

TEN TIPS FOR GREAT COVER LETTERS

1. Always include important information. Your name, address and phone number (with area code) should be clearly visible on every cover letter you send.
2. Make it personal, address a specific person within the company. If necessary, call for a contact name. "Dear Sir/Madam" letters are less likely to get attention than those addressed to an individual.
3. Make the opening sentence catchy. Employers scan cover letters for content: Who is it for? What's the opener? Attention grabbing first sentences (those that address the interests of the employer) will encourage the recipient to read on.
4. Write each letter for a specific job. There is no such thing as a generic cover letter. Each job you apply for is different. Show how you meet the needs of a given job. Refer to the specific job in the first paragraph.
5. Describe your skills as they relate to the job! Here is a chance to highlight several additional skills. Tie your experience to your job skills and relate your skills to the job preparation.
6. Type and proof-read your cover letter. First impressions are important. Appear professional by not making mistakes.
7. Be brief. Use descriptive action words. Employers receive hundreds of cover letters and resumes daily, so get right to the point with as few words as possible.
8. Be confident, creative and upbeat! Next to your resume, your cover letter is your best selling tool. Let your personality come through.
9. Avoid negatives. If there has been a health or some other problem (ex-offender, etc.), the cover letter is not the place to mention it. Discuss employment gaps at the interview.
10. Always end with an action you will take. One of the biggest mistakes people make is to end the letter asking the employer to respond. You have to be assertive. Call the employer to make sure your cover letter and resume arrived and to set up an interview.