* Five paragraphs max. Keep to one side of A4
* Don’t waffle - Keep sentences concise. Start sentences with action/doing words. Keep your writing professional/formal
* Avoid generalised statements and clichés. Express yourself clearly, be specific
* Match your skills and experience to the requirements in the job description
* Read through your covering letter out loud to help identify verbose sentences that can be rewritten and will help you check the sense of your writing. **Check spelling, grammar and tense very carefully!**

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| --- | --- |
| **Address/date** | 1st: your address, right side  2nd: their address, left side  3rd: date, right side |
| **Dear** | Named person – ring and ask  Sir/Madam |
| **1st paragraph** | Giving context as to who you are and why you are writing to the employer. Outline briefly your current situation e.g. *‘I am currently a final year Law student at Cardiff University’*. You will usually be writing in response to an advertised vacancy but you could also be taking a speculative approach. If you are applying for an advertised job, you should state where you saw the advertisement and quote any reference numbers. If you are making a speculative application, be very clear about what type of role you are interested in. |
| **2nd paragraph** | **Write about why this type of role? What attracts you to this type of role?**  Demonstrate that you have done your research into the **responsibilities** and **type of work**. This paragraph is incredibly important as it shows the employer that you are motivated enough to find out as much as you can about the role.  Generic approaches/batch emailing, such as “I am keen to work for a large graduate employer with an excellent reputation” won’t cut it.  Re-read the job advertisement or job description and make sure you have done some background research into the work. This will help you tell the recruiter what attracts you to working for them and why you are interested in the particular job.  Provide specific reasons for applying, such as the work they do or the training they provide. Avoid anything that could be said about pretty much any employer, such as ‘… because you’re a prestigious and dynamic employer’. |
| **3rd paragraph** | **Write about why that particular employer? What attracts you to this employer?**  Demonstrate that you have done your research into the **employer** and understand what their **company** is about. This paragraph is incredibly important as it shows the employer that you are motivated enough to find out as much as you can about them.  Don’t copy and paste from the website, when you read a lot of cover letters you can see the ones that are specific, genuine and tailored. |
| **4th paragraph** | **Write about why you?** Tell the employer why you are well suited to the role you are applying for, referring directly to the advert/job description/person specification and concentrating on how you have the **skills, experience and/or knowledge** to excel in the job. Cross-referring to your CV can be useful e.g. *‘You will see from my CV that I …’* but avoid copying statements direct from your CV. Think about how you can rephrase the information or expand on particular skills and achievements you have that are right for the role.  At graduate level remember that it’s fine to refer to work experience that isn’t directly related to the profession you are applying to. You need to show how your current experience ‘transfers’ into the job. Examples from part-time jobs, extra-curricular activities and academic work will all help to demonstrate how you have used and developed skills such as communication, teamwork, problem solving, organisation, time management and commercial awareness.  Do you live in the area where the job is based? If not, is the recruiter likely to wonder if you’re going to have problems getting into work in the morning? You may need to explain that you would be willing to relocate. |
| **5th paragraph** | This is your closing paragraph, be strong and clear. Reaffirm your suitability for the role and your enthusiasm about the prospect of working for the employer. State that you look forward to hearing from them and are happy to provide any further information they need. Indicate your desire for a personal interview, while mentioning any unavailable dates. Finish by thanking the employer and say how you are looking forward to receiving a response. |
| **Signature** | Name = Yours sincerely  No name = Yours faithfully |