

# Cover Letter Checklist

By Alex Strickland

## ☐ Basics

- ☐ Maintain all cover letters to a single page.
- ☐ Address the letter to a person and check for spelling of the person's name and the exact title.
- ☐ Tailor the letter to the reader to show that you are interested in and have researched the organization.
- ☐ Use your own words.
- ☐ Demonstrate energy and enthusiasm.
- ☐ Emphasize what you offer the employer.
- ☐ Give concrete examples of your skills.
- ☐ Use direct, positive language.
- ☐ Keep a balance between professionalism and friendliness.
- ☐ Include information relevant to the job you are applying for.
- ☐ Clearly ask for the next step in the process.

## ☐ Writing Style

- ☐ Keep your average sentence ten to twenty words.
- ☐ Keep every paragraph under five lines.
- ☐ Make sure your sentences begin with or contain powerful action verbs.
- ☐ Make effective use of "white space", making your letter easy to read.

## ☐ Contact Information

- ☐ Your personal data should be on every page.
- ☐ Omit your business number.
- ☐ If your letter is more than one page long, each page should be numbered and all the pages should be bound together.

## ☐ Objectives

- ☐ Clearly state why you are writing.
- ☐ If you have the details, tie the letter specifically to the target organization and job.
- ☐ Demonstrate that you have researched the company by including some information in one or more of your sentences.
- ☐ Address points of relevance, such as applicable skills from the job description.

- ☐ Include references to some of your personality or behavioral traits that are crucial to success in your field.
- ☐ Avoid wasting more space than required with employer names and addresses.
- ☐ Omit any reference to reasons for leaving a particular job.
- ☐ Omit any references to past, current, or desired salaries.
- ☐ Avoid listing irrelevant responsibilities or job titles.
- ☐ Sell yourself: mention your achievements and the problems you have successfully solved during your career.
- ☐ Avoid vagueness.
- ☐ Leave out lists of references and only mention the availability of references.
- ☐ Correspondence Tips
  - ☐ Always send a letter with a resume, never a resume alone.
  - ☐ Proofread for poor grammar, spelling, and typos.
  - ☐ Type all letters.
  - ☐ Make paragraphs approximately the same length.
  - ☐ Keep a copy of the cover letter for your records.