



Writing a Cover Letter

The purpose of a cover letter

A cover letter should show the employer that you have read the job description and advert that you are applying for and that you are truly interested in their business and role they are advertising. This letter is an essential part of your application with many employers not even considering looking at a resume that is not accompanied with a cover letter. Avoid using stock-standard cover letter templates. While it's good to get ideas, ultimately, you should be writing your own cover letter for each application.

Your letter should:

- Introduce you
- Mention the job (or kind of job) you're applying for, or looking for
- Match your skills and experiences with the skills and experiences required by the job
- Encourage the reader to read your resume
- Finish with a call to action (e.g., requesting an interview or asking to meet)

How long should a cover letter be?

A cover letter shouldn't be more than three to four paragraphs long and no more than one page. It's only meant to be a summary of the information you put in your resume, so remember to keep things short.

What to Include in a Cover Letter

Your name and contact details

Put your name and contact details at the top of your cover letter. You don't have to give your postal address, but you do need to include your email and phone number.

Make sure your email address is a professional sounding one. An email address like yolo@zabangpowdude.com.au doesn't create the right impression.

Address the letter to the contact person responsible for the job. If you're having trouble finding this information you can call the company to ask who you should address your application to. You can also use "To Whom It May Concern" - but try to only use this as a last resort.



The name of the job you're applying for

At the start of your cover letter explain which job you're applying for. You can either do this on a line by itself (e.g., "Re: Application for Customer Service Position") or in the opening paragraph (e.g., "I am writing to apply for the recently advertised Customer Service position.") If a reference number is supplied in the job ad, make sure you quote it.

A list of your relevant skills

Your letter should include a brief summary of your skills and experiences that match the job description. Sell yourself, don't be shy, but keep it brief and to the point. Be sure to use a positive and upbeat tone in your word choice.

If you're answering a job ad, either the ad or the position description may provide a list of skills and experiences that are essential for doing the job. It may also provide a list of "desirable" or "essential" skills, experience or qualifications. Your cover letter needs to respond to all of the items on the "essential" list and as many items as possible on the "desirable" list in as short a way as possible.

"I have enclosed my Resume which highlights my skills relevant to this position, including:"

Remember that if you say you have a skill or experience, you need to show how you've used it or how you got it. E.g., if you say you've got child-minding skills, mention some jobs where you've used them.

A summary of why you're right for the job

After listing your skills and experience you should explain why this means you're suited to the job. E.g., "The combination of my interest in sport and my experience with book-keeping makes me ideally suited for this job."

Ask them to review your resume and contact you (call to action)

Your cover letter should finish by asking the reader to look at your resume. It should also ask them to contact you about an interview. Try something simple like, "I have attached a copy of my resume for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you about this application."

PROOFREAD & SPELL CHECK your letter for errors or mistakes. Have someone else proofread it, don't always rely on the spellcheck function. Mistakes in a cover letter or application indicate a sloppy approach to job prospects.

