

COVER LETTER CHECKLIST

Overall format (scroll down for example):

- Concise, written in an active, not passive voice
- Avoid overly long paragraphs and academic asides
- Single-spaced, paragraphs are not indented; double space between paragraphs
- At the top of the page, be sure to include your personal address block, followed by the employer's address block
 - A personal address block includes your name and address; the employer's address block includes their name, organization, and address
- Do your best to address the letter to the person hiring, or at least name the position title
 - Avoid using "To whom it may concern:"
- Colon, not comma, after the greeting
- Free of spelling, grammar, syntax and formatting errors
- Uses the same font and generally matches the resume
- Save as a .pdf with your name included in the file name

Opening paragraph:

- A strong opening paragraph, communicating your job target, how you learned about the position, and key strengths within the first few lines of text
 - Think of this as a thesis statement setting up the flow for the rest of the letter.
 - If you learned of the position by a connection to the employer, be sure to include the name.

Body of the letter (one or two paragraphs)

- Demonstrate interest in the employer
 - Find information in their mission statement, LinkedIn page, through informational interviews with connections who work, or have worked, for the organization, or from the job description.
 - Demonstrate that you have researched the organization and know why you are excited about working there
- Use industry-specific language
- Include examples of your accomplishments and successes so employers can see you have a proven track record
- Few sentences should start with 'I'
- Do not use worn-out phrases like 'proven track record'
- Explain **why** you are a good fit for **this specific job**
 - NOT a reiteration of the information on your resume
 - How** your experience, education, temperament meet the qualities specified in the job/internship description; map your skills to the position description
- Express how you would benefit the employer if you were hired
- Express clearly **WHY** you **want** this specific job with this specific organization
- Include all information that was **requested**, such as a job reference number, employment availability date and salary requirements (put in a wide salary range which includes the minimum you'll accept)

Closing paragraph

- Include an easy way for employers to contact you, such as a direct phone line and email address
- Clearly request an interview/discussion/conversation

*don't forget to sign paper versions that you actually mail, you can also scan your signature into electronic documents



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Ms. Alison Jones, Human Resources Director
The Smithsonian National Zoological Park
155 Connecticut Avenue
Washington, D.C. 12345

January 1, 2016

Dear Ms. Jones:

Please accept this letter and accompanying resume for your **Communications Coordinator** posting. I was excited to learn of this opening from Dr. Barbara King, Professor of Anthropology at William & Mary, who has conducted research on gorillas at the National Zoo for five years. Having earned a B.A. in Anthropology with a minor in Psychology from William & Mary, I have a solid foundation to serve as a valuable asset to your team.

As a life-long visitor to the National Zoo, my involvement prompted my choice of academic major and several projects related to it. I am a firm believer in the educational and cultural value of the National Zoo, as well as the many programs the Zoo enacts to engage with students, especially in the D.C. public school system. This sustained interest in the Zoo's mission and activities inspired me to submit my application.

My significant related experience demonstrates that I am an ideal fit for the Communications Coordinator position. As a marketing intern with the Indianapolis Zoo, I helped create a safari adventure guide tailored for elementary school children. To ensure the guide's effectiveness, I coordinated focus groups consisting of teachers, children, and parents. This project enhanced my ability to communicate with the public and serve as a spokesperson for the Zoo. In creating the Zoo's first Instagram account, I took pictures of the new panda exhibit and kept the public informed of their daily activities. It resulted in over 10,000 followers in only two months. As you seek to modernize the National Zoo's brand, my knowledge of Instagram, as well as Twitter and Facebook, showcases my ability to achieve this initiative.

Finally, as a member of the William & Mary lacrosse team, I balanced the demanding schedule of a full academic course load, with team practices requiring over 25 hours a week, and regular travel. As a result, I have the time-management and organizational skills required to prioritize and meet deadlines, and graduated with a 3.4 GPA.

At your convenience, I would like to meet with you to further discuss my qualifications. Should you have additional questions, feel free to contact me. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Greengold

Rebecca Greengold
Enclosure: Resume