

| Cover Letter Checklist | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Presentation | <input type="checkbox"/> Design and format is consistent with resume <input type="checkbox"/> Check spelling, grammar, syntax, spacing/margins, and font consistency |
| Salutation & Opening Paragraph | <input type="checkbox"/> Conforms to classic business letter format: addresses recipient(s) using titles of respect, avoid informalities <input type="checkbox"/> Addressed to person supervising the position (if can't find a name, address to hiring manager or specific department) <input type="checkbox"/> Opening sentence compels recipient to read further <input type="checkbox"/> Opening paragraph is appropriately enthusiastic, confident, and assertive <input type="checkbox"/> Communication style is direct and informative; avoids wasted words (fluff) <input type="checkbox"/> Includes all requested information (job number, referral source, job title, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Targets your key strengths, skills, and accomplishments <input type="checkbox"/> Include names of those who may have referred you to the position or work within the organization/company |
| Main Body | <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates your knowledge and/or expertise by using profession-specific language <input type="checkbox"/> Specific and relevant examples from your resume that highlight/parallel the most essential aspects of the job description Content is original, i.e., not simply a restatement of your resume content <input type="checkbox"/> Speaks specifically to the requirements of the job by highlighting experiences that match the qualifications and necessary skills for the position; experiences communicate how applicant completed a project and the learning that resulted <input type="checkbox"/> Tone is professional and communicates approachability, interest in the position, and genuineness <input type="checkbox"/> Includes the most pertinent examples of your skills and accomplishments with language that indicates clear connection to the position <input type="checkbox"/> Provides explanation of how you will utilize your experiences in the most related and productive way for that particular organization/company <input type="checkbox"/> Avoids starting too many sentences with "I" or "My," allowing you to focus on parallels to job description |
| Closing Paragraph and Signature | <input type="checkbox"/> Restate interest in the role, team, organization/company <input type="checkbox"/> Makes it clear to recipient(s) that you are a confident candidate <input type="checkbox"/> Communicates enthusiasm about the opportunity <input type="checkbox"/> Provides an easy way of contacting you, such as an email address or phone number <input type="checkbox"/> Expresses appreciation for consideration <input type="checkbox"/> Provide next steps (i.e. "will follow up in a week") |

Cover Letter Rubric

Your cover letter expresses your interest, highlights skills/knowledge that show your fit, illustrates how you accomplished the most relevant entries on your resume, and offers a glimpse of your personality.

| | <i>Impressive</i> This cover letter is strong enough to land an interview | <i>Developing</i> This cover letter doesn't stand out among the competition | <i>Beginning</i> This cover letter needs significant improvement & would be discarded during screening |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Presentation | Visually appealing; design is consistent with resume; business letter format; professional font, 10-12 font size, maximum 1" margins, even spacing; overall strong professionalism | A few visual errors; design may or may not be consistent with resume; business letter format; professional font, 10-12 font size, maximum 1" margins, even spacing; overall average professionalism | Many errors in regards to: visual appeal, design, business letter format, professional font, 10-12 font size, maximum 1" margins, even spacing; ; does not convey professionalism |
| Content: Opening/Intro | Letter is addressed to specific person/hiring manager; opening sentence and paragraph are compelling; content grabs employers attention; introduces most relevant skills and fit for the position; communicates genuine enthusiasm about your interest in the position and transitions well to main body of the letter | Letter may or may not be addressed to specific person/hiring manager; opening sentence and paragraph are standard but not particularly compelling/creative; provides relevant skills to the position; communicates interest in the position and transitions to the main body of the letter. | Letter is not addressed to the hiring manager; there is little structure to the opening paragraph; interest is not able to be found in written communication; does not engage the reader. |
| Content: Main Body | Communicates your understanding of what the employer needs and explains how you have the knowledge/skills to meet those needs and add value to the organization; includes specific and relevant examples from your resume that highlight/parallel the most essential components and qualifications of the job description; focuses on accomplishments and impact; writing is clear, concise and compelling | Includes one or some examples where experiences portray skills needed for the position; may include some skills/knowledge less relevant for this particular position; some organized structure in the transition of sentences; writing is generally organized but not necessarily compelling | May simply repeat/list everything that is on your resume and/or be too vague; examples included are not relevant to the specific position; does not convince reader that you understand needs of the employer; writing may lack structure and/or clarity |
| Content: Closing | Includes a statement of appreciation, restates your confidence in how your experience matches the position description; inspires the employer to contact you to discuss candidacy further | Includes a statement of appreciation and restates interest in and qualification for this position; provides plans for follow up | Lacks a statement of appreciation and/or restatement of interest in position; does not inspire the reader to move your application forward |
| Details: Spelling, Grammar, & Syntax | Contains no spelling or grammar errors; spacing and font are consistent; style of cover letter and resume are complementary; includes critical contact information | Minor spelling or grammatical errors; spacing and font are appropriate; includes contact information | Lacks balance of text and white space; multiple spelling and grammar errors; leaves out critical contact information |