

Cover Letter Checklist

When writing/customizing the cover letter:

- Make sure the cover letter uses the same style/font/format of the résumé. The résumé and cover letter should “match” each other. And the content should complement each other, but not be an exact duplicate.
- Address the hiring manager by name specifically, not just “To Whom It May Concern.”
- The first paragraph needs to be attention-getting! If it’s not, rewrite it!
- Focus on what sets you apart from other candidates! Make the case for yourself in your cover letter — many hiring managers read the cover letter first before deciding whether or not to look at the résumé. This is especially true for e-notes.
- Use pronouns. Unlike the résumé, you can include pronouns in your cover letter — “I, me, my” — however, remember, that you want to focus on what the *employer* is looking for, not what *you* want.
- Include a “call to action” in the closing paragraph — what is the next step? Will you follow-up with the hiring manager or recruiter, or do you invite them to call you? How should they contact you? (For example, direct them to your cell phone number, if that’s how you want to be reached.)

Before sending the cover letter:

- Double-check that you’ve spelled the contact person’s name and the company name correctly.
- Have someone else proofread the cover letter to make sure there are no typos and no mistakes. Watch especially for words that spellcheck won’t catch. (For example: the wrong word spelled correctly — like “pubic relations” instead of “public relations.”)
- If using the cover letter and résumé to apply online, make sure you’ve stripped out any formatting that may get lost in the ATS software, or that may corrupt the content of the document as it’s being uploaded into the ATS database. (You can always follow-up to the online application by sending a copy of the résumé and cover letter — with formatting — via email to the hiring manager directly, or by snail mail.)

Need someone to review your cover letter? Schedule a complimentary career consultation — <http://www.madelynmackie.com/resume-writing/>