Cover-letter further assistance

Types

1. Application letter
2. Informational Interview letter
3. Networking letter
4. Thank you letter — include something about your conversation to distinguish yourself (if you know a recruiter well, you can use his or her first name)

Checklist

1. Individualize each letter
2. Keep it to one page
3. Keep a copy so when you’re talking with an employer or a recruiter, you’ll know what you wrote.
4. Address the recipient by name (look online or call the company)
5. If you are unable to obtain a contact name, you can use “Dear Sir/Madam” or “To Whom It May Concern.”
6. Business language is clear, concise and tight; don’t get wordy
7. Include specific examples (accomplishments, qualifications) when referring to your skills.
8. Avoid overusing “I.”
9. Use transition words and phrases as well as action verbs and adjectives to make your letter more interesting.
10. Check and re-check; proofread for spelling, grammar and punctuation; ask others to proof it for you.

Common Mistakes

1. Using a “standard” cover letter — you only get one chance to make a first impression, which is why it is crucial to tailor your cover letter to each and every employer and position.
2. Stating what you hope to gain.
5. Having a letter that contains grammatical, spelling, punctuation or spacing errors.
6. Not editing the letter for word choice (keywords) — search the job description for requirements and key technical, job-specific words (for example: C++, R, HTML, Creo CAD Software, VHDL, Verilog, Matlab, Soldering, Microsoft Excel, Six Sigma).