

Cover letters in depth

COMMUNICATION

LEVEL
Upper-intermediate

NUMBER
EN_BE_3A03X

LANGUAGE
English

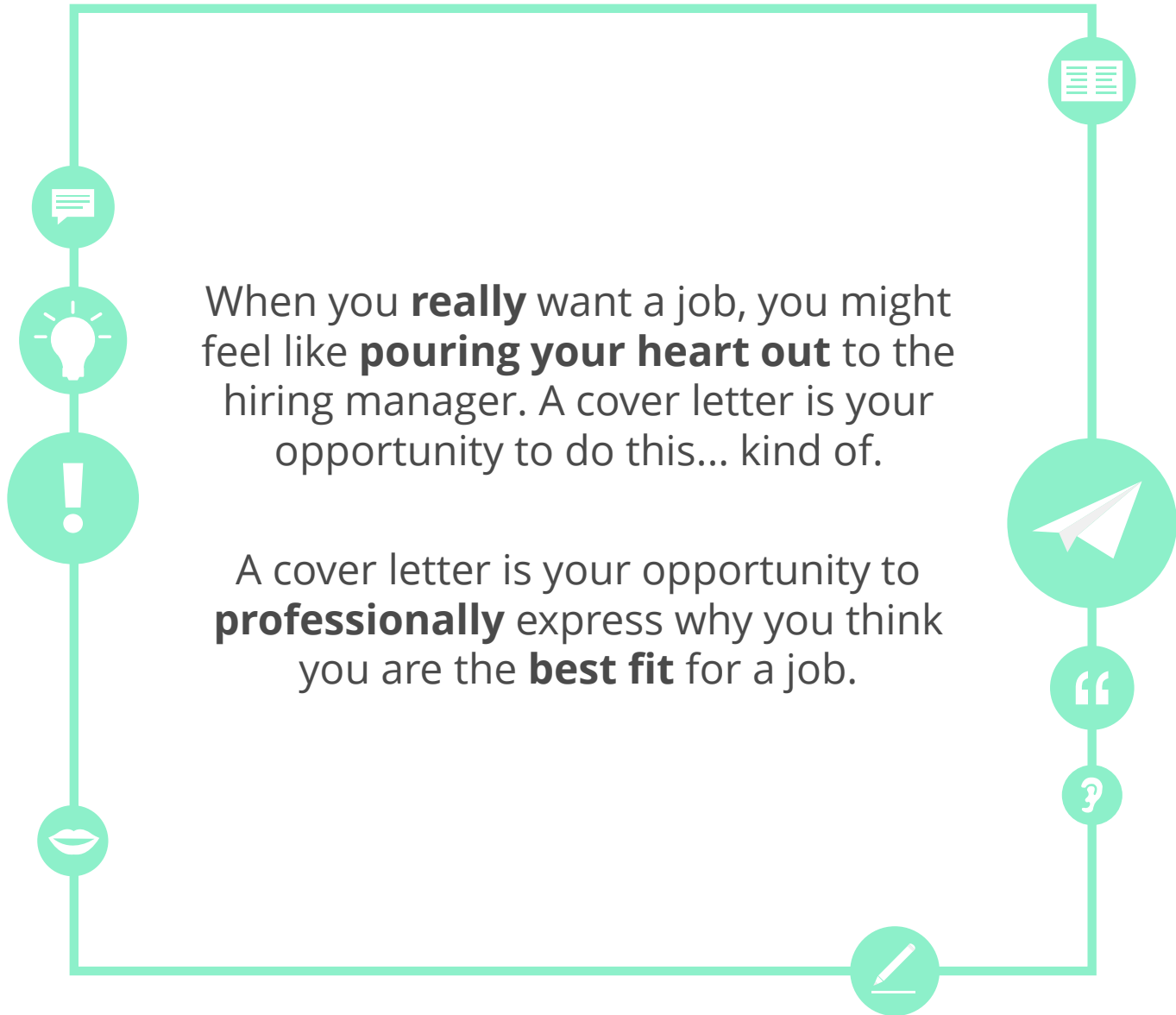




Goals

- Can understand the typical structure of a cover letter and advanced expressions
- Can use new understanding and phrases to read and write an example cover letter







Preview and warm-up

- You may have already learned about the **general format** and **content** of a cover letter. Today you will go more in depth and learn how to make your cover letters **stand out**.



What do you already know about **cover letters**?



Discuss the questions

**What do you
already know about
cover letters?**

**Have you ever
written a cover
letter?**

**Do you always
write a cover
letter when
applying for a job?**

**What is the hardest
part about writing a
cover letter?**



Cover letters from top to bottom

- If you are used to **writing e-mails**, writing letters might feel a little unfamiliar. The boxes below show the **general structure** of a cover letter.

- Your cover letter should include your contact details as well as the contact details of the person to whom you are writing, even if you're sending the letter by e-mail.
- Use the hiring manager's name, if possible.
- Be sure to close your letter with a professional sign off.
- You should also sign your letter. Either print it out or use an electronic signature.

Amelia K. Jobseeker
123 Oak Street,
Hepworth, UK
YR2954

Esther P. Liebowitz
Country Living Magazine
33 Hedgerow Lane
Suffolk, UK

Dear Ms. Liebowitz,

[In the body of your letter you explain what makes you an amazing candidate. Strategically share your skills and experience.]

Sincerely,
Amelia K. Jobseeker



Diving into content

- What should you say in your cover letter? You want to provide a **brief** outline of **who you are** and **why you're qualified**.

A cover letter should provide...	What the reader will learn:
educational background	Do you have the right qualifications?
relevant skills	What could you bring to the position?
relevant employment	Do you have useful experience?
a personal touch	Do they get a sense of you beyond your CV?



A **cover letter** is an opportunity to say why you'd be a good candidate for a specific job.



Getting started with the right words

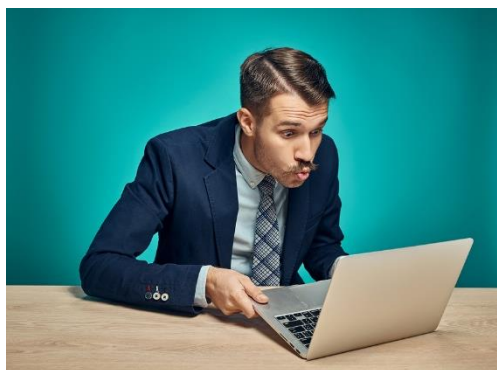
I wish to apply for
the post of...

I wish to apply for the
post of Operations
Manager which is
currently available at
your company.



I am writing in
response to...

I am writing in
response to your
advert on
nonprofitcareers.co.uk.



I would like to apply
for the position of...

I would like to apply
for the position of
International Education
Coordinator, and
believe I am well-suited
to this role.





Finding the right words to describe yourself

to be suited to something

Due to my experience teaching abroad, I **am suited to** the intercultural aspects of this position.

to have experience with

I **have experience with** all aspects of technical training: planning, implementing, delivering and evaluation.

area of expertise

The acquisition of new clients is a particular **area of expertise**. In my last position, I attended trade fairs and networking events to expand our client base by 6%.

to be highly motivated

I **am highly motivated** and go the extra mile to succeed.



Ending your cover letter professionally

Thank you for taking the time to read my application.

Thank you for taking the time to read my application. I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

I am available for interview on...

I am available for interview on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays. Please feel free to contact me by e-mail or telephone to arrange this.

Please find my CV attached.

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.
Please find my CV attached.

to welcome the opportunity

I **welcome the opportunity** to share more about my background with you and your colleagues.

references

My **references** will be happy to provide you with more details about my work history.



Fill in the gaps

Fill in the gaps with the word or phrase that fits best.

tasks

area of
expertise

welcome the
opportunity

have
experience

am suited to

1. I _____ the role due to past experience managing large corporate events.
2. In addition to a degree in accounting, I _____ managing teams, and pride myself on my ability to build rapport.
3. I _____ to learn new skills, and have obtained several professional certificates since beginning my current role.
4. My role includes many diverse _____, ranging from coaching employees to creating strategic plans.
5. The Asian financial market is my _____, as I've worked in this field for over ten years.

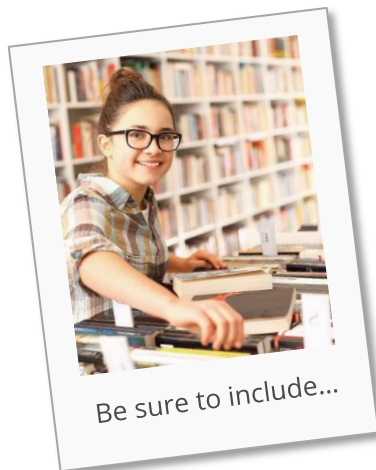




Cultural differences in cover letters

We're learning about writing cover letters in English.

What's typically included when writing a cover letter in your mother tongue?



What advice would you give someone who is writing a cover letter in your native language?



Sample cover letter

- Sally is applying for a position as an Associate Digital Editor for *Foreign Trends Magazine*.
- The job description mentions **editing online content**, including articles, interviews and social media posts; **developing strong relationships** with reporting staff; **updating digital content** in a fast-paced newsroom; and **increasing multimedia features** on the magazine's website.

Read Sally's cover letter on the next two pages.





Example cover letter (1/2)

Read through the main body of Sally's cover letter.

I wish to apply for the post of Associate Digital Editor, which is currently being advertised on your website. I am a highly motivated content editor and website developer with over five years of experience in print and online publications, from local magazines to academic journals. I would be thrilled to contribute to a publication as renowned as yours.

My combination of editorial, writing and video production experience make me an ideal candidate for this role.

My past responsibilities have included writing and editing online content for *New York Outdoors*, a regional publication that focuses on outdoor tourism. One feature I worked on was the most-shared article of the year. As a writer myself, I know I can build strong relationships with reporters. I am skilled at collaborating across departments when reporting, editing and delivering the news.



Example cover letter (2/2)

Continue reading the main body of Sally's cover letter.

Multimedia journalism is one of my areas of expertise. I produced video content for *Brooklyn Beat*, a well-respected daily news source. I also completed an internship at a local radio station, focusing on sound editing. Thanks to my experience in local news, I am used to working in fast-paced settings and meeting deadlines. Moreover, as I currently balance several freelance positions, I manage a daily schedule that includes producing videos, posting on social media and editing articles.

I would welcome the opportunity to share further information regarding my background and qualifications. Please find my CV and writing samples attached.



What did Sally do well?

- Sally's cover letter is written in a clear, easily readable style and is error free.
- Other strategies have helped her as well. Read about them below.

Sally **mirrored the language** used in the job description in her cover letter.

Sally focused on the **hard** and **soft skills** she can offer: writing, editing, video production and relationship building. She talked about tasks she accomplished in her past jobs.

Sally's cover is **concise** and **to the point**. It answers the question: why am I a qualified candidate for this job?

- As you can see, the **job posting** or **description** is helpful when writing a cover letter. It gives you **clues about what to highlight** in your letter.

reflecting language used in a job posting

When applying for a job, you should **identify the responsibilities of the job** and any qualifications listed in the posting. Now ask yourself:

- How does my experience match this?
- How would my experience or training make me successful, even if my experience is in a different field?
 - What have I done that could enhance this role?
 - Which of my skills are required for this job?



Mirror some of the language used in a job posting. For example, if a post requires someone to **analyse sales data**, you might write about how you have **analysed customer satisfaction data**.

tailoring cover letters

By **tailoring** a cover letter, or making it match the position description, you are more likely to **get the attention of the hiring manager**. Other strategies include:

- Mention the organisation and why you want to work there.
 - Reflect language used in the job posting.
- Highlight the experience you have that is most relevant to the job or organisation.
- Focus on the relevant qualifications, skills and interests that bring you to this job rather than generically reiterating your CV.



A **tailored cover letter** is much more memorable than a generic one!



Which of the skills listed in 1-4 are reflected in statements A-D?

A

Though we were a small department, management skills were essential. I managed three colleagues and helped our department hit its sales targets for five quarters in a row.

B

As a founding employee of a small tech startup, I participated in strategic planning, identifying goals for growth and sustainability.

C

I was the manager of the sales department and have experience on both sides of sales: setting goals and hitting them. I believe this experience translates well into new business acquisition.

D

I am a natural networker and tend to leave conferences with at least five new business cards.

1. Candidates should have experience managing teams.

2. Identify and build relationships with new partners and clients.

3. Meet pre-established benchmarks for new business development.

4. Create strategic plan for expansion into emerging markets.



Reflecting your own experience

**Think about your own work, academic and volunteer experience.
How would you tailor a cover letter to demonstrate your experience
with the skills listed below?**

Developing and implementing strategies
to help our brand grow.

Communicating our mission, values and
goals with internal and external
stakeholders.

Project management, including
overseeing budgets, timelines, work
plans and team meetings.

A spiral-bound notebook with lined pages. The pages are white with light blue horizontal ruling. There are faint, large circular patterns in the background of the pages. The notebook is shown from a slightly elevated angle, with the spiral binding visible on the left side.



Tailoring experience for a dream job

The posting below is for a position with Sunshine Year, an Australian firm that organises gap years for recent secondary school graduates. The requirements for the position of student and family liaison are listed below.

1. Arrange and coordinate student placements.
2. Develop and maintain partnerships with hosting organisations for student volunteers (such as schools, nonprofits, environmental advocacy groups, etc.).
3. Evaluate student progress and satisfaction during gap year. Identify problems with placements as they arise.
4. Communicate with internal and external stakeholders, including students, programme alumni and families. Produce social media content and quarterly newsletter.
5. Support planning and execution of student induction and end of year celebration.



**Your friend, Dan, wants to apply for this job.
You'll discuss the job and his application over the next few pages.**



Highlights from your friend's CV

You ask Dan to talk about his past work and educational experience. Knowing his education, employment and skills background will help you assist him in writing his cover letter.

1. **Camp Counsellor:** I was a camp counsellor for four years. I planned fun activities, did arts and crafts and directed campers' plays. I also was trained in first aid and was a lifeguard.
2. **Café Server:** I worked in a café while I was finishing my degree. I actually helped the café go from serving only coffee to being a nice lunch spot as well.
3. **Office Manager:** I've been working as an office manager at a travel agency. I take care of a lot of the finances, maintain an office calendar and am the first face that clients see when they come in.
4. **Student:** I studied English Literature at university and took a number of courses in Cultural Studies.





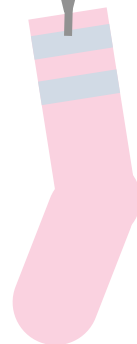
Relevant experience

Discuss the questions below with your teacher or classmates.

- What experience does Dan have that is relevant to the position mentioned on p. 21?



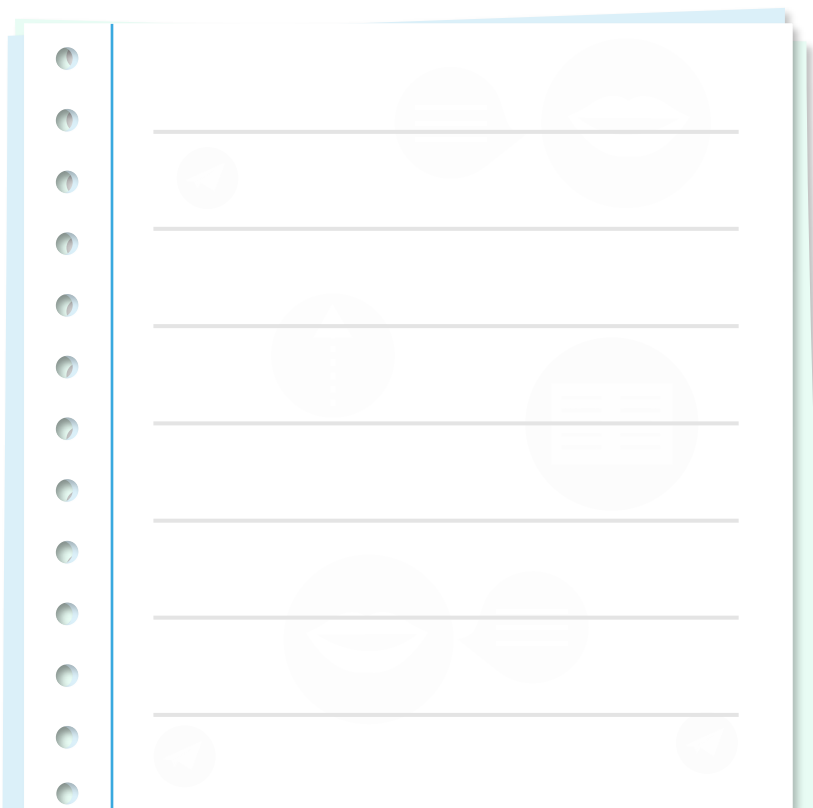
- How can he tailor his experience in his application?





Writing the cover letter for Sunshine Year

Now that you've discussed the position, Dan's experience and how you might tailor his cover letter, it is time to write. Write a brief cover letter (c.150 words) detailing why he is a good candidate for this job.





Reflect on the goals

Go back to the second slide of the lesson and check if you have achieved all the goals of the lesson.

yes

no





Reflect on this lesson

Think about everything you have seen in this lesson.
What were the most difficult activities or words? The easiest?



If you have time, go over
the most difficult slides again



Answer key

Exercise p. 19
1a, 2d, 3c, 4b

Exercise p. 11
1. am suited to, 2. have experience, 3. welcome the opportunity, 4. tasks, 5. area of expertise





Categorise the following strategies as either suitable or unsuitable for a cover letter

a. use a sign off like sincerely, yours or best

b. include your contact information

c. address your letter generally, simply writing *dear sir or madam*

d. keep your cover letter short – less than a page is ideal

e. highlight the most relevant skills for the job

f. use the same writing style as you'd use on a CV

g. mirror the language used in the job posting

h. provide a very detailed account of all your experience

i. show some personality

j. write one good cover letter and use it for as many jobs as you can

k. describe your CV point-by-point

l. express why you want the job

suitable

unsuitable



Writing a cover letter

You get an e-mail from your sister, who needs help writing a cover letter. Respond to her e-mail with tips for writing the letter and some suggestions about language she could use.

-□×

To: <me>

Subject: Cover letter help

Hi there!

I'm applying for a job as an intern at a language school in Beijing. I think it would be so fun – you know I love language education and travel! I had a great time when I attended that language school in Moscow, remember? I just think it would be great to help international students have a fun and educational summer.

Anyway, I just can't get started with my cover letter. Any tips?



Homework answer key

Exercise p. 29
Suitable: a, b, d, e, g, i, l
Unsuitable: c, f, h, j, k



About this material

Find out more at
www.lingoda.com



This material is provided by

lingoda

lingoda Who are we?



Why learn English online?



What kinds of English classes do we offer?



Who are our English teachers?



How do our English certificates work?



We also have a language blog!