



CONQUERING THE COVER LETTER

The value of a cover letter is an ongoing debate. Even when job descriptions ask for one, there's no guarantee it will be read. But when they are, a well-written cover letter can help you stand out from the pack and increase your chances of securing an interview.

It allows you to introduce your background and interest in the role. It also allows you to demonstrate that you understand the job requirements and how your skills and experience match the role.

A cover letter isn't a one-size-fits-all note. Instead, it should be tailored to each individual position you're applying for. The suggestions below will help you write a that will give you an edge in the application process.

CONTENTS



HOW TO WRITE A GREAT COVER LETTER



PARAGRAPH 1: THE PURPOSE



PARAGRAPH 2: YOUR BACKGROUND



PARAGRAPH 3: SELL YOUR SKILLS



PARAGRAPH 4: WIND IT DOWN



HOW TO WRITE A GREAT COVER LETTER

There's no standard format for writing a cover letter, but we recommend keeping it to a few short paragraphs and definitely no longer than a page. You're not going into detail about every job you have – that's what the interview is for. Instead, you're giving a high-level summary of your experiences and interest in the role.

Your letter should be addressed to the hiring manager for the role. Usually this person is listed on the job ad, but if not, a little detective work can help. Check out LinkedIn and search for the head of the department you're applying for or the talent manager. Even a quick call to the office's general line can help you identify who your letter should be addressed to. If all your sleuthing still hasn't turned up a name, best to not address it to anyone instead of the old-fashioned, dreaded "sir or madam."



PARAGRAPH 1: THE PURPOSE

State the role you're applying for and explain why you're interested in both the position and the company at large. Be sure not to focus on what the company can do for you, but rather what you bring to the table. If a contact at the company referred you to apply, include the person's name here.



PARAGRAPH 2: YOUR BACKGROUND

Here's where you can delve into your work history and education. Keep this section brief – they have your CV as well.



PARAGRAPH 3: SELL YOUR SKILLS

Here's your time to shine. This is where you should describe the skills you've developed throughout your professional career and your education, and **how they've prepared you for the role you're applying for**. Don't include achievements that, while impressive, have no relation to the position at hand. Whenever possible, show, don't tell: use tangible results, numbers, and specific outcomes rather than vague generalisations to describe your experiences and the impact you have made.



PARAGRAPH 4: WIND IT DOWN

samples/attachments to your letter, include the information about them here, so the person understands what they're receiving.

Remember, this is your first chance to speak directly to the employer, and it's easy to tell if you're sending a mass cover letter. Use this valuable opportunity to tailor your letter and showcase your strengths for the role. Good luck!