Below is a standard outline for cover letters that you can follow for a first draft. I encourage you to get your cover letter critiqued by a career counselor, academic advisor, or internship coordinator.

Your Name
Address
City, State, ZIP

Month, Day, Year

Employer Name
Title
Company
Street Address
City, State, ZIP

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr./________, 

First Paragraph: Why am I Writing?
• State why you are writing. Are you responding to a position advertisement or inquiring about an opportunity to work in someone’s lab, etc.
• Indicate how you learned about the position if you heard about the position from a contact associated with the lab/agency/organization, be sure to point that out.
• Demonstrate briefly your knowledge of the company/agency/organization by mentioning how your skills and experience match the position/organization interests. This will give the employer a preview of the rest of your letter.
• Communicate your enthusiasm about the position.

Second/Third paragraphs: Who Am I and Why Should You Hire Me?
• Use the position description, or your knowledge of KSAs required for the position, to organize these paragraphs. Your goal here is to match your skills to the employer’s needs.
• Describe your experience or specialized training that would be of interest to the employer
• Mention specific qualifications listed in the job posting and explain how you meet those qualifications.
• Be specific about your qualifications and skills. Describe how you gained important skills and provide examples of when you have used them in a related position.
• Do not (!) simply restate your resume; provide specific examples that elaborate on your resume.
• Explain how you would fit into the position and organization. Demonstrate that you’ve researched the position and the organization!

Closing Paragraph: My Next Step?
• Close your letter by explaining why you are interested in the job and why you make an excellent candidate for the position.
• Express your interest in further discussing your background and the position. You can refer them to your resume at this point.
• Explain that you intend to follow up to make sure all your application materials were received and state when you plan to follow up.
• Include a statement expressing your appreciation for the employer’s time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Name: