



**OLDFIELD
SCHOOL**

Year 10

CV Writing Workshop



CV COVERING LETTER

How to format a cover letter

Your cover letter should be well-presented, concise, and to-the-point.

So use an easy-to-read font, and don't get carried away with embellishments. No pictures and no word art.

Aside from ensuring its written using clear paragraphs – it also should be the right length. Too long, and you'll risk boring the reader; but too short, and you're unlikely to have covered everything.

Aim for half a side to one page of A4.

How to address a covering letter

Cover letters should be addressed to the person dealing with the applications.

Usually, this will be shown somewhere in the job advert – and if not, don't be afraid to find out. Start by visiting the company's website to track down the name of a relevant recipient, and if you have no luck there – there's no harm in simply calling and asking.

Not only will you be able to address your letter accurately, you'll also demonstrate your initiative and genuine interest in the role.

If you manage to find a name – address with 'Dear Mr Smith/Dear Ms Jones'.

And if you don't? 'Dear Sir/Madam' will suffice.

How to structure a covering letter

Although there are no set rules on how your cover letter should be structured, making sure it flows well is vital if you want to impress recruiters.

Here's a rough guideline of how your cover letter should look:

Opening the letter – *Why are you getting in touch?*

The opening paragraph should be short and to the point, explaining why you're getting in touch. It's also useful to include where you found the ad i.e. as advertised on xxxx. If someone referred you, mention their name in this section.

Second paragraph – *Why are you suitable for the job?*

Briefly describe your qualifications, or expected qualification qualifications grades, that are relevant to the role and ensure you refer to each of the skills listed in the job description.

Third paragraph – *What can you do for the company?*

Now's your opportunity to emphasise what you can do for the company. Outline your career goals (making it relevant to the position you're applying for) and expand on pertinent points in your CV – including examples to back up your skills.

Fourth paragraph – *Reiterate*

Here's where you 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

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to meeting with you to discuss my application further.

Sign off your cover letter with 'Yours sincerely' (if you know the name of the person dealing with the applications), or 'Yours faithfully' (if you don't), followed by your signature and name.

DO'S AND DON'TS FOR DEVELOPING A CV

Do...

- **Research your prospective employer.** Look at the job advert and consider what the job involves, and what the employer needs. Find out about the activities of the employer.
- **Tailor your CV to the job.** Your CV should be tailored for the job you're applying for.
- **Make your CV clear, neat and tidy.** Get somebody to check your spelling and grammar. Your CV should be easy to read with space between each section and plenty of white space. Use left-justified text as it's easiest to read, using black text on good quality white paper.
- **Place the important information first.** Put experience and education achievements in reverse chronological order. Include experience and interests that might be of use to the employer: IT skills, voluntary work, foreign language competency, leisure interests that demonstrate team skills and organisation/leadership skills.
- **Use positive language.** when describing your work achievements use power words such as 'launched', 'managed', 'co-ordinated', 'motivated', 'supervised', and 'achieved'.

Don't...

- **Hand-write or type your CV.** This looks unprofessional and old fashioned.
- **Include anything that might discriminate against you** – such as date of birth, marital status, race, gender or disability. Also, don't include a photograph unless requested.
- **Include salary information and expectations.** Leave this for negotiations after your interview
- **Make your CV more than two pages long.** You can free up space by leaving out or editing information that is less important. For example, you do not need to include referees – just state they are available on request. Add details about your most recent qualifications with grades or prospective grades.
- **Dilute your important messages.** Concentrate on demonstrating that the skills they need, what you have achieved by applying the skills.
- **Use jargon, acronyms, technical terms** - unless essential.
- **Lie** - employers will find out what you stated was true.

INITIAL CV TEMPLATE

Contact Details

Full Name

Home Address

Mobile number, landline number

Email address

Tip: *Don't include date of birth, gender, ethnicity, photo or any other personal data that is unrelated to your ability to do the job (unless you're required to do so on an application form).*

Personal Statement (or profile)

Tip: *Brief overview of who you are, your strengths and any work experience and/or temp jobs you've had. Include examples of responsibility e.g. Team captain of the school hockey team or organisational skills e.g. Member of the School Christmas Fair Committee. Include skills you've gained such as time management, customer service, teamwork, computer skills etc. Also state what sort of jobs you're looking for and why you think you'd be good at it.*

Example:

Motivated, hard-working former school badminton captain with nine GCSEs (grades A-C) and good literacy and numerical skills. Practical work experience in a part-time and voluntary retail role. Looking to build on my skills and experience in a retail role.

Additional Skills

Tip: *Include achievements that are relevant to the job you are applying for and place you in a positive light.*

Example: IT skills:

- **Fully proficient in Microsoft Office (Word, Excel & PowerPoint)**
- **Customer service: Retail**
- **Admin: Filing, diary management**

Education and Training

Tip: *List your education first, starting with your most recent education. Once you have more work experience this section will move to after work experience.*

Example:

Oldfield School, Bath, Sept 2014 – June 2018

9 GCSEs: Including grades A-C in English, Maths, Spanish, Geography, Physics, Chemistry, Business Studies, Technology and Media studies

Work Experience

Tip: *Include any work you have undertaken, whether part-time or voluntary, highlighting your responsibilities and the skills and experience acquired. This helps demonstrate your willingness to work hard, and how the experience helped develop your skills: time management, team work, customer service. Start with your most recent first.*

Example:

Volunteer, Mercy in Action Charity Shop, Jan 2017 – present

Duties and responsibilities:

- **Served customers at the till**
- **Accepting and sorting customer donations**
- **Assisted with stock replenishment**

Interests

Tip: *Include interests and hobbies that are relevant to the job or highlight a relevant skill.*

Example:

- **Captain of school hockey team (demonstrates leadership)**
- **Currently doing the Duke of Edinburgh Award (demonstrates commitment)**

References available upon request

Tip: *Don't include names and contact details on a CV (although application forms may ask for this.) Always seek permission from a reference before passing their details on to a potential employer.*

WORDS YOU SHOULD NOT AND SHOULD USE IN YOUR CV

Words you should not use

In terms of the actual words you write, almost all recruiters have their own views.

Here are just a few of the most common CV which fail to impress:

- **Excellent communication skills**
- **Goal driven**
- **Flexible**
- **Motivated**
- **Strong work ethic**
- **Multi-tasker**
- **Independent**
- **Detail oriented**
- **Self-motivated**

Most of the words that fall into this list have been around so long that they no longer carry any real meaning.

Obviously, if one of these words is a key element for the role you're applying for, then they can be used.

Words you should be using

It almost goes without saying that you should always be as positive as possible when describing yourself.

But some of the key words you could use include:

- **Accurate**
- **Adaptable**
- **Confident**
- **Hard-working**
- **Innovative**
- **Pro-active**
- **Reliable**
- **Responsible**

Again, it's always important to make sure you back up your attributes.

So, instead of just using an adjective to describe yourself, mention previous experience and responsibilities, as well as your accomplishments (for example, any targets you achieved).

Some pro-active descriptions you could use might be:

- **Achieved**
- **Formulated**
- **Planned**
- **Generated**
- **Managed**
- **Represented**
- **Completed**
- **Implemented**

However, the most important thing is how you use these words.

Formulate strong statements that **demonstrate your skills and experience in action**, using terms that **show you're positive and pro-active** rather than flimsy phrases.