

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.