

Cover Letters



What is a cover letter?

It is a short letter which is usually sent out with your CV, to provide you with an extra opportunity to tell the employer about:

- ❖ Who you are
- ❖ What you are currently doing (e.g. just finished/ due to finish school)
- ❖ Where you saw the role advertised and why you are interested in the role
- ❖ The skills you have which you can bring to the role
- ❖ What experiences you have that could be useful for the role (this will be included in your CV already, but is still useful to include in a cover letter to explain parts of your CV in more detail)
- ❖ Any gaps in your CV or anything else you would like the potential employer to know

TIP: Make sure your Cover letter is no longer than **one A4 Page** and remember to use **spellcheck!**

Why is it important?

- ❖ It shows that you are committed, as you are willing to spend time writing a letter to the employer, rather than just sending off a CV
- ❖ It provides the opportunity for you to explain why you are interested in the role and what interests you about working for their company
- ❖ It allows the employer to gather a more rounded view of your experience, rather than just the core facts
- ❖ It enables you to clearly highlight your key skills that you feel are particularly relevant for the role

TIP: Make sure your Cover letter is specific to the **job** and the **company** by:

- ✓ highlighting your **skills and experiences** that are **most relevant** to the role
- ✓ **Researching the company** (e.g. looking at the 'about us' pages, finding out more about the company values and employees) - and use this information to explain **what it is that interests you about working for them**

TIP: Think about what will make **you stand out from the crowd** - it could be some other **significant experiences and achievements**, such as those undertaken during school (e.g. any awards or roles of responsibility), or even achievements outside of school (e.g. winning any competitions, volunteering etc.)



Insert your company paragraph here

Make it clear that you have done some research into the company/job and use this research to explain why you are interested in applying. You might talk about:

- ✓ What you know about the company (e.g. size, reputation, culture, values, number of employees, training opportunities)*
- ✓ What hobbies, interests and personal qualities you have that could help you fit into the company and do well in your job*

Insert your motivation paragraph here

Use the end of your cover letter to leave a good last impression and express your interest in the job. Consider:

- ✓ what makes you so keen and interested in the job*
- ✓ how you can make sure you end the letter positively*

I look forward to discussing my application with you further.

Yours faithfully/sincerely

[Add your name here]



Activity two: Cover letter checklist

Here's a checklist to help you remember the points that we have discussed in activity one.

Layout

- Have you included your own and the employers address in the right place?
- Does your letter look easy to read (3-5 paragraphs and no longer than a page is a good guide)?
- Have you used a standard font (e.g. Arial/Times New Roman) and standard size (i.e. 10-12pt)?

Introduction & End

- Have you found out who you should address the letter to? If not, write 'Sir/ Madam'
- Have you written a polite final statement that sounds positive and thanks the employer for taking the time to consider your application?
- Have you chosen an appropriate signature for the letter?

TIP: when signing the letter...

- ✓ if you know the person use '**Yours sincerely**'
- ✓ if you do not know them, use '**Yours faithfully**'
- ✓ or to cover all situations, use '**Kind regards**'

Positive Language

- Do you come across well?
- Have you included words and language that describe you and your skills in the best way?

Standing Out

- Have you included a few things in your cover letter that will make you stand out from other applicants?

Company Information

- Have you included some company information to show that you have done your research?
- Have you related that information to yourself in some way? For example, have you used it to show an interest in the company?

TIP: once you have completed a cover letter, ask someone to check it for you! (E.g. Parent/ carer, friend or Miss McGuinness)