

HOW TO WRITE A COVER LETTER

When you are applying for a job, how you format your cover letter is important because the letter is one of the first impressions you'll make on an employer. In fact, how you format your letter is almost as important as what you write in it. A cover letter that is formatted incorrectly, or is difficult to read, can quickly eliminate you from the pool of candidates, so it's critical to pay just as much attention to the formatting of your letter as to its content.

The trouble with cover letters is that they need to be concise and must never be longer than a one-page. Employers are busy professionals who have 10-20 seconds to skim your cover letter – so it's important to state your case clearly and to the point.

How to cram lots of information into little space:

It's not as difficult as it seems. **Less really is more** when it comes to writing a cover letter. It's a simple matter of focusing your time and attention on the essentials, basically the items an employer is most interested in.

Here's how you can do it:

1. Three paragraphs

Start with creating three paragraphs on one page. In the **first** one, tell the reader what job you are applying for and why. In the **second** you list your skills and experience. And in the **third** paragraph, clearly and directly ask for the opportunity to have an interview to discuss things further.

2. Stay concise

Make sure you limit each paragraph to three or four well-written sentences, cutting out all the fluff and non-essentials. These could well be the most important sentences you write in your career, so take your time to ensure they are compelling and inspire the reader to want to see your resume and even call you for an interview today.

3. Layout

Leave generous margins so there's plenty of white space and be sure to double space between paragraphs. This will make the cover letter more pleasing on the eye and put the reader at ease.

4. Facilitate reading

Assist the reader see at a glance what you wish to say by using numbers or bullet points. You want the reader to be able get a two second snapshot of the cover letter, as most people do before they read it through.

5. Check and check again

Proof-read through to catch spelling and then print it out for one final edit. When you think it looks good, send it over to friends and family and let them go through it.

You're done!

Conclusion

The rule of keeping things simple very much applies to cover letters. With employers being inundated with applications, they will appreciate a brief and effective letter like yours.