

# HOW TO WRITE A COVER LETTER

Just like a CV, a good cover letter is essential when looking for work, especially as most employers spend approximately half a minute casting an eye over each job application.

With this in mind, you have to make sure that your cover letter makes enough of an impression in those 30 seconds to make the reader want to learn more about you. But what should it contain?

Building upon the information in your CV, it gives you an opportunity to explain why you want to work for their company in particular and should highlight the reasons you best suit the role. Everything it includes should encourage the recruiter to give your CV the attention it deserves.

**Not sure where to start? Here's a step-by-step guide to help you write a compelling cover letter.**



## Research

We can't stress this enough. Before you sit down to write your cover letter, do some research on the company and the job you're applying for. Things to know include: what the company does, their competitors and where they're placed in the market.

Not only will carrying out this research give you the knowledge you require to tailor your cover letter and CV to the style of the company, it also demonstrates that you've a real interest in the role and the company itself.



## Personalise who you address the letter to

It may sound obvious, but when writing a cover letter you should always try to address the letter to the person handling job applications. This is usually listed in the job advert. If you're unsure of the right contact, don't be afraid to call the company to ask for a name. After all, there's no harm in showing initiative. If you know the person, Dear Mr Smith / Dear Ms Jones, and if you don't; Dear Sir/ Madam will suffice.



## What to include in your cover letter?

### Opening the letter

The opening paragraph should be short and to the point and explain why it is that you're writing.

**Example:** 'I would like to be considered for the position of 'Apprentice'.

It is also useful to include where you found the ad  
i.e. as advertised on: <http://www.exe-coll.ac.uk/apprenticeships> OR if someone referred you to the contact, mention their name in this section.

### Following paragraphs

- Why are you suitable for the job? Briefly describe your professional and academic qualifications that are relevant to the role and ensure you refer to each of the skills listed in the job description.
- Emphasise what you can do for the company. Outline your career goal (make it relevant to the position you're applying for) and expand on pertinent points in your CV.
- Reiterate your interest in the role and why you would be the right fit for the role. It's also a good time to indicate you'd like to meet with the employer for an interview.

### Closing the letter

Sign off your cover letter with 'Yours sincerely' and your name.