

Your Address
Today's Date

Recipient's Name
Recipient's Title
Organization Name
Organization Address

Dear Mr. or Ms. _____:
[Opening Paragraph]

As you begin, keep in mind that you want your letter to be distinctive in some way. Too many letters begin with, for example, "I am a senior at Barnard majoring in..." Try to think of a different way to phrase your first paragraph so that it is interesting as well as introductory.

In the first paragraph, you may want to include (not necessarily in this order):

- Some identifying information about yourself (e.g., mention Barnard, your year, your major, career interests, etc.)
- Why you are writing (eg., you saw a listing in the Barnard Office of Career Development; saw an ad in ...; someone recommended you to contact them; the organization interests you because...)
- That you are enclosing a resume

[Middle Section: usually one paragraph, but can be split into two]

Think of what the job entails and what skills, experience, and interests would be helpful for the person filling that job. Then think of your background – places you've worked, activities you've participated in, your academic background, skills you've acquired, interests you have developed, etc. – and decide what is applicable to this job.

It's usually best to organize this section by making a summary statement about how your background fits the job, then give evidence that supports that assertion. The evidence comes from your resume and anything not on your resume that you want to add. You can mention any aspects of your background that will describe you in a unique and positive way, such as specific projects, jobs, or internships that illustrate your skills. Try to avoid simply re-stating your resume.

If you are concerned that you don't have experience that directly relates to the job for which you are applying, point out any skills and experiences you have acquired that could be used on the job, even if they were acquired in a completely different setting.

[Concluding Paragraph]

You may want to begin with a summary statement indicating (and reiterating) that you are confident your background makes you a good/strong candidate for the job. If you know something about the organization you are applying to, demonstrate that knowledge by pointing out why you would like to work for them.

You can also thank them for their time and consideration of your application.

Let them know what happens next (e.g., you look forward to hearing from/meeting with them or you will call soon to see if you can talk further/arrange to meet, etc.). The way you close the letter depends on whether you are responding to an ad/listing or initiating the contact yourself.

Sincerely,
(Your Signature)
Your Name Typed

Enc: