Writing a Cover Letter

Make it brief and to the point.
- Your letter should be short and word processed on quality paper.
- Use simple and direct language.

Link yourself to the employer.
- How did you hear about the job? Refer to the ad or web posting if applicable. Name your referral if possible. Show your awareness of what the company does or wants to do.

Do some research if you can.
- Check the internet, newspapers or trade journals for info about the company.

Before writing the letter, ask yourself:
- What skills and experience is the employer looking for? Which of my achievements demonstrate that I have the required experience? What personal attributes and skills do I have that match the requirements of the job?

Tailor your letter to the specific job.
- Show how your skills relate to this particular employer’s needs. You can use the same wording as the job description to show that you have the specific skills required.

“Personalize” your letter.
- Reflect your personality but be careful not to appear pushy, overbearing or too familiar. Humour is generally out of place here. Avoid cliché phrases.

Stress how the employer will benefit from hiring you.
- Make it easy to see how you would fit in and how your experience is relevant.

Mention your availability.
- Supply phone number(s) and e-mail addresses. Alternatively, you can include this information in your letterhead.

Check the letter carefully for spelling, grammar, punctuation and typing errors, and then have someone else read it over. A Learning Centre Tutor would be happy to do this!
Cover Letter Format

Your Name
Your Street Address, City, Province, Postal Code
Your email address, Your phone number

Date

Contact Person’s Name
Position/Title
Company’s Name
Company’s Mailing Address

Dear “Contact Person”, (i.e. Ms. Jones, Mr. Nguyen, Connie Smith, Human Resources…) (Avoid “To Whom It May Concern or “Dear Sir/Madam”.)

Re: Reference Number or Position Title (optional)

| Paragraph 1: | What job are you seeking?  
|             | How did you hear about it, or why are you choosing this company? |

| Paragraph 2: | Describe your qualifications related to the position.  
|             | Summarize the highlights of your resume. |

| Paragraph 3: | Express your willingness to meet at the employer’s convenience.  
|             | (Optional – of course you’d be willing to meet!)  
|             | Tell how you can be reached.  
|             | (or have this info in your letterhead - better)  
|             | Thank the employer for his/her time/consideration.  
|             | “I look forward to hearing from you.” |

Sincerely,

Your Signature

Your Name

Encl: Resume

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January 20, 2010

Siemens IT Solutions and Services
1234 East Georgia Street
Vancouver, BC
V7Z 8Y9

Re: Deskside Support Analyst #003171

Dear Human Resources,

I am submitting my resume in response to your posting on Workopolis for a full-time Help Desk Analyst.

My successful completion of the Information Technology Specialist program at Vancouver Community College along with recent industry-related experience, qualify me to provide excellent service for your customers, both internal and external. I have strong written and verbal communication skills in both English and French, and I would enjoy finding solutions to your customers’ needs on the phone or online. I am sure that my technical training and proven customer service skills would be a natural fit for your dynamic, international company.

I would welcome the chance to meet with you at your convenience. Thank you for reviewing my application.

Yours sincerely,

Tom Cruise

Tom Cruise

Encl. Resume
Some Helpful Phrases

Salutations

• Dear Ms./Mrs./Mr. Last Name:
• Dear Pat Smith: (write full name if gender not specified)
• Dear Hiring Committee / Human Resources: (when no contact name provided)

Possible First Paragraph Wording

• I am writing in response to _________________________.
• I was very pleased to learn of the opening for _________________________.
• This letter is in response to your advertisement in ______________ for a ______________.
• I would like to be considered for the position of ______________________ as advertised on your website on ______________. (date)
• I am seeking a position as a _______________________.
• As an experienced ___(job title)___, I have a great deal to offer your company.
• I am especially interested in this position because_______________________
• You may have a situation that requires (a skill you have) ___________________
• I recently read about __ (company name)___ and discovered that (information about company, e.g. you are expanding).

Possible Second Paragraph Wording

• I feel I could make a contribution to (company name) by_______________________
• My strengths include ________________________________________________
• My relevant experience includes _________________________________________
• Throughout my career I have demonstrated for my employers_________________
• My experience in ________ has taught me how to/the importance of__________
• My _________training at VCC would make me a strong addition to your company.
• My __________training at VCC combined with my ______ years of ___(related)____ experience make me a strong candidate for this position.
• I am excited about applying my newly acquired skills.
• I believe I have many of the qualifications you are looking for.
• My employers have described me as ________________________________.
Possible Final Paragraph Wording

- I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you.
- I would be happy to meet with you at your convenience.
- I believe that the combination of my ______________ experience and ____________ training make me well suited to the position.
- Please refer to my enclosed resume for additional details about my background.
- I will contact you in the next short while … / to see if you require any additional details regarding my qualifications.
- Thank you for your time.
- Thank you for reviewing my qualifications.
- Thank you for your consideration.
- I look forward to hearing from you.
- I look forward to your reply.
Finally, check your cover letter against the following questions to see if it needs more work or if you have forgotten something. Make changes as required.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cover Letter Checklist ✓ ✓ ✓</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Needs Work</th>
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<td>➢ Is the layout and format pleasing to the eye?</td>
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<td>➢ Is it easy to read?</td>
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<td>➢ Have you included at least two ways to be contacted? (If your contact information is not in your letterhead/resume)</td>
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<td>➢ Have you matched your qualifications specifically to the job description?</td>
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<td>➢ Have you researched the company?</td>
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<td>➢ Have you included any of your research in the cover letter?</td>
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<td>➢ Have you reflected your personality in some way?</td>
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<td>➢ Is your cover letter no more than three to five paragraphs long?</td>
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<td>➢ Have you done a spell check?</td>
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<td>➢ Have you done a grammar check?</td>
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<td>➢ Has a friend, colleague, or tutor checked it over?</td>
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