

Cover Letter Tips

A cover letter **introduces** (that's why sometimes you hear them called "Letter of Introduction") you and your CV to potential employers. It is the first document an employer sees, so look at the cover letter as your way to make a *good first impression!*

Use your cover letter to prepare the employer for your application stating:

- Why you are writing
- Why you are a good match for the job and the organization
- When you will contact him or her

Cover letters do more than introduce your CV. A cover letter's importance also includes its ability to:

- Explain your experiences in a story-like format that prepares the reader for the information provided in your CV.
- Allow you to highlight important experiences/skills and relate them to job requirements.
- Show the employer that you are writing a custom letter for this job application.
- Provide an example of your written communication skills.

Other Key Tips:

1. Always include contact information

Your name, address and telephone number should be easily visible on every cover letter you send out. It will be the first thing the reader looks for when trying to contact you so you do not want to make them work to find it!

2. Personalise your letter – Address the letter to the person who will be reading it!

Start with and end with the reader. Sometimes you will have to make a phone call to find a contact name.

3. The opening sentence should grab the reader's attention!

When people read cover letters they scan them for content: Who's it addressed to? What's the opener? What's the desired action? etc. An attention grabbing first sentence will describe why you're the best person for this job and how you address the interests of the employer, etc. Remember that your goal is to encourage the reader to read on!

4. Write a new letter for each company or job you apply to!

One size fits all may work for adjustable hats but it is a sure road to failure when you are applying for a job. Every job is different so you need to customize your approach to show how you meet the needs of that particular job. Be sure you refer to the job you are applying to in the first three sentences so the reader knows you're applying to the position they think you are. You do not need to state where you saw the advert, it adds nothing helpful to your letter.

5. Describe HOW your skills relate to the job

The reader needs to be SHOWN how your skills apply to the job you're applying to. Don't assume that they will make the connection for you. Tie your experience to skills and your skills to the job at hand.

6. Type-Proofread-Revise

Remember what we said before about FIRST IMPRESSION! You want to instantly impress your reader with your neatness, attention to detail, writing skills, and the absolute correctness of the words, spelling, and grammar. Ask a friend to review it for you before you send it out!

7. Use action words and cut it short. Be brief!

Think about the reader who has perhaps 100 letters to review. Yours must be filled with action words that describe your skills and which is short and concise. The last thing you want is for the reader to *SIGH* at the sight of your lengthy, dense narrative.

8. SHOW Confidence, Creativity, and Enthusiasm!

Your cover letter is your first opportunity to sell your qualifications on paper. Let your personality come through and stress the benefits of hiring you!

9. Always keep a copy of every cover letter you send out.

Keep copies of your letters on file as part of your application tracking process.

10. Ask for an interview.

Your purpose is to get an interview right? So why not ask for one? Express your enthusiasm about meeting the reader and having the opportunity to share more about why you're a good fit for the job in an interview.