

## The Cover Letter, Dissected.

Please see page two to read about the purpose and format of a well-written cover letter.

Alfred Hitchcock  
Northwest Clinic  
14 Filmmaker Drive  
San Francisco, CA 94114

June 1, 0000

Dear Dr. Hitchcock:

I am writing in response to your **Nurse Practitioner** position, recently posted on Craig's list job board. As a recent graduate from the University of California, San Francisco's GNP program, I have three years of clinical experience in hospital and clinic settings, and Spanish and Mandarin language skills. As a resident of San Diego for fifteen years, I am committed to returning to the Southern California area to serve the health care needs in my community.

To highlight my experience:

- **Gerontological Clinical Experience:**

At both SFGH's Elder Care Clinic and the Tom Waddell Homeless Clinic, I addressed a wide range of clinical issues facing elderly patients and their care givers, including managing diabetes, glaucoma, Alzheimer's, and hospice/end of life care. My clinical experience and training enables me to triage patients, conduct patient interviews, propose diagnosis and treatment plans and make referrals for patients who need ongoing specialized or emergency care.

- **Excellent Interpersonal and Spanish/Mandarin Language Skills:**

I have extensive experience working in collaborative, interdisciplinary teams at the Elder Care and Tom Waddell. In both settings, I used my Spanish and Mandarin language skills in a medical capacity, sometimes even serving as the translator between the patient/caregiver and the staff. These experiences have taught me how to address patients and care givers professionally and respectfully, discuss their concerns, and manage their frustrations.

What I cherish most about my role as a clinician is working in collaborations with other health professionals, patients and care givers to address a complex health issue with both clinical and educational tools. My professional goals include returning with my family to the San Diego area and working in a community-focused practice. The opportunity to apply my skills and experiences at the Northwest Clinic is an exciting prospect. I can be reached at 123.456.7890 should you have any questions. I wish you the best in your search.

With regards,

Stanley Kubrick

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Stanley Kubrick  
12 Movie Street, San Francisco, CA 0000. 111.222.3333. Stanley@email.edu



**OCPD**  
office of career &  
professional development

## The Cover Letter, Dissected.

Alfred Hitchcock  
Safeway, San Francisco  
14 Filmmaker Drive  
San Francisco, CA 94114  
June 1, 2004

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- **Gerontological Academic/Clinical Experience:**

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With regards,

Stanley Kubrick

### A. Why write a cover letter?

A CV or resume only explains all of your previous **academic training** and **professional skills**. A Cover Letter:

1. Summarizes how that **academic training** and **professional skills** will directly benefit them.
2. Explains **desire** – why you want the job.

B. Often, employers only skim the first paragraph, so Stanley's paragraph is a summary of:

- A. What he brings to the table (experience & skills)
- B. Why he wants the job (desire)

This includes his:

1. **Academic training**
2. **Professional skills**
3. **Desire**

C. The rest of his cover letter gives detailed evidence about his claims in his first paragraph. It also follows the order of his summary paragraph.

1. **Academic training & 3 years clinical experience**
2. **Interpersonal & language skills**
3. **Desire**

D. Note that the text focuses on examples and language about what he is able to do for the employer. For example: "My training enables me..."

### E. Isn't this a long letter?

A cover letter can be 1-4 paragraphs. A briefer letter would only include the first "summary" and last paragraph.

### F. Do employers really read cover letters?

Yes. The real question isn't if, but when do employers read cover letters? Think about how you sort through a stack of information. First, you'd probably skim the CV/resume and first paragraph of the cover letter, to sort candidates into 'yes', 'no' and 'maybe' piles.

The second time through, you'd read everything closely to whittle down your 'yes' pile to 3-5 strong candidates to invite to interview. But what if there were 6?

Here's when a cover letter is most valuable: it makes your argument about how you can contribute to their organization, and why you want the position. Those without cover letters have to hope that the employer can figure that out. It might be the edge you need!