

Damascus University
Faculty of Arts and Humanities
Department of English
Third Year / Second Semester

Module: Writing for the Workplace

Lecture 5

How to Write a Cover Letter

Hello everyone..

A cover letter, along with the CV, can be a deciding factor in whether you get a job interview or not. It is important because it is part of the potential employer's first impression.

Please keep in mind from the very beginning to personalize your cover letter for each potential employer and do not be tempted to save time by sending out the same cover letter to all.

A cover letter should not contain the same information as your CV. Its purpose is to interpret the data-oriented, factual CV and add a personal touch.

You should explain the reason why you are interested in the job and the workplace. Think about the point of view of the workplace you are applying to and tailor your letter to its needs.

Then identify your relevant skills or recent experiences. Your letter should show that you have a high level of interest in the position and you know a lot about the workplace to which you are applying.

Your letter should follow the basic format of a typical business letter and should be in clear paragraphs saying:

- why you are writing;
- what you have to offer; and
- how you will follow-up.

Before you start to write a cover letter, take time to look at various samples of cover letters available on the net.

On the next page is a cover letter example we will look at.

Example of a cover letter

Your contact information:
full address.
(phone number and e-mail address optional)

Flat 10C Block 11
Toogood Plaza
Shatin, NT
HONG KONG

23 June 20XX

Date: use the full date

Employer contact information:
(if available):
name, title,
company
address

Ms Nicola Yeung
Human Resources Manager
Upmarket Retailing Pty Ltd
407 Thistle Rd
Kwun Tong, Kowloon
HONG KONG

First paragraph:
Include which position you are applying for and where you found the job listing.

Dear Ms Yeung

Subject: Application for the position of Sales Manager

Salutation:
Dear Mr/Ms last name (if you know the name)

I am interested in the position of Sales Manager advertised in the South China Morning Post on 21 June 20XX. I am employed as an Assistant Sales Manager at Peta's Fashion Goods. This position has given me ample opportunities over the past two summers to experience working in the area of sales, in particular women's apparel.

Middle paragraph(s):
Tell the employer what you can offer. Say how your qualifications match the job you are applying for.

Previously I worked in women's apparel at Wing Shing Store where I gained experience in petite size garments as well as in Japanese fashion. In my position as Assistant Sales Manager at Wing Shing Store, I regularly advised the manager on sales issues.

Final paragraph:
Thank the employer for considering you for the position.

A recent part-time course in sales I completed at The Vocational Centre has greatly increased my knowledge of the retail fashion industry in general and in Hong Kong in particular. My extensive experience as a Assistant Sales Manager also well qualifies me for this position of Sales Manager.

I am enclosing my CV to provide you with more details of my sales experience and I hope you will consider me for this position. You can reach me at phoebechan1@hatmail.com or on (852) 2111 1111. I look forward to meeting you and discussing the position further.

Closing:
Yours sincerely
(if you have used a name in the salutation)

Yours sincerely

Yours faithfully (if you do not know the name)

Phoebe Chan

Chan Kit Ying, Phoebe

Signature:
Handwritten
Typed Signature

Content

First Paragraph: why you are writing

You may:

1. be writing in response to a job advertisement.

If you are writing in response to a job advertisement, say where you found out about the position. Include the title of the position. You could also express your enthusiasm for the workplace and how you think your qualifications can bring something to the organisation.

Example:

I am writing to apply for the position of Sales Manager as advertised in the South China Morning Post on 21 June 20XX. I believe I am an excellent candidate for the position.

2. have been referred to this employer.

If you have been referred by a friend or acquaintance, mention the mutual contact, by name, straightaway.

3. want to enquire about the job openings at the workplace.

If you are writing a letter to find out about possible job openings, state clearly which job it is you want. You must grab the reader's attention.

Middle Paragraphs: what you have to offer

If you answer an advertisement, refer specifically to the position listed and illustrate how your particular qualifications, abilities and experiences relate to the position for which you are applying.

Your paragraph(s) should include these three components:

- requirements of the job;
- evidence that you meet the requirements; and
- a conclusive statement to encourage them to hire you.

You don't have to wait for your dream job to be advertised. You may want to work for a specific company; in which case, you may write a prospecting letter to enquire if the company has any positions available. If you write a prospecting letter, describe how you will fulfill the employer's needs rather than focus on what the employer can offer you. You can do this by giving evidence that you have researched the workplace thoroughly and that you possess skills used within that workplace.

Emphasize your achievements and problem-solving skills. Show how your education and work skills are transferable and relevant to the position for which you are applying.

Final Paragraph: how you will follow up

Finish your letter by once again showing your interest in the job. Let the employer know how they can contact you or how you will

follow up, usually with a phone call. Don't forget to include your phone number and/or e-mail address.

In conclusion, you may indicate that your references are available on request if you have not listed them in your CV. Also, if you have a portfolio or writing samples to support your qualifications, state their availability.

Example:

Given my education, experience and personality, I feel I could contribute greatly to Upmarket Retailing Pty Ltd. Please do not hesitate to contact me on 9846 5214 should you have any queries. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Points you should keep in mind when writing a cover letter

- Write your letter on plain white A4 paper.
- Use a simple font such as Times New Roman, 12 point.
- Keep your letter to one page.
- Use paragraphs and plenty of white space to make sure it is easy to read.
- Carefully proofread your final document.

This is all for this lecture. We will have some practice next session.

Stay safe... Stay home!

Thank you!