

WRITING COVER LETTERS

GENERAL TIPS

- Each cover letter should be one page and tailored to the job you're applying for.
- Choose a couple of key experiences from your résumé, and use the cover letter to describe or explain what you learned or gained from those experiences. Do not simply reiterate what is on your résumé.
- Demonstrate that you have skills; don't just say that you do.
- Focus on the organization you are applying to and how your skills and experiences will help its members and mission.
- Share experiences most related to the job description and connect them to the needs of each organization.
- Save the cover letter as a PDF file for sending or uploading to keep page formatting intact.
- For internships: mention how the internship fits into your future goals and plans.

SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

See the reverse of this page for an example of a properly formatted cover letter. Do not be tempted to shrink the font size below 12 (or, depending on the typeface, 11) point or to reduce the margins to under 0.75-inch.

- **Letterhead** – you may use the same contact information header from your résumé, but you may scale down the size of your name.
- **Date** – month *followed by* day, year (e.g., May 1, 2020)
- **Inside Address**
- **Salutation** – follow the salutation with a colon (business correspondence), not a comma (personal correspondence)
- **Paragraph 1** – state the position for which you are applying, your interest in the position, why you would be a great candidate, and why you want to contribute to the work the organization is doing.
- **Paragraph 2** – choose one experience that is related to the desired skills, qualities, and experience the organization has listed in the position description. Demonstrate with details and examples how you gained the experience and how it relates to the position you're applying for.
- **Paragraph 3** – same as paragraph two, but focus on a different experience or skills.
- **Paragraph 4** – create a summary sentence about your skills and abilities that you would bring to the organization and state that you appreciate their time and consideration.
- **Complimentary Close** – capitalize only the first word; followed by a comma
- **Signature** – type the name that you've listed in your header at the conclusion of the letter. A digital signature is not necessary, but can be included.

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| 1. The date should be formatted month <i>followed by</i> day, year. | 9. The position description references how the organization aids community development, so Ben described his own experience with community development. |
| 2. Keep margins reasonable: 0.75-inch top, bottom, left, and right (minimums). | 10. The description for the internship in Newark details the work the All Stars Project does to bring together youth and family with the business and cultural communities in New Jersey's suburbs. Ben detailed his work liaising between the Grinnell community and the College to achieve certain initiatives. |
| 3. Ben included the name and title of the contact person and the organization's name and address. | 11. Ben's mention of his organizational and planning skills mirror particular skills referenced in the position description. |
| 4. The letter is addressed to the point of contact for the internship and the salutation ends with a colon. | 12. Ben ends his cover letter with a summary sentence reiterating the skills and abilities he would bring to the organization, and thanks the reviewer for considering the application. |
| 5. This internship has positions in several locations, and Ben has acknowledged that he is applying specifically for the internship in Newark. | |
| 6. Ben stated why he would be a great fit for the organization and connected his previous experiences to the mission of the All Stars Project. | |
| 7. Ben described in greater detail the aspects of the All Stars Project that are most interesting to him. | |
| 8. The ability to work with children and interest in the arts are both highlighted in the position description, so Ben elaborated on his experiences with both in the second paragraph. | |

Mengyu (Ben) Cheng

1115 8th Avenue, Box 2608 Grinnell, IA • (987) 654-3210
ben.chang@gmail.com • www.linkedin.com/in/mengyucheng

May 12, 2019

Dr. Natalie G. Hansen
Executive Director
All Stars Project
33 Washington Avenue
Newark, NJ 07102

Dear Dr. Hansen:

I am writing to apply for the Grinnellink internship with the All Stars Project in Newark, New Jersey. My previous experience is rooted in teaching which, combined with my passion for youth engagement and performance art, will aid me in advancing All Stars Project's efforts to support urban youth as they transform their communities through artistic avenues. I am particularly drawn to All Stars Project's novel approach to community development through the arts and professional mentorship and welcome the opportunity to contribute my skills.

While volunteering throughout high school at Friendship Circle (see résumé), my love for working with children emerged. I furthered this love by working with children as a summer volunteer at the Noble Education Center. In these positions, I interacted one-on-one and in small groups with children with disabilities, focusing on social skills and language development. I value initiative and seek to find ways to meet the needs of an organization and the people it serves. In both positions, I incorporated music into my work with children, using music as a dynamic teaching tool through games and vocal exercises which would benefit me in this internship with the All Stars Project.

Recently, I have expanded my interest in community development by serving as a member of the Student Government Association's Services Committee at Grinnell College. In this role, I liaise between the Grinnell community and the College to actively promote service initiatives to Grinnell students, encouraging their involvement in civic engagement activities that enable them to apply classroom learning to real-world problems. To support these efforts, I manage a budget of \$18,000 to fund students' service opportunities with non-profit organizations. Through careful application review and appropriate grant disbursement, I have aided the Services Committees in becoming one of the largest sources of student organization funding at Grinnell College. The organizational and planning skills I have gained would serve me well in assisting the All Stars Project with performance and development workshops.

In addition to my previous experiences, I converse with ease in three different languages: English, Mandarin, and Spanish. I would use these skills to support All Stars Project youth from a variety of backgrounds. In summary, with my experience working with children and communicating with people from a variety of backgrounds—and with my committed desire to work with youth and their communities—I would both contribute to and gain valuable perspectives from All Stars Project. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Ben Cheng