



Cover Letters

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How to Write a Cover Letter

A well-written cover letter alongside a great CV will give you a much better chance of securing an interview. However, if you submit a poorly written cover letter with your CV or application form, there is every chance that it may not be considered.

Types of Cover Letters

Two types of cover letter most commonly written are:

- **Application** - a response to a known vacancy
- **Speculative** –inquires about possible vacancies

Application cover letter

An application cover letter usually provides detailed information on why you are qualified for the job you are applying for. Effective cover letters explain the reasons for your interest in the job and identify your most relevant skills or experiences.

You can break the letter up in the following paragraphs:

- **an introduction** – why you are writing
- **an outline** - why you want this particular job with this particular company
- **your skills** – the skills you have relevant to the role
- **a polite ending** – thanking the employer

Speculative cover letter

A speculative cover letter is your opportunity to ask employers if there are any available vacancies at their organisation. In this letter you will highlight why you want to work for that particular organisation so make sure you research them first and mention particular aspects of the company that appeal to you. Then explain the type of role you are seeking and tell them about your skills and abilities specific to the role. Make sure you are enthusiastic and positive.

You can break up the letter in the following paragraphs:

- **an introduction** – why you are writing why you want to work for this particular company
- **your skills** – the skills relevant to the role, sell yourself
- **your availability** – when you are available and the hours you can work
- **a polite ending** – thanking the employer for their time

Over the page are examples of how to layout your application and speculative cover letters.

Application cover letter example:

Your Name
Your Address
Your Post Code
Your phone number and/or email address

Employer
Company
Address

Date

Dear [insert named person here, if not known write 'Sir/Madam'],

Job Reference or Title (in bold and underlined)

Introduction

Explain why you are writing to them. You could say something like:

I am writing to apply for the advertised position of [insert job title]; having read the job description and person specification, I believe I am the ideal candidate for the role.

Your skills

Here you want to outline the skills you have that match the job description. Mention three to four skills and explain how you displayed these skills in previous roles. Make it relevant to the job you are applying for and remember to keep it brief, write one sentence for each skill.

Ending

Thank the individual for taking the time to read your cover letter and mention that you hope to hear from them soon. Then close with 'Yours faithfully', if you don't know who you are writing to or 'Yours sincerely', if you know who you are writing to. You could say something like:

I would like to thank you for the time taken in reading the reasons why I believe I am suited for this role. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours faithfully/ Yours sincerely,

[Write signature here]

[Type your name underneath the signature]

Speculative cover letter example:

Your Name
Your Address
Your Post Code
Your phone number and/or email address

Employer
Company
Address

Date

Dear [insert named person here],

Reason for writing (in bold and underlined)

Introduction

Explain why you are writing to them and why you want to work for that particular organisation. Be specific to show that you have researched the company. You could say something like:

I am writing to ask if you have any available positions at your organisation for the role of [job title you want]. The reason I am writing because I admire the ethics and ethos of your organisation, the quality of the products you produce [mention specific products] and the training opportunities [mention the specific training opportunities] you provide to all your employees.

Your skills

Here you want to outline the skills and experience you possess and explain why the skills and experience would be a benefit to the organisation. Mention three to four skills and explain how you displayed these skills in previous roles. Make it relevant to the job you are applying for and remember to keep it brief, write one sentence for each skill.

Availability

Tell the employer when you would be able to start if they have a potential vacancy and the days and times you are available to meet with them to discuss the vacancy further. Remember to be as flexible as possible.

Ending

Thank the individual for taking the time to read your cover letter and mention that you hope to hear from them soon; then close with 'Yours sincerely'. You could say something like:

I would like to thank you for the time taken in reading the reasons why I believe I am suited for a position at your company and how I could be of benefit to you. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

[Write signature here]

[Type your name underneath the signature]

Here are some final points for you to consider before you write your cover letter:

- keep your cover letter brief, short and concise, motivating the reader to look at your CV for more information
- include your name, address and contact details
- address to a named person by finding out the correct person's name
- follow instructions: if an advert asks you to write to a particular person and/or asks you to quote a reference, then do so
- use a title to reference the job you are applying for or job reference number
- explain why you have the skills for the role
- make sure your cover letter is no longer than one side of A4
- avoid gimmicks like coloured paper, fancy lettering to get you noticed
- grammar and spelling has to be correct so proof read
- be positive

Good luck!