

Exercise - Tool #8: Building the “Middle” Paragraph(s) of Your Cover Letter

⇒ For the same position description you used in Exercise #7, carry over the top five relevant key words or phrases. Then complete the second column.

Top 5 priority key words or phrases	Related “Show it” stories (from Exercise #5) - If you don’t have one for this key word or phrase, create one following the Exercise #5 guidelines.

⇒ Next, choose your strongest 2–3 “Show it” bullet points from this list and use them as the basis of the middle section of your cover letter. The cover letter is a chance to expand on the knowledge and skills highlighted in your resume with a few very brief (1–2 sentences) stories that paint a picture for the reader of what you would bring to the position to which you are applying. You are not regurgitating what is in your resume, you are expanding upon it and painting a more interesting picture about your qualifications for the reader.

⇒ With the job advertisement in one hand, the results of Exercise #7 in your other hand, and your “Show it” story list above, draft one or two paragraphs that demonstrate to the reader why you would be a good fit for this position. In your writing be sure to convey authenticity and friendliness. *Vary your sentence structure* so not every sentence begins with “I” or “My”. Doing a little research on a company, division, or group can really make the difference between a phrase being timely or falling flat.

Draft 1 of middle section of cover letter

Pass the job advertisement and your draft paragraphs to a peer, mentor, or career services professional and ask them the following questions, suggesting ways to make your case even stronger. You can also review the draft yourself, with an eye to the following questions:

- Do I clearly tie my skills and experiences to the needs of the employer?
- Are there words that sound too generic to be meaningful?
- Is my letter simple, clear, genuine, error-free, and convincing?
- Do I clearly and accurately demonstrate my skills, abilities, and interest in the position?

After receiving feedback, draft a second version of the middle section of your cover letter.

Draft 2 of middle section of cover letter