

COVER LETTERS

BEFORE YOU WRITE

- Research the company to find out about their products/services, customer or client base
- If you are applying to a specific job posting review the job description thoroughly
- Identify the top skills needed and then link those to experience gained in work, education, volunteer, placement, projects etc.
- There are various types of cover letters, decide which one will be the best fit for your job search situation

OPENING PARAGRAPH

- If possible write your letter to a specific person, check the spelling of their name and use the proper salutation (Mr./Mrs./Ms./Miss). Don't assume you have the correct one, double check!
- If there is no name, consider removing the salutation and referencing the job title
- State the position you are applying for, be specific and include any job reference numbers that the employer used in the posting
- Include research about the company, be specific about what it is you find interesting, and reference new projects or contracts in which they are involved

BODY PARAGRAPHS

- Choose the top skills that are referred to in the posting, or if there is no posting than rely on your research to make an educated guess about required skills
- Once you have identified the skills write about your use of those skills, referencing examples to prove having use in either work, volunteer, educational or other experiences
- Organize! Group by skill set or type of experience, ensure that your letter flows logically
- Use action verbs and professional language, only use acronyms that are industry standard

CLOSING PARAGRAPH

- Include your contact information, phone number and/or email in the closing paragraph
- Refer to any next steps (i.e. Wait for them to contact you? Will you contact them?)
- Finish your letter on an interesting and relevant note, you've kept them reading this far, don't let your closer be boring
- Use a polite, professional closer, Sincerely or Thank you are good choices

MECHANICS/AESTHETICS

- Proofread –typos, spelling and grammar mistakes all show a lack of attention to detail
- Use a formal letter layout, include dates, addresses etc. for a professional and polished look
- Did we mention proofread?
- Avoid elaborate fonts and use the same font as your resume
- If emailing your application, either send as an attached PDF or paste the text into the body of your email (however pasting means a loss of formatting)
- Ask yourself: Have you created a targeted letter that addresses company needs and uses examples of your experiences to highlight important skills?