Writing a Cover Letter

- Use your job-application letter to show how the qualifications listed in your résumé have prepared you for the specific job for which you’re applying.

- If possible, address your letter to the individual in the organization who will be conducting the interviews.

- When applying for an advertised opening, begin by stating (or implying) the reason for the letter, identify the position for which you’re applying, and tell how you learned about the opening.

- When writing an unsolicited application letter, first gain the reader’s attention by showing that you are familiar with the company and can make a unique contribution to its efforts.

- In one or two paragraphs, highlight your strongest qualifications and relate them directly to the needs of the specific position for which you’re applying.

  **Show – don’t tell.**
  NOT: I am an accurate person.
  BUT: In my two years of experience as a student secretary, none of the letters, memorandums, and reports I typed were ever returned with a typographical error marked.

- Refer the reader to the enclosed résumé.
  NOT: I am enclosing a copy of my résumé for your review.
  BUT: As detailed in the enclosed résumé, my extensive work experience in records management has prepared me to help you “take charge of this paperwork jungle,” as headlined in your classified ad.

- Treat your letter as a persuasive sales letter: provide specific evidence, stress reader benefits, avoid exaggeration, and show confidence in the quality of your product.

- Close by tactfully asking for an interview.

- Maintain an air of formality throughout the letter. Avoid cuteness.

- Make sure the document presents a professional, attractive, and conservative appearance that is 100% error-free.