Peer Review of Cover/Application Letter Assignment

Read/review at least three cover letters today. Write your review comments on a separate piece of paper and give them back to the letter's author when you're finished. Being "nice" is important in this process, but being critical is important too. So without being heartless and cruel, make your comments as honest and as detailed as you can so that your comments are useful for revision.

1. Without looking at the job ad, read the letter. Then jot down what you think the job ad says—you are reverse engineering the letter/ad by doing this—trying to see if you can figure out the job ad just from the letter.

2. Read the job ad. Were you close in your reverse engineering attempt? If you were, then the letter probably meets with some of the employer's needs. If you weren't, has the author missed understanding the employer's needs? Or have they just emphasized certain things and overlooked others?

3. Does the letter make the person applying seem like a good applicant (Pile 2); an unappealing applicant (Pile 3 or trash bin); or an outstanding applicant (Pile 1)?

4. Explain why and how you made the judgment in #3. If the applicant was in Pile 2 or 3, explain what the author needs to do to get into a higher pile.

5. Does the letter look nice? That's vague, but does its layout, use of space, use of font make for a business-like, professional look?

6. Is the letter free of spelling, mechanical, and grammar errors? If not, circle a few of the errors you see—only a few. If there are a lot, let the author know.

7. On a scale of 1 (low) to 6 (high) rank this letter. Give a one or two sentence explanation of your ranking.