Cover Letters / Emails

You have found a job you want and you are ready to apply. But what do you do? How do you stand out? First, you need a resume. For information on how to write one, see "How to Write a Resume". Next, you will need to review the information provided and DO WHAT IT SAYS. If the posting says submit a resume to an email address, you need to do just that. If it asks you to fill out a form, you need to fill it out as completely as possible. Just because you can't see why they are asking for what they are, doesn't mean it isn't really important.

Unless they ask you to submit a form, you will need some sort of cover letter / cover email. Never send a resume without a cover of some kind! A cover letter / email has three parts: how you heard about the opening, why you are UNIQUELY qualified for the opening, and how to reach you.

If you are writing an email, your subject line should include the job you are applying for and some indication you are applying. For instance, "interested in Position Title" or "Position Title - Would Like to Apply" will help the recipient know how to manage the email.

The first paragraph of your cover should indicate where you heard about the position. "I am writing to you today about your open Job Title position that I saw on Website". This helps the recipient track their position marketing efforts and makes it easy for them to do their job. Next, indicate why you are a unique fit for the position. Call out something specific in your resume that matches the job criteria or something that isn't on your resume but speaks to the position.

The third sentence or paragraph should indicate when is the best time to get in touch with you and how best to do that. Make it as easy as possible for someone to get in touch with you. There is nothing worse than playing phone tag when someone wants to offer you a job! Review your voice mail message. "You know what to do!" is cute for your friends, but may be off-putting to an interviewer. Help them know they have called the right number by stating your name in your greeting.

Be sure your message is checked for spelling and grammar. It is important to demonstrate your level of detail orientation by presenting a clean document. If you aren't sure, have someone else proof it like a teacher, librarian, friend, etc. Also, it is a good idea to read your document aloud before you hit send. That will help you make sure it conveys exactly what you want it to say.

In a cover letter, short, sweet and to-the-point is best. Give the person a reason to keep reading!