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Writing Your Cover Letter

However you submit your resume – by email, via the Internet, by fax or by regular mail – you should always include a brief cover letter. Your cover letter needs to make a strong first impression, since it's usually the first thing a recruiter or hiring manager reads about you.

Take the time to customize a note geared specifically to this particular resume submission. A form letter may be well written, but above all, a form letter could be construed to indicate that you were "too busy" to write something just for this occasion.

Instead...

If you're applying for a particular position, mention that in the first sentence. If you're responding to a job advertisement and the opportunity has a reference number, *use* the reference number – it's there for a reason.

Use a handful of carefully chosen words to highlight why you should be considered for the job. The purpose of the cover note is *not* to give a laundry list of your skills and experience- that information should already be part of your resume.

Demonstrate pertinent knowledge of the hiring company's industry. If necessary, do a little research to make your comments relevant and timely.

If you're registering with a recruiter without a particular position in mind, keep in mind that staffing firms often specialize in particular industries and/or job functions. Briefly explain why you'd be a strong candidate for the types of positions they offer.

Double check your cover letter, review for typographical and grammatical errors, and make sure you spell everything correctly.

Attach your resume as a separate document, and reference this in the cover note. End with your complete contact information, including daytime and evening phone numbers and/or email addresses whenever possible.