

Welcome!

Resume Refresh (Class #2) will start soon...



aspire
— W I T H —
aileen

Resume Refresh

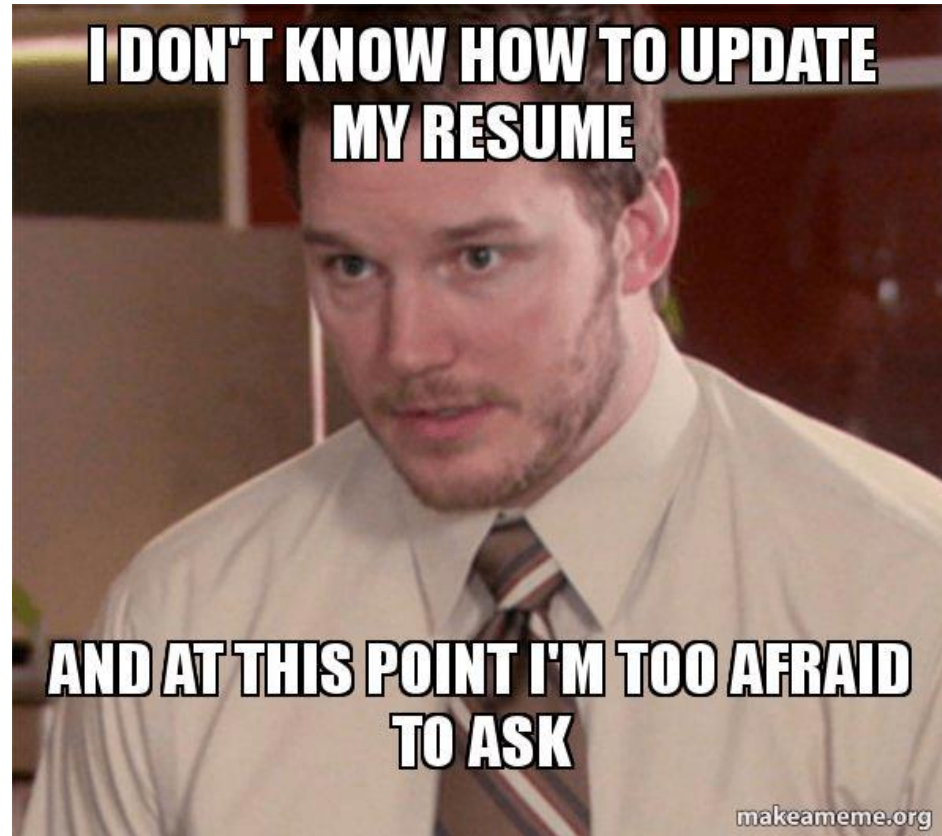
CLASS NUMBER 2



Today we'll *cover*...

- Follow-up questions from our first session
- How to dissect a job description to tailor your application materials in the future
- Whether or not you need to write cover letters
- Common questions on formatting, what goes on a cover letter vs. in a resume
- The structure you can use every time and how to prevent writer's block
- Answers to YOUR questions!

Resume wrap-up



I uploaded my
resume



now enter your
info manually



Common Cover Letter Tactics

After editing thousands of cover letters over the last 15 years, the most common approaches I see are that people will...

- try to make a “template” letter for every job, simply cutting/pasting the new company name and job title each time
- regurgitate everything that's already on their resume
- just not write them

LMK if any of these resonate – **it’s a judgment free zone!** 😊

Do I Have to Write a Cover Letter?

YES!

...most of the time

The Exceptions

- When a job description specifically says to not submit additional materials
- When you know for a fact from the hiring manager that they don't/can't use them to evaluate prospective hires

Ask yourself: *What do I have to lose (other than some time and sanity)?*

- The worst thing that happens? Your letter goes right into the recycling bin.
- The best thing that happens? You land yourself the job.

Real Talk

Universal truth: cover letters are always going to be a pain to write AND they may not end up being read.

But, if you're applying to positions that you're both excited about and qualified for, it's worth every painstaking paragraph.

The Biggest Advantage(s)

It gives you space to show your knowledge of and passion for the organization.

- It can also show:
 - Motivation for applying
 - Knowledge of the position and employer
 - Fit for the job including transferable skills
 - Professionalism
 - Ability to sell yourself
 - Written communication skills



Cover Letters Can Be Key



If your resume doesn't tell your story in a compelling way, the cover letter is your chance to connect the dots to show the employer you're a fit.

Example: A client worked at a bank but wanted to transition to a major athletic apparel retailer and open a new location in her hometown. She was active in the local fitness community and saw growth potential there.

In her letter, she spoke about how she could use her finance background for budgets, her real estate license to secure an ideal location, and leverage her longstanding community relationships to increase brand awareness. The town now has two store locations!

Try This:

1. Print out or copy/paste the job description
2. Highlight everything that aligns with your background/experience
 - Don't just look at the qualifications – the entire post
3. Put a STAR by anything that is “A-ha! That’s me!” info
4. Notice any themes

For example: The full qualifications section lists "attention to detail" ...but in the description it says things like “manage multiple projects” and “does well in a fast-paced environment” and “can wear a lot of hats.”

This benign looking skill is actually a big one!

Samples

- From Lisa: <https://www.linkedin.com/jobs/view/3431817968/>
- MomUp: <https://www.momup.com/jobs/counsel-legal-insurance/>



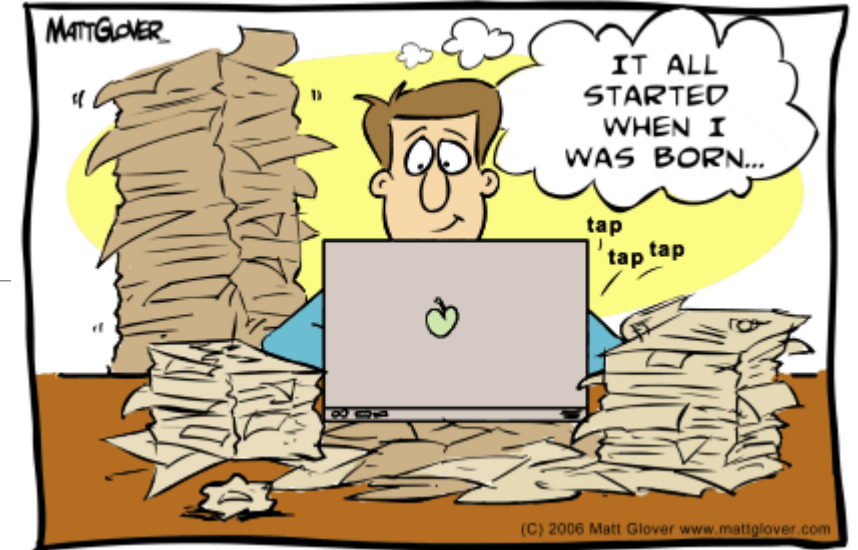
Avoiding Writer's Block

- Talk it out
- Get rid of your computer
- Then tidy it up



Cover Letter Structure

1. Salutation
2. Opening paragraph
3. Selling your relevant skills and knowledge
 - Two paragraphs OR one paragraph with an example that shows lots
4. Concluding paragraph (aka The Closer). Consider:
 - **What makes them unique?**
 - **Why do you want to work for there over somewhere else?**
 - **How do they differentiate themselves from their competition?**
5. Sign-off



What Do I Want vs. What Do They Need?



In my new position, I want:

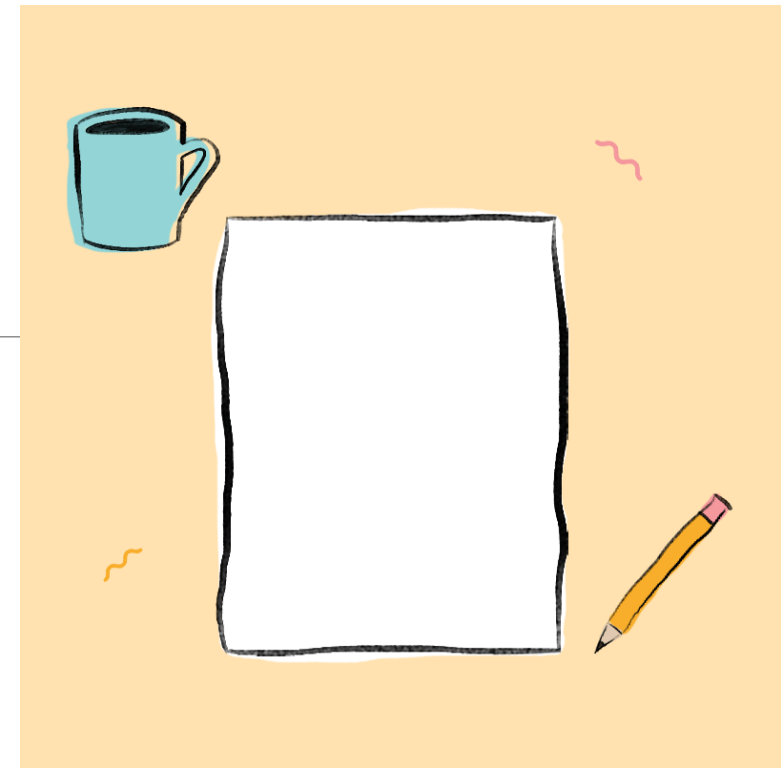
- To gain new skills and experience
- Exposure to a new field
- A good opportunity in this field
- To increase my marketability and build a bigger network

The employer needs:

- The skills necessary to do the job
- Experience relevant to the role to which you are applying
- Passion and true interest in this particular job
- Longer-term commitment to the organization

Housekeeping and FAQ's

- NEVER have a letter that's over one page!
- Save bullets for your resume
- Address it to a specific person if possible
 - Worst case? Dear Selection Committee
- Convert to PDF if possible + Heading Format
 - Email vs Attachment?
- Have someone else read it!



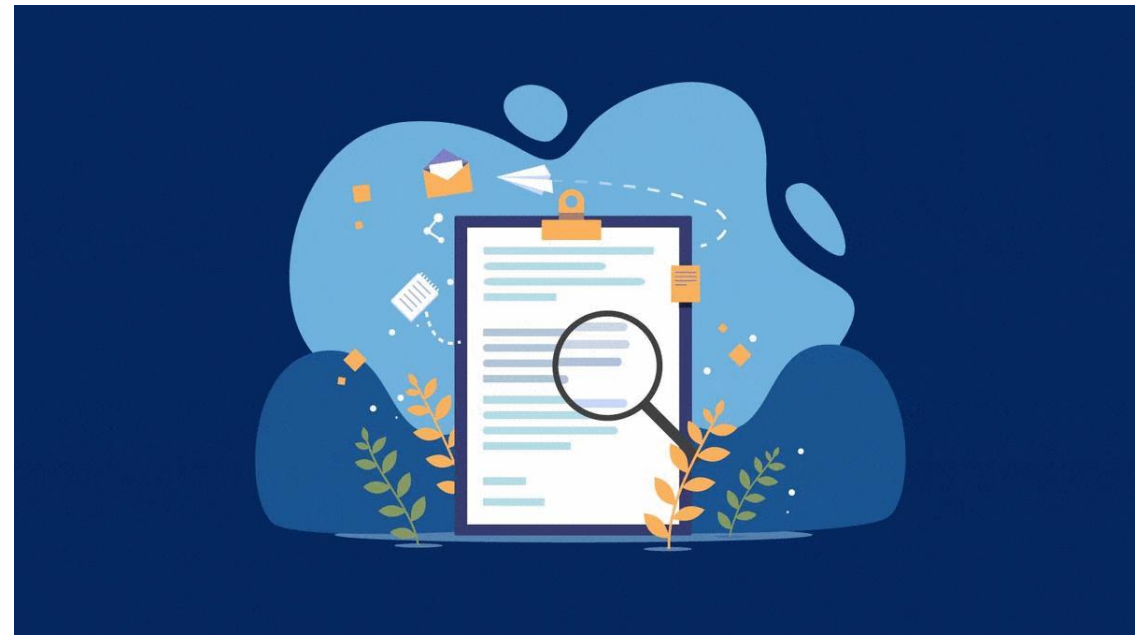
Cover Letter Examples + Tips

Check out The Muse for TONS

- <https://www.themuse.com/advice/cover-letter-examples-every-type-job-seeker>
- <https://www.themuse.com/advice/how-to-write-a-cover-letter-31-tips-you-need-to-know>
- <https://www.themuse.com/advice/to-whom-it-may-concern-alternatives>

30 second scan

- Turn the tables- pretend you're the employer and give your first reactions:
 - Easy to read or overwhelming?
 - Any major errors jump out right away?
 - First overall impression?





Wrap Up

Get and STAY organized! Sample spreadsheet

- For any of this to work, you have to know what you want, and that should be clear to employers.
- This will feel like a time suck in the beginning, but it gets easier.
- Carve out time, set goals, and reward yourself!
- Remember quality vs quantity and ask for help when you need it.
- Buddy system option!