

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.