

## Material Imprimible

Curso de Redacción de CV y cartas de presentación y entrevistas laborales

### Módulo 2

#### **Contenidos:**

- what a cover letter is for
- the importance of research
- structure of a cover letter
- differences between an email cover letter and a print one
- sections of a cover letter
- useful vocabulary
- hard and soft skills
- the writing process
- cover letter templates
- common mistakes
- cover letter for an academic position

## Cover Letter

A cover letter is sent along with your CV but it should not repeat the information contained in a CV. It should complement it. Its main purpose is to convince a recruiter to read your CV and since it is your first contact with the recruiter. It should create a good and professional first impression and demonstrate:

- how interested you are in a job
- your attention to detail
- your written communication skills
- which benefits the company will get if it hires you and
- your suitability for the position

There are some special considerations we should bear in mind when preparing the cover letter, that is:

- in regard to register, the language should be formal. To illustrate, contractions, slang and phrasal verbs must be omitted.
- in relation to length, it shouldn't be longer than a single page.
- regarding placement, if you send your cover letter by email, paste it in the body of the email. Concerning the CV, it should be sent as an attached PDF file to prevent any subsequent changes.

As the cover letter should be tailored to the position we are interested in, before writing we should do some research. What should we find out?

- who will read our application
- the skills and experience demanded for the position
- our prospective employer, the company's culture, mission and values
- the company's competitors and its market position
- the industry or sector and any trends or new developments
- the company's future aims and challenges

For starters, check company's website, then, its executives' Twitter feeds and employees' profiles on LinkedIn. The results of that research will allow us to customize our cover letter and be bespoke of each company and position in our realm of interest. It also

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shows our knowledge of the organization and field. After doing the corresponding research, we should be able to answer these questions:

- What does the company do?
- what services or products does it offer?
- how does it describe its culture?

The answer to those questions will also help us decide if it is the type of company we want to work for.

### **Different elements of a cover letter.**

It should include:

- a salutation, which will vary depending on whether you know the recipient's name or not
- an introduction, which should be short and to the point
- a body to let the recruiter know why they should choose you
- an ending to finish the letter or a professional and positive note
- a closing or close, which is a signoff
- your signature, with your full name and contact information

### **The differences between cover letters sent by post and those sent by email.**

We should be aware of those differences because they are found at the very beginning of cover letters. What about having a look at them?

- First, a cover letter sent by post doesn't include a subject line, which must be present in a letter sent by email.
- Second, the applicant's and the employer's contact information is placed at the top of a letter sent by post but it's omitted in one sent by email.
- Finally, the date is written in a cover letter sent by post but not in one sent by email.
- Just bear with me to talk about these differences in detail.

## **Subject lines**

Are only present in applications sent by email. They are important because it is the first thing hiring managers see in their inboxes. If you leave the subject line blank, the chances are that your email will be marked as spam or end up in the trash folder. There are different ways to write the subject line. Let's see how.

- You can include the title of the position you are applying for in response to an ad followed by your name. Remember that a company may be hiring for several positions and it is essential for you to help them identify the position you're interested in fast. For example: "Architect – Claire Henderson".
- If the job ad indicates an id number, you should include it in the subject line. To illustrate: "Application for chemist – ID 123 – Oscar Simmons"

Here are more examples for different situations:

- In addition to the position you are applying for and your name, you may indicate where you saw the job advertised. As an illustration, "Accounting position (LinkedIn) – Fiona Miller".
- If someone in your potential employer's company referred you, make sure to add that person's name in the subject line together with the title of the position and your name. For example: "Referred by Amy Sims for waiter position – Ian Alby".
- If you are sending a cold email job application, that is, a spontaneous application and not one in response to an ad, you can start the subject line with the words "job inquiry" or "job application" followed by the position you would like to get and your name, for instance, "Job inquiry for biologist position – Paul Walter".

## **Cover letters sent by post.**

The first part should include your contact information, that is:

- your name, for example, John Doe

- your address, for example, 23 Main Street, Dayton, Ohio, 45401
- a phone number where your potential employer can reach you, for instance, 789-123-4567
- your email address, [john.doe@hotmail.com](mailto:john.doe@hotmail.com)

A space should separate your contact data from the date. For an advertised job application, write a reference line with the words "Re:" or "Subject:" followed by the job title or job ID. Place one line of space before the reference line and one space after it.

What comes next is the employer's information which should include:

- employer's name, for example, Mr Jason Preston
- the employer's title, as an illustration, Human Resources Manager
- the company name, ABC Corp. in this case
- the company address, for example, 500 Main Street, Dayton, Ohio, 45401

If you don't have the employer's information, just include yours. Then, you will skip a line and write the salutation, such as Dear Mr Preston.

## Salutations

It is always better to address your application to a specific person. If the ad indicates the person, make sure to include it, for example, "Dear Mr Henderson". If you can't find out the name of the recipient of your application, the salutation can be "Dear Sir or Madam" or "Dear Hiring Manager". In relation to punctuation, I would like to point out that after the name of the recipient of your email, you can write:

- a comma, typically British,
- a colon, typical of the US

In British English, the abbreviations Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms and Dr are not followed by a period while in American English they are. If you aren't sure of the person's gender, include the first name and the last name in your salutation, without any sort of title that reveals gender, for example, Dear Taylor Ford.

Let me make a final comment about salutations and their relation to closings. The salutation chosen will dictate the closing you will have to write. If you indicate the recruiter's name, for example, "Dear Mr Henderson", then you should close the cover letter by writing "Yours sincerely" whereas if you write down "Dear Sir or Madam", you should finish the email with the words "Your faithfully".

### **The introduction or opening paragraph of a cover letter.**

The introduction is your chance to grab the recruiter's attention and to prompt them to keep reading the letter. It tells the recruiter:

- the name of the position or area where you want to work
- the source of information, that is, how you learned about the position, and
- why you are interested in the position or the company.

The introduction of a cover letter may change depending on three scenarios. You may you send your application:

- for a solicited job, which means in response to an advertisement
- for an unsolicited job, which means an application sent out of your own volition hoping that the company has a vacancy to cover.
- as a referral, in other words, you were referred by a contact, probably someone who works in the company you're applying to or someone who knows the recruiter

Next, we will concentrate on introductions for those three scenarios.

First, let's look at *an example of an opening paragraph* for a solicited job:

- "I am writing to express my interest in the mathematics teaching position listed on Bumeran.com, on May 3rd 2020. Having helped students master math skills and concepts for over twenty years, I am confident that I can make a positive contribution to your school and community."

I'd like to analyze the example together. The candidate includes the following elements:

- the name of the position advertised: mathematics teaching position.  
Needless to say, you can also mention the area or sector where you want to work and not a specific position. As recruiters are often looking at candidates for several openings at the same time, you should make it easy for them to discover your intent.
- the source of information: bumeran.com
- the date of the publication: May 3rd 2020
- the qualifications that match the requirements for the position: over twenty years. This candidate has broad experience in the teaching field and if the school is looking for a seasoned teacher, this applicant will be an ideal match. Besides the candidate shows how he added value to his employers, that is, by helping students master math skills and concepts.
- the benefits the employer will get if the candidate is hired: a positive contribution to the school and community.

### **The introduction for a Spontaneous application**

Your purpose is to convince your potential employer to read on. Let's have a look at an example together:

- "I am writing to enquire about a sales position after reading that your organization is on the Great Place to Work list. I was impressed to learn that your company provides high quality consultation services to the hospitality sector. I am currently looking for a position where I can apply my sales and language skills for the benefit of a company that cares for its employees' wellbeing and specializes in international events."

It goes without saying that you must not forget the position or area where you want to work. Besides, you should show knowledge of the employer's activity. The job seeker in the example knows what type of business the company is in and that it is on the Great Place to Work list, so it seems that this applicant keeps up with the news related to his field. You also have to explain why you are interested in the organization. In this

example, the job seeker wants to work for a company that takes care of its employees' wellbeing. It goes without saying that you must not forget the position or area where you want to work. Your experience, skills or accomplishments should undoubtedly be present in this paragraph.

### **The introduction for a referral scenario**

It's time for us to switch our attention to an example of an opening paragraph in which someone referred a job-seeker to a position.

- "Thomas Sherman, a collaborator of your research and development department, told me that ABC Corp. is searching for a seasoned industrial engineer and suggested I submit my CV to you. My degree in industrial engineering awarded by the University of California and my expertise in production optimization at Top Engineering Ltd. will help me contribute to your expansion operations."

This example starts by mentioning the name of the person who referred the candidate, Thomas Sherman, and the contact's position and area: a research and development collaborator. If you have a contact at your prospective employer's organization, you should indicate this information at the beginning of the letter. Referrals are one of the best ways of securing an interview as it is like getting an employment reference in advance. Even if the company doesn't have an official employee referral program, having a shared contact will probably speed up the hiring process. Without a doubt, the position you are looking for, the qualifications you have that set you apart from other competitors as well as the benefits the employer will get if they hire you can't be left out.

### **Sentences that you may use when writing the introduction of your cover letter.**

We'll concentrate on preposition in introductions

- *I am writing in response to your job posting for an architect on your company's webpage.* We should write "in response to" a job posting or advertisement. The word "posting" is followed by the preposition "for"



and then the name of the position. The preposition "on" is used for information we find on webpages and websites.

- *I would like to apply for the position of chemist in your firm as advertised on Bumeran.com.* You apply "for" a job or position, but you apply "to" a company. The word "position" is followed by the preposition "of" and, then, the title of the position. Bumeran, LinkedIn, etc., are pages or sites, so we should say that a position is advertised "on" them.
- *I am a final-year student who is about to graduate with a degree in biology from the XX University.* The word "degree" is followed by the preposition "in" and what you studied. The same preposition is used for a master's or PhD. Then, you have a master's degree in history and a PhD in biotechnology, for instance. Also, you have a degree "from" a specific university.
- *I am writing to inquire about possible employment opportunities with ABC Ltd.* Whenever you use the verb "inquire" meaning that you want to ask for information, it should be followed by the word "about" and then a noun or noun phrase.

Since we are not native English speakers, we can't run the risk of seeming to lack English knowledge and we have to be really thorough to avoid a mistaken use of nouns and verbs. Let me share with you some examples to use a noun and its corresponding verb.

- I think I have sent off more than thirty applications recently but I haven't applied for the job advertised on Glassdoor site yet.
- The company decided to place a job advertisement in one of most popular newspaper in the city and it is advertising for a human resources manager.
- After graduation, I moved to Germany where I pursued other studies and graduated in physics. Keep in mind that the word "graduate" can also be used to refer to the person who finishes higher education studies. We

should use the preposition “of” after the word and say, for example, that “John is a graduate of Yale University”.

- Jason Anderson matches the requirements for the position but if you require further information, we can contact him.
- James Miller recommended I should apply for the post and even wrote a recommendation letter for me.

### **The body of a cover letter**

The body of your cover letter is your chance to demonstrate suitability for the position. Before writing it, you should review the job posting and write examples of your skills, experience or education that match the requirements for the position. Include in each paragraph a compelling reason why your employer should hire you but avoid explaining your entire CV.

Although there are no rules on how to structure the body, the following guidelines will help you organize the information:

- The first paragraph is about what you have to offer the employer. You can include examples of the work you performed and the results you achieved, expand on the skills you indicated in your CV and also describe your academic qualifications that are relevant to the role.
- The second paragraph gives you the chance of stressing what you can do for the company and outline your career goals making sure that they are closely related to the job you are applying for. You can show knowledge of the company by including some of the company’s goals and how you can help them achieve those goals.

### **Describing work experience**

In relation to length, the body should be two paragraphs. If you have little work experience one paragraph is enough. Now let’s turn our attention to an example on how a candidate can show that they have the necessary experience to do a job:

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- “According to your advertisement, the job requires a person with marketing background to increase company's site traffic. I have such experience since, in my present role as marketing assistant at ABC Company, I have increased online queries for our standard product packages by 80% in 6 months, which resulted in a 30% rise in company's profits”

Let's dissect the different sections.

- The paragraph starts with the words: “according to your advertisement, the job requires a person with marketing background to increase company's site traffic”. It shows that the candidate reviewed the job advertisement and is aware of what the company is searching for.
- Then, the candidate wrote: “I have such experience since, in my present role as a marketing assistant at ABC Company, I have increased online queries for our standard product packages by 80% in 6 months, which resulted in a 30% rise in company's profits.” In that part the candidate makes a connection between his work experience and the company's needs. This candidate gives an example of work he performed and includes metrics by indicating that he increased online queries by 80% in 6 months. The applicant also explains what result that action had on the organization, that is, a 30% rise in company's profits.

### **Enhancing work experience**

The most credible examples are specific, not general. Let's look at two examples to appreciate the difference in impact.

- In the first example the candidate wrote: "as a marketing assistant I have helped at various campaigns and made presentations".
- Now let's analyze the second example in which the specifics outlined are connected with the employer's needs. “As a marketing assistant I have

supported marketing executives in the organization of five digital campaigns this year and I have prepared and delivered promotional presentations”

In the second example the candidate used the verb "support" instead of help and he specifies:

- who he's supported,
- what types of campaigns he's been involved in,
- how many campaigns and
- the period during which he's given this type of support.

Clearly, the applicant has given detailed information.

Now let's focus on the last part: “I have prepared and delivered promotional presentations”. If we use the verb "make" with the word "presentations", it is not clear whether we just prepare them or deliver them as well. Besides, indicating the type of presentations will show what we are capable of doing for our prospective employer.

### **Why a Repertoire?**

If you have a long career, you may lose track of your accomplishments. For that reason, a "repertoire" of accomplishments would allow you to easily look for the ones that are suited for a particular application. This list will also help you save time because you won't need to start writing the middle section of your cover letter from scratch every time you compose one.

### **Repertoire of accomplishments**

The accomplishments can be categorized according to the skills or experience you want to highlight or any other criteria.

Let's have a look at an example:

- “I am a team leader who champions individuals and teamwork and always ensures that each team member receives feedback and coaching in order to achieve the team and the company's goals. In my present position I have overseen a team of 30 staff through three projects that generated a

45% increase in sales. This result was possible thanks to the identification of each teammate's talents and by communicating instructions in a clear way."

This candidate illustrates the type of leadership he exercises and supports his skills as a leader with an undisputable result: a considerable rise in sales.

### **Useful expressions for describing work experience**

The following expressions are useful to write about your experience. I would like to give you some examples on how to use them.

- "My former experience as a team leader has offered me the chance of developing strategies to promote team compliance with internal regulations." Let me say that, unlike Spanish, the article "a" or "an" should always go before the profession or position and after the words "chance of", a gerund, in other words, a verb ending in "ing".
- "Since 2010 I have worked for ABC Company and that enabled me to gain experience in the biochemistry industry." As a reminder, let me point out that "since" indicates the precise moment an activity starts and it includes the present.
- "Prior to my current position, I worked for DEF Company, where I specialized in database administration." You can use the adjective "current" or "present" to refer to the position you have now.
- "Attached is my CV outlining my greatest achievements which have been in classroom management as well as curriculum planning. "
- "My experience in solution architecture has led me to the belief that a senior software development engineer position should be the next step in my career ladder". This is a way of showing that you are interested in a position of more importance or responsibility than your present one.

## **Soft skills**

You may also cover your relevant personal traits and soft skills in this section of the cover letter. Rather than a list of traits or skills, offer evidence that you really have them. We should write something specific to a role because it is not enough to say that you are a good team leader. If unsure of what skills you should focus on, read again the ad and choose keywords to include in the body of your letter. In the following example the candidate provides proof of his abilities:

- “Within my previous role as a team leader, I guided a team of forty people by coaching team mates and building consensus for the adoption of ten customer care oriented measures thanks to my negotiation skills.”

The applicant described his leadership experience, the way he led people (by coaching and gaining consensus) and let his negotiation skills shine through. Numbers and specific information are included, which increases credibility. Keep in mind that nowadays many companies choose attitude over aptitude.

## **Hard skills**

Hard skills, are job-specific abilities we acquire through education or training They can be measured and evaluated and they are focused on specific tasks and processes. They are important because they increase employee’s productivity. Here’s an example of this section:

- “I have attached my CV which provides details of my skills as a web developer. My knowledge of web development using HTML5, CSS 3 and JavaScript has helped me create user friendly websites and, consequently, increase companies' revenues.”

This candidate explains the type of hard skills he possesses (web development) and how those skills have been helpful resulting in an increase in companies’ revenues. This paragraph clearly exemplifies how he put his hard skills to use because indicating “web development knowledge” is insufficient.

If you are applying for a highly technical job, you should place your most important skills first. Remember to include keywords from the ad but if it doesn't provide much information, you can repeat buzzwords from other postings for the same role. An online portfolio with work samples allows you to display your past work and show what you can you do.

The following examples illustrate how we can describe both our soft and hard skills.

- "I have remarkable communication skills that can translate into quality customer service." If one thing translates into another, the second one happens as a result of the first one. In this example the job-seeker's communication skills result into quality customer service.
- "I am known for my ability to tap into the creative potential of teams." Don't forget that the word "ability" is followed by the word "to" and then a verb in the infinitive form.
- "I excel at management thanks to the blend of my problem-solving skills and my decision-making abilities." If you excel in something or at something, you are excellent at doing it. A blend of two abilities is just another way of saying "a combination of two abilities".
- I am well-versed in Six Sigma and Agile Management. If you are well-versed in something, you know a lot about that.

### **Educational background**

We shouldn't forget that what companies are interested in is not the courses you have done but what you can do for them. Rather than "I have completed medical terminology, general healthcare office procedures and database management courses", write: "Courses in medical terminology, general healthcare office procedures and database management have helped me develop the skills required to be a medical administrative assistant at ABC Company." This example shows employers how your education can be of benefit for them. The information you should focus on will change depending on your level of education. Choose your strongest qualifications and,

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definitely, the ones that fit the position advertised. If you are a student or if you are a recent graduate with little work experience, you'd better turn the spotlight on your educational background and its practical applications. If you are an honours student or if you have a high GPA (grade point average), it is useful to mention this in the letter. Now let me give you some examples that you can resort to when you describe your educational background.

- My educational background includes a degree in human resources, which contributed to the development of my teamwork and communication skills, two key requirements for the position at your firm.
- The courses in immigration laws and security management that I have taken have helped me master the necessary skills and knowledge to be a customs agent.
- My training at ABC Technical School fulfills the requirements for the position of assistant product manager as I am highly skilled in ensuring the quality of products.
- My educational background in graphic design has provided me the tools to help you design graphics for logos and websites.
- The knowledge I have gained in the courses taken at ABC Institute are directly related to the position of production editor, namely, a profound understanding of the publishing sector.

### **Salary requirements**

The rule is not to include your salary requirements if the job listing doesn't require so. However, some ads require applicants to include salary expectations and sometimes if you are completing an online application, the system won't accept your application if you don't indicate what salary you expect to earn. Let's analyze the following example to know how to write this requirement.

- "Per your request and given my extensive experience in the automobile industry, my salary requirement is in the \$2,000 and \$2,500 per month



range depending on the incentives offered and opportunities for advancement”.

You'd better indicate a salary range, rather than a specific amount; otherwise, you will be left with no room for negotiating. The range should be based on research you have done. Bear in mind that if your salary requirement is lower than the average, you may come across as unprepared. If you ask for a salary that is higher than the industry average, you may not be called for an interview. In Argentina, we make salary requirements on a monthly basis but in other countries the requirements are per year. You should also state that your salary requirements are open to negotiation based on benefits, career prospects, overall compensation package, responsibilities, etc.

### **The ending or closing of a cover letter**

In the ending or closing paragraph you restate why your skills and experience match the position requirements, you indicate your availability for the job, you suggest a meeting or when you plan to contact the recruiter. Typically, you thank the recruiter for their time and consideration. I'd like to share with you an ending which is a great way to end a cover letter written in response to an ad.

- “The description of my qualifications and vast experience demonstrate my desire to put my sales skills to work for you. I would welcome the opportunity to meet you in order to learn more about the challenges of implementing a new system for handling customers’ complaints. I will call you on Monday 10th to see whether we can schedule an interview. Thank you for reviewing my letter and attached CV.”

You can take advantage of the closing paragraph or ending to briefly restate your unique selling point, that is, what makes you different from the other candidates and an excellent fit for a particular job. In this example, the candidate possesses vast experience and the necessary qualifications and skills. The candidate also shows willingness to attend an interview and to be further acquainted with the company’s challenges. This last element indicates that the applicant used information from the job listing and

customized his letter accordingly. This job seeker has an assertive approach and shows his intent to contact the reader on a specific day. The letter finishes with a thank-you line.

Now it is time for us to have a look at the closing paragraph of a cover letter written for an unadvertised position, in other words, a spontaneous application.

- “I would appreciate the chance of joining ABC Company since I believe that my vision and values align with the company. I am willing to take on a secretary position immediately and I am available for an interview at your earliest convenience, where I can explain in detail how I can contribute to your organization. I would like to express my gratitude for considering my application.”

As you can see, especially if you send an unsolicited application, you should explain why you are interested in working for that firm. In this example, the job seeker feels that his and the company’s vision and values match. In the last paragraph, you can also indicate availability for the job. The candidate also indicates that, if asked to do so, he would be please to attend an interview. The applicant ends the letter by thanking the reader but as this applicant has a way with words, he uses the structure “I would like to express my gratitude”, after which, he uses the preposition “for” and, then, a verb with “ing”.

## **The writing process**

### **How to get started**

If after learning all this information about writing letters, you feel a little overwhelmed, don't panic. Here is a list of steps you can follow to organize the information you want to include in your cover letter:

- Prepare a template including the typical elements of a business email, such as salutation, closing and signature.
- Then, go for an inviting first paragraph. Think about a hook. If the position requires experience, start explaining your expertise in a certain industry. If the job requires strong academic credentials, start by indicating the

degree you have. Also, write a sentence showing your interest in that particular position and make sure to build on that sentence in the following paragraphs.

- Next, the second and third paragraphs should provide strong arguments that answer the question "why should we hire you?". You can write one paragraph about your professional experience thinking about specific projects and accomplishments. The next paragraph can be about your academic background that will add credibility to your professionalism. In both paragraphs make sure to emphasize the hard and soft skills that have helped you achieve your goals.
- After that, write the closing paragraph and wrap up the cover letter with the elements we mentioned earlier.
- Finally, go back to the advertisement again and compare your letter to the ad. Are there any keywords that you failed to include? Is your letter aligned with what the company needs?

### **From the beginning to the end**

Each cover letter we write should be tailored to the specific job we want to apply for. Let me give you an example that for a project management application, from beginning to end, where we'll zero in on the body.

- This example starts with a salutation:
  - Dear Mrs Atwood:.
- Let's move on to the introduction:
  - "Having led over 30 projects in the healthcare industry, I am excited to read your recent posting for a project manager, as advertised on your website, on May 1st. The prospect of working with such a dynamic organization as ABC Company is exhilarating and it would be an honour to contribute the skills I have honed throughout my ten years of experience to your firm."

Now, what if we read the first paragraph of the body of the cover letter?

- “According to the job advertisement, you are seeking a project manager who is able to communicate across all organisation levels. At Top-Notch I have succeeded in communicating with and managing cross-functional project teams while developing and directing projects from conception to delivery. My keystone project involved planning and implementing the Aon Hospital \$5 million renovation. By means of careful organization and ability to establish and maintain relationships with clients, stakeholders and collaborators, my team and I managed to deliver the project on-time and \$5,000 under budget.”

Now, let’s focus on the first paragraph of the body. It starts by indicating the ability requested in the job advertisement and then matches it with the candidate’s skills. Afterwards, the job seeker describes an accomplishment (a keystone project), how it was attained (by means of...) and the result it brought about (on-time and under-budget delivery). Metrics (\$5 million) were also included in the description of the accomplishment.

It is time to move on to the second paragraph of the body.

- “Furthermore, I have solid educational foundation that supports my work and that includes a degree in Business Administration awarded by DEF School. During my university studies, I became well-versed in the management of project integration, scheduling and costs and I would love to apply that knowledge to help you facilitate the development of project deliverables.”

I’d like us to discuss the second paragraph. The candidate focuses the second paragraph on his higher education. Rather than just mentioning the degree he has, the applicant explains what he learned (management of project integration, scheduling and costs) and how that knowledge can be of benefit for his prospective employer, that is, by facilitating the development of project deliverables. However, if you don’t have a degree or if your educational background is not solid or quite relevant to the position, you could

draw your potential employer's attention to the skills and capabilities you have that cater for the employer's needs.

Finally, we should concentrate on the ending and the closing.

- "My problem-solving capabilities as well as my ability to orchestrate projects are some of the contributions I would bring to your company in order to help keep ABC Company ahead of its competitors. Should you have any questions or wish me to attend an interview, please contact me at 555-5555 or by email at james.jones@hotmail.com. Thank you for your time and kind consideration. Yours sincerely,"

This candidate reiterates key aspects of their profile that are advantageous to the employer and shows willingness to clear up doubts or attend an interview. As it is customary, the applicant thanks the employer at the end of this paragraph. Regarding grammar, in the phrase "should you have any questions", the modal "should" goes before the subject "you" just to make the sentence more formal. I would like to remind you that as the salutation was "Dear Mrs Atwood", the proper closing is "Yours sincerely".

### **Mistakes**

If you are new to job hunting or if your English level is a bit rusty, make sure to double-check your letter so that you don't make any of the following mistakes. Let's see the following example:

- "To whom it may concern, As I'm a big fan of your company I read your ad and I would like to apply. As my CV shows, I have 10 year experience in administration and , IMHO, I was born for this job!!! "

This example starts with the salutation "to whom it may concern". It is archaic, so avoid it. "As I'm a big fan of your company I read your ad and I would like to apply." Apart from the fact that the position is not specified, we can spot the following mistakes:

- If the sentence starts with the linking word "as", we should use a comma in the middle to separate the two clauses. In addition, the use of "as" is not correct because it fails to connect a result with its reason

- Contractions are not suitable in formal writing.
- "Big fan" is an example of informal language.
- Rather than "ad", we should write "advertisement" because full forms are preferable.

Let's go to the following section: "As my CV shows, I have 10 year experience in administration and, IMHO, I was born for this job!!!"

- What's wrong here?
  - First, we should avoid repetition and "as" is used twice.
  - IMHO stands for "in my humble opinion" and this type of acronym is completely out of line.
  - "I was born for this job" may show a lot of enthusiasm but it is informal. In addition, the exclamation mark is another big mistake.

Let's see the following example and let's analyze which mistakes we must avoid.

- "Despite coming from a different field, I learn fast and these are the reasons why I am right for it: Wrote reports for the top management. If you want to farther discuss my qualifications, then please give me call. Hope to hear from you soon. Cheers, Joe

Now let's concentrate on the following sentence: "Despite coming from a different field, I learn fast and these are the reasons why I am right for it." What mistakes have you spotted?

- "Despite" is used to show contrast and it doesn't do so in that sentence.
- The word "it" at the end of the sentence doesn't have a clear reference.
- The job-seeker wrote reports for the top management but doesn't specify which kind.
- The candidate indicated that he was going to provide reasons but he only mentioned one, which clearly fell short of relating his achievements to the company's needs.

The last paragraph reads as follows: "If you want to farther discuss my qualifications, then please give me call. Hope to hear from you soon. Cheers, Joe " What is wrong?

- Rather than "want", use "would like", which is more formal and polite.
- "Farther" with letter "a" is used to refer to physical distance. "Further" with letter "u" is the right word here.
- We don't ask recruiters to give us a call, we may suggest that they contact us and then we should provide our phone number.
- Don't use "hope" to end a cover letter. Try "look forward to".
- "Cheers" is an informal closing. Clearly, this applicant can't tell the difference between formal and informal language.
- Finally, the signature should have included Joe's full name and not just his first name.

### **Cover letters for academic positions**

Cover letters for a faculty position at university greatly vary from business cover letters. Academic cover letters emphasize your past and present academic career. They are longer than one page but they shouldn't be more than two pages. Investigate the university and target department in order to closely connect their orientation with your philosophy.

Let's analyse an example:

- "Dear Mr Thompson, It is with pleasure that I submit my application for the position of professor of modern history in the department of international politics, as advertised on your department webpage. With three years of experience teaching and mentoring university students as well as doing administrative and research activities in my present position as assistant professor of history at DEF University, I am confident that I will make a significant impact on your university.

The first paragraph is used to indicate what position you are applying for, where it was posted, what your present position is and where you work.

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Let's go to the second paragraph.

- “As my CV illustrates, over the past three years I have taught numerous history courses at DEF University, including “The Vietnam War” and “Newspaper History” where I engage students by resorting to collaborative platforms and keeping my courses student-centred. ”

If you are applying for a teaching position, you should indicate what experience as a teacher you have and what your values and approach to teaching are. If you have co-taught courses with distinguished professors, don't forget to include this information. For research-only position, explore your research experience before your teaching experience and indicate any grants and funding you have received to carry out your research activities.

The next paragraph reads as follows:

- “Additionally, my current research explores the changes of society due to the industrialization”

For space sake, this example paragraph doesn't include much information but keep in mind that here you should explain what your research vision is, your methodology and how it fits the applied position, department and university.

Is there anything else we can include?

- If you have international experience or if you have worked in both academic and industry, make sure to include and relate those points.
- Don't forget to give evidence of your soft skills which may be relevant to the position, such as supervising students, managing other staff and project planning.
- Make comments on any awards or recognition that you have received for your teaching or research activities.



The last paragraph reads as follows:

- “Therefore, my experience and credentials combined with my passion for education enables me to provide the highest standards of teaching and research at your university. I would enjoy discussing this position with you in the weeks to come. If you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your consideration. Yours sincerely,”

In the last paragraph you can also offer to provide additional materials like writing samples and letters of recommendation.