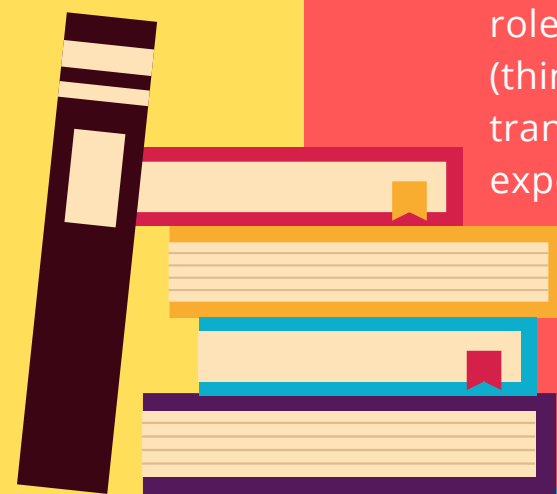


HOW TO CRAFT A COVER LETTER

PURPOSE

Why write a cover letter?

- Make a case for why you're a fit for the job
- Capture interest towards an interview
- Narrate how the job fits into your career trajectory (especially if pivoting out of academia)
- Illustrate how your interests and values align with position or organization



HOW TO APPROACH YOUR COVER LETTER

EXPERIENCE

- Identify key themes around responsibility in the job ad
- Brainstorm examples of how your experience has prepared you for the role's responsibilities (think about transferable experiences too!)



VALUES/ INTERESTS

- How do the company's values and/or the values you could express in this role align with yours? (ex. curiosity, collaboration, etc.)
- How does the role reflect your interests or expertise?
- What interests could you explore and develop in the role?



FIT FOR ROLE

- Review your brainstorming and highlight the most persuasive answers to:
 - **Why are you interested? (Why now?)**
 - **How are you qualified?**
- Where can you fill in the blanks or complement your resume?
- Draft a working "thesis statement" that sums up your argument for why you're a fit for the position.



ORDER OF COMPONENTS

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Introductory paragraph stating the position and a "thesis statement" about your fit/interest.
- Organize paragraphs around:
 - experience throughlines preparing you for or cultivating your interest in this job and field,
 - skills or expertise that make you a fit, or
 - some combination of narrative/skills examples
- Simple conclusion, summing up your interest and eagerness for further conversation about the role



COVER LETTER RULES OF THUMB

- Your cover letter should...
 - ...be tailored to each job description.
 - ...reflect familiarity with the organization.
 - ...show, not tell how your experience connects to the job (use examples).
 - ...double as a writing sample. (Proofread!)
 - ...not repeat or summarize your resume.
 - ...synthesize and translate your advanced degree experience to an employer who might not appreciate your resume (that is, write one even if it's optional!).

WHEN PIVOTING...

WHAT A LETTER CAN DO THAT A RESUME CAN'T

- Anticipate and address employer reservations about fit.
 - i.e., why you are switching fields, how experience that looks unrelated on your resume does connect to the role, explain your desire to relocate, "gaps" on your resume, etc.
 - For PhDs, rebut possible negative stereotypes about academics by emphasizing collaboration and communication skills and desire to address new challenges.
- Narrate your transition into a new field or non-academic job.
 - Be positive. Always frame career pivots, etc. as what you want *more* of vs. what you dislike now.
 - ex. "When conducting my research, I realized that what I really love is collaboration, making me excited to . . ."
- Show that you are an enthusiastic and personable candidate with whom they'd like to meet in an interview!

ADDITIONAL TIPS



- **Ideal tone:** enthusiastic and confident.
- Orient the reader with clear **topic sentences**.
- Write **concluding sentences** at the end of sections or paragraphs tying the experience you've just outlined to the position.
- **Avoid jargon.**
- Let go of defensiveness or shame! Write your letter knowing that **you are an impressive candidate**. The reader is seeing you with fresh eyes, unaware of whatever anxiety you may have about your resume or career transition.
- **Revise.** Have someone review your document for clarity and readability. Did you connect your experience to the role as you'd hoped?
- **Read aloud** for check for flow and catch typos.