

**Cover Letter Boot Camp Workshop, Supplementary Handout
Robinson Writing Center
West Liberty University**

COMPONENTS OF A COVER LETTER

- Header
- Introductory Paragraph
- Education Paragraph
- Employment Paragraph

HEADER

The header of your letter should include:

- Your contact information
 - Your name
 - The address where you can be most easily reached
 - Your phone number
 - Your email address
- The date on which you are writing
- The contact information for the employer
 - The name of the specific person you are writing to and their title (if available)
 - The employer's address

INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH

In this paragraph, you should:

- Identify the position you are applying for and express your interest.
- State your source of information (how you learned about the job or where the advertisement is posted).
- Preview your qualifications. These qualifications will become the main claims of your education and employment paragraphs.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT PARAGRAPHS

In these paragraphs, you should:

- Begin with a topic sentence that states the main claim of the paragraph. This sentence should address the following questions:
 - What did you do? (course project, internship, work or volunteer experience, etc.)
 - What skill or attribute did you gain?
- Support the main claim with evidence and specific examples. This evidence should be more specific than what can be seen in your resume.
- Close with a sentence that relates the experience and skill back to the job.

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CLOSING PARAGRAPH

In this paragraph, you should:

- Summarize your qualifications, and emphasize your fit with the company/position.
- Refer to your resume.
- Specify how you would like to be contacted (would you like them to email or call you?) and include the appropriate contact information.
- Politely request an interview.
- Sign the letter above your typed name.

STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING BODY PARAGRAPHS

- Focus on a single point that you identify in the topic sentence.
 - In the following example paragraph, the writer makes the point that he can think outside of the box and bring new perspectives to situations.
- Develop this point in more detail than can be seen on your resume.
 - In the example writer's resume, he might have said that he developed a robot that can color in letters, but he did not likely give such a vivid description of the robot spinning the marker in the air or driving forward to color the letter. He also did not likely say that his group was the only one to color in multiple letters.
- Don't just tell, show.
 - The example writer does not simply say that he can think outside of the box. Rather, he gives a detailed illustration of a time when he did so, helping his reader to actually visualize him as a creative thinker in a specific situation.

Example Education Paragraph:

One of my best attributes is being able to think outside of the box and bring new perspectives to an array of situations. I was once tasked to program a robot that could color in letters of the alphabet for a class project. I developed a winning solution, leading my group to color in multiple letters. We were the only ones who managed to do so. Using a sound detection device, the robot was programmed to spin in place with its marker in the air until sound was detected, drive forward until another sound was detected, and set the marker down and begin coloring the new letter. This was an unorthodox approach to solving the problem, but it resulted in the desired outcome for our team.

COVER LETTER BRAINSTORMING ACTIVITY

Working with a partner, discuss:

- What job or type of job interests you? Are you writing your letter for a specific position?
- What are the company or field's values and priorities? What types of candidates are they looking for?
- What skills and qualifications do you have that align well with the company's values and priorities? What do you bring to the position that will set you apart from other candidates.

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Once you have discussed these questions:

- Write topic sentences for your education and employment paragraphs. Use the following template to get started:
 - Through _____ (course or work experience), I developed _____ (skill or attribute), which aligns well with your company's interest in _____.
- Write a sentence or two for your introductory paragraph that previews the main ideas of your education and employment paragraphs.