



ARE YOU COVERED?

Is your cover letter like a bad handshake? Handshakes are a form of introduction, so think of your cover letter as a handshake. While you may think you're offering a warm handshake, your cover letter could actually be strong-arming you out of a job. Take this quiz to find out what type of handshake your cover letter is most associated with and the impression it's giving to potential employers:

Cover Letter Quiz

1. Your cover letter's opening sentence is:

- A. "I want to tell you why you should hire me for this open position at your company."
- B. "I'm interested in the open position at your company and would like to submit my qualifications."
- C. "I was surprised to hear of the open position at your company and was hoping you could look at my résumé if you get a chance."

2. If you're currently employed, do you mention your job in your cover letter?

- A. Yes, I explain that my current job should pay better, and I'm interested in receiving a promotion.
- B. Yes, I relate my current job to the open position and explain why I'm ready to assume more responsibilities.
- C. No, I don't want the hiring company to think I'm not ready to leave my current job.

3. Your experience matches about 90 percent of the job requirements. Do you address the requirement you don't meet in your cover letter?

- A. Sort of. I tell them how experienced and smart I am and how impressed my past boss was with how quickly I picked things up.
- B. No. I address the requirements I do meet and include my relevant experience; I can mention the other requirement if I get asked about it in an interview.
- C. Yes. I point out that I don't know how to do it and say I hope I get the chance to learn it.

4. Where in your cover letter do you write about the company of interest?

- A. Briefly in the middle; most of the room was used for boasting about my qualifications and why I'm the best choice.
- B. After the introduction paragraph about my interest and experience, I write a short paragraph about why I admire the company and the values I share with it.
- C. Most of the cover letter is about them. I only included a few sentences about why I'd be lucky to work there.

5. How do you end your cover letter?

- A. Thank you for your time, and I know you'll make the right choice.
- B. Thank you for your time, and I look forward to hearing from you.
- C. Thank you for your time, and it'd be so incredible to hear from you.



RESULTS

- Mostly A's** — Death-grip handshake:
You're coming on too strong.
- Mostly B's** — Confident, approachable handshake:
You make a great first impression.
- Mostly C's** — Dead-fish handshake:
You need to muster up some confidence.

Cover Letter Quiz from Susan Ricker at CareerBuilder.com

“THE RÉSUMÉ FOCUSES ON YOU AND THE PAST. THE COVER LETTER FOCUSES ON THE EMPLOYER AND THE FUTURE.”

— JOYCE LAIN KENNEDY, COVER LETTERS FOR DUMMIES