

# SAMPLE COVER LETTER OUTLINE

Appropriate (i.e., conservative) Letterhead or Resume Header  
Street Address, City, State and Zip Code; Telephone; E-mail

Date (spelled-out)

Full Name of *Targeted* Individual [and title or degrees (e.g., LL.M.)]  
*Complete* Title (if applicable)  
*Entire Name* of Firm or Organization  
Address

Re: (subject)- this line will only be necessary if you are going to state the vacancy number or other required reference in the text of the letter.

Dear Mr. / Ms. / Judge / Honorable:

**Opening Paragraph/Positioning Statement.** Be concise in explaining:

(1) Who You Are (e.g., “I am an LL.M. student at the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law...”); (2) Your Objective (e.g., “and am interested in obtaining a postgraduate internship...”); (3) Briefly, Your “Relevance” to the position (“I have a demonstrated interest in intellectual property and patent law, and plan to return to practice in New York when I graduate...”); and, if applicable, (4) the Name of a Contact (“Mr. Alexander suggested I contact you directly...”). *Exercise professional creativity in using all or some of these elements to express your uniqueness and to motivate the reader to read your enclosed resume.*

**Heart of the Letter.** This section should be no longer than two paragraphs and should convey relevant: (1) Experience in the Field (academic and practical); (2) Credentials (overall grades and/or upward trend); (3) Accomplishments (academic [undergraduate, graduate or law school], job-related or otherwise); (4) Honors and Awards (academic, military, civic, etc.); (5) Critical Reasoning, Research and Writing Skills (acquired before and during law school); and (6) Demonstrated Commitment to the overall objectives and philosophy of the organization. (You should endeavor to weave these factors with elements of the position offered or desired, thus making your ambition and ability to effectively contribute to the employer readily apparent to the reader.) *Because most employers consider cover letters to be indicative of the author’s research and writing abilities, as well as telling of his/ her level of commitment to the subject organization, they expect perfection and a personalized approach.*

**Closing Paragraph.** Do not waste this opportunity on a simple “Thank you for your consideration” or similarly bland statement. Instead: thank the reader, but also position yourself for a follow-up campaign (e.g., “I will be in New York early next month and will contact you beforehand in the hope that we can schedule a time to meet.”). Explain what course of action you plan to take or what action you would like the reader to take, and follow-through. If you fail to follow-up as promised, an employer may take this as a lack of sincere commitment, poor time-management skills or as an indication of laziness.

“Sincerely,” “Sincerely yours,” or “Very truly yours,”

Signature in black or blue ink  
Typed Name

Enclosure(s): (#) *(Remember: if you are faxing/ e-mailing your cover letter and resume to an employer, those materials are attachments, not enclosures, and you would use Attachment(s) instead of Enclosure(s).)*