

## **Writing Covering Letters**

Regardless of whether it is read or not, most employers will expect you to include a cover letter with your C.V.. It has been standard practice for a long time and gives a professional appearance.

C.V.'s all follow the same format and are usually a summary of your qualifications and employment history. No matter how hard you try, it's difficult to make your C.V. stand out; this is where a cover letter has a significant part to play.

A cover letter is used to draw together all the facts and comments in your Curriculum Vitae and makes a case for the job being applied for. Unless a handwritten letter is requested, word processed is best – it looks more professional. The letter must be well presented and written or printed on plain white paper using black ink as this produces a clearer photocopy. Most importantly of all, the letter should be brief. A good letter can make you stand out among other candidates. It is your sales pitch to present yourself and target a specific employer.

### **It should:**

- Introduce you
- Confirm your contact details
- Highlight relevant qualifications/experience/training
- Register your interest in this specific vacancy
- Demonstrate your written communication skill

Convince the employer to offer you an interview!

### **Content**

The key with covering letters is to keep them brief, get across the important points and let a positive, enthusiastic personality shine through.

If you've completed a long 'personal details' section on an application form, the letter should be short to avoid repetition. If you're sending a C.V., your letter needs to be a little more detailed, in order to put a personal slant on the information you've provided.

The tone of your letter should respond to the tone of the advertisement and job description. If that seems relatively informal, follow their lead, but be careful to avoid using language you wouldn't normally use; it's all about the real you.

As a rough guide, take a look at the following tips:

- In the first paragraph, get across what vacancy you're applying for, and where and when it was advertised.
- In the second paragraph, let them know how your interests and abilities link to the needs of the company and why you want to work for them.
- In the third paragraph, let them know when you are available and conclude with a confident: 'I look forward to hearing from you'.



Before sending it off, check for errors and make sure the appearance and tone feel right throughout.

## Checklist

Before sending a covering letter, ensure you've:

- Done your research on the company.
- Addressed your covering letter to the right person.
- Included both addresses at the top.
- Used good quality plain paper and an easy-to-read font.
- Stated what the job is and where you saw it advertised.
- Made it clear why you want to work for them and why your skills match the job
- Reflected the job advertisement's tone.
- Made yourself sound positive and enthusiastic.
- Kept it clear and brief, with good presentation.
- Checked and double-checked for errors.
- Signed your name by hand.
- Used the correct salutation (see below)

## Salutation

If you do not have the employer's name then you will need to begin your letter with 'Dear Sir/Madam' and then end your letter with 'Yours faithfully'.

If you do have the employer's name then you will begin your letter with one of the following: 'Dear Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms' (Surname). You then need to end your letter with 'Yours sincerely'.

## *Example of a Cover Letter*

**Your Name**  
**Your Address**

**Mr/Mrs**  
**Name of Company**  
**Address of Company**

## Date

Dear (Name if known, or Sir/Madam),

I am writing to apply for the position of Office Administrator as advertised in the Courier, dated 17 March. I am enclosing my application form and/or Curriculum Vitae for your consideration.

As you can see from the attached C.V., I have experience of office duties and I am familiar with Microsoft applications. I am keen to pursue a challenging career and am very willing to further my potential through training if necessary.

I am available for an interview at any time and please do not hesitate to contact me for further information. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely/Yours faithfully,

**Your Name**