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| CAREER CRUISER | Drafting a Cover Letter |

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| **Step 5** | Prepare for your chosen career. |
| **Driving Question** | How do I write an effective cover letter? |
| **Goal** | Draft a cover letter. |
| **Standard** | Demonstrate mastery of the career navigation skills necessary to obtain, retain, advance within and switch employment. (CR.3.3) |

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| **FOR TEACHERS** |

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| **Timeframe** | 1 to 3 roughly hour-long class periods |
| **Materials** | Internet and digital device access. Cover letter writing can be done on paper with a print copy of the cover letter template provided at the end of this document.  |
| **Overview** | **Beginning*** Students (and many others!) can often find the following terms confusing: application, cover letter, reference letter, letter of recommendation, resume, CV, etc. Establish at the beginning of the lesson an understanding of the definition, purpose and importance of cover letters.
* Explore what content goes into a cover letter, how to write a cover letter with little work experience or education, and formatting the document.

**Middle*** A well-written cover letter is written for a specific employer and a specific job opening. Students will go on the web to find a job opening relevant to their career aspirations and write a cover letter specifically for that opening. Students may actually apply to the job, but there is no expectation to apply.

**End*** Have students discuss in pairs how they are customizing their cover letter for the specific company and position they chose.

**Extension*** Have students research and report on example cover letters written for their chosen career field.
* Have students present to the class (PowerPoint, display board or just verbally) what they learned about the company and position they are writing a cover letter for and how they explained in the cover letter why they are an excellent fit for the position.
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| **FOR STUDENTS** |

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| **Learn** |

**What Is a Cover Letter?**

A cover letter is a document that you send to an employer along with your resume for a specific position opening. The purpose of the document is to explain in your own words why you want the job and are a great fit for it.

**Why Are Cover Letters Important?**

A resume application focuses primarily on *what* – what your education, experience and skills are – while a cover explains *why* – why you want the job and why you would be successful in the job. It’s a chance to explain yourself! In addition, a resume looks back at the *past* – your experience and qualifications – while a cover letter looks forward to a successful *future* relationship with the company you are applying to. These two documents – a resume and a cover letter – work together to give a full picture of you.

**How to Write a Cover Letter with Little Experience or Education**

Before you start writing, start by learning about the company. What interests you about the company? What do you admire about their culture, brand, reviews, mission and/or vision? Take notes on these and be sure to weave them into your cover letter. Then, review the job position again looking for aspects that align with your interests, values and/or skills. Finally, focus on your strengths. Consider what makes you unique, what you excel at, and what skills you have developed through coursework, extracurriculars, awards, achievements, challenges in life, or other types of experiences.

**Use Standard Formatting for Your Cover Letter**

* Standard font settings:
	+ Calibri, Arial or Helvetica
	+ 11-12 points
* Standard margins:
	+ 1-inch wide on all sides
* Standard paragraph spacing:
	+ 1-1.15 between lines
	+ Include a space between paragraphs

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| **Do** |

**Write a Cover Letter**

In this lesson you have two options: practice writing a cover letter for a job position you will not be applying to but are interested in for the future OR write a real cover letter for a job you are actually applying to now.

**Option 1: Write a Practice, Hypothetical Cover Letter** (Not Sent to Employer)

* Go to EmployFlorida.com.
* Type the name of your preferred career in the appropriate search field. Type in your city, state, county, region or zip code. Press the ‘Search’ button.
* Select the first job posting.
* Read the entire job posting.
* Learn more about the company by performing internet searches. Find information on the employers culture, brand, reviews, mission and vision.
* Write a cover letter using the template at the end of this document.

**Option 2: Write a Real Cover Letter You Will Presently Use**

* Identify a job opening through someone you know, visiting a business location or online.
* Learn more about the position and company by performing internet searches.
* Write a cover letter using the template at the end of this document.

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| **Reflect** |
| **Company**: After researching the employer online, list something you learned about the kind of employer you want to work for in the future. |  |
| **Position Pros**: After reading the job posting or researching the position, list aspects of the job you think you will like. |  |
| **Position Cons**: After reading the job posting or researching the position, list aspects of the job you think you will NOT like. |  |
| **You**: After finishing your first draft of your cover letter, reread it and list how you would like to grow in the future through additional experience and education. |  |

Cover Letter Template

[Your Name]

[Street Address] | [City, ST ZIP Code] | [Phone] | [Email]

[Date]

[Recipient Name]

[Title]

[Company]

[Address]

[City, ST ZIP Code]

Dear [Name of Hiring Manager],

[Opening paragraph: The purpose of your opening paragraph is to state your thesis: that you are excited about the position and you are a great fit for it. Give a high-level summary of what you will say in the middle paragraphs about your skills, qualities, experience and qualifications.]

[Middle paragraph(s): Explain why you are right for the position – your skills, qualities, your experience and your qualifications.]

[Closing paragraph: Re-emphasize what excited you about the position and about working for the specific company (research the company before writing). Thank them for their time and ask for a job interview. Say you look forward to hearing from them soon.]

Sincerely,

[Your Name]