



ATTORNEY SEARCH

GENERAL COVER LETTER INFORMATION

Cover letters should be clear, concise, and well-written.

The cover letter should serve as a brief introduction to your resume; it should not simply reiterate the same information. Try to come up with some fresh material. For instance, if you plan to relocate, discuss the reason for your move. If you are trying to simply switch firms, discuss the reasons for your career shift. The cover letter is also meant to offer a glimpse of your personality, so you are encouraged to use language that helps define who you are. Be unique, but to the point. Accuracy is extremely important in these letters. Please make sure you reflect your experience clearly and accurately.

The purpose of a cover letter is five-fold:

- 1) Your cover letter needs to briefly address “who you are” and “what you want.”
- 2) Your cover letter needs to highlight your most relevant experience and skills.
- 3) Your cover letter needs to delve into any attributes that cannot be explained in full on your resume.
- 4) Your cover letter needs to address the requirements of the position you are applying for.
- 5) Your cover letter needs to address any “red flags” that will be raised by your resume.

Read on for a more detailed discussion of each of these aspects:

- 1) Your cover letter needs to briefly address “who you are” and “what you want.”

One important thing that you need to accomplish in your first paragraph is to tell the reader who you are and what you are looking for. In other words, why are you writing to this person? It doesn't always have to be in the first sentence, but at some point in your first paragraph, you should provide this information. Employers don't like to hunt for the meaning of your letter, so don't beat around the bush.

The standard sentence would be, "I am an X seeking X," but there are many forms that this type of sentence can take.

Here are a few examples:

I am a skilled labor and employment attorney interested in a position with your law firm.

My unique combination of experience in both the education and legal settings makes me an ideal candidate for the senior counsel position at X.

As an experienced and successful litigator, I feel well prepared to take the next step in my career by assuming a senior associate position with a firm such as yours.

You can also phrase this in the form of a question:

Could your firm use a talented negotiator who has spent seven years increasing profits and satisfying clients?

These sentences all get across your purpose in writing to the employer with an added bit of flair.

2) Your cover letter needs to highlight your most relevant experience and skills.

In addition to stating who you are and what you want, you need to hook the reader with your first few sentences. Otherwise, why should he/she bother reading on?

The sentences above kill these two birds with one stone by incorporating the candidate's strengths as part of the description of who he/she is. Things you may want to highlight early on in your letter include: big/prestigious firm names, strong academic background, specialized experience, and notable achievements.

Here are a few examples:

I am licensed in New York and previously practiced law at both White & Case and Davis Polk & Wardwell in New York before moving to Baltimore and my current position at Piper Rudnick.

Since graduating in the top 10% of my class from Fordham Law School, I have gained significant experience in the legal and international business fields.

I offer expertise in securities law and I am adept at helping companies navigate the increasingly complex web of state and federal securities regulations.

As discussed more in #4, you should keep in mind the employer's particular needs when choosing which strengths to highlight. If the job you are responding to asks for an intellectual property litigator with 5-7 years of experience who is licensed in California, what better way to grab the employer's attention than starting your letter with, "I am a California-licensed intellectual property litigator with six years of experience."

If you have issues to address, don't address them in the first paragraph. Remember, you need to capture the employer's attention before you can hold it. Beginning your letter with, "After taking a five-year hiatus from legal practice, I am ready to resume working," is not going to hook your reader in a positive way. If you show the employer what you have to offer first, however, that five-year hiatus might seem a little more palatable.

PAGE 3

3) Your cover letter needs to delve into any attributes that cannot be explained in full on your resume.

A good cover letter supplements a resume rather than reiterating it. Instead of giving a condensed version of your job descriptions, you want to tell the reader how your experience makes you qualified to do the job you want. In other words, you want to translate your experience for the reader.

Here are some examples of how that might be done:

As a seasoned legal professional, I offer:

- keen legal analysis and drafting skills;
- diplomacy in working with and negotiating with people from diverse cultures and backgrounds;
- an ability to litigate aggressively if needed; and
- the foresight to prevent the vast majority of matters from reaching that point.

OR

As a general counsel, I have demonstrated my ability to determine the relevant issues, negotiate cost-effective contracts, draft error-free documents, and successfully manage and foster relationships. I have an insider's perspective on client needs, a finely honed business sense, and an entrepreneurial approach to client development.

Sometimes there are elements of your experience that are very difficult to get across in a resume. You may have gone to a school that has a unique curriculum. Maybe it's known for its intensive writing program, or it has a unique externship program. Or you may have participated in a class with a particular professor who had a great impact on you. In these situations, a cover letter is a good outlet for providing this extra information.

Take Northeastern University Law School, for example. Northeastern has a unique curriculum that

allows students to gain hands-on experience outside of the classroom in place of typical courses. Here is how that might be explained:

Through Northeastern's highly individualized course of study, I have been able to acquire exposure not afforded to most law students. The program employs an intensive system whereby half of each student's time is spent in full-time legal environments (referred to as "co-ops") in which we earn increased responsibility.

You can also use your cover letter to give more detail about a particular project you worked on, commendations you received, particular areas you excel in, etc.

Here's an example of how your experience might be expanded upon in your letter:

As a law clerk, I was frequently trusted to perform complex research and drafting without supervision. I played a critical role in a very close tax liability case and successfully opposed the general corporate tax liability on behalf of foreign manufacturers, reducing it from a high figure to the statutory minimum tax. Another highlight during my clerkship was a contract/business torts case I could truly call my own. I was almost exclusively responsible for all aspects of it: meeting with the client and its agents and witnesses, ascertaining the facts, vacating a default judgment, pleading an answer to breach of contract claims, and asserting 18 counterclaims in contract and tort.

In essence, you want to use the middle paragraph(s) of your letter to make your experiences more "real" to employers.

4) Your cover letter needs to address the requirements of the position you are applying for.

Before submitting your letter for a position, make sure that the letter addresses the requirements of the position. This step may seem self-evident, but oftentimes people get so caught up in highlighting their skills, they fail to consider whether those skills could be of use to the employers they are writing to. For instance, you don't want to spend a paragraph talking about your abilities in the courtroom if you are targeting a transactional position, or your immigration experience if you're seeking a job in employment law.

One way to ensure that your letter passes this test is to match it up with the actual job description.

Take a look at this description:

Fantastic opportunity! Outstanding law firm needs an intelligent, talented real estate associate. 3-5 years experience. Perhaps a bit more senior if you can be flexible with your year group. Significant experience in leasing, financing, purchase and sale. Working for a very dynamic partner. Top schools desired, as well as top grades. Will consider lesser schools if top 10%. Must be California licensed. Firm offers a great working atmosphere. This is an outstanding opportunity to make a difference.

Now, here would be an ideal letter for this position, assuming you possess all of these qualifications.

Dear X:

I am a cum laude graduate of New York University School of Law with eight years of experience practicing real estate law. Having recently relocated to California and earned admission to the California Bar, I am seeking an opportunity to lend my skills to a dynamic firm such as yours.

I offer extensive experience in leasing, financing, purchases and sales. As I realize I may be a bit senior for the position you advertised, I am willing to be flexible with regard to year classification to avail myself of the fantastic opportunity you've described.

I hope to meet with you to further discuss my potential to benefit your real estate practice.

Sincerely,

Real Estate Attorney

PAGE 5

This letter addressed each and every requirement listed. Now not all job descriptions are going to be this concise. In this case, you should try to hit the most important requirements.

In addition, not all attorneys will be as perfectly qualified as Mr. Real Estate Attorney. In this event, you may choose to omit mention of those requirements you don't meet. Or, if you think you offer experience that is commensurate with the requirements, while not a perfect match, you should explain why that is so.

Bottom line: Know your audience and draft your letter accordingly.

5) Your cover letter needs to address any "red flags" that will be raised by your resume.

One very important function of a cover letter is to address any potential negatives surrounding your candidacy. This is a tricky notion. There are some things that are better left un-addressed. For instance, if you have a gap in your employment because you were strung out on heroin, this is not something to mention. However, if you have a gap in your employment because you took one year off immediately after law school to build homes for the poor in Mexico, this is something worth mentioning; otherwise employers may assume you were strung out on heroin.

A red flag is anything that you think might cause an employer to think poorly of you as a candidate. This could be an employment gap, poor GPA or absence of a GPA, lack of experience, age, job hopping, a particularly short tenure at one or more positions, the termination of a position, etc.

When deciding whether or not to explain a potential red flag, you should solicit the advice of someone unfamiliar with your situation. Allow that person to read your resume & cover letter and ask him what conclusions he has drawn. Maybe that person didn't even notice the two-year gap in

your employment because it was 10 years ago and he didn't bother to read back that far. Maybe he didn't see the absence of a GPA as a bad thing because you'd won a number of awards in law school and participated on Law Review.

Before you decide to address a red flag, first make sure it is something that will actually be questioned by others. Once you've decided that something does need to be addressed, it's time to put your "spinning" cap on.

Avoid negative words.

When addressing something that could be construed as negative about your candidacy, avoid words like "although," "despite," and "notwithstanding." These words automatically signal that something negative is to come. Even if you are discussing something negative, you want to put a positive spin on it.

PAGE 6

Check out these two examples:

Bad

Although my cumulative GPA was not very high, my academic performance consistently increased each semester.

Good

The fact that my academic performance continually improved throughout law school demonstrates my perseverance and commitment to growth.

You don't need to point out the negative in order to make your point. Here are some additional examples:

Since my relocation to Connecticut, I have focused on becoming a member of the Connecticut Bar while also providing litigation assistance on a temporary basis to a small firm in Bristol. Now, I am eager to secure a position with a firm where I can make a long-term contribution and commitment.

Shortly after being admitted to the Illinois Bar, I was excited to accept my first associate position with the litigation firm of Smith & Associates. Unfortunately, due to the downturn in the economy, Smith had to reduce its staff just five months after I began. I did, however, gain valuable experience, upon which I am now eager to expand.

I accepted a position with the Philadelphia firm of Johnson, Jones & Howard in early 2007-2008, unaware at the time that the opportunity to relocate to San Diego would present itself so quickly. During my brief tenure with the firm, however, I familiarized myself with client management and construction litigation.

You want to present any negative situations in as positive a light as possible. Avoid sounding bitter, defensive, or helpless. Also avoid badmouthing your employer. Instead, you want to give off the attitude that you're turning a negative into a positive and making the most of your given situation.

SPELL-CHECK AND PROOFREAD YOUR WORK CAREFULLY.

Spell-checkers do not catch everything: for example, “incite” is properly spelled, but it is incorrect to say that you have incite into a situation. “Insight” is the word you want. Do not submit a cover letter without reading it to yourself first. Often, you’ll be able to find any repetitiveness or awkward phrasing simply by reading over the cover letter after you finish it. For example, when you read the sentence, “Please contact me, at your earliest convenience, to schedule an interview,” you should realize that the pauses sound awkward. No commas are necessary. Here is another example of an awkward sentence: “I am confident that you, after reviewing my resume, will agree as to the viability of my candidacy.” Do not split the subject and verb. The sentence should read, “I am confident that after reviewing my resume, you will agree that I am a highly qualified candidate.”

PAGE 7

Only proper nouns should be capitalized. Titles such as “vice president,” “chief executive officer,” and “board member” should not be capitalized.

Right:

“Currently, I am an associate at Latham and Watkins. I specialize in health care and insurance law. While I have enjoyed my time at the firm, I am now ready to take on new challenges.”

Wrong:

“Currently, I am an Associate at Latham and Watkins. I specialize in Health Care and Insurance Law. While I have enjoyed my time at the Firm, I am now ready to take on new challenges.”

USE ONE SPACE AFTER EACH PERIOD. IT’S BEST TO FOLLOW AP STYLE GUIDELINES, AND ONE SPACE AFTER EACH PERIOD IS THE PREFERRED FORMAT.

Numbers one through nine should be spelled out. “I successfully settled eight cases in the last month.” Numbers such as 1 million should be written as such, not as 1,000,000. Try to avoid starting a sentence with a number. If you must do so, spell the number out, even if it is greater than 10.

Instead of writing “I earned my Juris Doctor from Stanford,” try writing, “I earned my law degree from Stanford.” It is a less awkward construction.

Please avoid starting every sentence the same way. Also, try not to overuse “I,” as it can sound egotistical. Vary your sentence structure and be aware of any words and phrases that you have a tendency to overuse.

HERE ARE SOME PATTERNS THAT YOU SHOULD MAKE AN EFFORT TO AVOID:

"In the near future, please do not hesitate in contacting me at your earliest convenience."

This sentence is too wordy and repetitive. "Please contact me at your convenience," or "I look forward to hearing from you soon," get the same point across more concisely.

"While in law school, I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to clerk for Judge Whosit." Earning a clerkship or any other position while in law school is not accomplished through luck or good fortune. It is the result of hard work. Don't downplay your achievements.

"I am confident that you will agree as to the viability of my candidacy."

That's a mouthful! How about, "I am confident you will agree that I am a highly-qualified candidate"? Or, "I am confident that you will recognize my excellent credentials"? Don't get stuck in the trap of using the same phrase over and over again.

"I am writing to introduce myself as a candidate for a position with your firm."

Again, this opening sentence won't cause anyone to sit up and take notice. Try to lead with your strengths. Be clever, but not glib.

PAGE 8

STYLE SHEETS: PUNCTUATION

APOSTROPHES:

Apostrophes are used for possessives and quasi-possessives. Follow AP style and use apostrophes after academic degrees.

EXAMPLES:

master's degree; bachelor's degree.

Please note that the degrees are not capitalized when used in a cover letter.

FURTHER EXAMPLES:

The book is Jane's.

Sarah earned two weeks' pay for two days' work.

BE CAREFUL WHEN USING ITS/IT'S. ITS IS POSSESSIVE; IT'S IS A CONTRACTION MEANING "IT IS."

EXAMPLES:

Put everything in its place.

It's the thought that counts.

COLONS:

Colons can be used to introduce a concept or an idea, to introduce a list, or to set off attribution at the beginning of a long quote.

EXAMPLES:

Consider this: We order takeout and work all night.

Note that “We” is capitalized. The first word after a colon is capitalized when it introduces a complete thought that could stand on its own as a sentence.

The basket was filled with exotic fruit: mangoes, kiwis and pomegranates.

Here, “mangoes” is not capitalized because it starts a list, not a sentence.

I have worked as in-house counsel for three companies: General Electric, Southwestern Gas and Enron.

PAGE 9

COMMAS:

Commas are used to separate or set off the following:

1) ELEMENTS IN A SIMPLE SERIES.

A series of at least three elements can consist of single words, phrases, or clauses. In a simple series, a comma is not used before the and preceding the final element.

EXAMPLES:

I specialize in estate planning, tax law and elder law.

I received my bachelor’s degree from UCLA, my master’s degree from Northwestern and my law degree from Columbia.

The exception to the rule is when the final element of the series contains the conjunction and. Then, a comma is used after the second-to-last item in the series and before the and that follows it.

EXAMPLE:

At the firm, I practiced numerous areas of law, including criminal, family, and labor and employment.

2) NON-ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS.

These are words or phrases that are not necessary to understand the meaning of the sentence.

EXAMPLES:

Roger gave his only sister, Candice, a guitar.

Since Roger only has one sister, her name is not essential to understanding the meaning of the sentence.

The comedy "Sweet Home Alabama" is playing downtown.

We presume that more than one comedy is playing downtown, so the title is essential to the meaning of the sentence. Therefore, it is not set off by commas.

Enclosed, please find my resume, which details my experience.

Enclosed, please find my resume that details my experience.

In the first sentence, the fact that the resume details the candidate's experience is supplementary information. Most, but not all, phrases and clauses that start with which are non-essential and are set off by commas. The second sentence implies that the candidate may have more than one resume, but only this one details his experience. Most, but not all, phrases and clauses that start with that are essential and are not set off by commas.

3) INDEPENDENT CLAUSES WITH THE SAME SUBJECT.

EXAMPLES:

Feed a cold, starve a fever.

You is the implied subject of both independent clauses.

We saw it, we wanted it, we bought it.

This is a series of independent clauses with the same subject, "we."

4) LONG INTRODUCTORY CLAUSES AND PHRASES.

EXAMPLES:

When I graduated from college after only two years, I knew I wanted to practice corporate law.

Long introductory clauses and phrases of more than three words are set off with commas to help pace the reader.

When I graduated I knew I wanted to practice corporate law.

Short introductory clauses and phrases of three words or fewer usually do not need commas.

I left Pillsbury Winthrop in 1998. Ever since, I have yearned to return to private practice.

This example is an exception to the rule. When a comma's absence would make the sentence

unclear, you should use a comma, even if the introduction is short. In this case, the lack of a comma would result in a sentence fragment.

5) COORDINATE AND NON-COORDINATE ADJECTIVES

EXAMPLES:

Seiko inherited a colorful, old painting.

Coordinate adjectives can be transposed logically: Seiko inherited an old, colorful painting. They are separated by commas.

Seiko inherited a colorful oil painting.

Non-coordinate adjectives cannot be transposed logically: Not Seiko inherited an oil colorful painting. They are not separated by commas.

PAGE 11

6) STATE NAMES, YEARS, AGES, ELEMENTS OF DIRECT ADDRESS

EXAMPLES:

The attorney from Los Angeles, California, graduated from law school on Oct. 1, 2007-2008, and was hired by a law firm soon thereafter.

State names and years are set off with commas when they appear in mid-sentence and are paired with their respective municipal entities and full dates.

Samantha Rogers, 24, of Long Beach was elected to the council.

Jimmy Jones of 11722 Mayfield Road won a scholarship.

Ages are set off with commas. Phrases beginning with "of" that denote place of residence are not.

Yes, I'm the one officer. Oh, well, you'll just have to arrest me.

Elements of direct address are set off with commas, even when they appear in sentences that are not direct quotes. These elements include interjections, names, and titles.

COMMA RULES FOR AND, BUT, OR AND

1) If no subject follows and, then no comma should precede it.

EXAMPLE:

I practiced for four years and then moved to New York.

2) If the subjects of the clauses joined by "and" are the same and the clauses are closely related in

meaning (the second being a logical outcome of the first), don't use a comma before and.

EXAMPLE:

I practiced for four years and then decided to teach.

3) If the subjects joined by "and" are the same but the clauses are not closely related in meaning, use a comma before "and."

EXAMPLE:

I practiced for four years, and then I joined the circus.

4) If the subjects of clauses joined by "and" are different, use a comma before "and."

EXAMPLE:

I practiced for four years, and then the firm dissolved.

BUT

1) Use a comma before "but" if a subject (same or different) is stated after it.

EXAMPLES:

I practiced corporate law for four years, but I did not enjoy it.

I enjoyed practicing corporate law for four years, but the firm dissolved.

2) Don't use a comma before "but" if no subject is stated after it.

EXAMPLE

I practiced corporate law but did not enjoy it.

OR

1) Use a comma before "or" when the second subject is different.

EXAMPLE:

I had to move to New York City, or the firm would not have made me partner.

2) When the subjects before and after "or" are the same, don't use a comma.

EXAMPLE:

I had to move to New York City or I would not have made partner.

HYPHENS

Hyphens join related words to each other and prefixes and suffixes to their root words.

1) Compound modifiers

EXAMPLE:

I am seeking a first-year associate position with your firm.

First-year is a compound modifier describing the noun position.

2) Suspensive hyphenation

EXAMPLE:

The second- and third-year students eagerly anticipated the on-campus interviews.

KNBC is an NBC-owned and -operated station.

Suspensive hyphenation eliminates the need to repeat either the first or second element of the compound modifier. The hyphen is suspended either at the end of the first adjective or the beginning of the second.

3) Prefixes and suffixes

EXAMPLE:

During my years as an attorney, I successfully negotiated several multimillion dollar deals.

Multimillion is not hyphenated because the prefix "multi" is generally solid, as in multipurpose room or multiuse development.

SEMICOLONS

Semicolons are used to separate independent clauses with different subjects in the same sentence or to separate elements in a complex series.

EXAMPLES:

The House passed the bill; the Senate rejected it.

He leaves a son, John Grove of Chicago; two daughters, Sally Grove of Los Angeles and Mary Grove of San Francisco; and a sister, Martha, wife of Bob Smith of New York.

Note that the word following a semicolon is not capitalized. Also note that a semicolon is used before and in a complex series.

GRAMMAR

Subject-verb/subject-pronoun agreement

This can get tricky.

1) Prepositional phrase separating subject from verb

EXAMPLES:

Jinxed by a series of near disasters in the last six months that includes two fires, the first collision in orbit, loss of oxygen and several power failures, Mir is suffering crises that raise serious questions about the future of manned space flight.

The verb includes must agree with the subject a series, which is singular—not with disasters and/or months. Note that crises is the plural of crisis. Also note that Mir must be the subject of this statement, e.g. "Mir has been jinxed by a series . . . "

The smell of freshly baked breads and cakes mingles with the smells of vegetables, meat and fish.

The verb "mingles" must agree with the singular subject "smell"—not with "cakes."

2) None

"None" can take a singular or plural verb depending on the sense in which it is used. When none means not one, use a singular verb. When none means no two (or more), use a plural verb.

EXAMPLES:

All of the union members were picketing, but none (not one) was paid to be there.

None of the teams in the league play today. (It takes two teams to play.)

3) Collective nouns

Companies, teams and groups take singular verbs and pronouns. If a team name is plural, however, use plural verbs and pronouns.

Right:

The firm is considering its options.

The partners are considering their options.

Wrong:

Morrison and Foerster are considering their options.

4) Avoid switching from singular to plural in midstream

Right:

The object is to have three comics each try to make the contestants laugh. They get a buck for each second they remain stone-faced.

Wrong:

The object is to have three standup comics each try to make a contestant laugh, with that contestant getting a buck for each second they remain stone-faced.

5) Anybody, anyone/gender

“Anyone” and “anybody” take singular nouns and pronouns.

Right:

The teacher told them all to try their hardest.

Wrong:

The teacher told everyone to try their hardest.

PAGE 15

USAGE:

AFFECT, EFFECT

Confusion can arise when using these words as verbs. As a verb, “affect” means to influence; “effect” means to bring about.

EXAMPLES:

The candidate’s pleading did not affect the hiring partner’s decision.

The councilman vowed to effect change.

“Effect” and “affect” can also be used as nouns. “Affect” means emotion; “effect” means result.

EXAMPLE:

The net effect was a drop in employment.

ANTICIPATE, EXPECT

“To expect” means to look forward to something as likely to happen; “to anticipate” means to expect something to happen and to prepare for it.

EXAMPLES:

I expect to graduate in May.

I am beginning my job search now because I am anticipating my graduation in May.

ANXIOUS, EAGER

Eager implies desire; anxious always implies anxiety or worry.

EXAMPLES:

I am eager to explore employment opportunities with your firm.

I am anxious about the outcome of my interview.

BECAUSE OF, DUE TO

Use due to to modify a noun. Use because of to modify a verb.

EXAMPLES:

The postponement was due to the rain.

The game was postponed because of the rain.

COMBINED WITH, COUPLED WITH

Only two things can be coupled. For more than two, use “combined.”

EXAMPLES:

My practical experience, coupled with my legal education, makes me an excellent candidate.

My practical experience, combined with my outstanding academic record and my strong work ethic, makes me an excellent candidate.

Note that the verb makes agrees with the singular subject experience.

COMPRISE, COMPOSE

“Is comprised of” is never correct. The whole comprises the parts, so the collective noun must precede the individual members or parts.

Right:

The jury comprises 12 angry men.

The jury is composed of 12 angry men.

Wrong:

Twelve angry men comprise the jury.

I work in a law firm comprised of several different departments.

PAGE 17

ENSURE, INSURE

“Ensure” means guarantee; “insure” refers to insurance.

EXAMPLES:

I believe my combination of skills and training ensures my success.

I bought a policy to insure my car and my house.

FEWER, LESS

If you can count the items individually, use “fewer.” If not, use “less.”

EXAMPLES:

If I had fewer deadlines, I would feel less pressured.

He waited in the express line because he had fewer than 10 items.

IMPLY, INFER

Speakers and writers imply; listeners and readers infer.

EXAMPLES:

Your cover letter implies that you have knowledge of tax law.

From your resume, I can infer that you were not a very good student.

MEMORANDUM, MEMORANDA

Memorandum is singular; memoranda is plural.

MORE THAN, OVER

Use “more than” for amounts you can count. Use “over” for spatial references.

EXAMPLES:

During the past six months, I negotiated more than 30 deals.

I am an attorney with more than 20 years of experience.

The helicopter hovered over the field.

PAGE 18

U.S.

You do need the periods.

WEBSITE

One word, capitalized.

MISCELLANEOUS

HOMONYMS

1) Colombia, columbia

Colombia is a county in South America. Columbia is the correct spelling for Columbia University or the District of Columbia.

2) Compliment, complement

A compliment is an expression of flattery or courtesy. Complement denotes completeness or the process of supplementing something.

EXAMPLES:

“You have a beautiful smile” is a compliment.

My academic training complements my practical experience.

3) Insight, incite

EXAMPLES:

The psychologist had great insight into the situation.

He was charged with inciting a riot.

FOREIGN WORDS

All foreign words should be italicized. This includes Latin words or phrases such as *voir dire*, *habeas corpus*, *pro bono*, *prima facie*, *quid pro quo*, etc. For a very helpful glossary of legal terms, visit <http://homepages.uhwo.hawaii.edu/~clear/Glossary.html>.

PAGE 19

NUMBERS

Spell out whole numbers below 10, but use figures for 10 and above.

Spell out a numeral at the beginning of a sentence. Rewrite the sentence if necessary.

Okay:

Twelve years ago, I graduated from college

Forty-three students were absent from school yesterday.

Better:

I graduated from college 12 years ago.

Yesterday, 43 students were absent from school.

TITLES

Titles should only be capitalized when a formal title is used directly before an individual's name. For example, Judge Sanders is capitalized, but if the judge is referred to without a last name, judge would not be capitalized.

Right:

Vice President Sam Meadows held a press conference today. President Hill attended.

Yesterday, Chief Executive Officer Owens released the third-quarter sales figures.

I am a senior partner at my firm.

Wrong:

The Vice President held a press conference today. The President attended.

Yesterday, the Chief Executive Officer released the third-quarter sales figures.

I am a Senior Partner at my firm.

Occupational titles such as associate, partner, senior partner, etc. should not be capitalized unless they are used as formal titles before a name.