Employability Level 2 – Cover Letters

1 of 17 – Welcome

Welcome to this session on cover letters.

In this session we will look at:

* Do I need a cover letter?
* What should you include?
* How to write a cover letter for a specific job
* Cover letter examples
* Common mistakes made

2 of 17 – Introduction

A covering letter and CV or application form is your opportunity to sell yourself to employers.

They will read your covering letter before your CV so it’s important that it makes an impact – they may not look at your CV if it doesn’t!

Covering letters that create a good first impression are well constructed and don’t contain any spelling mistakes or bad grammar.

A good letter makes an employer sit up, take notice and want to read your CV or job application.

Your letter needs to convince an employer that you want the job and that you’re the best person for it.

3 of 17 – Key points

Your covering letter is a document that is individual to you and the job you are applying for. Here are some points about covering letters to get you thinking along the right lines.

**Point 1**

Promote your strengths – make sure you include your most relevant experience and skills linked to the job.

**Point 2**

Every time you apply for a job you should create the cover letter based on the details of the job.

**Point 3**

Make sure the language you use is professional and business appropriate.

**Point 4**

Always check it; if spelling and grammar isn’t your strong point, get someone else to check it for you.

4 of 17 – Why do I need a cover letter?

A cover letter should always accompany your CV unless you are told otherwise. It allows you to personalise an application and highlight key areas of your CV in more depth. It can also be called a covering letter.

It is your opportunity to create your first impression.

5 of 17 – How do I write a cover letter?

Keep your cover letter brief, also make sure it emphasises your sustainability for the job.

**First paragraph**

Begin by stating the position you are applying for and where you saw it advertised.

**Middle paragraphs**

Use the next two or three paragraphs to explain: what attracted you to this vacancy and type of work; why you are interested in working for the company; and what you can offer to the organisation. Demonstrate how your skills match the specific requirements of the job description.

**Last paragraph**

Use the closing paragraph to indicate you would like an interview. Finish by thanking the employer and say how you are looking forward to receiving a response.

6 of 17 – Example of a cover letter

There are many examples of cover letters available. Download the attached **Cover Letter Example PDF** and look through the content.

Notice that the letter is:

* Professionally laid out
* Concise and to the point
* Covering why you are the right person for the job
* Personalised to the job

7 of 17 – Further examples of a cover letter

When writing a cover letter, you can use templates to help you, you can also look at examples which have been written for a specific type of job.

Visit the following website to view examples:

[Cover Letter and Résumé Samples](https://www.thebalancecareers.com/entry-level-finance-cover-letter-sample-2060252)

Can you find one that matches your career choice? You may wish to print one off and save a copy to help you in the future.

8 of 17 – Phrases to use in your cover letter

Here are some phrases you could use when writing your cover letter:

* Your position for (job title) strongly appeals to me because…
* I am very excited to learn more about this opportunity and share how I will be a great fit for your company…
* I believe this is a position where my passion for the job will grow because of the opportunities you provide…
* I am particularly well qualified for this position, because…
* Examples of my passion for doing the job well are…
* Working as a sales manager, I obtained the following skills which might be valuable for your company…
* I would like to point out…
* Should you have any questions, don’t hesitate to get in touch with me…
* I would enjoy the opportunity to meet with…
* I look forward to meeting with you to further discuss my background…

9 of 17 – Cover letter top tips

With employers often receiving high volumes of applications for each vacancy, you need to make sure that your cover letter makes a lasting impression.

Here are some rules to help you:

1. When sending it electronically, put the text in the body of the email rather than as an attachment – it avoids it being detected by spam filters
2. Include a named contact when possible to show you have sent it to them personally
3. Double check your spelling and grammar, always proof read
4. Make sure you get the company name and other key details right
5. Keep it concise, to one side of A4

10 of 17 – Cover letter mistakes

Your covering letter is an opportunity to show employers how well you express yourself and it should entice them to read your CV.

If you want to ensure it is as effective as possible, avoid these common mistakes:

* Not targeting your letter to the specific job you are applying for
* Failing to address the letter to a named individual at the company
* Repeating what is written in your CV
* Forgetting to proofread your letter and sending it full of mistakes
* Sharing unnecessary personal details and giving rambling explanations
* Concentrating too much on your qualifications rather than your skills and experience

11 of 17 – Video

Watch the following video on top tips when writing a covering letter. You may wish to make notes.

[How to Write a Cover Letter - Forbes](https://www.youtube.com/embed/wR4X-sAAFYI?autoplay=1&rel=0&start=0&modestbranding=1&showinfo=0&theme=light&fs=0&probably_logged_in=0)

12 of 17 – Question 1

Using the following choice of words: **first**, **OK**, **crucial**, **letter**, **competition**, **address**, **relevant**, **impressions**, **duplicate** and **signature**, fill in the blanks for the paragraph below.

Set yourself apart from the **blank** by producing a positive and **blank** cover letter that directly relates to the job you are applying for – why are you the right person for the job? Your cover letter is often the **blank** thing a hiring manager looks at, so it’s **blank** to get it right. As well as letting your personality shine, it’s also an opportunity to stand out from the crowd. Remember, first **blank** count.

The correct paragraph should read:

Set yourself apart from the **competition** by producing a positive and **relevant** cover letter that directly relates to the job you are applying for – why are you the right person for the job? Your cover letter is often the **first** thing a hiring manager looks at, so it’s **crucial** to get it right. As well as letting your personality shine, it’s also an opportunity to stand out from the crowd. Remember, first **impressions** count.

13 of 17 – Question 2

Arrange the contents of a cover letter as listed below into the correct order.

1. Why you are interested in the job
2. Name and address of the company or organisation
3. Your signature
4. You are available for interview and look forward to hearing from them
5. The job you are applying for

The correct order is:

1. Name and address of the company or organisation
2. The job you are applying for
3. Why you are interested in the job
4. You are available for interview and look forward to hearing from them
5. Your signature

14 of 17 – Question 3

Read the following statement and decide whether it is true or false.

Every cover letter you write should be specific to the job.

True

False

The correct answer is: True

15 of 17 – Question 4

Complete the following sentence.

When writing a cover letter, you should always **blank**.

Choose all that apply:

1. Include your contact details
2. Check your letter for spelling and grammar
3. Use the letter you wrote for your last job application
4. Copy information off your CV
5. Relate your skills to the job advert

The correct answers are A, B and E, include your contact details, check your letter for spelling and grammar and relate your skills to the job advert.

16 of 17 – End

Well done. You have completed this session on CV cover letters.

In this session we have covered:

* Do I need a cover letter?
* What should you include?
* How to write a cover letter for a specific job
* Cover letter examples
* Common mistakes made

If you are unsure or have any questions about any of these topics, make a note and speak to your tutor for more help.