

COVER LETTER
(Covering letter, Letter of Application)
by courtesy of H.Němcová

1. Why do you write a letter of job application? What's its purpose?

2. What would you like a future employer to know about you?
Note this information down in a list.

3. What do you think the future employer would like to know about you?
Note this down too. Are your lists the same?

Now compare your lists with a colleague's. Discuss the similarities and differences.

4. What should be included in a cover letter?

Use the following format as a guide for your letter:

- Briefly introduce yourself, state the post you are applying for and where you saw it advertised. For a speculative letter, specify the type of work you are looking for.
- Explain why you are interested in this type of work and show an understanding of what it is likely to involve.
- Explain why you are interested in working for this particular employer. Demonstrate enthusiasm and evidence of research into such aspects as their successes, involvements, values or clients.
- Highlight what makes you suitable for this position. Provide evidence of your key strengths by referring to experience listed on your CV. Aim to show that your key strengths reflect their requirements.
- Take the opportunity, if necessary, to explain any anomalies in your background, such as time gaps or ways in which you do not match the selection criteria. Perhaps explain how any hurdles you have encountered have helped you develop in a positive way.
- If the role and organisation are creative, you should reflect this in your writing style. If the organisation is formal, you are more likely to be successful if you write a formal covering letter.
- Ensure there are no errors and spelling mistakes and that you have written the addressee's name correctly.
- Respectfully request an interview or an opportunity for an informal discussion

16th July 2009

Your Address

Mrs. M Foster,
Graduate Recruitment Manager,
Elsewhere Bank plc,
39 High Street,
Manchester. M2 1RS

Dear Mrs Foster **(A)**

My name is John Andrews **(B)** and I am writing in response to your advertisement for a Graduate Trainee on the University of Kent vacancy database. **(C)** I enclose my CV for your consideration.

I first became interested in retail banking during an "Insight" course which I attended during my second year at University. Since then, discussion with my careers adviser and my own research have confirmed my belief that this is a career which will enable me to use not only my interest in business and finance but also my skills in working with people, both in an advisory and a managerial capacity. **(D)**

I am particularly interested in a career with Elsewhere Bank, because of the high reputation of your graduate training scheme, and your commitment to giving new recruits early responsibility. **(E)**

During my time as a student I have had a variety of part-time and vacation jobs, all of which have required me to work as part of a team and to deal directly with the public. I found my work at the Tourist Information Office particularly valuable in teaching me the importance of ascertaining customers' needs and providing clear and accurate information in response to those needs. **(F)**

As part of my degree course, I chose to carry out a final-year project which involved a statistical analysis of 150 questionnaires sent to local employers. To process this information, I taught myself to set up and use a database and felt great satisfaction in completing this project well ahead of the end-of-term deadline. **(G)** Although my overall degree result was a 2.2., this particular piece of work was awarded a high 2.1.

I will be available for interview at any time apart from the 12 - 24 August when I have arranged a holiday in Italy. **(H)** I look forward to hearing from you shortly.

Yours sincerely
John Andrews
John Andrews **(I)**

1. Print your name underneath your signature, so it is legible
2. Gives specific evidence of relevant skills for the job.
3. Starting with your name can show a personal touch.
4. Shows that you have researched the career carefully. Here you can also say what attracts you to the employer (if it is a small company say you prefer to work for a small friendly organisation).
5. Gives evidence of people skills. It is a good idea to emphasise the qualities and skills which are particularly relevant to the vacancy. Summarize your strengths and how they might be an advantage to the organisation.
6. In the final paragraph, indicate your availability for interview. Mention any dates when you will not be available. Thank the employer and say you look forward to hearing from them soon.
7. When you are applying for an advertised vacancy, state the job you are applying for and where you found out about it or if you are making a speculative application, make it clear.
8. Say what attracts you to the particular career.
9. If you know the name of the person in the company you are writing to, then use it.

Adapted from: <http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/cv/standardcovlet.htm>

Job Interview

Listen to the interview and answer the following questions.

(O'Neill, R, Success at First Certificate, OUP, 1987)

- What was the previous job of each applicant?
- What is the reason for changing job?
- What is their personality?

1. Here are some lines from the letters of application of different candidates. Choose the most appropriate and convincing sentence in each group and give reasons for your choice.

- I am familiar with this type of work.
 - I am totally knowledgeable about this type of work.
 - I know this type of work.

 - I am quite interested in this kind of work.
 - I have a genuine interest in this kind of work.
 - I am incredibly keen on and interested in this type of work.

 - I feel sure my studies recommend me for the job.
 - I hope I am right for this sort of work.
 - I am sure I am the best person for the job.

 - I can make decisions when it is really necessary.
 - I always make the best decisions.
 - I am not afraid to make decisions if necessary.

 - I am well-liked by everybody.
 - I can maintain friendly relationships with people.
 - I am a friendly person.
- **Suppose you are writing a covering letter to apply for a job. Pick five adjectives that best describe you. Then write two sentences – similar to those in the previous task – that describe your qualities.**

responsive	determined	flexible	critical thinker	
team player	tactful	confident	persuasive	reliable
creative	self-assertive	organized		
energetic	willing to learn	enthusiastic		
patient	indecisive	defensive	self-motivated	

¹ adopted from <http://www.quintcareers.com/>

A. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. Try to identify the questions you are most likely to be asked in each of the following areas and prepare your responses.

Area	Questions	Response
Education		
Skills and experience Achievements		
Personality		
'Oh no!' questions		

2. What questions should / shouldn't you ask in an interview?

B. MOCK INTERVIEW

Interviewee: Complete the following sentences so that they are true for you.

I think I'm quite.....

I'm not at all.....

I'm sometimes.....

I tend to be rather.....

People say I'm

I can't stand people who are.....

Interviewer:

See an example of the interviewer's notes below. Complete the personal qualities of particular candidates.

During the mock interview take your own notes.

Sarah: I liked her because she seemed very friendly and positive, she smiled a lot during the interview. The only problem was that she found it difficult to make up her mind when I asked her about different situations she could face.

cheerful

Juan: At first I thought what a nice man – seemed very intelligent but then when I asked him why he'd left his last job and if he had any problems he got quite angry. We can't have someone who can't take criticism.

.....

Maria: Very practical and down to earth and no silly answers to my questions. Very honest in her answers and genuinely seems to like her work.

.....

Laura: No, she seemed to think we should be begging her to join us... a big ego! I didn't like the way she kept looking at herself in the mirror either!

Jim: I think he'd be a problem because he wants to be in charge all the time – do everything his way. And he admitted that he thinks it's good idea to tell colleagues their bad points so they can "learn"!

Source: New Cutting Edge, Workbook, J.C.Carr, F.Eales, Pearson Education Ltd 2005

Homework

5. Watch video <http://www.videojug.com/film/how-to-write-a-cover-letter> and take notes.