

How to write a cover letter

A cover letter introduces you to an employer and asks them to consider your application. It's a short letter – 3 to 5 paragraphs – that you should send with your CV or application form.

Write it as an email if you are applying online, or print off and sign a typed copy to go with a paper application.

Addressing the letter

Check you have the details of the person you need to send your letter to. You'll need their name and preferred title (for example: Dr, Mr, Mrs, Ms) and their job title.

You should also have the right company name and address, including a postcode.

If you do not know the name of the person dealing with your application, use Dear Sir or Madam.

First paragraph

Keep this paragraph short, just two or three sentences long. You want to tell the recruiter:

- What position you are applying for. Be specific so there's no doubt. Give the job reference number if there is one.
- How you heard about the position, e.g. on Find a Job or Indeed.
- Most importantly, why you are interested in the position. Be brief and specific. For example: you are looking for promotion, the company offers more career opportunities, shift pattern is ideal for you, etc.

Second paragraph

In this paragraph you will explain why you are suitable for this role.

Use specific examples from your career, as they go a long way towards helping the recruiter understand, and remember, your abilities.

Your CV lays out your work experience; your cover letter explains how those experiences apply to the job at hand. Add detail linking your experience to the job you are applying for.

Mention the job and the company. This shows the recruiter you are really thinking about what you can bring to the job.

Final paragraph

This is the wrap-up, but you still want to be sure to mention certain key things. In particular, you want to:

- Refer to the enclosed CV.
- Request an interview to further discuss your candidacy. Specify when you are available.
- Thank the recruiter for taking the time to consider you for the position.

Signing off

- If you have addressed your letter to a named person, sign off with:

Yours sincerely

- If you have addressed your letter Dear Sir or Madam, sign off with:

Yours faithfully

- If sending a paper copy, always sign your letter by hand.

Example

Alex Anyone
47 Anywhere Street
Anytown
AN77 8ON
07123456789
alexanyone@anyemail.com

Mr A Jobsbody
Select Shoes
5 The Promenade
Anytown on Sea
AN76 6CV

Dear Mr Jobsbody

I am writing in response to your advert for a store manager at the Anytown on Sea branch of Select Shoes. Having worked in this sector for several years with great success, I am confident I can contribute to your company's projects and goals. The management training programme you offer is of particular interest.

For the past two years, I've been a great asset to my employers by consistently meeting sales targets, staying on top of health and safety requirements and making sure the company keeps a high level of customer service. At Suited and Booted, where I worked for three years, my store increased sales every year. We were often described as the cleanest store in the area. During my time at Shoes-to-go, I focused on customer satisfaction, starting a feedback plan to track and improve our image in the mind of customers. Subsequently, we started a loyalty programme that was a great success. I can assure you that my experience, sector knowledge and track record to date make me a strong candidate for this role.

I attach my CV with this letter and I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and discuss my candidacy further. I am available for an interview at any time. Thank you for taking the time to consider me for this position.

Yours sincerely

(Sign by hand if printing)

Alex Anybody