

Cover Letters 101: Panel Notes
ARLIS/NA Mentoring Subcommittee
March 8, 2023 | 4pm ET / 1pm PT

Panel Discussion Tips:

Anna

1. Mimic/copy the language from the job advertisement in your cover letter – be specific!
2. Don't be afraid to apply to positions that do not exactly match your expertise – your cover letter is the opportunity to anticipate questions about why you are applying and convince them that your experience has prepared you for the role.
3. Remember to double check your spelling and grammar usage. Also it is always a good idea to have a friend or colleague (who knows about your job search!) do a proofread for you, if you have the time.

Shannon

1. Cover letters are not about your past but your future, specifically doing the job you are applying for at the institution with the job opening.
2. Paste the job ad into a document and use it to begin writing (show example). And guess what? It's ok to copy/paste from your other letters.
3. [Open Cover Letters](#) is defunct but still useful for seeing real people writing about real jobs.

Virginia

1. Use your cover letter to help your future employer imagine what working with you would be like---it's fine to tell them why you want the role, but it's even better to give them a sense of why you're a good fit (and why they're a good fit for you!)
2. Don't just restate your resume---if you want to talk about your past experience, make sure you're making clear connections between the job description and your past work.
3. Who is really going to read this? Parallel the language you see in the job description, but you can take it one step further and explore the organization's mission and vision statement. How can you align yourself with the larger organization's goals?
4. Be confident, inspire confidence: if you think you're a good fit, if you are qualified, say that. You don't need to say "I think I'm a good fit" or "I believe I'm qualified for this job" when you can say "I am a good fit", "I am qualified for this job" and show them why.

Beth

1. Be yourself in your letter. You want to sound professional, but let your personality shine through.

2. Give yourself plenty of time before you apply so you have time to reread and think about what you want to say, and if you have said it succinctly and clearly. Writing the night before the due date is not recommended.
3. Read the letter out loud. This is a great way to check flow, clarity and if you've missed prepositions, articles and that your verbs and objects match.
4. Use consistent style and attention to details. Consider, type style, indentation, spacing, etc. An untidy cover letter signals a lack of organization and attention to a hiring committee.

Jason

1. Research the company--show you know about them.
2. Brevity is Clarity--no more than a page, preferably less.
3. Think about the reviewer--what do they expect to see?

Resources Shared in Chat:

- Interesting student news coverage about using ChatGPT to write cover letters: <https://dailytrojan.com/2023/03/03/students-use-ai-to-write-cover-letters/>
- Open Cover Letters (now defunct): <https://opencoverletters.com/>