
COVER LETTER CHECKLIST

BE SURE TO ...

Write the letter yourself *and* have someone else proofread it for grammar, syntax, and spelling.

Keep the letter to one page, three to four paragraphs (shorter for email).

Address the letter to a specific individual with his or her correct title and business address.

Tailor your letter for each situation.

In the opening paragraph, mention the name of the person who referred you, if applicable.

Write a letter that is work-centered and employer-centered, not self-centered.

Mention something you know about the company that is related to the position for which you are applying.

Tell the reader why you are qualified for the position.

Mention a personal interest you have in the company, its location, service, or product.

Make it attractive and easy to read.

Use high quality, matching stationery and envelopes (16-25 pound weight).

Produce error-free, laser-printed, clean copy.

Refer the reader to your resume.

Be honest. Be positive. Be direct.

Write clearly and simply; use industry-specific keywords.

Use the active voice and action verbs.

Be sure your phone number, email and home address are included.

Sign your cover letter in blue or black ink (or type your name if you are sending it electronically).

Keep your letter personal, warm and professional.

NEVER...

Give a summary of your life, values, goals, etc. longer than 50 words.

Describe, at length, your admiration for the company's history.

Overuse the pronoun "I."

Explain why you left your last job or want to leave your present one.

Use a form letter and just change the company name.

Begin the letter with "To Whom It May Concern," or "Gentlemen."

Repeat verbatim the information in your resume.

Include your salary history or current salary requirements (unless specifically required to do so, and even then it may not be advisable).

Inflate or exaggerate your experience and qualifications.

Hint that you are interested in virtually any job with that organization.

Say anything negative about your previous employer(s).

Expect the reader to figure out what job you are best qualified for.

Use copier paper and/or a dot-matrix printer.