1. Your cover letter is usually the first contact a potential employer has with you. Your letter needs to be polished, articulate, and typo-free. Proofread it and ask someone else to proofread it after you have done so.

2. An address at which you have regular access to your mail should appear in the top left or right or left corner. If this is the address of a parent, make sure the parent knows you could be receiving important mail at the address. Check the mail regularly because sometimes notifications (especially for scholarships) are sent via snail mail.

3. The date should appear immediately below your address. Never use the date the application is due; this could result in disqualification (e.g. if an application is due before March 1st and you date the letter March 1st, it could be put in the trash).

4. Most applications provide you with a contact person and this is the person to whom your letter should be addressed. If no name is provided, you can use "To Whom It May Concern" or "Dear Sir or Madam" (without the quotation marks, obviously).

5. Your letter should not be a summary of your resume. Include only the most relevant highlights from your resume that are directly related to the position for which you are applying.

6. Avoid writing that you want a position because it sounds like "fun." While the position might be fun and your friends may have told you that working for this particular company is fun, this is not the best reason for applying in the eyes of potential employers.

7. While you can write that classmates have had excellent experiences working for a company and you would welcome an opportunity to join such a community, avoid mentioning previous employees by name. While you may think they were valued employees and they may even think they were valued employees, you can never know how they were perceived by the company. Be careful not to align yourself with folks who may not have left the best impression on their employers. Likewise, you don't want to appear to be riding the coattails of previous employees.

8. A cover letter is a good vehicle for providing information you cannot add to a resume (e.g. if you are an excellent collaborator, but also work industriously on your own, it is a good idea to let your potential employer know in your cover letter).

9. Tailor your letter to the specific position for which you are applying as well as to the institution to which you are applying. This demonstrates that you truly want this particular position and took the time to research the institution.

10. If you are sending your application via snail mail, attach your resume to your cover letter and write in your cover letter that your resume is attached. Make sure you sign your letter above your typed name. Pay for tracking so you can be sure your application arrived (and arrived well before the deadline). If you email your application, address your email to the contact person and write that you have attached your cover letter and resume as a single PDF (or two separate PDFs). You can create electronic signatures for letters—if you are not sure how to do so, ask me. Make sure these files are titled with your name. For example: Jane Doe's Resume and Jane Doe's Cover Letter for Manchester Opera. In your email, add a statement to this effect: If you have any trouble downloading my materials, please don't hesitate to email me at janedoe@gmail.com or call me at 555-666-7777 and I will resend the materials in another format.

11. Always end your letter thanking the reader for her/his time and consideration. And always provide a telephone number at which you can be reached so that the potential employer can contact with you questions and, even more importantly, a possible job offer! The voicemail for the number you provide should be professional.