# Planning Sheet for Cover Letters

## What Does the Employer Want?
List the skills & qualities in the job description, (or deduce the valuable skills for such a position:

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

## What’s Your Best Evidence Match?
List resume entries, experiences, classes; *anything* that proves and demonstrates your wanted skills:

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

## Who is the contact receiving your application? (Name, Title, Company Name and Address)

## Name or Title of the Internship or Job?

## How did you learn of the position? (UMass Career Services, company website, company recruiter, etc)

## What’s your personal brand? What makes you different from others in your major? How should they remember you “in shorthand”? (interdisciplinary, experienced, a people-person, ability to learn software quickly, etc). Boil yourself down to 3 main points. This is your main argument.

A) 
B) 
C) 

## Choose An Outline Structure:
- Address job skill requirements in order of your Best Evidence Matches (above).
- Use your Personal Brand as your argument structure, referencing specific entries on your resume as demonstrated evidence of your brand.
- Combine both, making sure to address all of the Employer’s Wants (above).
The “How-To” of Cover Letters

My Address
My Address

Today’s Date

Company Name
Company Address

Company Address

Dear (insert the correct contact person’s name here, or if not available, use “Dear Search Committee, Hiring Manager, Internship Coordinator” etc.):

First Paragraph—Must-Haves:

✓ Identify the position you are applying for or the purpose of the letter if it is a cold contact/internship opportunity.
✓ State where you saw the job/internship advertised.
✓ Answer the question “Why?” Why do you want this job?
✓ Demonstrate your knowledge of the company by including a reference to the organization. By acknowledging their mission/reputation/accomplishments, you form a positive connection from the start.
✓ Relay your enthusiasm for the job.

Second Paragraph Should: (You may have more paragraphs depending on the content.)

✓ Give specific examples of how your strongest qualifications match the position requirements.
✓ Introduce and sell your relevant skills and experiences.
✓ Describe how you meet the needs of the employer by providing evidence of your related skills and experiences.
✓ Use short narrative examples and showcase how your skills and experience are an excellent match for the position.
✓ Reinforce qualifications presented in resume.
✓ Show your strong writing skills.

Closing Paragraph—Must-Haves:

✓ Last chance to highlight skills/abilities. Do not replicate your resume.
✓ Thank the employer for the time and consideration given to your application.
✓ Suggest a plan of action (request an interview; indicate you will follow up in some way during a specific timeframe).

Sincerely,

My Name (typed)

The Formatting:

Left-hand justified with margins set 1 inch uniformly or business-style (left-hand justified at 1.25 inches).

Your name signed in pen here if hard copy; if emailed, just eliminate these extra spaces or include electronic signature.