



# COVER LETTER & CORRESPONDENCE GUIDE

## COVER LETTER CONTENT & FORMAT

Your present address  
City, State Zip Code

Date of Letter

Name of Contact  
Title of Contact  
Name of Organization  
Street Address  
City, State Zip Code

**Dear Ms./Mr./Dr. (Name):** If you do not have the person's name, do your best to get it. Call the organization and inquire to whom you should address your letter. Do not write "Dear Sir or Madam," or "Gentlemen." If necessary, you might address the person by title, "Dear Human Resources Manager" or by organization, "Dear (Name of Organization) Representative."

**Opening Paragraph.** This paragraph is intended to express your interest *and fit* with the position, organization, and/or field. **Include a sentence or two summarizing this interest and fit or tell a story that demonstrates it.** Stimulate your audience to continue reading. If applicable, tell how you heard of this opening or internship. If a person referred you to the organization, mention the person's name and connection to the organization.

**Body.** This section consists of one or two paragraphs in which you tell the employer why you are a strong candidate for the position. Emphasize the **employer's needs** – not your own. Demonstrate your ability and desire to perform the functions of the position by providing examples or telling stories drawn from your work, academic, and/or extracurricular experiences. Instead of trying to describe all of your experiences, pick a couple of the most relevant to expand on.

**Closing Paragraph** - Indicate your desire to arrange a mutually convenient time to interview, as well as how he/she may contact you. Mention any intentions of visiting the city where the organization is located because employers may be more apt to meet with you. Re-emphasize your interest in the position, thank the individual, and mention that you are looking forward to meeting him or her.

Sincerely,

Type Your Name

## COVER LETTER BUILDER

Have a copy of the job/internship description and your resume handy!

### ***Opening Paragraph:***

Why are you interested in this field/organization/position?

What is the objective of your letter (e.g., to apply for a full-time position or an internship)/how did you discover the opening and/or the organization (e.g., a personal referral, or an ad)?

Develop a thesis statement about how your skills and experience fit the job description:

<b>Good Thesis Statements</b>	<b>Better Thesis Statements</b>
I'm applying for a Peer Advisor position primarily because I think every Hamilton student can and should benefit from a visit to the third floor of Bristol Center. Additionally, I believe my writing and editorial skills make me a strong candidate for the job	Every Hamilton student can and should benefit from a visit to the third floor of Bristol Center. As a Peer Advisor, I will use my writing and editorial skills to ensure that students receive exceptional assistance with their resumes and cover letters.
I am particularly impressed with Nomura's emphasis on cultivating a collaborative, disciplined, and international culture. I believe my strong analytical background, leadership experience, and communication skills will enable me to contribute as a member of the Investment Banking group.	As a member of the Investment Banking group at Nomura, I will contribute my leadership experience, communication skills, and strong analytical skills to upholding Nomura's impressive client service record.

My thesis:

## **COVER LETTER BUILDER**

***Body of your letter:***

***Match your skills to the employer needs, what experiences illustrate how and where you acquired the skills?***

***Top Skills/Responsibilities in Posting***

***My related skills, experiences, stories***

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li>          <li>•</li>          <li>•</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li>          <li>•</li>          <li>•</li></ul>
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***Closing Paragraph:***

Ask for an interview. Include your contact information (email and phone number) in this paragraph.

**BEFORE STARTING YOUR COVER LETTER, COMPLETE THE COVER LETTER BUILDER ON THE PREVIOUS PAGE OF THIS GUIDE.**

This will help you to consider your interest in the position/industry and develop a chart of how your skills match the responsibilities & requirements in the posting. Have your resume, and a copy of the job or internship posting handy.

**The below example is for a Peer Advisor position at the Career & Life Outcomes Center**

**Posting:**

Peer Advisors wanted! Are you passionate about Hamilton? Enjoy working one-on-one with fellow students? Have you been praised for your advising and helping skills? Do you have excellent writing & editing skills? As a Peer Advisor you will:

- Work with students to help them develop and refine application materials (i.e., resumes, cover letters, networking emails)
- Share your Hamilton experiences with your students to help relieve nervousness that they may feel about sharing materials
- Spread the word about the Career & Life Outcomes Center and the services we offer

Please send a resume and brief cover letter to Dan Green at [dgreen@hamilton.edu](mailto:dgreen@hamilton.edu)

**Linda Morse – Peer Advisor position skills chart**

<i>Top Responsibilities in Posting</i>	<i>My related skills/experiences/stories</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent writing &amp; editing skills required</li> <li>• Passion for Hamilton &amp; Hamilton students</li> <li>• Advising &amp; helping skills – students sometimes feel nervous about sharing material</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I write weekly articles for the Spectator, and serve as a writing tutor.</li> <li>• On the Hill blog to help HS Seniors pick Hamilton!</li> <li>• When my roommate was terrified about her oral presentation, I talked through it with her, listened to her practice, then accompanied her to the OCC.</li> </ul>

**SEE LINDA’S RESULTING LETTER ON THE NEXT PAGE**

**SAMPLE LETTERS –**  
**DO NOT LIFT CONTENT DIRECTLY FROM THE SAMPLES IN THIS GUIDE.**  
**RECRUITERS IN THE PAST HAVE COMMENTED ON SIMILARITIES IN**  
**HAMILTON STUDENT COVER LETTERS.**

Date of Letter

Dan Green  
Senior Associate Director  
Maurice Horowitch Career Center  
198 College Hill Road  
Clinton, NY 13323

Dear Mr. Green:

All of last year, I chronicled my on-the-Hill happenings—the exciting, the everyday, the edible—in the hopes that I might help a high school senior make the same choice I did three years ago when I applied Early Decision I to Hamilton. When I first visited campus, I was in awe of the College’s amenities: a diner with late-night breakfast on weekends, a rock wall with open hours, and the prettiest dorms I’d ever seen on a campus. But one of the Hamilton’s best resources—one that I didn’t take advantage of until my sophomore year—is the Career Center. I’m applying for a Peer Advisor position primarily because I think every Hamilton student can and should benefit from a visit to the third floor of Bristol Center. Additionally, I believe my writing and editorial skills make me a strong candidate for the job.

When I graduate from Hamilton, I intend to pursue a career in journalism. The journalistic impulse is not simply that which drives one to compose articles and share information. It’s also the desire to meet new people, to work with new media, and to expand the possibilities of communication. As an editor for the Spectator, I look forward to the aspects of the Peer Advisor job that will require me to pay attention to detail, such as critiquing resumes and copy editing cover letters. But more than anything, I can’t wait to listen to students talk about their passions and help them begin paving their paths. It’s never too early to start thinking about life after Hamilton, and I hope that as a Peer Advisor, I can guide some students through that process, instilling not anxiety but excitement and confidence in them.

I would very much like to the opportunity to discuss my fit for this position with you. I can be reached at (315)555-4567, or at [ltmorse@hamilton.edu](mailto:ltmorse@hamilton.edu). Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Best,

Linda Morse

## ORIGINAL

Mailbox #1403  
198 College Hill Road  
Clinton, NY 13323

Date of letter

Marvel Studios LLC  
1600 Rosecrans Avenue  
Building 7 - Suite 110  
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

Dear Marvel Studios LLC Internship Coordinator:

After the final credits rolled on Spider-Man in 2002, my adolescence was irrevocably changed. Spider-Man's stunning visuals and compelling characters eventually led me to Legends of Superheroes in Waterbury, CT and an increasing curiosity about the power and various mediums of storytelling that has not wavered since. By the time I was eighteen, I had built a notable comic collection and knowledge of the Marvel canon. It has always been Marvel's trademark intelligent, emotionally honest storytelling, whether on page or screen, that has consistently left me beyond impressed.

I would like to apply this passion and my exceptional computer skills to the Marvel Studios Web Design Summer Internship. A self-taught computer geek, I have developed several websites, including one for the Hamilton Entrepreneur Club, which has helped grow the club from 10 students to over 50 in five months. I have designed images, developed wallpaper and become quite adept with flash animation. I am currently learning coding through an on-line course, which will be completed in February. Samples of my work can be found on my website: [MarTaz.com](http://MarTaz.com). While my top choice would be the web design internship, I am also interested in contributing to Marvel's marketing and the creation of successful branding strategies.

I have attached my resume and look forward to hearing back about this position. Feel free to call me at (555)-677-1011 or email me at [mtazzo@hamilton.edu](mailto:mtazzo@hamilton.edu) if you have any questions or comments regarding my application for this position or my resume. Thank you so much for your time.

Sincerely,

Martin Tazzo

## REVISED

Mailbox #1403  
198 College Hill Road  
Clinton, NY 13323

Date of letter

Marvel Studios LLC  
1600 Rosecrans Avenue  
Building 7 - Suite 110  
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

Dear Marvel Studios LLC Internship Coordinator:

After the final credits rolled on Spider-Man in 2002, I raced home to my comic book collection and my Mac. As I flipped through Spider-Man SPECIFIC ISSUE #/TITLE, I wanted to imitate Marvel's stunning visuals and compelling characters. Marvel's trademark intelligent, emotionally honest storytelling, whether on page or screen, is unparalleled in the comic book industry. As a Web Design Intern for the Production team, I will contribute my passion and exceptional computer skills to keeping Marvel Comics iconic. [*States what position Martin is applying for and tells what Martin will do for Marvel Comics.*]

The Spider-Man, Wolverine, and Thor attract and keep fans like me because directors like Mark Webb go to such lengths to ground Spider-Man's amazing superhero power in real-world physics. [*Specific reason Marvel is awesome. Demonstrates research done outside of Marvel's website.*] As a self-taught computer geek, I know firsthand the persistence required to master image design and maintain frame balance. [*Shows that Martin knows about web design and is familiar with Marvel's techniques.*] When I developed the website for the Hamilton Entrepreneur Club, I used Marvel inspired image continuity to attract new members. As a result, our club grew from 10 to students to 50 in the five months after I designed the website. At Marvel, I will harness my ability to work independently to help the "bullpen" continue to publish top selling comics, such as April 2015's impressive 200,000+ sales of Star Wars Issue 4. [*What Martin will do for Marvel – shows Martin is aware of Marvel's sales goals.*]

I have attached my resume and look forward to hearing back about this position. Feel free to call me at (555)-677-1011 or email me at [mtazzo@hamilton.edu](mailto:mtazzo@hamilton.edu) if you have any questions or comments regarding my application for this position or my resume. Thank you so much for your time.

Sincerely,

Martin Tazzo

*What we've changed and why: This student had fantastic skills and specific evidence for how he used them to achieve results. His original matched the tone of the internship listing well. I changed the letter so that Martin was showing his knowledge both of graphic design techniques and their recent performance as a company. The letter is now tailored to Marvel and focuses on what Martin will do for Marvel.*



3 Target Lane  
New York, NY 10004

Date of Letter

Jennifer Moss  
Nomura Securities International  
309 West 49th Street  
New York, NY 10019

Dear Ms. Moss,

I am a junior at Hamilton College pursuing a career in finance and wish to be considered for the position of Investment Banking Summer Analyst at Nomura. After speaking with Hamilton alumni and reading about Nomura, I am particularly impressed with the firm's emphasis on cultivating a collaborative, disciplined, and international culture. I believe my strong analytical background, leadership experience, and communication skills will enable me to contribute as a member of the Investment Banking group.

During my internship in the Portfolio Management Group at Credit Suisse, I learned to analyze corporate and capital structures, and honed my financial modeling skills to perform several credit initiations on healthcare, insurance, and financial service companies. I was given the opportunity to present these initiations to senior management in the Investment Bank. I also worked in conjunction with several members of the group to research various industries and design presentations on recent regulations and industry trends.

My education at Hamilton College, where the curriculum stresses writing, taught me to communicate effectively and solve problems using creativity and logic. My position as Treasurer of the 20-person Hamilton College Social Traditions Committee allowed me to collaborate with other members of the Executive Board to plan and execute events. Based on the leadership skills I developed during my term as Treasurer, the Committee elected me to serve as Co-Chair for the Spring 2015 semester. During my time working with children with disabilities, I catered to my clients' preferences and met their diverse needs. I also learned to think quickly and approach every challenge with an open mind.

Given my background in the Portfolio Management Group, and my quantitative, interpersonal and critical thinking skills, I am a particularly good fit for the Investment Banking group. I look forward to discussing the contribution I can make to Nomura, and I ask that you include me in your upcoming Investment Banking Summer Analyst interview schedule. Should you require additional information please do not hesitate to contact me via email at [tchase@hamilton.edu](mailto:tchase@hamilton.edu) or at 555-777-8883. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Tracey Chase

64 Elm Street  
Boston, MA

Date of Letter

Samuel Teely  
Teely Agency  
165 Chicago Street  
Boston, MA

Dear Mr. Teely,

Please consider me a candidate for the summer internship program at Teely Agency. I was encouraged by Suzanne Smith, a past intern, and Jon Gil, a current employee, to apply. Both speak highly of their positive experiences with the program and with the community at Teely. I am passionate about the field of advertising and would welcome the opportunity to contribute my relevant experiences in advertising and digital marketing as well as my diverse set of skills to your dynamic agency this summer.

I am excited about Teely's commitment to producing work that is "quirky but real". As a copywriter intern at New York based branding studio Holmes & David, I quickly learned the importance of creating a tagline that not only encapsulates the spirit of the brand but also leaves a lasting impact on the audience. I demonstrated this through my development of the slogan "all ours" for the Follis Soup brand, which can be seen on their website and social media platforms. This unique opportunity gave me the experience and confidence to work in a dynamic, fast-paced environment where learning quickly, creatively and collaboratively are instrumental to success.

My education at Hamilton College has helped me develop written and oral communication skills needed to be successful in this position. My founding of the Wellin Initiative for Student Engagement – or WISE club – is a testament to my ability to communicate effectively through the digital medium and solve problems in a creative way. Seeing the lack of student engagement at the college museum, I collaborated with museum chairs, artists, and students to create events for the public; through this endeavor, I was also able to greatly increase the internet presence for the museum via Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, and press from campus publications. This endeavor proved successful, and the club has expanded greatly since then.

I look forward to discussing with you the contributions I can make to your internship program. I can be reached by phone at 917-885-9392 or by email at [jreid@hamilton.edu](mailto:jreid@hamilton.edu). I look forward to the opportunity to speak in person about my interest in the position.

Sincerely,  
Jasmine Reid

## TIPS FOR WRITING YOUR LETTER

- An excellent cover letter is personalized and targeted to the employer and the specific job posting. Never use a template, it will be obvious.
- Put yourself in the employer's shoes – if you were hiring for the position, what skills, interests, and experiences might you be looking for in the cover letter?
- Demonstrate what makes you a good fit for this company starting in the first paragraph. Then include a thesis or topic statement to demonstrate this fit.
- Vary your sentence structure. Turn some of your sentences around to spice up the letter. For example, instead of starting every sentence with "I", say "The Audubon Society internship tested my communication skills \_\_\_\_\_."
- Always have someone proofread your letter to ensure that it is error free. One typo or misspelled word may be the only excuse needed to disregard your application.
- As a general rule, the tone of your letter should match that of the posting. Some industries (i.e., finance & law) necessitate more formality, while a young start-up may have a different feel.

## THE NETWORKING EMAIL

This type of email is to be used as a first contact in setting up informational interviews. Please refer to the *Networking Guide* for more detailed information on this process.

**First Paragraph:** Explain why you wish to meet with this particular person (i.e. you are interested in learning more about his/her field or organization) and mention how you received her/his contact information. You do not need to sell yourself as you would to a potential employer. It is more important to inform the reader how you came to learn of this person's career field or place of employment and how he/she can be of assistance to you. Remember, this letter and subsequent meeting are NOT to be used for job solicitation purposes; rather, you are asking for information and advice regarding your own career exploration or job search.

**Body Paragraph:** Give a *brief* summary of your background, skills, and career interests as they relate to this person's employment to provide some more concrete rationale for meeting with this contact. Build a case for your interest so that the contact can better understand why you would like to meet with her/him.

**Closing Paragraph:** State that you would like to set up either a phone interview or face-to-face meeting (whichever is more feasible) and that you need *less than thirty minutes* of this person's time. Offer a few dates and times that you will be available. You may wish to include your resume so that this person may gain a better understanding of who you are and how your background pertains to what he/she does. If you do choose to send your resume, indicate here that you have enclosed a copy. Mention that you will call to follow up with your letter, but also include your contact information (phone and email address) should she/he choose to get in touch with you. Remember to thank this person for his or her time and consideration.

**Remember, you are asking for a favor;  
compose the letter with an appreciative tone.**

## SAMPLE NETWORKING EMAIL

Hamilton College  
198 College Hill Road  
Clinton, NY 13323

Date of Letter

Maria Reade  
Dean of Students  
Trinity-Pawling School  
Pawling, NY 12564

Dear Ms. Reade:

Heather Wixson suggested I contact you in regard to my interest in teaching at independent schools. I understand that you got involved in independent school teaching immediately following graduation, and as I am looking to do the same, I was wondering whether you would be available to answer a few questions I have about the process.

I am interested in teaching positions at independent schools in particular, because I am hoping to find an environment that closely compares to the small, welcoming atmosphere I have grown to love as an undergraduate at Hamilton College. Teaching has always been a passion of mine, and I have had the opportunity to work with children of all ages in a range of classroom, camp and after-school settings.

Would it be possible to set up a phone interview or meet briefly sometime over the next few months as I conduct my job search? I will be near Trinity-Pawling over winter break, and would like to meet between January 5<sup>th</sup> and 10 at the school if that could work with your schedule. Attached is a copy of my resume, which I hope will give you a better sense of my teaching interests. If you have any questions for me, you can reach me at [alaurits@hamilton.edu](mailto:alaurits@hamilton.edu). Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Laurits

## THE THANK YOU LETTER

Writing a thank you letter after an employment interview is a must. In fact, some employers think less of those interviewees who fail to follow-up promptly. You should send out your thank you letter within 24 – 48 hours after your interview.

In your letter, be sure to:

- Thank the employer for his/her time.
- Mention the position you interviewed for, and the date of the interview.
- Reaffirm your interest and enthusiasm.
- Refer back to the interview. Mention a personal connection that you made with the interviewer and/or something discussed during the interview that reaffirmed your interest in the position.
- Express your willingness to provide additional information.
- Conclude by mentioning your interest in hearing from the employer soon.

Thank you letters may be emailed, but there are some considerations. It may be advantageous to send via email because it will reach the employer quickly and may impact the hiring decision. If most of your prior correspondence with the employer has been via email, it should be acceptable to email the thank you letter. However, certain industries and employers may not consider an emailed letter appropriate. Base your decision on the organization's culture and the people you met during your interview. If in doubt, always err on the side of caution and hand write or type the letter in a formal style. When typing a letter, choose high-quality paper with a watermark. If writing by hand, use a simple note card or personal stationery.

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## THE ACCEPTANCE OR DECLINATION LETTER

An **acceptance letter** is a formal notification to an employer that you are accepting a position. It should be sent only after an offer from the employer has been extended to you in writing. In your letter, state that you are accepting the position as outlined in the offer letter you received from the employer.

Even if you decline a job offer during a telephone conversation, it is a professional courtesy to decline the offer in writing. These letters can be difficult to write and you need to be careful not to "burn your bridges" for future job opportunities. Always use an appreciative tone and thank the employer for their interest in you. If you have accepted another offer, you may inform the organization of the opportunity you have taken.

## SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER

Hamilton College  
198 College Hill Road  
Clinton, NY 13323

Date of Letter

Ms. Sophia Thomas  
Editor  
*The Daily Herald*  
345 Solomon Street  
Lexington, KY 40555

Dear Ms. Thomas:

Thank you for meeting with me on Wednesday, April 18, to discuss the position of editorial assistant at *The Daily Herald*. Your paper's creative journalistic style, commitment to training individuals, and enthusiasm for the publishing field impressed me very much. As a result of our meeting, I became extremely interested in joining the editorial staff of *The Daily Herald*.

As I mentioned during the interview, I believe that the strong writing skills which I developed through my liberal arts education and my experience as a writer for the school newspaper qualify me for the editorial assistant position. In addition, I demonstrated an ability to work under pressure and meet deadlines in my advertising internship at Delta Graphics last summer.

Since I spoke with you, I have received the Outstanding College Reporter of the Year Award for my article entitled "Excellence in Publishing" which appeared in *The New York Press*. I was very excited about receiving this distinction since this is my first published article. Attached is a copy for your review.

My excellent writing ability, editorial experience, and interest in the newspaper industry will enable me to achieve significant results for *The Daily Herald*. I look forward to hearing from you soon. Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Chien Li

## SAMPLE ACCEPTANCE LETTER

Hamilton College  
198 College Hill Road  
Clinton, NY 13323

Date of Letter

Mr. James Thatch  
Vice President, Sales  
Biotech  
1514 Technology Parkway  
San Francisco, CA 92120

Dear Mr. Thatch:

I am delighted to accept your offer to join Biotech as a Sales Representative in your San Francisco office, as outlined in your offer letter to me dated April 12, 2008. Thank you and your colleagues for having confidence in my candidacy and please know that I will do my best to be prepared and ready to meet the challenges of the position.

My intention will be to relocate to California a few weeks prior to my designated start date of August 1, 2008. From now until May 20<sup>th</sup>, however, I can best be reached here at Hamilton College in upstate New York, so if you will be corresponding with me in the coming weeks you may continue to use my mailing address, email and telephone number noted above.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to join Biotech. I am very excited and look forward to seeing you again in California.

Sincerely,

Jared Student



## SAMPLE DECLINATION LETTER

Hamilton College  
198 College Hill Road  
Clinton, NY 13323

Date of Letter

Mr. Adam English  
Headmaster  
Windsor School  
41-60 Kissena Blvd.  
Flushing, NY 11355

Dear Mr. English:

Thank you for offering me the position as Spanish teacher at the Windsor School. The offer was very appealing and I appreciate your giving me extra time to make a decision.

After much consideration, I have decided to decline your offer. The decision was very difficult, but I have accepted a position as a teacher at the Hotchkiss School. The opportunity to work with a mentor teacher and to have a reduced teaching load seems to be the most appropriate course of action for me, as I begin my career in independent school teaching. Perhaps our paths will cross in the future.

Thank you again for your interest. Your consideration has been greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Theresa O'Leary

## WHEN IN DOUBT, ASK AN EXPERT

**Peer Advisors** - Make an appointment by calling 315-859-4346 or emailing one of them directly  
**Career Advisors** - Appointments must be made at least 24 hours in advance by calling 315-859-4346