

Cover Letter Checklist

- Use spell check and proofing
- Times Roman or other Serif font, 10 point to 12 point
- Same quality bond paper used for resume, 8 x 11 inches, in white, off-white, or light gray
- Use professional business letter format with your name and contact information matching what you created on your resume (your very own letterhead!)
- Written to someone specific, with name and title spelled correctly
- One page only
- Limited to three targeted paragraphs focused on the reader's needs (not yours); (See "sample cover letter")
- Checked twice for spelling, grammatical or typographical errors
- Proofread by at least one other person
- Signed neatly with a blue or black pen
- Don't forget to follow up!

Provided by Heartland Community College Workforce Services
1500 W. Raab Road, Normal, Illinois 61761, (309) 268-8034,
workforce.services@heartland.edu

[10-12 lines]

Your Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Phone (May use the heading from your resume)

[4 lines]

Date

Contact's Name

Title

Company Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Dear [Mr. or Ms. Last Name]:

First paragraph: Write a strong opening statement that grabs the reader's attention and emphasizes the qualities you possess that would fulfill the employer's needs. Point out what is unique about you and separates you from the competition – your background or experience that tells the reader why you are the right person for the job. To do this you will need to analyze the job for both the noted and assumed needs and determine the most important skills the employer is looking for. In other words, you need to do your research.

Second (and third if relevant) paragraph(s): Be more specific about why you are qualified for the position. Briefly summarize some of your strongest qualifications to do the work. Highlight and expand on specific aspects of your resume that are relevant. (e.g. "As indicated on the enclosed resume . . . "or "Of particular interest to you may be my [accomplishment, skills, experience] in the area of ____".) Remember to consider this from an employer's point of view. Show what education, experience, skills, accomplishments and achievements you have to offer the employer; how you can be of value to them (rather than how they can be of value to you).

Closing paragraph: If you haven't done so above, refer the reader to the resume you are enclosing. State your interest in an interview and offer to provide further information upon request. Make it easy for the employer to respond by: 1) including your telephone number and times when you are available to receive calls; 2) indicating when you will contact the employer*; or 3) stating when you will be available for an interview.

Sincerely,

[4 lines] Signature

[Your name typed]

Enclosure: Resume

[* If you say you will call, make sure you follow through. If you don't you will appear disinterested and unreliable.]