



Cover Letter Recommendations

About DOC (dropoutclub.org)

Our aspiration is to unite the global community of doctors, scientists and other biomedical professionals who seek to shape healthcare through innovative careers outside of traditional clinical and research tracks

We focus on 3 specific objectives:

- Connect members with great opportunities that leverage their unique backgrounds and experience
- Help employers rapidly source talent with highly specific biomedical and business experience
- Facilitate the online and in-person exchange of ideas, insights and opportunities among our members

Ultimately we hope that this will help improve the healthcare system by placing those who understand the real content of healthcare in leadership positions

Contact us at contact@dropoutclub.org

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Context of the cover letter in the application process

It's a formality for some jobs but a game changer for others

“The cover letter is what determines if we give someone an interview. We’ll skim a resume, but the cover letter is where you stand out.”

- Startup co-founder

Very important for small and early-stage companies

Particularly important for communications roles

Less important for larger companies with established processes

Less important for more technical roles

“We don’t both reading cover letters because we have a well-oiled resume screening machine.”

- Recruiter at large management consultancy

Your goal

Make the hiring manager want to ask you more questions by impressing and intriguing them (not by confusing them!)



Cover Letter + Resume

Cover Letter

Resume



Your cover letter and resume should complement each other to present a cohesive narrative about you as a candidate and why you are the right fit for the specific job you're applying to

Cover letter advice in a nutshell

- 1 Read the job description to understand the most important “hard” and “soft” skills required
- 2 Choose 3 skills you believe are your strongest matches
- 3 For each skill, brainstorm experiences that truly illustrate your expertise in that area
- 4 Select one in-depth or several shorter experiences to highlight
- 5 Put it all together in a cohesive cover letter that complements your resume (content and style)

10 Elements of a Cover Letter

- 1 Position you are applying for
- 2 Context of why you are applying
- 3 Summarize your skills and relevant experiences
- 4 What's the hook?
- 5 Relevant skill and experience #1
- 6 Relevant skill and experience #2
- 7 Relevant skill and experience #3
- 8 Recap
- 9 Thank you
- 10 Sign off

Sample Cover Letter Template: 3 Skills Skeleton

Dear [name],

I write to apply for the position of [position title]. My interest in [field] has taken me from [experience] to [experience]. My passion for [aspect of your field or background], strong commitment to [aspect of your field or background], and interest in [aspect of your field or background] make me an ideal candidate to join [company] as a [position].

My passion to join [company] was sparked when [your moment].

As a candidate, here's what I could immediately bring to the table:

An effective [descriptor that reflects transferable skill #1]: In my role at [postdoc], I [action or accomplishment]. I was also able to showcase my [skill] abilities as a [role] in [project name] project by [what you did].

A disciplined [descriptor that reflects transferable skill #2]: I have always displayed my careful approach to [job duty] by [action]. At [previous role], I frequently [action]. In addition, I had the opportunity to [action or accomplishment], which further shows my dedication to [aspect of your field].

A passionate [descriptor that reflects transferable skill #3]: Everything I have engaged in so far has all been driven by my keen interest in [aspect of your field]. Even as a [extracurricular role], I made sure to dedicate some part of my day to [action]. It is this passion that has driven every one of my career decisions thus far.

I look forward to contributing my skills and experiences to the [position title] position at [company] and hope to have the opportunity to speak with you further about how I can be an asset to your team.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

Example: McKinsey Cover Letter

Dear Ms. Drinkwater:

I write to apply for the position of Summer Business Analyst at McKinsey & Company. I intend to pursue a career in public policy and hope to learn from McKinsey's innovative approach to problem solving and implementing effective change. I will bring to McKinsey significant leadership experience as well as excellent analytical, teamwork, writing and oral communication skills I have developed as Secretary of the Yale College Council and National Education Policy Director of the Roosevelt Institution.

I am attracted to McKinsey because of the firm's commitment to the public and non-profit sectors, demonstrated recently by its partnership with the New America Foundation to promote energy efficiency. I am particularly drawn to McKinsey because of its emphasis on providing consultants with opportunities to develop solutions for a diverse set of clients facing different types of challenges.

I knew I wanted to work for McKinsey when my friend Katherine Linzer told me about her internship in the Pittsburgh office. Katherine spent the first half of the summer working with city officials and non-profit organizations to develop the Pittsburgh Promise scholarship initiative, and the second half advising a professional services firm in Chicago.

I have demonstrated my ability to be an effective leader and team player through my involvement in extracurricular organizations. As Secretary of the Yale College Council, I brought together student representatives and university administrators to work on issues ranging from Yale's financial aid policies to its relationship with New Haven. As National Education Policy Director of the Roosevelt Institution, I coordinated the policy research efforts of students at over 30 campuses and produced a booklet of their proposals to present to policymakers. I have focused on how to structure, manage and improve organizations inside the classroom as well as outside of it. As an Ethics, Politics and Economics major, I have been taught to tackle complex social problems with an integrated approach that uses multiple frameworks of analysis. I will apply this approach as part of a team working to solve the real-world problems of McKinsey's clients.

Thank you for considering my application.

Sincerely yours,

DOC Applicant

Cover Letter Dos and Don'ts



Beginning with the 10 Don'ts

- 1 Repeat your resume
- 2 Write a laundry list with no story
- 3 Assume the reader will get why your experiences are relevant
- 4 Focus only on education
- 5 Be too wordy, overly formal or use insider jargon
- 6 Make it about you and your wants
- 7 Go over a page
- 8 Apologize for any skills missing
- 9 Avoid obvious questions your application raises
- 10 Use the same one for each job or rely on an old template

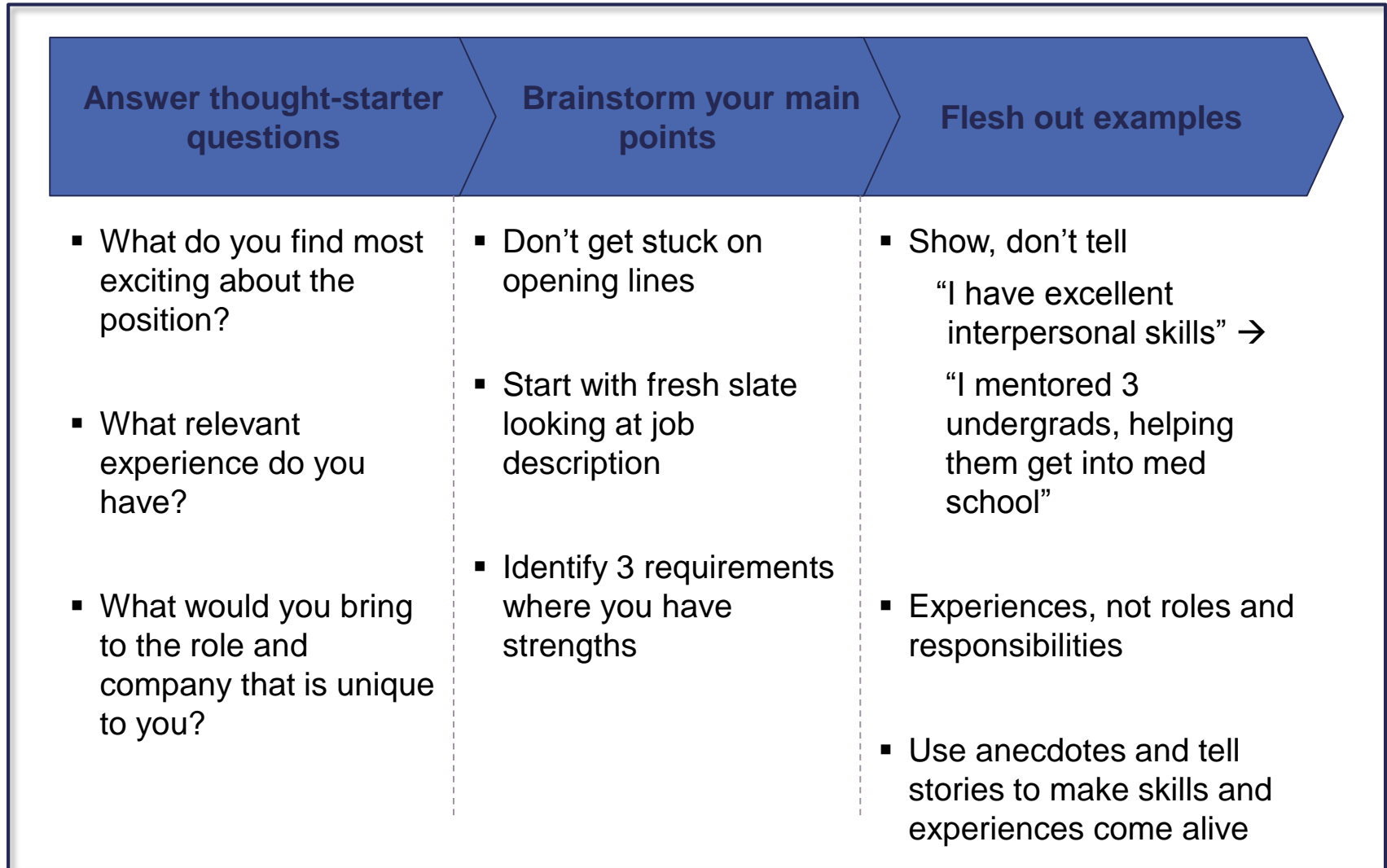
And now the Dos

- 1 Take the company's perspective first
- 2 Connect the dots: make clear why your experiences are relevant
- 3 Flesh out your resume: sentences, not bullet points
- 4 Make it personal: Tell a story or two
- 5 Write sentences only you can
- 6 Be concrete and results-oriented; use numbers
- 7 Write in the company's voice
- 8 Consider testimonials
- 9 Have fun with it
- 10 Ask others to give you feedback

Get Started Writing!



Get to work



More thought starter questions

- What brought you to this company? How did you hear about it? Sing along to commercial jingles? Meet a recruiter at an event?
- Who are you? How would your friends describe you? Colleagues?
- How would you make the case to the CEO to hire you?

