# How to write the perfect covering letter
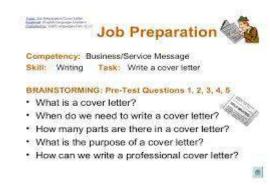
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# What is a covering letter?

- A covering letter should compliment your CV by demonstrating how your skills, abilities and experience match your understanding of the role you are applying for

- Before you start to write your letter think about these two things:

  - What does the employer want to hear?
  - What do you want it to say about you?

# How to set out your covering letter?

- First paragraph – this should include the position you are applying for and where you saw the advertisement.

- Second paragraph – explain what attracted you to the position, why you are interested in working for the company and what you can offer them.

- Third paragraph – demonstrate how your skills and experience match the requirements of the position. Use bullet points to get maximum impact with as few words as possible

- Last paragraph – indicate any dates you are unavailable for interview. Finish off by thanking the employer and that you look forward to receiving a response.

# How to address your covering letter?

- Address your letter to the person who will be reading it even if it means you have to ring the company to find out who will be dealing with the recruitment. It might be a pain, but it makes a big difference to the reader.

# Rules of success to writing a covering letter

- Be concise and to the point
- Keep it short & simple 250-300 words in length
- Relate your skills to the job advert
- Tailor your letter for each application
- Read it and cut any unnecessary words or sentences
- Be specific – if you can include a figure or two, so much the better.
- Be enthusiastic and show them you've done your research on the company.
- It's a good idea to sign off with a positive statement to prompt the recruiter to take action. Be assertive and never apologetic.

# Common mistakes in a covering letter

- Failing to address your letter to named individual
- Repeating word for word what is written in your CV
- Forgetting to proof-read or getting someone to proof-read for you
- Failure to tailor your letter to the specific job you are applying for
- Concentrating to much on your qualifications rather than skills and experience

# Common mistakes in a covering letter

- Spelling and punctuation errors – There's no room for either. If you can, ask a friend to check it over and do a final spell check before you send it off

- Outrageous lies – Nowadays it's easy for employers and recruiters to check candidates' claims online. If you lie, they'll find out

- Negativity and sarcasm – Don't criticise former employers and certainly not the company you're applying to. Be positive about yourself, your previous experience and the role

- Inappropriate personal details – You don't need to state your age, religion, sexual preference or political affiliations on a cover letter or CV. Neither should you include a photo of yourself or your National Insurance number

- Confused language and unnecessary waffle – Keep things clear with short, snappy sentences that tell the reader what they need to know

# Attention grabbing covering letter Golden Rules

- Write individual letters for each job you apply for, even when the basics are the same.
- Remind the recruiter of what they are looking for
- Explain how you fit the job description and how you are exactly what they are looking for.
- Demonstrate with examples why you are best choice
- Keep it simple and to the point

If you need any

further help or advice email

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