



# Widener University

COVER LETTERS AS EASY AS ABC



# Why Write a Cover Letter?



- Your chance to make an A+ first impression
- Done well, it can help you outshine your competition and win the interview
- Done poorly, it can take you out of the running

# What Employers Say



- No form letters. Show me you took the time to learn about our organization
- Help me connect the dots between your qualifications and our opportunity
- Proofread!! A sloppy letter says sloppy employee

# Use Proper Formatting



- Date
- Who you are writing to? Full name, title, organization, and official mailing address
- Reference job title (Re: Public Relations Intern)

# Formatting (continued)

- Dear: (colon, not comma)
- Body of letter, either blocked or indented paragraphs
- Closure: Sincerely or Regards followed by comma
- Leave three spaces, then your signature
- Your full name

# Justin Hennigan

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February 5, 2013

Ms. Grace Sperling  
Chase Manhattan Bank  
5309 Canal Blvd.  
New York, NY 10023

RE: Finance Internship

Dear Ms. Sperling:

I am seeking a position with Chase Manhattan Bank to exercise my skills in finance and economics. My friend, John Trahan, was recently hired at your bank and told me about your internship program. His enthusiasm alone intrigued me and made me eager to know more about this exciting organization and the opportunities involved.

I will bring many proven skills and talents to Chase Manhattan Bank. Having honed my banking skills through my experience with the World Trade Center of Philadelphia's internship program and the USDOE's research program, I am comfortable with banking vernacular and processes. My extensive banking research and proposal development at these positions are rare for someone my age. Additionally, I possess strong interpersonal and leadership skills. Success drives me, as is evidenced by my sound academic performance and scholastic awards.

I am confident I would contribute to the continued success of Chase Manhattan Bank and would welcome the chance to discuss internship opportunities with you. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Justin Hennigan

# What if there is no posted opening?

- You can still write a letter to express your interest in an organization
- Tell them why you are interested, what you know so far
- Ask for an informational meeting
- Great way to get on an employer's radar early

# A is for About

- First paragraph:

What about this role interests you?

Did someone refer you? (mention first, and make sure you have permission to do so)

What attracted you to *this* job? (not generic)

# Does this opening work?



Dear Recruiter:

I saw your job posting on Indeed.com. I am a hard worker and great with people. I could be a real asset to your organization.

# A is for About: Paragraph #1

Dr. Kathleen L'Armand, Professor of Psychology at Widener University, suggested I contact you regarding your upcoming need for an Intake Counselor. I am very interested in employment in the area of family services and believe that my qualifications would allow me to make a solid contribution to Camden Family Services upon my graduation in December.

# B is for Because

□ Second paragraph:

What is the employer looking for?

Why are your skills and interests a match?

Back it up: give at least 2 good examples

You can break into 2 paragraphs if too long

# Would this make your case?



I see that you are looking for someone to plan events. I am a great party planner – just ask my friends. You are also looking for a good proofreader. I am great at this to.

# B is for Because: Paragraph #2

This past summer, I served as an intern with the Southeastern Pennsylvania Geriatric Services and helped the director develop a pilot project designed to curb abuse of elderly family members. I know you recently received a federal grant to develop a similar program for the Camden area and I am confident that I could contribute significantly to the implementation of this program.

# C is for Close: Paragraph #3



Reiterate your interest and qualifications

Ask for the interview

Tell them you will follow up – and do it

Thank them for their consideration

# Would this seal the deal?



Please call me to arrange an interview. I look forward to hearing from you.

# C is for Close



I am available for an interview at your convenience and look forward to having the opportunity to meet with you personally. I will follow up next week and can also be reached at 610-555-2222 or by email at [jkramer@gmail.com](mailto:jkramer@gmail.com). Thank you for your consideration.

# Let's Practice



- Read the posting below
- How might you start your letter?
- What skills or interests might you emphasize?
- How would you close the letter?

## **Intern - Special Events |**

Leukemia & Lymphoma Society -  
Conshohocken, PA



How many people can answer the question, "What do you do for a living?" with the answer, "**I help find cures for cancer.**" At LLS, employees take our mission seriously. Whether you work in one of our chapters, are an accountant at the national office or a specialist in our Information Resource Center, you work each day on making our mission a reality: Cure leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease and myeloma, and improve the quality of life of patients and their families.

**Join us and give new meaning to the word, "job."**

## **Responsibilities :**

- . Coordinating logistical aspects of various events such as securing in-kind donations, recruiting volunteers, preparing event materials, etc.
- . Helping with event day logistics
- . Preparing mailings to be sent to potential participants and donors
- . Working with local businesses to facilitate involvement with our campaigns
- . Administers select special projects as assigned
- . Grassroots Marketing and Fundraising
- . Assist the Donor Development staff with publicizing special events, information meetings, and other activities as needed

## **Requirements :**

- . Excellent verbal and non-verbal communication skills
- . Excellent computer skills: Microsoft Outlook, MS Word, MS Excel, MS PowerPoint and database management
- . Detail-oriented and strong organizational skills
- . Professional demeanor and appearance
- . Excellent verbal and non-verbal communication skills
- . Strong interpersonal skills and

# The finishing touches

- Use your resume letterhead for coordinated, professional presentation
- Save and upload the letter as a pdf so format stays intact (save in Word as well so you can make future changes)
- If sending as an email attachment, reference position you are applying for in subject line

# Remember Your ABCs

- About = Why this job? This company?
- Because = Why are you a fit? Connect the dots between job description and your skills!
- Close = Ask (nicely) for the interview. Thank them.

# Take your time. Do it right.



# Thank you, Thank you



What is single the most important thing to remember about thank-you notes?

# And the answer is...



Send one within 24 hours after your interview!

# Thank-you note etiquette

- Email is fine
- If you meet with several people, send each one a separate note (include a point or something you learned unique to each meeting)
- Consider a handwritten note to stand out from the crowd

Keith Watson  
Director, Workforce Planning  
Advanced Workforce Solutions  
579 Henderson Road  
King of Prussia, PA 19406

Dear Mr. Watson:

It was truly a pleasure speaking with you on Friday, September 7 about your human resources generalist position. I appreciated the opportunity to discuss my qualifications with you, as well as our discussion focusing on the mission of your firm. I am confident that my current skills and experience would serve me well in the position of human resources generalist.

I was excited to learn about your firm's plans to hire more native Spanish-speaking executives, as you continue to build your business in Central America. My strong conversational ability in Spanish has been a great advantage to me in dealing with people from Spanish-speaking cultures, and I have experience communicating with diverse cultural and socio-economic groups.

It is my sincere hope that I would be given the opportunity to make a significant contribution to Advanced Workforce Solutions in this manner. Thank you once again for your time and for your serious consideration.

Sincerely,

# Extra credit question

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Besides showing good manners, why else should you send a thank-you note?

# And the answer is...



It's another opportunity to close the deal

# Use your thank-you note to...

- Add a great point you wish you had made during the interview
- Reinforce why you are a strong fit for the position
- Attach a sample project, paper, etc. that supports your response to an interview question

# It's also a final opportunity to...

- Show your good listening skills: refer to specific content from the interview
- Demonstrate your writing and communication skills
- Show attention to detail: spell everyone's name correctly and proofread!

# Helpful Resources

- [http://www.widener.edu/academics/support/career\\_services/\\_docs/coverletters.pdf](http://www.widener.edu/academics/support/career_services/_docs/coverletters.pdf)
- <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/engagement/34/42/>

# Career Services Can Help

## By Appointment:

- Career Counseling
- Resume and CV Critiques
- Mock Interviews

Call: 610-499-4176

- Walk In Hours

Monday to Thursday

1:00 to 3:00 PM, 526 E. 14<sup>th</sup> Street

Visit [www.widener.edu/careers](http://www.widener.edu/careers) for more info

