Business letter formatting instructions

Print up this page and use it as a guideline when creating your own document on a computer. You can use Microsoft Word or a word processing page and type along with these instructions.

General Tips

- Set your computer with one-inch margins for the entire page.
- Use the same font style that you used in your resume (e.g. Times New Roman, Arial, etc.).
- Use a 12 pt. font size for the text of your letter. However, once you have completed your letter, if you need to adjust the size in order to ensure your letter fits on one page, you can go as small as 11pt.
- A block style business letter format is recommended because it is the easiest to create. You begin each line at the left margin—you don't even need to indent for the paragraphs. Single space the text of your letter and only use a double space to separate paragraphs.

Formatting your cover letter

- Copy the header from your resume onto the top of your cover letter. This will create a look of your own personal, yet professional, letterhead.
- Hit the enter key four times.
- Type out the current date.
  - Example: August 28, 2005
  - Do not use any date variations such as 8/25/05 , 08/25/2005 , 2005-08/28, etc.
  - For the block style business letter, make sure the date is left justified.
- Type in the employer's name and address.
- Hit the enter key two times.
- Type in an appropriate salutation.
- Hit the enter key two times.
- Begin the body of your letter.
  - All lines will be left justified and single-spaced.
  - Hit the enter key two times (double space) between paragraphs.
  - Keep your letter to one page, or between 3-5 short paragraphs.
  - If you use bullets, bold, italics, etc., do so sparingly and only to emphasize a point.
  - Review other keynotes in this tutorial for suggested opening statements, ways to write about your strengths, and closing statements.
  - Hit the enter key two times after your last paragraph.
- Type in an appropriate closing statement.
- Hit the enter key four times (to provide a space for you to sign your name –use black pen to do so).
- Type in your name.
- Hit the enter key two times.
- Type in a catchy postscript statement (optional).

- Hit the enter key two times.
- Type in the word Enclosure(s) (to indicate that you are submitting your resume or other application documents with your letter).

Reminders

- Edit your document. You want to convey a professional, confident image in a clearly, concisely written letter.
- Proofread your work. Spelling and grammatical errors are unacceptable.
- If you find that you have made an error, reprint the document. Do not make corrections using liquid paper, correction tape, or writing in the corrections with pen.
- For more tips on cover letters, check out the Hot Tips section of this tutorial.