, zip are optional for online*

City, State Zip Code *applications, but at least use the employer name)*

Dear Ms./Mr./Dr. Last Name: *(If unknown, use Dear Hiring Representative,)*

Introductory paragraph addresses three questions:

* How did you hear of the position?
* Why do you want to work for that specific company/organization?
  + (Stay away from general answers or aspects focused on you- be specific)
* What knowledge, skills, abilities, or achievements (KSAAs) qualify you for that position?
  + Usually the last sentence (Think of this as a thesis statement)
  + Mention 2-3 and then focus on them in the body of the letter

Detail paragraph(s) provide(s) your strongest connection/example of how your experience relates to the position:

* Discuss KSAAs in the order they are listed in the introductory paragraph
* Provide evidence of the KSAAs listed in introductory paragraph from related work or academic experience
* Use concrete examples, active voice, and action verbs; vary sentence structure and length
* Explain how you can benefit that company and what value you can add, not what they can do for you
* If you have two strong ideas to present, break this into two shorter paragraphs
* Shorter items are more likely to be read; longer ones get skimmed or even skipped altogether
* Be brief (A cover letter is shorter than a full single page)

Closing paragraph:

* Thank them for the opportunity and indicate your interest in an interview
* Provide contact information and best overall times to call

Sincerely,

Type your name