

COVER LETTER CHECKLIST

Cover Letter Check List

FORMAT/SETUP:

- Standard business letter formatting is used (everything left-justified, no indentations, 1 space between each “section” except after “Sincerely,” where 4 spaces should be used).
- Content is in this order: your address block, the date, the company’s address block, salutation, paragraphs, closing (“Sincerely”), your signed name, your typed name.
- Use same name and address heading that you used on your resume.
- The company information is correct and includes contact name, job title, company name, and company address.
- The letter is addressed as follows: Dear Mr./Ms. <insert last name>:
- The cover letter contains 3-4 paragraphs, each at least 3 sentences long.
- The entire letter fits on 1 page.
- Font is 10 or 12 points and easy to read.

OVERALL CONTENT:

- The letter is addressed to an individual, if possible.
- Letter is focused, concise, clear, and well organized.
- Writer comes across as confident, not too arrogant, passive, or desperate.
- Letter does not simply restate your resume.
- Letter is convincing, engaging, and interesting.
- Letter is written for the employer, not what the employer can do for you.
- There are no spelling, grammatical, or punctuation errors.
- Cover letter is targeted to the position you are applying for (not generic).
- Avoids phrases like “I believe” and “I feel” which lessen the impact of the statement.
- Avoids starting every sentence with “I” (change it up with “My experience...” or “Interning at...”).
- If you have a gap in your employment history you have explained it in your cover letter.
- Letter is signed if you are mailing it. No signature required if sending via e-mail.

FIRST PARAGRAPH:

- Engages the reader (use of a personal story or attention grabber)
- Mentions the position you are applying for and where it was listed.
- Any referrals or company contacts are mentioned (if approved with that person ahead of time).
- Includes a statement about your interest and/or fit for the position.
- Includes your degree and major (or this can go in the second paragraph as appropriate).
- Optional: A statement about your knowledge of the company or how your values align with those of the company.
- If applicable: Mention if you will be relocating, when you are available to begin work, and/or if you already have experience with that company.

PARAGRAPH 2 (3rd paragraph optional):

- Gives examples of how your skills and experiences match up with the job/internship description.
- Focuses on real life experiences (jobs, internships, involvement, etc.), not just academics.

- Provides examples and quantifies professional accomplishments that demonstrate a relevant competency.
- Highlights transferable skill examples, especially if applicant has no directly related experience.

LAST PARAGRAPH:

- Restates your interest and/or fit for the position.
- Includes how you can be contacted (phone and e-mail address).
- Thanks the employer for their time and consideration.
- Optional: Mentions that you will follow up via phone or e-mail. Caution: Some employers may see this as too forward. If you wish to follow up, you don't need to mention it in the cover letter; you can follow up (preference is via e-mail) in 1.5-2 weeks.

SUBMITTING A COVER LETTER:

- Resume and letter are mailed flat in a business envelope (ideally) or neatly folded into thirds.
- Cover letter is printed on good quality bond paper that matches your resume.
- If e-mailing the cover letter, save it as a PDF first and attach it to the e-mail. Then write a "mini-cover letter" in the body of the e-mail, referring to the attachments.