

SAMPLE COVER LETTER FORMAT

P.O. Box 0000
James Madison University
Harrisonburg, VA 22807

September 1, 2003

Mr. J.B. Employer, Director
Personnel Department
Widget Incorporated
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Dear Mr. Employer:

Introductory Paragraph: This paragraph should include information on who you are, why you are writing, and specifically where you learned of this position or organization. You might make reference to a previous conversation or correspondence, giving specific dates if possible. If you learned of the position through another person, mention his or her name as personal referrals often attract more attention.

Body: The next one to three paragraphs contain your sales pitch, convincing the employer that you have what it takes to do the job. Highlight important features of your resume that pertain to the position applied for. Your letter will be effective if you incorporate specific knowledge of the position and the organization to which you are writing. It shows you have done your homework and appear to be truly interested in this organization.

Follow-up Paragraph: This paragraph should be short and to the point. Indicate what steps you would like to happen next (if you want an interview - ask for it)! There are two different approaches you might take. The **PASSIVE APPROACH** puts responsibility on the employer to make contact with the applicant. You will wait for the employer to contact you. With the **ACTIVE APPROACH**, the applicant offers to initiate further contact with the employer in the near future. You may indicate that you will call the employer on a specific date to verify receipt of your letter and arrange for an appointment. Remember to thank the employer for his or her time and consideration.

Sincerely,

James Madison

Enclosure