

HOW TO WRITE A COVERING LETTER

The purpose of the covering letter is to get an interview. It is not to summarise what is in your CV, but to prove that you possess the key criteria which they have asked for in the job advertisement – the relevant skills, qualifications, personal strengths, motivation etc. to do the job. Your cover letter will let the employer know how well you have analysed the job and provides information about you that matches it.

Make this letter appropriate and unique to this job. Do not use the same letter for every job. Ensure all spelling and punctuation is correct.

Sample layout for covering letters:

[Your address]

[Date]

[Employer's Name/Title/Address]

Dear [Name of Manager/Recruitment Officer] [Sir/Madam (if no name)]

[Opening paragraph]

What you are applying for or looking for. Why you are writing to them.

[Middle paragraphs]

What you feel you have to offer them. Use the advertisement/job description/company information. Let them know you have what they are asking for and that you will fit into their organisation. Describe your knowledge, experience, skills, strengths, personality, etc.

[Further paragraph]

Why you are interested in them as an organisation. Why the position appeals to you.

[Final paragraph]

Thank them for considering your application. Finish by encouraging them to reply to you.

Yours sincerely

[signature]

Your name [not initials] should be typed under your signature.

Sample wording for covering letters – these are a guide only; be creative.

Opening paragraph (introducing why you are writing)

- I wish to apply for the position of [position] which was advertised in [paper] on [date].
- I am writing in answer to your advertisement for a [position] which appeared in [paper] on [date].
- I would like to be considered for the position of [position] which was advertised in [paper] on [date].
- I am looking for a role in [job area or position] and am writing to enquire about possible vacancies in your company.
- I am looking for an opening in [job area or position] and am writing to enquire if you have any opportunities which might be suitable.

Middle paragraphs (where you give details and sell yourself)

- I have completed the [name of course] at [institution] and have developed specific knowledge in [area of expertise].
- I am currently undertaking a [certificate, degree] course in [subject] at [institute] after which I intend to pursue a career in [area].
- My past work experience includes [briefly outline areas of experience].
- I have skills such as [name them] which have been developed in [work background]
- I have a portfolio showing samples of my work, which I could bring to an interview.
- I enclose the following documents for your information [list them].
- For further information please refer to my enclosed CV.

Further paragraph (why you are interested)

- I am interested in working for your company because [reason]
- This position appeals to me because [reason]

Closing paragraphs (encouraging them to reply to you)

- Thank you for considering my application. Please find enclosed a copy of my CV.
- I would welcome the opportunity to discuss my application with you and I look forward to hearing from you.
- I hope to be considered for an interview and look forward to hearing from you.
- I am available for an interview at any time [except] and can be reached on [telephone number].
- I would welcome the opportunity to discuss my application with you, and I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.
- I realise you may not have any vacancies at this time but I would be grateful for any advice you can give and hope that I may have the opportunity of discussing any opportunities with you.

Important points about covering letters

- The tone of your letter is very important. Be thorough and convincing but not over-the-top.
- Always type your covering letter [unless asked specifically for a handwritten application]. The presentation of your covering letter is as important as the CV because it may be the first thing the employer reads.
- Keep a copy of your covering letter. Before you go for the interview read it to check what you promised!
- If you don't hear from a company after 5-7 days of writing to them or going to an interview, you are entitled to follow up with a telephone call.