

## Planning

# Writing a Cover Letter

- A cover letter should accompany every single resume you send out. Why?
- A cover letter shows that you care enough to put effort into your job search.
- The cover letter introduces you to the employer, and personalizes your resume.
- An employer can judge your writing skills better from a cover letter than from a resume.
- A cover letter directs your resume to the right person, and emphasizes what you want that person to notice in your resume.

Writing a good cover letter is sometimes considered an art. Many people forget when they're writing a letter that they're just recording what they might say to an employer. That is, what they might say if they had hours to prepare, and the opportunity to edit what they were saying, on the spot.

Cover letters are hard to write if you don't know the person you're writing to. There's a good reason for this. Jobs come from people, not businesses. When you want a job, your letter and your resume have to get the attention of a person who has the power to hire you. If you can, call or visit the place where you want a job to find out the name and title of the person to write to.

### The Cover Letter Puzzle

When you write a cover letter, you weave together four important pieces of information, just like you fit pieces into a puzzle. It's your job to make these pieces fit together right, so the letter sounds natural and says what you want it to.

- Introduce yourself, explain why you're writing, and draw attention to the resume you're submitting.
- Describe your skills and experience, especially those that are relevant to the job you're seeking.
- Show that you've done some research and know a little bit about the employer and the industry.
- Indicate how you can contribute to the business and be a valuable employee.



Tie it all together by letting the employer know that you're available for an interview or to answer questions.