

# Legal Cover Letter Structure

## First Paragraph: Introduce yourself.

- Introduce yourself – state your class year and the position for which you are applying (e.g., law clerk, legal intern, legal extern, summer associate, etc.).
- State **briefly** why you are interested in the employer (one sentence should suffice in the introduction).
- Mention if you have mutual acquaintances or someone has referred you.
- Mention if you have any geographical ties to the area or the office to which you are applying.
- Craft your opening in a compelling manner that will encourage the reader to read further.
- Explain why you are interested in working for this employer. **Be specific** – special summer program, location, firm size, practice areas/types of work, career goals, etc.

## Second & Third Paragraphs: Explain how your skills, education, and experience match the requirements of the position (reference the job description).

- Describe and demonstrate your skills, education and experience to match the requirements of the position (i.e., why is your prior experience **relevant** to this employer?). **Highlight your relevant/transferable skills.**
- Supplement, but do NOT duplicate, the information on your resume. What has your prior experience taught you (e.g., the litigation process, drafting transactional documents, customer service skills, etc.)?
- Illustrate your training, interests, and experience, including skills not included on your resume (working well under pressure, having a strong work ethic, dedicated, etc.), but avoid overstatements (i.e., “I am a perfect candidate,” or “I possess superior legal skills”).
- Do NOT use limiting language or highlight skills/experience that you lack – this is your opportunity to demonstrate why you are a strong candidate.
- Tell the employer how you can help/benefit them, not how they can help/benefit you.

## Fourth Paragraph: Pave the way for the interview.

- Thank them for their time and consideration.
- Demonstrate your interest for an interview.

\* Your cover letter should be limited to one page; note that it is not necessary to have four paragraphs in a cover letter.