



Cover Letters for Industry, Nonprofits, and Government

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**What brings you to
today's workshop?**



AGENDA

1. **Is this Necessary?**
2. **Letters as a Genre**
3. **Content**
4. **Formatting**
5. **Practice**



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So Long, Cover Letter?

2017 JOBVITE SURVEY

Cover letters are losing footing in the modern job seeker's repertoire.



47% of job seekers did not submit a cover letter with their current or most recent job application.

58%

Younger and older workers particularly eschew tradition: **58%** of both 18-22 year olds and 55+ year olds decided to forego the cover letter.

26%

According to Jobvite data, only **26%** of recruiters consider cover letters important in their decision to hire an applicant.

- Many industry job openings no longer require cover letters
- Referrals are serving as introductions to applicants



Not So Fast . . .

- Cover letters are still a **best practice** for job seekers
- Why? Some hiring managers consider cover letters a **must**, and they use letters to evaluate candidates
- Even if a recruiter ignores the letter, **going the extra mile** will never count against you



So, You Should

JUST DO IT.



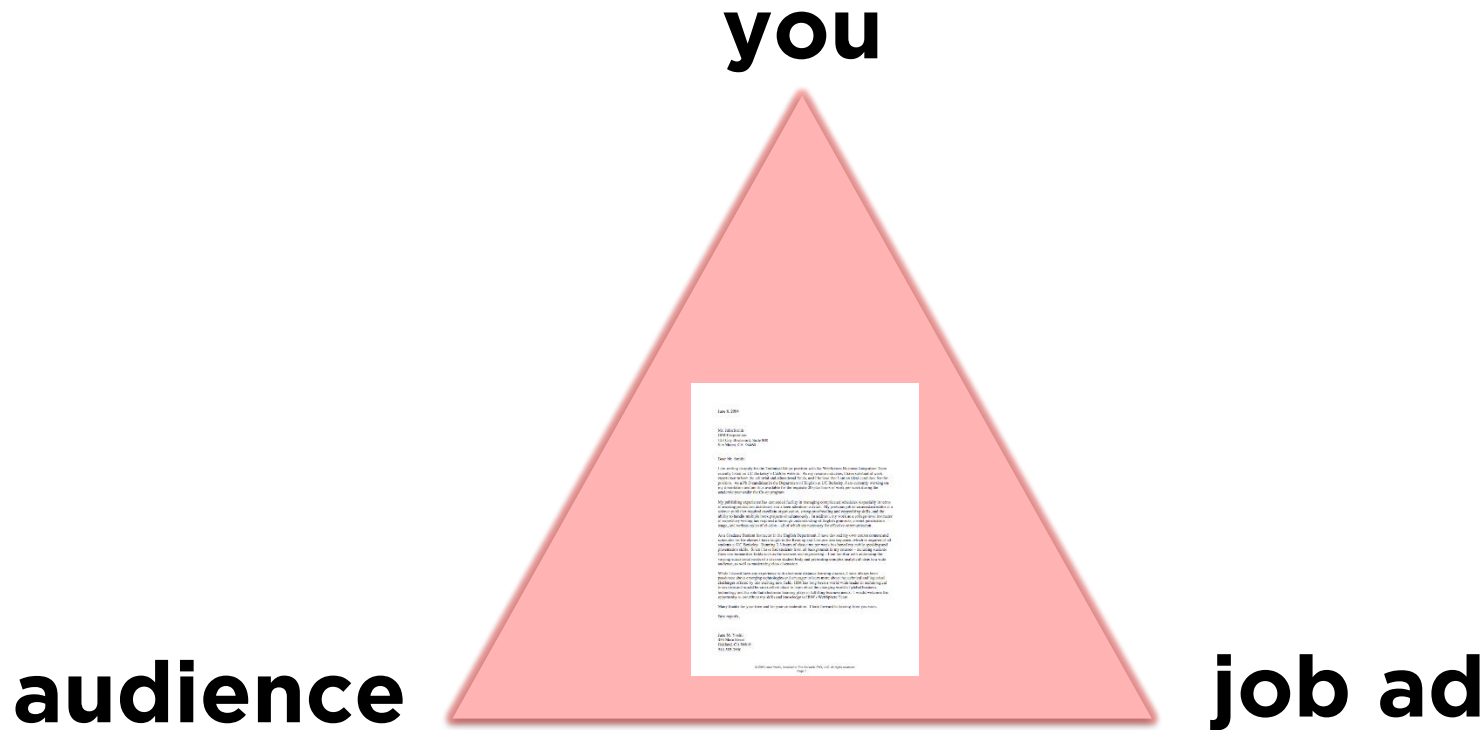
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Mastering the Genre

- A cover letter is an **argument** made to a **specific audience**



Mastering the Genre

- Your argument should be supported by **claims** and **evidence**
- Claim: I can provide data-driven solutions to your clients' business challenges.
- Evidence: During my recent internship, I . . .



Mastering the Genre

- Good cover letters make arguments, but there is **no one right way** to write them
- Your tone, content, and even format may differ depending on your **audience**
 - How might you write differently for a tax consultancy (Deloitte) vs. a digital media company (Buzzfeed)?
- Read examples in your field



An Example

- What argument is this letter making?
- What claims and evidence support this argument?
- How does the letter speak to its audience?

June 8, 2004

Mr. John Smith
IBM Corporation
123 City Boulevard, Suite 800
San Mateo, CA 94460

Dear Mr. Smith:

I am writing to apply for the Technical Editor position with the WebSphere Business Integration Team recently listed on UC Berkeley's CalJobs website. As my resume indicates, I have substantial work experience in both the editorial and educational fields, and I believe that I am an ideal candidate for the position. As a Ph.D candidate in the Department of English at UC Berkeley, I am currently working on my dissertation and am thus available for the requisite 20-plus hours of work per week during the academic year under the Co-op program.

My publishing experience has demanded facility in managing complicated schedules (especially in terms of meeting production deadlines) and a keen attention to detail. My previous job as an assistant editor at a science publisher required excellent organization, strong proofreading and copyediting skills, and the ability to handle multiple book projects simultaneously. In addition, my work as a college-level instructor of expository writing has required a thorough understanding of English grammar, correct punctuation usage, and various styles of citation—all of which are necessary for effective communication.

As a Graduate Student Instructor in the English Department, I have devised my own course content and schedules for the classes I have taught in the Reading and Composition sequence, which is required of all students at UC Berkeley. Running 2-3 hours of class time per week has honed my public speaking and presentation skills. Since I have had students from all backgrounds in my courses—including students from non-humanities fields such as the sciences and engineering—I am familiar with addressing the varying educational needs of a diverse student body and presenting complex analytical ideas to a wide audience, as well as moderating class discussion.

While I do not have any experience with electronic distance learning courses, I have always been passionate about emerging technologies and am eager to learn more about the technical and logistical challenges offered by this exciting new field. IBM has long been a world-wide leader in technological innovation and would be an excellent place to learn about the changing world of global business technology and the role that electronic learning plays in fulfilling business needs. I would welcome the opportunity to contribute my skills and knowledge to IBM's WebSphere Team.

Many thanks for your time and for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Best regards,

June M. Yoshii
456 Main Street
Oakland, CA 94610
510-555-7890



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Content Overview

- You can write a solid cover letter in just **four paragraphs**
- These four paragraphs . . .
 - **Introduce** you to the hiring manager
 - Provide evidence that you are a **fit**
 - Show **knowledge** of the organization
 - Reveal your **motivations** for applying
 - Demonstrate **writing skills**



Paragraph 1: Hello There

- Provide an **introduction**
 - Why are you writing?
 - Why are you interested?
 - Who have you talked to?
 - What will you bring to the table?
- Your **main claim** usually comes at the end of paragraph 1



Paragraphs 2-3: The Goods

- Begin body paragraphs with **strong claims**
- Provide **1-2 examples** as evidence of each claim
- Bring it back to **them** (state how past experiences apply to this new setting)
- Show, don't tell, and **don't repeat the resume**



Paragraph 4: The Future

- Conclude with **confidence**
- Reiterate your **motivations** without repeating yourself
- Give final thoughts or **key takeaways**
- Look **forward** to future conversations



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Cover Letter Formatting

Recipients' full address



David Trust
SVP, Money Laundering
Trustworthy Bank
1201 Ave of the Americas 26th Floor
New York, NY 10002

Date



January 9, 2016

Address a real human



Dear Mr. David Trust,

As a current PhD student at the University of Chicago with experience in the field of monetary hygiene, I am applying for the position of Sr. Money Launderer at Trustworthy Bank. From my conversation with TexE. Vader, Associate Director of Cleanliness, I learned that Trustworthy not only launders currency, but is developing a proprietary disinfectant to create the world's cleanest money. Given my extensive research on sanitary paper and my established record of misdemeanor crime, I am confident I could quickly deliver value for Trustworthy Bank and its clients.

One page in length



My doctoral research focused on ways to improve the cleanliness of toilet paper. I sought to create a tissue that not only cleaned but disinfected at the same time. By combining household cleaners with industrial strength disinfectants, I was able to create the first tissue that makes the skin 90% more resistant to microbial infection than standard tissue. At Trustworthy, I intent to use similarly innovative techniques to maintain optimal money laundering conditions.



Beyond my expertise in laundering, I also bring a uniquely morally indifferent attitude that will serve Trustworthy well. During my internship at the Maroon Bank, I routinely embezzled office supplies. I amassed such a collection that after one summer, I was able to sell it on eBay for \$500. This was enough to buy my first forgery kit. This propensity toward white-collar crime will be an asset to Trustworthy in its effort to defraud investors while also providing them with the world's cleanest currency.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to learning more about Trustworthy and elaborating on my skills and experiences in an interview.

Physical signature



Yours Sincerely,

Amber Shady

Your contact info



Amber Shady
1234 Hyde Park Way
Chicago, IL 60637
123.345.5678
ashady@uchicago.edu

Formatting: 11-12 Pt. Font

- Use the same font across **all** documents

AVOID

~~Arial~~

~~Times New Roman~~

~~Calibri~~

~~Cambria~~

~~Comic Sans~~

USE

Garamond

Georgia

Palatino Linotype

Helvetica Neue Light

Trebuchet MS



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Practice

- **Read** the job ad
- Working with a partner, **outline some claims** that you would want to make in your cover letter
- Then, **brainstorm some potential evidence** that you could provide in support of your claims
- We'll **discuss** the results as a group



Questions?

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Appointments?

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