

Cover Letter Checklist:

Is it an original letter, tailored to a job within one company/organization?

Is the letter in a standard business-letter format?

Is it clear where the employer can reach you during business hours? Have you ensured that either a person or a machine will take the employer's call?

Is the letter neat and attractive?

Have you enhanced the letter's reader-friendliness through use of bullets or other special formatting?

Is it no longer than one page?

Have you signed your name boldly and confidently?

Writing Style:

Is every word spelled correctly? Is all grammar, syntax, punctuation, and capitalization correct? Is the letter free of typographical errors?

Does the letter tell why you are writing, as well as grab the reader's attention in the first paragraph?

Have you avoided such phrases as "I feel" and "I believe," which tend to weaken and dilute the statements you make about yourself?

Tone and Appeal to the Reader:

Is it confident without being arrogant?

Does it project the image of a person the employer would like to get to know better?

Avoidance of Major Cover-Letter Mistakes:

Is it addressed to a named individual (unless it is a response to a blind ad)?

If it's in response to an ad, does the letter speak to the requirements of the position?

Have you told the employer what you can do for the company rather than what the company can do for you?

Enhancing the Value of your Cover Letter as a Job-Search Marketing Tool:

Have you added more credibility to the value judgments you make about yourself by attributing them to a professor or former employer(s)? For example, "My former employers can attest that I am a motivated hard worker."

Have you taken advantage of your networking contacts by referring to someone the employer knows?

Have you quantified and given examples of accomplishments that demonstrate your skills wherever possible?

Have you demonstrated your company knowledge and fit?