

UNIT 3

Effective cover letters

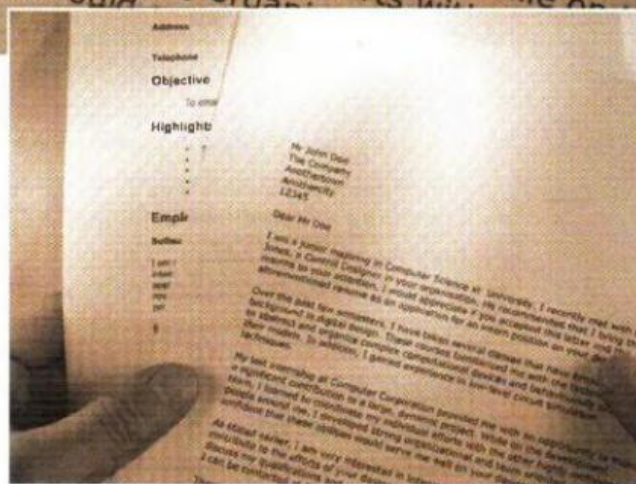
- Identifying features of cover letters
- Beginning a cover letter
- Writing the main body of the letter
- Writing an effective final paragraph
- Using appropriate language
- Writing a cover letter

Identifying features of cover letters

- 1 a In pairs, discuss the following questions.
- 1 What's the difference between a CV and a cover letter?
 - 2 Have you ever written a cover letter in English?
 - 3 What did you write in your cover letter?
- b Complete this introduction to cover letters using the words in the box.

business complement cover letter CV employer
interview introduction persuade position well-focused

- c Find an alternative expression for cover letter in the text.
- d Vicky Tang is the Communications Manager at Green Pharmaceuticals. She wants to change her job and phones her friend, Felix, a recruitment agent, for advice on writing a cover letter. In pairs, discuss what advice you would give Vicky on the following areas.
- the length and structure of the letter
 - the language you would use
 - the content of the letter
- e ▶ 3.1 Listen to the beginning of the phone call and answer the following questions.
- 1 How long has Vicky been working at Green Pharmaceuticals?
 - 2 Why is Vicky looking for a new job?



What is a cover letter?

A (1) CV gives information about the educational qualifications and professional experience you have, whereas a (2) cover letter explains why you want the job. A cover letter should (3) not duplicate, your CV. The main purpose of a personalised cover letter is to (4) persuade the reader to read your CV and consider you for the vacant (5) position.

A cover letter is often your earliest written contact with a potential (6) employer, creating a critical first impression. A well-written, (7) well-focused cover letter demonstrates your written communication skills and will help you to get that all-important (8) interview.

The letter of application should follow the general guidelines for all (9) cover letters. It should have an (10) introduction, a main body, and a final paragraph.

f ▶ 32 Read the statements below and predict whether Felix recommends them (✓) or not (✗). Listen to the rest of the conversation and check your answers.

- 1 Use high-quality paper that matches the paper of your CV. ✓
- 2 Ensure that your cover letter is written using formal language.
- 3 Use the same cover letter for every application.
- 4 Show that you have done some research into the company you are applying to.
- 5 Emphasise your suitability for the post.
- 6 Enclose copies of your educational qualifications and certificates.

g What do you think is the most important advice that Felix gives Vicky?

h Look at the example of a good cover letter that Felix sent Vicky. Read the letter and answer the following questions.

- 1 What is Jane studying at university?
- 2 Where did she work last summer?
- 3 What does she do in her free time?

Jane Nuttall
71 Lambert Road
Brixton
London
SW2 5XL
jane.nuttall@kcl.ac.uk
1 December 2008

a → Jane Nuttall
71 Lambert Road
Brixton
London
SW2 5XL
jane.nuttall@kcl.ac.uk
1 December 2008

b → Ms Diana Allsopp
Recruitment Manager
McClure and Company
Russell Square
London WC1C 9SE

c → Dear Ms Allsopp,

1 I am a final-year student at King's College London reading Economics, and would like to apply for an Associate Consultant position with McClure and Company, as advertised on www.monster.com.

e → **2** Management consultancy appeals to me because it combines analytic research across a wide range of business situations with frequent client contact. I recently attended a McClure and Company workshop run by Charlotte Penton-Smith, and she gave a very positive impression of the company. I was particularly impressed by the excellent in-house training programme which she described, and I would welcome the opportunity to work in such a close-knit team of supportive colleagues.

f → **3** During my time at King's College I have employed a variety of different research methods, and am familiar with the analytical applications of spreadsheets. For example, for my recent dissertation, I used Excel to compare the effects of tax increases on alcohol and tobacco consumption. In addition, when I was working at the Williton branch of Costcutter over the summer, I presented suggestions for improving the layout of the store to the regional management team. They decided to put these ideas into effect and sales rose by 7% over the autumn quarter.

g → **4** During my free time, I sing in and manage a jazz band, arranging concerts and gigs and managing the band's accounts. I very much enjoy collaborating with a team of people with similar interests and working towards shared goals. I am also learning Italian by attending weekly evening classes and studying on my own towards the A-level exam next June.

j → **5** I enclose a copy of my CV and hope very much to be invited for interview.

k → Yours sincerely,
Jane Nuttall
Jane Nuttall

h → **3** During my time at King's College I have employed a variety of different research methods, and am familiar with the analytical applications of spreadsheets. For example, for my recent dissertation, I used Excel to compare the effects of tax increases on alcohol and tobacco consumption. In addition, when I was working at the Williton branch of Costcutter over the summer, I presented suggestions for improving the layout of the store to the regional management team. They decided to put these ideas into effect and sales rose by 7% over the autumn quarter.

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d → **1** I am a final-year student at King's College London reading Economics, and would like to apply for an Associate Consultant position with McClure and Company, as advertised on www.monster.com.

i Match Felix's advice (1–12) to the parts of the cover letter (a–l) in Exercise 1h.

- 1 Give your contact information and current date. a
- 2 End 'Yours sincerely' and type your name under your signature (indicate Ms or Mr if not obvious). l
- 3 Give a clear context – say who you are and why you are writing. c
- 4 Your sign-off should be friendly, polite and to the point. b
- 5 Point out your aptitude for the sorts of skills they are seeking. d
- 6 Name any employee you have met and say why they impressed you. e
- 7 Your use of leisure time can show you are a well-rounded person. f
- 8 Support your claims with evidence, focusing on results and achievements. g
- 9 Include the name, title and full address of recipient. h
- 10 Mention where you saw the job advertisement. i
- 11 Explain your motivation for applying. This also shows you have done your research and learned something about the sector. j
- 12 Show you are acquiring additional useful skills. k

j Look at Jane's cover letter again. In which paragraph does she:

- 1 explain her interest in the position? 3
- 2 create a positive final impression? 5
- 3 demonstrate her skills and experience relevant for the position? 2
- 4 introduce herself and explain her reasons for writing? 1
- 5 mention other relevant skills and interests to impress the employer? 4