

## Writing a covering letter

Your covering letter is usually the first thing employers see when they open your application. Follow the tips below to help ensure their first impression is a good one:

- **Always use a Strong Opening**

Ensure your opening paragraph grabs the readers interest, for example:

*Weak Opening – ‘I am applying for the fashion design vacancy’.*

*Strong Opening – ‘Your vacancy is an excellent match to my Fashion Design BA and Vivien Westwood work experience, achieved in my second year at University’.*

- **Sell yourself**

A cover letter, like your CV, is a marketing tool that sells you as a candidate. It should be compelling and give the main reasons why you should be called for an interview. A captivating cover letter should emphasise your top accomplishments.

- **Don't repeat your CV**

Your cover letter shouldn't just be a repeat of your CV. Make sure it doesn't dull the impact of your CV.

- **Be specific**

Always reference the specific job title in your cover letter. The person reading it may be reviewing hundreds of letters for a range of different jobs. Make sure your cover letter explains how you will meet the specific needs of this particular job.

- **Tailor made**

If you're applying to a number of similar positions, ensure you tailor the letter correctly to each specific company - don't be tempted to send out a circular.

- **Minimise the use of ‘I’**

Avoid the impression of being self-centered by minimising your use of the word ‘I’, especially at the beginning of a sentence.

- **Ensure all points are covered**

If your cover letter is only a couple of paragraphs long it probably doesn't have enough relevant information. If it exceeds one page, it probably has too much.

- **End with a ‘follow-up’ and a ‘thank you’**

In your final paragraph, say you will call in a few days to answer any questions they may have and leave your phone number should they wish to call you in the meantime. You should also thank the reader for their time and consideration.

- **Sign your letter**

Always sign your letter, unless you are sending an e-mail where a signature isn't necessary.