

How to write an effective Covering Letter

Getting Started

- A good Covering Letter should complement your CV, introduce yourself to the employer, show them why they should consider you for the job and highlight your suitability for the job you are applying for. It is wise to include a Covering Letter with every job application you make.
- The Covering Letter will be your introduction, therefore, it must be well written and targeted to that employer. Your Covering Letter may make the difference between securing a job interview or having your CV ignored. As a result it is essential to take the necessary time and effort to write an effective Covering Letter.
- A Covering Letter will give the best results if it is targeted to match a specific job description/person specification. A Covering Letter should be no more than one A4 page in length, use the same font as in your accompanying CV and should compliment but never completely duplicate your CV.
- Before you even try to write the Covering Letter make sure you conduct some research on the company in question. Gather all the information that will be needed to demonstrate your interest in the work and the organisation and your knowledge about the potential position.
- Address your letter 'Dear Sir/Madam' unless the job advert states otherwise.

Your Covering Letter will have approximately 4 paragraphs

Opening Paragraph (Example)

- Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to apply for the post of (job title) as advertised in the (source) and enclose/attach my Curriculum Vitae for your consideration.

Main Body: Paragraph 1

- This paragraph should act as an introduction to yourself and your interest in the available position.
- Include a sentence on how you became interested in the position/area/sector/type of work you are applying for. Did you undergo specific training? Did you study in a related field? Is it a hobby?
- Explain why you are interested in the position/area/sector/type of work. Do you feel passionate about it? Why are you committed to it?

Main Body: Paragraph 2

- This paragraph should outline your ability to do the job. Link all your relevant personal experiences, study and work history to the job description/person specification.

- List actual skills/experience relevant to the position being applied for, refer to job advert/job description eg. If the job requires someone who is resourceful then state that you have this skill.
- If you follow these guidelines when completing both main body paragraphs you will demonstrate your commitment to the position and your qualifications to undertake it.

Closing Paragraph (Example)

- Thank you for considering my potential and I hope that it has persuaded you of my ability to make a real contribution to (organisation). Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information and I look forward to hearing from you.

Remember

Use 'Yours Sincerely' when you know the name of the recipient

Use 'Yours Faithfully' when you do not know the name of the recipient

Alternatively Use 'Kind Regards' whether you know the name of the recipient or not

Print and sign you name on your Covering Letter

Check your Covering Letter

- Have a look again at your letter and make sure you have kept to the point throughout. It is very important that you do not bore potential employers with a letter that has lots of unnecessary information. Keep it clear and use normal everyday English.
- Ensure you double check your letter for grammatical errors, punctuation marks, etc. Use A4 paper of a white or pale background and ensure the printout is of good quality. Unless stated do not handwrite your Covering Letter. Employers will expect candidates to apply with a typed Covering Letter & CV in 99.9% of cases.

Covering Letter by Email

- Standard practice when applying for a position by email is to compose a small email such as:

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to apply for the position of (job title) with (organisation). Please find attached my Covering Letter and CV.

Kind Regards,
(Your Name)

- Send your Covering Letter and CV as separate attachments. Make sure that your Covering Letter and CV attachments have suitable names. Employers will not appreciate names such as:

Covering Letter 4 (2)
CV for Tuam Job €26,000

It is much better to name your documents:

(job title) Covering Letter
(job title) CV

Your address
Your address

Name/Title/Sir/Madam
Position
Employers address

Full Date

RE: Name of Post being applied for

Dear Name/Sir/Madam,

Introduction

I wish to apply for the post of (job title) as advertised in the (source) and enclose my Curriculum Vitae for your consideration.

Main Body: Paragraph 1

This paragraph should act as an introduction to yourself and your interest in the available position.

How you became interested in the position/area/sector/type of work you are applying for? Where did the interest come from?

Main Body: Paragraph 2

Outline your suitability for the position. Link your relevant experiences, study & work history to the job description/person specification.

If the job requires someone with fluent French who is computer literate, state that you have these skills. Use 'buzz words'.

Closing Paragraph

Thank you for considering my potential and I hope that it has persuaded you of my ability to make a real contribution to (organisation). Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely (if you **know** the name of the recipient)
Yours Faithfully (if you **do not know** the name of the recipient)
Kind Regards

Sign Name Here

Print Name Here