Picture this, you found a job or internship you’re interested in. You’ve researched the company, gotten your resume reviewed by the Office of Career Strategy, but now you need a cover letter? Panic ensues, but wait! OCS can help!

The first element we’ll cover is content. A cover letter is tailored to a specific job description and organization, so you need to clearly express your knowledge about the organization and industry, and why you are a good fit. All in one page! It may helpful to consider self-reflective prompts before you start: Why this employer? Why this position? What is the employer looking for? What skills and qualifications will you highlight?

In the opening paragraph, introduce yourself! Let the reader know who you are and why you’re writing. Remember, it’s important to include why you want to work for the organization in that specific position.

Next up, the true substance of your letter. In two or three paragraphs, elaborate on relevant experiences from your background that directly relate to the position. Use just one or two examples or share results of a relevant project to demonstrate your skills. Watch out: don’t simply repeat your resume! You should focus only on the most relevant experiences in your cover letter.

In your concluding paragraph, reiterate your interest and invite the organization to speak further about your qualifications.

Let’s move on to the structure. At the top of the page, include the date, the employer’s name, and the contact’s name and address. You’ll then formally address the reader. The body paragraphs should be the same font as your resume and sized within 1 point. End your letter with your name and contact information.

You’ve gotten this far in your cover letter – congratulations! It’s always important to have it reviewed before submitting it. Start with a self-review. We have tips on our website, along with sample cover letters. Next, come to the Office of Career Strategy during our Drop-in Hours to meet one-on-one with an advisor.

Happy writing!