

FROM PERFUNCTORY TO POWERFUL: THE ART OF THE COVER LETTER

- Tell a story
- Active voice, not passive voice
- Don't make excuses
- Show, don't tell
- Be authentic
- Show interest
- Keep it simple
- Personalize the letter
- It helps to have a "hook" or theme
- Be descriptive
- Avoid cliches

BEFORE YOU START:

- ✓ Reflect on who you are and what is different about you
- ✓ Consider adjectives that others would use to describe you, professionally and personally.
- ✓ Recall highlights, successes, challenges, and failures from past experiences (both professional and personal)
- ✓ The more reflective you are, the more effective your letter will be.

Structure:

FIRST PARAGRAPH:

First Sentence

"I am a second year law student at Akron Law, and I am writing to apply for a summer position at [insert organization name]"

Second Sentence

Your initial interests, and reasons for your interest in the firm:
"At this stage, I am gravitating towards a career in litigation. Competitive advocacy has been the high point of my time in law school."

SECOND PARAGRAPH:

Highlights from work experience

(Often in reverse chronological order but can be in chronological order if it helps the narrative)

THIRD PARAGRAPH:

Highlights of law school involvement and/or volunteer experience

CONCLUDING SENTENCE:

A few key qualities (should tie in with preceding paragraphs)

"I believe that I possess the grit, client focus and intellectual curiosity to be a successful student at your firm. I hope to meet with you for an interview."