



## Writing a Cover Letter

- ❖ Use your job-application letter to **show how the qualifications listed in your résumé** have prepared you for the specific job for which you're applying.
- ❖ If possible, **address your letter to the individual in the organization who will be conducting the interviews.**
- ❖ **When applying for an advertised opening**, begin by stating (or implying) the reason for the letter, identify the position for which you're applying, and tell how you learned about the opening.
- ❖ **When writing an unsolicited application letter**, first gain the reader's attention by showing that you are familiar with the company and can make a unique contribution to its efforts.
- ❖ In one or two paragraphs, **highlight your strongest qualifications** and relate them directly to the needs of the specific position for which you're applying.

### **Show – don't tell.**

NOT: I am an accurate person.

BUT: In my two years of experience as a student secretary, none of the letters, memorandums, and reports I typed were ever returned with a typographical error marked.

- ❖ **Refer the reader to the enclosed résumé.**  
NOT: I am enclosing a copy of my résumé for your review.  
BUT: As detailed in the enclosed résumé, my extensive work experience in records management has prepared me to help you "take charge of this paperwork jungle," as headlined in your classified ad.
- ❖ **Treat your letter as a persuasive sales letter:** provide specific evidence, stress reader benefits, avoid exaggeration, and show confidence in the quality of your product.
- ❖ **Close by tactfully asking for an interview.**
- ❖ **Maintain an air of formality** throughout the letter. Avoid cuteness.
- ❖ **Make sure the document presents a professional, attractive, and conservative appearance that is 100% error-free.**

Ober, Scott. *Contemporary Business Communication*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2003.