Cover Letter Tips

1. Write a customized letter for every job application.
   - Read the job ad to find out the skills the job requires, and tailor your cover letter to emphasize the skills you have that match these needs.
   - Use the same “keywords” as appear in the job ad when possible. For instance, if the job ad wants someone who is “proficient in MS Word,” then say “I am proficient in MS Word” rather than saying “I am experienced in using Word.”

2. Personalize the greeting line.
   - It is best to use the name of the person who will be receiving your letter. Do online research or make a phone call if necessary to find out the person’s name.
   - If you absolutely cannot find the person’s name, you can write “Dear Hiring Manager” as the greeting.

3. Don’t duplicate your resume.
   - The cover letter should not be a re-hash of your resume. It is your chance to expand on the key experiences that matter most to the job and to write about why you are a strong candidate.
   - Don’t be afraid to be creative. Write about why you are personally interested in this field, or include a brief historical fact about the job field that you find interesting. These kinds of sentences will stand out in the reader’s mind.

   - A cover letter should be only about 3 or 4 paragraphs.
   - Each paragraph should have 2 or 3 concise sentences.

5. Write a strong closing line.
   - Your final sentence should tell why you are a strong candidate for the posting.
   - Keep it short and direct.

6. Remember to proofread and use spellcheck
   - Use your program’s spell checker, and if possible have a friend or mentor read the cover letter to make sure you haven’t made any grammatical or spelling mistakes.

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