

# How to Prepare an Effective Cover Letter



**Use a cover letter to emphasize your strengths and assets to interest employers in interviewing you.**

## **Get their attention**

Make sure that the cover letter looks professional and is easy to read. Pay particular attention to spelling, grammar, punctuation, spacing, paragraph length, and margins. Address it to a particular person by name, and ensure that the spelling and title of the individual are correct. A good cover letter should not be too long; try to limit it to a single page.

## **Get their interest**

In the first paragraph, include any knowledge you have of the reader's business, or comment on a timely issue relating to the company's operation—but don't make it forced. Indicate the position that you are applying for and your interest in being considered for it.

## **Market your strengths**

The cover letter should explain what you can do for the company. Put yourself in the employer's position as you write it. Present facts that will be interesting and that accurately describe your skills and qualifications. Your prospective employer will be interested in your ability to make or save money, conserve time, and effectively assume and delegate responsibility. Do not stress or try to compensate for weaknesses, such as lack of experience.

## **Request action**

In the last paragraph, request a response or interview. In all circumstances, be courteous, but be direct. Restate your interest and always say thank you for their consideration.

## **Close graciously**

The letter should end with the formal sign-off, "Sincerely." Below the sign-off, add your signature above your typed name.

## **No errors!**

Proofread, and have others proofread, too. Make your cover letter understandable by avoiding jargon and using plain English.