

MAKE YOUR COVER LETTERS RELEVANT AND BRIEF



Summary: *What is the most important thing to keep in mind when writing your cover letter? Make sure it is relevant and brief.*

After the hard work of **creating a resume**, many people forget to prepare another important part of their application paperwork - the cover letter. Some people purposely skip this step, wrongly assuming that cover letters don't get read. This is not usually the case.

For example, potential employers may make a point to read cover letters in order to get a feel for the written communication skills of each applicant. This is an important piece of your application and an opportunity to gain an advantage over your competition.

The most important tip to keep in mind when writing your cover letter is to make it relevant and brief. A good cover letter 1) states your interest in a specific type of position, 2) includes a list of qualifications, 3) tells the employer why you're available and 4) requests an interview. Each section is described in more detail below:

1. Begin your cover letter with a brief paragraph stating what type of position you are seeking. If you have been personally referred to the company, include the individual's name. This paragraph is normally one to three sentences in length.
2. The largest portion of your letter is the overview of your qualifications as they relate to the desired position. Avoid the mistake of restating everything listed on your resume. Instead, look at your acquired skills and describe the two or three that you feel are most crucial to the specific position. You may go on to state how you feel you can utilize your skills to benefit the special needs of each company.
3. The next section of your cover letter should explain your work availability. Many times I receive cover letters from applicants with no explanation of when the candidate would be available for work or why he or she is looking for work. Remember, it's impossible for an employer to guess your intentions. If you are currently working but looking for other opportunities, state this in your letter. Explain the reason for your desired change and the time frame of your availability. If you live out of commuting distance, inform the potential employer of your desire to relocate. For those who are not currently employed, state the reason for leaving your last position, if possible.
4. In the closing paragraph of your letter, you should thank the employer for considering your resume and request an opportunity to meet in person. If you have specific directions that will assist the employer in reaching you, include this here.

The final step in creating your cover letter is to proofread carefully. If you can, ask a friend to proofread it also. Remember, this is a chance to impress a potential employer. Spelling and grammatical errors will not help your cause.