

How to write a cover letter

Follow our guide to write a cover letter that stands out, and get your CV or application form noticed.

What a cover letter is

A cover letter introduces you to an employer and asks them to think about your application.

It's a short letter, 3 to 5 paragraphs, that you should send with your CV or application form.

You should always include a cover letter when you apply for a job using a CV. You can write it as an email if you're applying online, or print a copy to go with a paper application.

Do your research

When writing a cover letter, let the employer know you're keen by showing that you've researched the company. Learn more about what they do through:

- their website
 - recent news articles
 - talking to people you know who work there
-

Send it to the right person

It's important to try to address your cover letter to someone by name. Check you have the details of the person you need to send it to.

You'll need their name and preferred title. For example, 'Dr', 'Mr', 'Mrs', 'Ms', and their job title. You should also make sure you have the right company name and address, including postcode.

If you don't know their name

If the job advert does not include a name you can check the company website. Try to find details of the head of the department, head of human resources or a recruitment manager.

If you still cannot find a name, you can start your letter with 'Dear Sir or Madam'.

Start your cover letter

Introduce yourself and explain how you found the advertised job. You can mention the job title, and reference number if there is one.

If you're asking about any job openings and not applying to a vacancy, tell them what sort of job you're looking for. Let the employer see how keen you are to work for them.

Show you're right for the job

Highlight the skills and experience you have that match what the employer is looking for. Convince them that you're enthusiastic about working for them. Let them know you share their work values, culture and style.

Give extra information

If you have gaps in your employment history, you could talk about the skills you gained while you were out of work.

If you've mentioned on your CV that you have a disability, you might want to talk more about this in your cover letter. Organisations like [Disability UK](https://www.disability-uk.org/) can

give you advice on how to do this. You do not have to mention your disability at this stage if you prefer not to.

End your cover letter

Thank the employer for considering your application. Let them know that they can get more details from your CV, and tell them you're looking forward to hearing from them.

Let them know how they can best contact you. Make sure your contact details are correct on both your cover letter and CV.

Sign off

If you know the name of the person you're writing to, you should end the letter with 'Yours sincerely'.

If you've addressed the letter 'Dear Sir or Madam', you should end the letter with 'Yours faithfully'.

Cover letter tips

When writing your cover letter, remember to:

- write a new one for every job you apply for and make sure it's tailored to the company and the specific role
- use the same font and size as you do for your CV, so it looks consistent
- make sure the company name and recruiter's details are correct
- use the right language and tone. Keep it professional and match the keywords used by the employer in their job advert
- be clear and to the point. 3 to 5 neat paragraphs is enough.
- show you've done your research into the job and the company
- highlight your most relevant skills and experience to stand out from other applicants
- double check spelling and grammar before you send it

- keep a copy of your cover letter. They may ask you about it in an interview
- back up any statements you make with facts. Use **the STAR method** to help with this-
 - situation - the situation you had to deal with
 - task - the task you were given to do
 - action - the action you took
 - result - what happened as a result of your action and what you learned from the experience