

# COVER LETTER GUIDELINES & SAMPLES

## Writing a Cover Letter

A cover letter is a well-written document that introduces you to a potential employer. It should highlight your qualifications and prompt the reader's careful examination of your resume. A cover letter should be attached to each resume you send out whether by mail or via the Internet.

### **General Guidelines**

- Your letter must be attractive and error free. Use white or off-white quality bond 8 ½" x 11" paper (preferably the same paper as your resume).
- Address your letter to a specific person, using his or her name (spelled correctly) and title.
- Investigate the potential employer's needs so you can give informed and specific reasons why you are interested in the position and the value you offer as a future employee.
- Use simple, direct, warm and personal language. Choose words carefully using action verbs and terminology common to the occupational field being pursued.
- Length should be one page with three to five paragraphs and a maximum of four sentences per paragraph.

### **Format for a Cover Letter**

The cover letter should have the style and appearance of a good business letter and should include the following elements.

#### ***Introductory Paragraph: Establish a connection.***

- Tell why you are writing, naming the position for which you are applying, why it interests you, and, if appropriate, how you learned of the opening.
- To stimulate the reader's interest you may wish to name your contact person or state specific information about the company that you find impressive.

#### ***Body Paragraph(s): Demonstrate you are well-qualified for the position.***

- Making reference to your resume, highlight a couple of qualifications and accomplishments that would interest the employer and show that you are a qualified candidate for the position.
- Demonstrate your potential to meet the employer's specific needs.
- Match your academic background, experience and skills to the position description or job announcement.
- Establish you are suited to the organization, its philosophy, mode of operation, location, clientele, etc.

#### ***Closing Paragraph: Request a response.***

- Identify the date, time, means and purpose of the next contact. (Be sure to follow through with whatever action you commit yourself to in the letter.)
- Include a statement of appreciation for the time taken to read your letter and resume and to consider your employment qualifications.

Sample Cover Letter - Ministry

October 22, 2005

Reverend Scott White  
First Baptist Church  
1600 Main Street  
Macon, GA 31201

Dear Rev. White,

Career Planning and Placement at Columbia International University informed me of your need for a Minister of Worship and has sent you my resume. I was also supplied with a copy of the job description, which I find remarkably compatible with my education, experience and philosophy.

I enthusiastically share your vision for promoting worship and spiritual growth through the music ministry of the church. It is my conviction that church music is not primarily for entertainment, but rather to promote worship of God and to stimulate joyful celebration and thanksgiving for His person and work. In my present position I have succeeded in building unity and a team spirit among the musicians and have helped develop them into ministers, not merely performers. I work closely with the pastor to see that the music complements and enhances his sermon themes.

You will notice in my resume that I have had over ten years of experience directing worship programs of various sizes. I have been most effective in larger programs such as yours that have several choirs and worship groups. Having formed a teen worship team and having traveled with them for three years, I am quite interested in your worship team called, "The Praise Partners." I appreciate your strong desire to keep this group active.

While my ministry has been in Presbyterian churches, I received a Masters in Church Music from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. Furthermore, my brother is a Southern Baptist pastor. I would have no difficulty ministering in a Southern Baptist Church and being loyal to its distinctives.

I would appreciate an opportunity to visit with you in the near future so that we can become better acquainted. My wife and I would be happy to drive to Macon for this purpose. I will be calling you on Tuesday morning, November 7, to see if a visit can be arranged. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
*Carl C. Smith*

Carl C. Smith  
123 Apple Lane  
Bayport, SC 29925  
(843) 555-1234  
ccsmith@aol.com

Sample Cover Letter - Teaching

**Stephanie Brown**

123 Maple Lane ♦ Columbia, SC 29223 ♦ (803) 555-1122 ♦ ssbrown@expressmail.com

---

January 22, 2005

Dr. Alan Smith  
Covenant Hope Christian School  
1512 Green Ave.  
Rock Hill, SC 29730

Dear Dr. Smith,

I read with great interest your literature on file in the Career Planning and Placement Office of Columbia International University (CIU). I am impressed with the growth and quality of Covenant Hope Christian School. I therefore would like to apply for an elementary teaching position at your school.

This June I will be receiving a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education from CIU and shortly thereafter will be certified by the state of South Carolina to teach first through sixth grades. In addition to academic credentials, my summer employments, church ministry experiences and student teaching assignments, which you will find detailed in my resume, have all demonstrated and confirmed my ability to love, nurture and instruct children.

I appreciate Covenant Hope Christian School's affiliation with the Presbyterian Church of America (PCA) and the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). Upon graduation I will be ACSI certified. I have been a member of a PCA church from my youth. Also, the summer camp where I served as a counselor and the Christian school in which I did my field education are PCA.

If agreeable to you, I would like the opportunity to have an interview sometime during spring break, March 5 - 10, 2005. Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

*Stephanie Brown*

Stephanie Brown

Encl.