Dear Ms./Mr. (Employer’s Last Name):

The opening paragraph should present your qualifications for this position in a clear, concise manner. This paragraph should be written in response to the specific needs outlined by the employer in the job description. Let the company know why you have chosen to apply by emphasizing what you have to offer to meet their needs.

Your middle paragraph(s) should provide details about the qualifications you listed above. Use this section of your letter to demonstrate how your skills and experiences match the needs of the employer and requirements of this position. Be specific, select examples from both academic and work experiences that directly relate to the organization or position. Avoid vague or generic statements; always be direct and specific when describing your skills. Do not simply restate what is already written on your resume. Instead choose one or two areas or skills that you want the employer to notice on your resume. Using specific examples, describe why you would enjoy this kind of work and this company (presumably because this position would leverage your skill set).

In the final paragraph, thank the employer for their consideration and reiterate your enthusiasm and interest in this position. Tell the employer you will follow up with him to determine next steps (be specific about how and when you will follow up), or encourage the employer to contact you with questions (provide your telephone number or email).

Sincerely,

Your full name, typed.
(Don’t forget to sign your name, too!)