

Writing a cover letter

- 7 a Look at the example of a bad cover letter that Felix sent Vicky. In pairs, discuss the mistakes he has labelled (a–o).

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Nat1987@bcs.ac.uk
PrincessNL@gmail.com
14 October 2008

Ace Consultants
45 Strand
London WC2 8LK

b Dear Sir or Madam,

c I would like to apply for a job at your company when I graduate this summer.

d f I have always wanted to work with a strategic management consultancy firm which helps its clients make lasting and substantial improvements, and I cannot imagine a better place to work than Hillier and Thomson.

e g I am extremely confident that my university course has prepared me for a career in management. Whilst at university I had a number of part-time jobs and I would say that my main strength is my ability to get on with other people. I am a very sociable person and through a range of social activities I have perfected my outstanding communication skills.

h i k

l j As you will see from my CV I am not familiar with many computer programmes, but I would like to learn and am sure that I would pick things up quickly. I really want a job which will give me the chance to travel, as this is a particular interest of mine.

m n I would be truly grateful to be invited for an interview and to be given a chance to further discuss my application.

o Yours,
Natalie Laurent

b Match Felix's advice (1–15) to the appropriate parts of the cover letter (a–o) in Exercise 7a.

- 1 Find a named person to write to. b
- 2 Make your letter specific to each company you write to and make it clear what job you're applying for. ____
- 3 Don't copy phrases from websites and brochures. Use your own words. ____
- 4 Make sure the name of the company matches the one in the address. ____
- 5 Research and be clear about the job you are applying for. Strategic management consulting is not the same as management. ____
- 6 Mistakes of spelling and grammar are unacceptable – always double-check. ____
- 7 Make it clear what you bring to the organisation, not just what you can gain. ____
- 8 Don't apologise for skills you haven't got, especially where they are not a strict requirement of the job. ____
- 9 Don't exaggerate your level of skill. Always use examples to substantiate what you say. ____
- 10 End your letter '*Yours sincerely*' (if to a named person) or '*Yours faithfully*' (if not). ____
- 11 Be polite and respectful but not excessively so. ____
- 12 Don't be vague about your aptitudes. Make sure you know what the recruiter is looking for and then provide specific evidence, highlighting key parts of your CV. ____
- 13 Don't start all/most paragraphs with '*I*'. ____
- 14 Use apostrophes correctly (here *its* not *it's*). ____
- 15 Just give one email address (keep this plain and sensible). ____

c Rewrite the cover letter in Exercise 7a, using the language and advice from this unit. Then compare your letter with the model letter on page 111.

d Research a real job that you would be interested in applying for. Spend some time researching the company and the position in more depth. Think about the skills and experience that you have that are relevant for the post and then write a cover letter for the job.

APPENDIX 3

Model cover letter

Baldrick College
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natalie.laurent@bc.ac.uk

1 December 2008

Hillier and Thompson
45 Strand
London WC2 8LK

Dear Ms Ainsley,

I am writing to apply for the position of junior consultant at Hillier and Thompson advertised in *The Independent*. Having read the job description, I believe that my excellent academic record, professional experience and interpersonal skills make me a strong candidate for the position.

As a postgraduate student studying International Relations at Warsaw University, I am currently completing my MA dissertation. Prior to this I spent nine months gaining practical experience in European Public Affairs, during a paid traineeship at CLAN Public Affairs in Brussels. My primary role at CLAN was to monitor developments in the energy sector at the European Commission, and to prioritise and communicate this information in a clear and concise manner, in line with individual client needs. Whilst in Brussels I used my strong interpersonal skills to establish a wide network of contacts. This network, combined with my research and analytical skills, enabled me to identify the information our clients required rapidly and effectively. My efficiency in this role, as well as my ability to communicate clearly with clients and colleagues, led to my promotion to team leader after only three months.

As you will see from my CV, I obtained a competitive scholarship to complete my first degree at North-eastern Illinois University, Chicago. My experiences of studying in America and working in Belgium have taught me how to live and work in diverse and challenging environments. This has helped me to work more effectively, both independently and as part of a team.

I am now looking for a position in which I can use and continue developing my professional skills. I am confident I could bring a great deal to the junior consultant position at Hillier and Thompson. Your advertisement states that the position will require close collaboration with the Central European Office in Milan, which will involve frequent trips to Italy. Having spent many previous holidays in Italy, I know the country and culture well. I have managed to acquire good conversational Italian and am currently taking evening classes to improve my language proficiency in this area. I also have fluent French following my work experience in Brussels.

Should you have any queries regarding my application, or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me. I would like to thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Natalie Laurent

Ms Natalie Laurent