

How to Write a Cover Letter Workshop Lesson Plan

Objectives

At the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- (1) Use vocabulary and concepts related to cover letters in conversation with each other;
- (2) Identify what is included in an effective cover letter;
- (3) Write a cover letter to match a specific job.

Workshop Duration: 2 hours; Recommended Level: 3+

Preparation/Materials Needed: Student Guide (that includes a cover letter template, a sample cover letter and sample job descriptions)

Flow	Time	Presenter	Content/ Key Points to Cover	Teaching Approaches/ Student Guide
1	5 min.		Welcome/Review Workshop Objectives and Agenda/Introductions	<p>Ask students to turn to <u>page 2</u> of their Student Guide.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Say: Welcome to the Cover Letters Workshop. 2. Do: Review the objectives and agenda. Have students introduce themselves.
2	10 min.		<p>Introduction to Cover Letters</p> <p><u>Page 3 of Student Guide:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is a cover letter? 2. When do you need a cover letter? 3. Why is a cover letter so important? <p><u>Page 4 of Student Guide:</u></p> <p>To be considered for almost any job, you will need to write a special letter called a cover letter. A cover letter introduces you, explains why you are writing to an employer, describes your experience and skills, and requests an opportunity to meet with the potential employer.</p> <p>A cover letter is usually your first introduction to an employer. It is often sent with a resume. Because first impressions are very important, you should take your time to write an effective letter. Remember that the cover letter not only tells the employer about your accomplishments, but it also shows how well you can communicate.</p>	<p>Ask Students to turn to <u>page 3</u> of their Student Guide.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Write: Ask students to write the answers to the following questions in their Student Guide: What is a cover letter? When do you need a cover letter? Why is a cover letter so important? 2. Read: Ask students to read their responses. 3. Read: Ask students to read the statement about cover letters in their Student Guide on <u>page 4:</u> To be considered for almost any job... 4. Say: Today we are going to spend time creating a cover letter. <p>Note to Tutor: The next section of the lesson covers the bolded vocabulary in the statement. As an alternative, you can cover vocabulary in phases as students read page 4 of the student guide. See the note to tutor on the next page for more details.</p>

		It's important to review the job description or job posting to find out what skills or experience the employer is looking for. Cover letters should be written to match the specific job you are applying for. When you prepare your cover letter, it's a good idea to ask a few people to review a draft of your cover letter and provide suggestions for improving it.	
3	15 min	<p>Important Vocabulary</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Employer-the company or organization that has a job opening. Experience-what you have learned from doing a job or going to school, e.g., volunteer, work, intern. Skills-your talents or ability to do an activity or job well, e.g., customer service, communication, planning, computer. Introduction-when you meet someone new. First Impression-what a person first thinks about you when they meet you. Accomplishments-your achievements or things you have done very well. Job Description/Job Posting-explanation of a job that an employer wants to fill. Draft-first version of your cover letter. Suggestions-ideas or recommendations that someone gives you. 	<p>Ask Students to turn to <u>page 5</u> of their Student Guide.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Say: We just read information about cover letters that included some important vocabulary. On page 5, define each of the words you see listed. Note: Students may need to use their translators. This can be a pairs activity. Discuss: Ask students to share their definitions. <p>Note to Tutor: Instead of reviewing all of the vocabulary after having students read about cover letters on page 4, you could have students read just the first paragraph, then review the corresponding vocabulary on page 5, move to the second paragraph and corresponding vocabulary, etc.</p>
4	10 min.	<p>Discovering the five parts of a cover letter</p> <p><u>The parts or sections of a cover letter are:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Date (includes current date) Person who will receive your cover letter (name, title, etc.); Note: It's okay to use "To Whom It May Concern" when you do not know the name of the hiring manager. More on this later... Greeting (Dear....) Body of Letter (job you are applying for, interest in the job, experience and skills, desire to discuss further, thank you) Close (Sincerely, contact information) 	<p>Ask students to turn to <u>page 6-7</u> of their Student Guide. Work in Pairs.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Write: Ask the class to look at the cover letter template on page 7 and write down the five parts of a cover letter on page 6. Review the list they come up with. Write: Ask the students to write down an example of information that is included in each of the five sections. Review responses based on information shown on page 7.

5	10 min.		<p>Tips for Success</p> <p>Do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Match your cover letter with the job you are applying for • Write about the strengths you can bring to the employer, not what the employer can do for you • Be brief and concise • Keep the cover letter to one page • Show a positive attitude with a focus on why they should hire you <p>Don't:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lie or include false information • Make any typos or misspellings • Use personal information like marital status or social security number • Use the same cover letter for different positions you apply for 	<p>Ask students to turn to <u>page 8</u> of their Student Guide.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss: Review each of the “Do’s” and “Don’ts”. 2. Ask (during the discussion): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is it important to match your cover letter to the job you are applying for? • Why shouldn’t you focus on what the employer can do for you? • What does it mean to be brief and concise? • How can you show a positive attitude in your cover letter? • What is a lie? • What are typos? • Why isn’t it a good idea to use the same cover letter for different positions that you apply for?
6	10 Min.		<p>Preparing to Write a Cover Letter: Sample Wording You Can Use</p>	<p>Ask Students to turn to <u>page 9</u> of their Student Guide.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Say: The information on page 9 will help you get started when you are writing a cover letter. 2. Do: Ask students to take turns reading about each part of the cover letter that they discussed in pairs earlier. Highlight that this page includes sample wording that they can use to help them.
7	30 min.		<p>Creating Your Own Cover Letter</p> <p><u>Directions:</u> Pick a job description from the samples in the back of your Student Guide starting on page 11. Use the space on page 10 to write a draft of your cover letter.</p> <p>Refer to the cover letter wording on page 9 and the sample cover letter on page 17 to help you.</p> <p>Note: If students have a specific job that they want to apply for, they can write a cover letter for that job instead of picking a sample job description.</p>	<p>Ask Students to turn to <u>page 10</u> of their Student Guide.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do: Ask a student to read the directions for creating their own cover letter. 2. Say: Ask students to write their first draft of a cover letter. 3. Do: Walk around to answer questions and assist students. 4. Do: Have students read each others’ first drafts and provide feedback. 5. Do: When complete, have students type the document in the computer lab.
8	30 Min.		<p>Type Cover Letter in the Computer lab</p>	<p>Pair students with Digital Literacy tutors in the lab to type their cover letters.</p>