

WESTERN NEW ENGLAND

INFORMATION TO INCLUDE IN YOUR COVER LETTER

Use the same heading as your résumé

Date

Address of person/organization to whom/which you are applying

Dear Mr./Ms. _____: (you should always try to address your letter to a specific person rather than "To Whom It May Concern:ö)

FIRST PARAGRAPH: The first paragraph states why you are writing and to which position you are applying. In this first paragraph, you should also include a general statement of why you are interested in the position. This statement can range from past experience in the field, a desire to gain experience, or how you feel your education or past experience will benefit the organization. The goal is to quickly catch the reader's attention and make him or her interested enough to continue reading. Although many cover letters you see will begin with phrases like, "I am extremely interested" or "I am writing to express interest in" that is oftentimes not the best approach. Instead, try to be creative and think of another way to start your cover letter. Remember, your introduction needs to entice the employer to read further!

SECOND/THIRD PARAGRAPH: The second and third paragraphs outline why you feel you are qualified for the position by highlighting specific accomplishments and experiences and then showing how those accomplishments/experiences are relevant to the position. In other words, you are not simply restating the information you have listed on your résumé. Instead, you are showing the employer *how* you are the ideal candidate for the position by citing specific, relevant examples from your background. Remember, these examples can be drawn from classes, community service, activities, and interests, along with your work experience.

Suggestions before you begin writing this part of your cover letter:

- Read through the job description and create a list of the specific skills or characteristics the employer emphasizes. The employer may be looking for an applicant with strong computer skills, research ability, analytical skills, leadership, initiative, dedication, or specific experiences. Take the time to write down those skills so you have them in front of you as you begin to write.