Resumes & Cover Letters That Work

Resume Review

Consider the cover letter below.

Clark Kent
123 Main Street
Metropolis, USA
clark.kent@email.com
(555) 123-4567

July 30, 2025

Dear Hiring Manager,

I am writing to apply for a job at your company. I believe my background and experience make me a strong candidate for any position you may have available.

As you can see from my résumé, I have worked as a reporter, covered breaking news, and written feature stories. I have also conducted interviews and collaborated with editors to meet tight deadlines. My experience includes working at The Daily Planet and other media outlets.

I am excited about the opportunity to work with your organization. I am confident that my skills and experience will be a great asset to your team.

Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Clark Kent

What errors can you detect?

How might these mistakes affect an employer's impression?

Examples of Common Mistakes

Too Generic

A cover letter that lacks personalization can come across as unfocused or disinterested, missing the opportunity to connect with the specific role or organization.

- Impact: A generic cover letter can fail to capture attention by making you seem uninterested in the specific role.
- Example: “I am writing to apply for a job at your company.”
- Tip: Name the job title and refer to the organization by name.

Repeats the Resume

A cover letter that simply restates your resume misses the opportunity to tell a compelling story or explain why you're a great fit for the role.

- Impact: Repeating your résumé can waste valuable space.
- Example: Lists job duties without adding new insight or storytelling.
- Tip: Instead of copying bullet points, use the letter to highlight a story, strength, or key fit.

No Clear Connection to the Role

Failing to link your background and interests to the specific job can make your application feel generic and disconnected, reducing its impact.

- Impact: Fails to show why you’re interested and how your experience fits the specific job.
- Example: Does not explain why Clark is interested in this specific newspaper.
- Tip: Show your interest and fit by connecting your experience to the role and the organization’s mission.

Inconsistent Formatting with Resume

When your application materials don’t visually align—such as using different fonts, layouts, or date formats—it can make your application look disjointed and less professional.

- Impact: Your resume and cover letter are part of your personal brand—when they don’t align, it can dilute your message.
- Example: Different header style or inconsistent date formatting.
- Tip: Use the same font, layout, and style as your resume to present a polished and cohesive application.

Other Examples of Common Mistakes

What are other common mistakes to make sure you avoid when writing a cover letter?