Writing a Cover Letter

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Information to cover:

• Cover letter types
• Functions of a cover letter
• Components of the cover letter
• Breakdown and review of the three paragraphs
• Pointers for your cover letter writing
• Common mistakes to avoid
Cover Letter Types

- **The Invited Cover Letter** (Letter of Application)
  Written in response to an advertised opening

- **The Uninvited or Cold-Contact Cover Letter** (Letter of Inquiry)
  Written to a particular employer you are interested in working for but do not have a publicly advertised open position

- **The Referral Letter**
  Extremely effective letter that springs from networking efforts.
Functions of a Cover Letter

• Tells the employer what type of position you are applying for
• Gives you an opportunity to impress
• Entice the reader to want to know more about you and read your resume
• Provides a bridge between your resume and the job description
• Small window to show your personality
• Shows how well you express yourself (written communication skills)
Components of the Cover Letter

- Return Address
- Inside Address
- Greeting
- Introductory Paragraph
- Middle Paragraph(s)
- Summary Paragraph
- Closing
First Paragraph (Introductory)

• Inform the reader as to why you are writing
  ❑ Be specific (name the position, employer, etc.)
• Mention how you heard of the opening CareerNet, career fair, networking, etc.
• Talk up the employer!
  ❑ Show your knowledge of the company, set yourself apart
Second Paragraph (Selling)

• Focus on one or two qualifications that you believe to be of greatest importance to the employer

• Match your qualifications and experiences to the position and the employer using SPECIFIC examples
Third Paragraph (Closing)

• Close by stating your desire for an interview

• Make sure to write in your contact information (phone number and email)

• Say thank you!
Pointers

• Address cover letter to a specific person, never use “Sir or Madam”
• Always send a cover letter with your resume
• Actively sell yourself
• Don’t convey anything negative!
• Keep letter to one page
• Use clear and concise sentences
Some Cover Letter Mistakes

• **Lack of Preparation**
  Details in letter don’t match job requirements
  Too much repetition of resume

• **Poor Writing**
  Too wordy
  Incorrect grammar
  Stilted language
  (you need to sound like *yourself*)
  Not written for your audience (remember there’s a person reading the letter)
  Didn’t proofread enough!
Questions?