

Cover Letter Template

A short, polite note that gets out of the way of your work.

For literary magazines,
journals, and anthologies

TEMPLATE · FILL THE BRACKETED PARTS

[Date]

Dear [Editor's name, or "Editors" if none is listed],

Please consider ["Title"], a [genre] of [word count] words, for [Magazine name] [, and for your issue or theme, if there is one].

[Optional: one honest sentence on why this piece suits them, e.g. a recent piece you admired there.]

[One to three sentences of bio, in the third person: past publications, relevant background, where you live. If you have none yet, one line about you is plenty.]

[If true: This is a simultaneous submission, and I will withdraw it promptly if it is accepted elsewhere.]

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

[Email] · [Phone, if asked]

[City, Province or Country]

READ THE GUIDELINES FIRST

If the magazine asks for something specific (a bio length, a form field, no letter at all), their rules come first. This template is a fallback.

KEEP IT SHORT

Aim for under 200 words. Editors read the work, not the letter. A tidy letter simply shows you are easy to work with.

WHAT TO LEAVE OUT

- A summary or explanation of the piece
- Praise for your own work
- Every publication you have ever had
- Apologies for being new

NO CREDITS YET?

That is normal and fine. Say where you live and one true, relevant thing about you, or simply thank them.

CHECK BEFORE SENDING

- Editor name spelled right
- Correct magazine name (no copy-paste leftovers)
- Word count matches the file
- Sim. sub line only if allowed

An Example Letter

A fictional writer, a fictional magazine, the shape you are aiming for.

All names below are invented

EXAMPLE · SHORT STORY, ONE EARLIER CREDIT

October 13, 2026

Dear Ms. Okafor,

Please consider "The Lighthouse Keeper's Ledger," a short story of 3,400 words, for The Northern Gull Review's winter issue on the theme of thresholds.

↑ Title, genre, length, and where it is going, all in one sentence.

I enjoyed the restraint of "Salt Year" in your spring issue, and I hope this story sits comfortably beside it.

↑ Optional and specific. Skip it rather than fake it.

Jordan Avery writes fiction about small coastal towns. Their flash piece "Low Tide" appeared in The Harbour Quarterly. They live in Nova Scotia.

↑ Third person, brief, true.

This is a simultaneous submission, and I will withdraw it promptly if it is accepted elsewhere.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Jordan Avery
jordan.avery@example.com
Halifax, Nova Scotia

WHY THIS WORKS

It is about 120 words. The editor knows exactly what they are getting before they open the file.

POETRY VARIATION

Name the poems instead of one title: "Please consider the following four poems: ..." Page count is more useful than word count.

NONFICTION VARIATION

If the essay touches on real people or events, one plain line noting that it is nonfiction is enough. Save context for the editor's questions.

CONTESTS

Many contests read anonymously. Keep your name off the manuscript and follow the entry form exactly; a letter may not be wanted at all.

AFTER YOU SEND

Log it on your tracker the same day, with the date and the magazine's expected response time.