

Name
City, State (full street address optional)
Phone number
Email address
Date

Hiring manager's name (if known)
Hiring manager's title (e.g., Human Resources Coordinator)
Name of organization

Salutation

- Try to address a specific person by name—check the job posting, the company website, or LinkedIn to find the hiring manager
- Use an honorific ("Dear Ms. Smith,") or their first and last name ("Dear Jane Smith,")
- If you cannot find a name, "Dear Hiring Manager," is acceptable

First Paragraph

- Briefly introduce yourself: mention that you are a University of Chicago student, give your year in school, and include your major if applicable
- Specify which position you are applying to
- Briefly summarize your relevant qualifications and explain why you are interested in this specific organization — show that you have done your research
- If you know someone at the organization, mention that person's name ("Mark Smith recommended that I apply for this position")
- Do not start with "My name is..."
- Avoid overconfident language like "I am the ideal candidate" or "I am the perfect fit"

Body Paragraphs (Usually 2-3 Paragraphs)

- Tailor each letter to the specific job and organization
- Structure each paragraph around a skill mentioned in the job description
 - Example: if research skills are an important part of the job description, dedicate a paragraph to your research experiences
- Show, don't tell: cite specific examples to show your qualifications
 - Ineffective: "I am skilled at time management"
 - Effective: "I managed five large-scale events and scheduled regular check-ins with our 25 event volunteers, all while balancing a full-time courseload"
- Keep it brief: one or two examples of each skill works great
- Do not simply repeat what is on your resume—use the cover letter to add context, tell a story, or highlight skills that don't fit neatly on a resume

Final Paragraph

- Reiterate your interest in the position
- Thank the reader
- End with a professional signoff like "Sincerely,"

Length & Formatting

- No more than one page
- Use a clean, simple layout: standard font, 10-12pt size, one-inch margins, no graphics or decorative elements