

CHECKLIST | Drafting a Cover Letter & Resume

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Are you thinking of drafting a cover letter and resume? Ask yourself the following questions.

RHETORICAL SITUATION & CHOICES

- ☐ **Purpose.** I need to remember that the main purpose of my cover letter is to persuade the reader to schedule an interview with me. How can I draw on my experiences to best position myself as a good candidate for an interview? Does my resume illustrate how my experiences and skills align with my potential employer?
- ☐ **Audience.** When I sit down to write my cover letter, I need to think about what my reader’s concerns will be. How can I appeal to those concerns in my letter and resume? To what extent does my resume provide a quick snapshot of my skills for my reader?
- ☐ **Rhetorical appeals.** How can I establish myself as reliable and responsible? How can I logically connect my experiences and skills with the reader’s needs and the position’s requirements?
- ☐ **Modes & media.** Will my cover letter and resume be delivered in print form or digitally? Would it be appropriate for me to include a visual(s)?

GENRE CONVENTIONS

- ☐ **Elements of the genre.** In my cover letter, what aspects of my resume will I want to elaborate on to highlight my qualifications for the specific job I’m applying for? What makes this particular position and organization appealing to me? What about my experiences connects up with what the employer is looking for?
  - ☐ **Style.** In my cover letter, how can I use specific details to support and develop generalizations that I make about myself? Does my resume support the case I make for myself in my letter? And, for both documents, is my tone inviting yet professional? Is my language formal enough? Did I proofread carefully?
  - ☐ **Design.** Will I create personalized letterhead for my letter? And how will I lay out my resume? Is it consistent in design? Am I using no more than two fonts? Am I using headings and white space to direct my reader’s attention to certain parts of the resume?
  - ☐ **Sources.** Did I remember to use my resume as a source for the details and anecdotes in my cover letter?
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