

Beyond the Basic Cover Letter

Leverage Your Strengths to Stand Out

CAR-S Format

Context: The situation

Action: What you did

Result: The impact

Strengths: Your unique approach

Reflection Activity #1

Think of a specific achievement from your career.

Context: What was the situation?

Action: What did YOU specifically do?

Result: What measurable impact occurred?

Strengths: What natural talents, skills, or approaches made your success possible? What did you do differently than others might have?

Cover Letter Formula: Three Paragraphs That Work

1. **Hook** with your strength
2. **Prove** with CAR story
3. **Connect** to their values

Reflection Activity #2

Choose a job posting you're interested in (real or hypothetical).

Job/Company: _____

Draft your opening paragraph using one of your natural strengths as the hook:

How does this strength directly address what the employer needs?

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Recommendation Letter Structure: Evidence + Impact + Potential

- What they consistently do well
- Measurable results they create
- Future value they bring

Reflection Activity #3

Think of someone you might write a recommendation for.

Person: _____

What does this person consistently do well? What unique value do they bring?

Write a specific CAR example of how these qualities created measurable impact:

Context: _____

Action: _____

Result: _____

Key Takeaways

Three most important things I learned today:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Action Planning

What will you implement this week? _____

By when? _____

What resources do you need? _____

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Template Reference

Cover Letter Opening Templates

- “My ability to [STRENGTH] has consistently [RESULT]...”
- “When [CONTEXT], I leverage my [STRENGTH] to...”
- “Throughout my career, my [STRENGTH] has enabled me to...”

Recommendation Letter Templates:

- “[Name]’s ability to [STRENGTH] consistently produces [TYPE OF RESULT]...”
- “In my [X] years of working with [Name], I’ve observed their unique talent for...”
- “Based on [Name]’s track record of [EVIDENCE], I’m confident they will [FUTURE VALUE]...”

Notes
