



**Cover Letter
Handout**

Writing a Cover Letter

When applying for a job online or by post, you will often be asked to attach a separate cover letter. Occasionally you will be asked to state the reasons for your suitability in a section of your online application form or in the body an email. Showing that you can follow simple instructions is an important part of every selection process. Do exactly as you are asked – if not, your application may be rejected.

Research

When applying for a new job you will need to research thoroughly before you prepare your CV and cover letter. Check out the company website and social media channels to learn about the company, its values, products, customers and competitors. Read the Job Description and Job Advertisement and Identify the key skills that the successful person needs. You will then be able to highlight these skills in your CV and summarise them in your cover letter.

Your cover letter needs to showcase your suitability clearly and concisely and it needs to be written and presented in a way that persuades the recruiter to call you for interview.

Cover Letter Presentation

- Always use a single sheet of good quality unlined A4 paper
- Leave a margin of at least one inch on either side of the page
- Aim for a maximum of three paragraphs
- If you know the name of the person handling the recruitment, address your letter with “Dear Ms O’Brien/Dear Mr Black” and close it with “yours sincerely”. If the name of the person is not advertised, address your letter with “Dear Sir/Madam” and close it with “Yours faithfully”.
- Proofread your letter for spelling and grammar accuracy – mistakes such as “*I am a perfektionist and have an I for detale*” will make a poor impression!

Cover Letter Structure

First paragraph – the opening: mention the title of the job you are applying for, how you heard about it and that you are enclosing your CV for consideration.

Second paragraph – the sales pitch: Your letter needs to arouse the recruiter’s interest. And your CV will provide further evidence to support the key points that you mention in your cover letter. Briefly describe your qualifications and experience and summarise why you think you are suitable.

Third paragraph – the positive statement: this is your opportunity to spell out what you can do for the company. Emphasise how much you would enjoy the job and say how much you would welcome an opportunity to attend for interview to discuss your application.