

Tips for Cover Letters

A cover letter is the opportunity to showcase your skills, show your ability to communicate effectively and your writing ability.

While there aren't and set restrictions on length, remember that the reader is probably looking at many resume, not just yours. Keep it to three paragraphs on one page. When looking at a lot of resumes, you don't want one's life history before you get to the resume. Your cover letter should:

- **Be tailored for each job.** No two jobs are alike and not all your skills will be relevant. A cover letter is your opportunity to highlight the skills the job requires.
- **Be personalized.** The only thing worse than getting a "to whom it may concern" letter is getting one addressed to someone else. If you are answering an ad and don't have a name, use "Dear Sir" and then reference the job (title, number etc.).
- **Highlight how your background relates.** Read the job description and then use the buzz words the ad uses and highlight how your experience fits. Keep it simple. More details should be in your resume.
- **Convey your knowledge.** Can you tell the reader why your background would be an asset to them in one sentence? Try it. It should be forceful and meaningful, but not a litany (once, again) of what you have done.
- **Proofread.** Over and over and over.

You want your cover letter to stimulate the reader to meet you. As with a resume, don't overdo the detail. A teaser that you have the experience and/or knowledge is what you want. Your resume will provide a little more information and, hopefully, the reader will want to know more!