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**FOR STUDENTS**

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***Are Cover Letters  
So “Yesterday”?***

***50/50 chance your  
cover letter will be  
read.***

***Yes, you should write  
one.***

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**TIP SHEET**



**THE BASICS**

- ✓ Keep it short, but not too short. About 300 words.
- ✓ Proofread and copyedit, and don't just rely on MS Word to tell you what's wrong.
- ✓ Describe how your qualifications match the job description, especially if it's not blatantly obvious.
- ✓ Do your homework: Study up on the company and refer to it specifically in your cover letter.
- ✓ Be enthusiastic yet professional. Let your letter reveal that you've thought about the job, you've researched what the company does, and the more you know, the more you'd like to work there. Steer clear of tired words (like “passion”).



**BEYOND THE BASICS**

- ✓✓ Make the hiring manager or company representative feel you, the applicant, have some understanding of the job they're trying to fill.
- ✓✓ Start out with a sentence or two that commands attention—not “Please consider my application for the position of . . .” or “Attached you'll find my resume, which . . . .” Instead, say something different and memorable, something that demonstrates you can write and you've thought about the job you're applying for.
- ✓✓ Talk yourself up without bragging. In your letter, position yourself as the lucky recipient of the good experience you've had.
- ✓✓ Write well: No clichés, no sentence fragments, no incomplete thoughts, no wandering paragraphs, no goofy diction. Make Liberal Arts majors look good, as only you can.

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### **Examples**

#### **Showing you've researched and thought about the position:**

“Although I don't know the specifics of your environment, I imagine the role of Communications Assistant is deadline-driven, and that clarity of the message is key to success.”

#### **Opening with something fresh:**

“The ‘Project Coordinator’ you describe is someone who is organized, articulate and deadline-driven. I believe I can offer those abilities to XYZ Company.”

“XYZ Company's commitment to creativity, as described on your web site, is the sort of environment I would like to be part of.”

***Avoid the predictable!***

#### **Talking yourself up without bragging:**

“I had the opportunity to study with Dr. Brown, whose research is nationally recognized, and I appreciate the two years I spent working with him.” (That makes Dr. Brown look good and you the fortunate recipient of his knowledge and wisdom.)

“During my three-month internship, I had the opportunity to improve my time management skills, and I learned to meet aggressive deadlines.”

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**The Liberal Arts Advantage—*for Business***

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