

Cover Letters

- **Make a connection:** Always connect your cover letter to the job and organization. Think from the employer's point of view. What would make you a strong candidate for the job? Use the job description and industry jargon to make a clear connection between your skills and the position requirements.
- **Be clear and concise:** Get straight to the point and avoid clichéd phrases or "fluff." Focus on how your skills and experiences will benefit the organization. Remember, the cover letter should be one page and about three to four paragraphs long.
- **Be convincing:** This is an opportunity for you to sell yourself to the employer. So, don't just repeat the information on your resume. Make sure to expand on your experiences and sell your skills by providing specific examples that illustrate how and where you developed them. For example, if the employer is looking for teamwork, write about a team-related experience and/or accomplishment. Use the STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result) method for this part.
- **Analyze the job description:** Look for repetition. If the job description mentions a desired skill more than once, it is probably one of the more important requirements. Additionally, keep in mind that if the employer provides you with a list of requirements, they are probably listed in order of importance. Make sure you focus on one or two of the most "important" requirements versus trying to talk about all of them.

- **Mention referrals or connections:** Name the person who referred you in the opening sentence.
- **Research the organization:** Employers will want to know why you want to work for their company. They are less interested in how the job or company will benefit your career. Make sure you provide a specific reason you would like to work for them. For example, if it is a publication company, mention how you admire their content. You could even reference a specific piece or two that you really enjoyed.
- **Write well:** Employers will look at your cover letter to evaluate your writing skills. Make sure you have your cover letter reviewed by The Career Center, a professor, advisor or friend before sending it.

Checklist:

- Always be professional.
- Use proper grammar and correct spelling.
- Avoid using "To Whom It May Concern." Address the cover letter to the recruiter or hiring manager.
- Do not copy and paste content from your resume to your cover letter.
- Keep to one page.
- Focus on the reader's needs, not yours.

Email vs. Attachment

Unless otherwise specified in the job description, either way is fine. Every hiring manager has his or her preference, but you won't be penalized either way. It is important to note that putting the cover letter in the body of the email makes it easier to scan quickly.

If sending the cover letter as an attachment, you can write a brief message in the body of the email. Example: "I would like to apply for _____ position. My resume and cover letter are attached for your review. Thank you, (your name)"

