

Writing a cover letter

A National Literacy Trust membership resource

What is a cover letter?

A cover letter is a single document that should always accompany your CV. Your cover letter provides you with the space to directly sell your skills, ambitions and qualifications.

Introduction

- Address your cover letter directly to the hiring manager or Head of HR. Search for their name by using the company's website or LinkedIn.
- Begin by outlining the position that you are applying for, your most relevant skills and one line stating how they will benefit the employer:

"I am writing to express my interest in the position of receptionist as advertised on your website. My previous studies in Business at college, my work experience in customer service and the unique skills I have developed makes me perfect for this role. Please find enclosed my CV for your consideration."

Letter content

- The content of your cover letter is your opportunity to elaborate on the achievements detailed in your CV in a more personal and descriptive way:

"As you can see from my CV, I am extremely passionate about good customer service. With over three years of experience working in the sector, I believe the knowledge and the skills I have built up during this time make me the perfect candidate for this role."
- Make sure the letter is engaging by keeping it to no more than one page in length and by keeping paragraphs succinct and relevant.
- Avoid using negative examples; instead concentrate on identifying your passion and motivation for the position you are applying for.
- Make sure your cover letter and CV match up. A cover letter should signpost and summarise the relevant experiences and skills detailed in your CV, highlighting why this experience makes you the right candidate for the job.

Writing a cover letter activity

Cover letter template	
Subject	<p>Your subject and email address are the first thing the person you are sending your email to will see.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• State what position you are applying for
Greeting	<p>This is a formal email so it starts like a letter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use 'Dear Sir or Madam' if you don't know who you are emailing• Use 'Dear X' if you know their full name
First paragraph	<p>Introduce yourself.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is your name• Why are you writing• What position are you applying for• State where you saw the position advertised
Second paragraph	<p>Your second paragraph should describe what you have to offer and why you want the job</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mention specific qualifications and skills you have and how they match the position you are applying for.• Talk about any relevant work experience you have.• Describe why you want this job
Third paragraph	<p>Conclusion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conclude by thanking the employer for considering you.• Make sure to include your contact details
Sign-off	

