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General rules

- Address your letters to a specific person if you can.
- Tailor your letters to specific situations or organizations by doing research before writing your letters.
- Keep letters concise and factual, no more than a single page.
- Give examples that support your skills and qualifications.
- Put yourself in the reader's shoes. What can you write that will convince the reader that you are ready and able to do the job?
- Don't overuse the pronoun "I".
- Remember that this is a marketing tool. Use plenty of action words.
- When converting it to a .pdf, check that your formatting translates correctly.
- Reference skills or experiences from the job description and draw connections to them.
- Ensure your resume and cover letter are prepared with the same font type and size.



Basic example

September 1, 2025

Morgan Smith
J.P Morgan Associate

Dear Morgan Smith:

I am a senior at the University of Georgia studying finance and psychology. I am writing to apply for the 2026 investment banking summer analyst position in Charlotte, NC posted on J.P Morgan's career website. I'm very excited about the investment banking field, and would welcome the opportunity to bring my strong communication skills, analytical thinking, and valuation experience to your growing team.

J.P. Morgan's commitment to serving a multitude of clients from all backgrounds and areas around the world is of particular interest to me and relates to my passion for striving to be the best I can be. This past summer, I worked as a valuation intern at EY in Charlotte, which is dedicated to helping businesses of all different sizes value their assets. I worked with a broad range of employees to help create pitch decks, models, and valuation estimates for different private and middle market companies. Throughout the summer, I consistently strived to deepen my understanding through each project, assignment, and presentation.

Additionally, in my role as president of marketing for the finance club at UGA, I led our team in creating a social media strategy to drive our member recruitment efforts and promote our programs and events on platforms including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. With so many competing events on campus each day, I had to continually be creative in my approach to developing and delivering content that would be compelling and effective. As a result of my efforts, our group experienced a 20% increase in our membership base and a 15% increase in our social media engagement. I'm excited at the prospect of bringing the skills I developed through this experience to the investment banking role at J.P. Morgan.

Thank you for your consideration. I very much look forward to the opportunity to speak with you in person about my interest in this position.

Sincerely,

Alex Crimson



Finance Cover Letter Walkthrough

A cover letter in investment banking is not a creative writing exercise, and it is not meant to restate your resume. Its purpose is to answer a small number of questions quickly and clearly: why this position, why this firm, why this group if applicable, and why you make sense as a candidate. When used correctly, a cover letter reinforces your story and removes doubt. When done poorly, it creates red flags that would not otherwise exist.

This guide explains what a finance cover letter is, how bankers read it, how it should be structured, and how to stay ready to write one quickly and correctly.

What a Cover Letter Is

In banking recruiting, a cover letter is a short, formal document that provides context to your resume. It is most often required for off-cycle roles, diversity programs, smaller firms, boutiques, and certain international applications. Even when optional, it can be used strategically to explain non-traditional backgrounds, lateral moves, or gaps in experience.

Bankers do not read cover letters looking for expression. They read them to confirm seriousness, professionalism, and logical career motivation. A good cover letter should make your resume easier to understand, not harder.

How Bankers Read Cover Letters

Cover letters are typically skimmed in under a minute. Bankers look first for structure, clarity, and obvious mistakes. Any spelling, grammar, or formatting error immediately damages credibility. After that, they focus on whether your story makes sense and whether your interest in the firm sounds specific rather than generic.

If a cover letter feels templated, overly long, or vague, it is often ignored entirely. Strong cover letters are concise, direct, and clearly tailored to the firm.

Standard Cover Letter Structure

A banking cover letter should be no more than one page and usually consists of three short paragraphs. The opening paragraph explains who you are, what role you are applying for,



and why you are interested in banking and the firm. The middle paragraph connects your background and experiences to the skills required for the role. The final paragraph reinforces interest, expresses appreciation, and closes professionally. This structure is not flexible. Deviating from it rarely improves outcomes.

The Opening Paragraph

The opening paragraph sets the tone and determines whether the letter is taken seriously. It should state your current position or background, the role you are applying for, and a concise reason for your interest in the firm. Generic statements about prestige or culture should be avoided. Instead, reference something specific, such as the firm's platform, deal exposure, or group focus. The goal is to sound intentional and informed without overselling.

The Experience Paragraph

The middle paragraph is the most important part of the cover letter. This is where you connect your experiences to investment banking. You should reference one or two key experiences and explain how they prepared you for the role through skills such as analysis, modeling, research, teamwork, or working under deadlines.

This paragraph should complement your resume, not repeat it. Avoid listing responsibilities. Focus on relevance and progression, keeping the explanation tight.

The Closing Paragraph

The final paragraph should briefly restate your interest in the firm and role and thank the reader for their time and consideration. It should be confident but restrained. This is not the place to introduce new information or repeat your entire story.

A clean, professional closing reinforces maturity and polish.

Formatting and Technical Rules

Cover letters should use the same font and format as your resume. They should be addressed correctly, with accurate firm names, group names, and locations. Dates, titles, and contact information must be correct. Attention to these details matters as much as the content itself.



A cover letter with even minor errors signals carelessness, which is unacceptable no matter who you are or what the position is.

Common Cover Letter Mistakes

Many candidates hurt themselves by trying to sound impressive rather than clear. Overly complex language, exaggerated claims, and generic enthusiasm weaken credibility. Another common mistake is copying the same letter across firms without meaningful customization. Addressing the wrong firm or group is one of the fastest ways to be eliminated. Keeping the same format is good and can help you submit a multitude of cover letters during recruitment season. However, make sure you change the dates, firm, names, interest, city, and other big characteristics in the letter.

Cover letters that are too long, repetitive, or unfocused are often skipped entirely.

When a Cover Letter Actually Helps

Cover letters are most valuable when you have something to explain or reinforce. This includes non-target schools, career changes, lateral recruiting, limited prior finance experience, or a strong personal reason for interest in a specific firm or group. In these cases, a strong cover letter can materially improve your application. While most firms still require cover letters, they rarely improve your candidacy. However, a weak cover letter can absolutely hurt it.

How to Stay Ready

You should always have a base cover letter drafted and reviewed so that it can be tailored quickly when needed. This base version should clearly explain your story and motivation without referencing a specific firm. When an application requires a letter, customization should focus on the opening and closing paragraphs rather than rewriting the entire document.

Being able to produce a clean, tailored cover letter quickly is a competitive advantage during recruiting.



Final Thoughts

A strong banking cover letter is simple, direct, and intentional. It reinforces your resume, clarifies your motivation, and demonstrates professionalism. It does not need to be memorable. It needs to be correct.

When written properly, a cover letter removes doubt rather than trying to create excitement.

