


## M 2 The structure of a business letter – a cover letter

A cover letter<sup>1</sup> is part of every application. Its structure is the same as any other business letter.

Mr Ben Smith ABC Ltd 12 North Street Brighton BN1 1RE England	B	Elena Winter Rotebühlstraße 2 70178 Stuttgart Germany	A
		19 February 2017	C
Dear Mr Smith	D		E
<b>Your job advertisement of 17 February 2017 on <a href="http://www.careersforall.com">www.careersforall.com</a></b> I have seen your advertisement at <a href="http://www.careersforall.com">www.careersforall.com</a> and I am very interested in the open position. I'm currently training to be a sales assistant in the automotive industry and looking for an opportunity for work experience abroad. After over two years of experience in international sales through my in-company training, I possess the necessary qualifications you list as requirements. I'm a native speaker of German and have strong English competence from dealing with international business partners and customers. Moreover, I have strong computer skills as I work with MS Word and Excel on a daily basis I would welcome a personal interview to discuss my qualifications. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.			F
Yours sincerely	G		
<i>Elena Winter</i> (Elena Winter)	H		
Encl. CV Certificates	I		



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**Task:** Label the different elements of the cover letter with the words from the box.

signature block • letter head or sender's address • inside address or recipient's address  
 salutation<sup>2</sup> • subject line<sup>3</sup> • body of the letter (with a formal sentence for closing)  
 complimentary close<sup>4</sup> • date • enclosure(s)<sup>5</sup>

### Vocabulary

1 **cover letter:** das Anschreiben – 2 **salutation:** die Anrede – 3 **subject line:** die Betreffzeile – 4 **complimentary close:** die Schlussformel – 5 **enclosure(s):** der/die Anhänge

## M 3 Writing a business letter – British vs. American layout

Find out about the difference between a British and an American business letter.

**The date:** The form in a British letter is the same as in a German letter. First comes the \_\_\_\_\_ (a) then the \_\_\_\_\_ (b) and at the end the year, e.g. 12 January 2017. The “th” for the ordinal number<sup>1</sup> is omitted<sup>2</sup>. In an American letter we write the month first followed by the day and the year comes at the end, e.g. January 12, 2017 or 01/12/2017. Don't forget to put a \_\_\_\_\_ (c) after the month.

**The salutation<sup>3</sup>:** In modern British \_\_\_\_\_ (d) there is no \_\_\_\_\_ (e) after Mr and Mrs. The salutation \_\_\_\_\_ (f) is not used any longer. Nowadays we use \_\_\_\_\_ (g) instead which is valid for both married and unmarried women. After the salutation there is no comma, e.g. “Dear Ms Saunders”. In an American letter we put a period<sup>4</sup> after Mr and Mrs and a \_\_\_\_\_ (h) after the salutation, e.g. “Dear Mr. Harris:”. “Mr” and “Mrs” are omitted when there is a title (Professor, Dr.), e.g. “Dear Dr. Jones”.

**The body of the letter:** Remember that, unlike in German, the first word of the \_\_\_\_\_ (i) of the letter has a \_\_\_\_\_ (j). This applies<sup>5</sup> to British as well as American letters.

**The subject line:** British letters have the subject line between the salutation and the body of the letter. We do not write RE as it is obsolete<sup>6</sup>. In the American form the subject line appears between the recipient's<sup>7</sup> address and the salutation.

**Salutation and complementary close<sup>8</sup>:** As the following tables show, there is sometimes a link between salutation and complementary close.

### British English

Dear Sir or Madam	→ Yours sincerely
Dear Ms/Mr Brown	→ Yours _____ (k)
Dear Lisa/John	→ With best regards / Best regards / Regards

### American English

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:	→ Sincerely, / Sincerely yours,
Dear Ms./Mr. Brown:	→ Sincerely, / Sincerely yours,
Dear Lisa/John:	→ Cordially, / Sincerely,



**Task:** Read the info-text above about the differences between British and American business letters. Then fill in the gaps with the words from the box.

colon • body • sincerely • Ms • comma • correspondence  
sincerely • day • capital letter • period • Miss • month

### Vocabulary

1 **ordinal number:** die Ordnungszahl – 2 **to omit sth.:** etw. weglassen – 3 **salutation:** die Grußformel – 4 **period:** hier: der Punkt – 5 **to apply to sth.:** für etw. gelten – 6 **obsolete:** veraltet – 7 **recipient:** der Empfänger – 8 **complimentary close:** die Schlussformel

## M5 Practise using tenses in a cover letter

*Simple present and present progressive are the tenses used most often in a cover letter.*

### Present progressive

**I am writing** to apply for the post of Sales Assistant in your company.

**I am seeking** a position in the automotive industry.

**I am training** to be an office management assistant at a small company in the metal industry.

→ We use the present progressive to talk about things that are happening at or around the time of speaking. The action is not complete.

### Simple present

**I speak** English and Spanish fluently.  
basis.

**I work** with international clients on a regular basis.

**I use** MS Word and Excel on a daily basis.

**I have** the following responsibilities in my job.

→ We use the simple present to talk about things that are always true and things that happen repeatedly.

**Task 1:** Fill in the correct tense of the verbs in brackets. The info box above will help you.

- a) David \_\_\_\_\_ (work) for a company in the South of London.
- b) What are you doing? I \_\_\_\_\_ (write) a letter to a company in Munich.
- c) Every day Penelope \_\_\_\_\_ (deliver) packages to local companies.
- d) We \_\_\_\_\_ (work) on a new project at the moment.
- e) My colleague isn't in. He \_\_\_\_\_ (attend) a computer course now.
- f) In my free time I \_\_\_\_\_ (play) football and \_\_\_\_\_ (listen) to music.
- g) I \_\_\_\_\_ (look) for a new job around Berlin.

**Task 2:** Translate the following sentences into English. Make sure you use the correct tense.

- a) Ich habe die Erfahrung und die notwendige Ausbildung für diese Arbeitsstelle.
- b) Ich arbeite zurzeit in einer kleinen Firma in Sheffield.
- c) Ich plane im Moment eine Veränderung meiner Karriere.
- d) Ich habe die mittlere Reife (in English: GCSE) an der Goethe-Schule in Stuttgart gemacht.
- e) Wir interessieren uns für Kandidaten mit ausgezeichneten Englischkenntnissen.
- f) Unser Chef arbeitet momentan für drei Monate in Shanghai.

## M 4 I've seen your advertisement – what to write in a cover letter

*Find out how to write a cover letter.*

The cover letter is the first page of your application. It shows the employer that you have the qualities needed for the job. A good cover letter is essential because most employers spend only half a minute looking at each job application.



Here a step-by-step guide and an example:

### Opening

The introduction should be short, to the point and it should explain why you are writing. Make sure you address your cover letter to the proper person. It is also useful to include where you found the advertisement and where you are working at the moment.

### Writing the main part

Why are you suitable for the job? Briefly describe your qualifications that are relevant to the role and ensure you refer to each of the skills listed in the job description. Do not forget to mention further skills, such as foreign languages, computer skills or certifications.

### Closing

In the last part you should mention your willingness to meet personally for an interview. It might also be useful to mention from which date you will be available for the interview and to work at the new job. Thank the person you are writing to for the time and close with one of the standard phrases for applications.

...

I have seen your advertisement at [www.careersforall.com](http://www.careersforall.com) and I am very interested in the open position. I'm currently training to be a sales assistant in the automotive industry and...

After over two years of experience in international sales through my in-company training, ...

Yours sincerely  
Elena Winter

**Task:** Complete the letter of motivation in your own words. Be creative, when writing about Elena's motivation, skill set and experience.

## M 7 Useful phrases for the main part of a cover letter

The following phrases help you to write the main part of a cover letter.



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**Task 1:** Rearrange the letters of the jumbled words to find the complete phrases. The first and the last letter is always in the correct position.

- a) I am confident<sup>1</sup> (cndenonift) that I am well qualified for this position.
- b) My \_\_\_\_\_ (ecienperxe) perfectly matches your requirements.
- c) I have been \_\_\_\_\_ (repsnobsie) for order management.
- d) I hold a Bachelor's \_\_\_\_\_ (dreeeg) from Cologne University.
- e) I have strong computer \_\_\_\_\_ (silkls) in MS Word, Excel and PowerPoint.
- f) I \_\_\_\_\_ (pssesos) the necessary qualifications your company needs.
- g) I have been working in the IT \_\_\_\_\_ (bsenysis) for three years.
- h) I am a team \_\_\_\_\_ (peyalr), work well under pressure<sup>2</sup> and am self-\_\_\_\_\_ (mvateotid).
- i) I have a \_\_\_\_\_ (dmpiloa) as an industrial clerk from the Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK) in Bonn.
- j) I possess<sup>3</sup> over five years of experience in this \_\_\_\_\_ (fleid).
- k) As you can see from my \_\_\_\_\_ (cilrucurm vaite), I am competent in English and Russian.

**Task 2:** Look at the example sentences above and make a list of standard phrases for each of the three categories. Add own phrases you know.

General information	Education <sup>4</sup>	Experience and skills
I am confident that ...	I have a diploma as a ... from ...	I am a team player.
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

### Vocabulary

1 **confident:** zuversichtlich – 2 **pressure:** der Druck – 3 **to possess sth.:** etw. besitzen, über etw. verfügen – 4 **education:** hier: die Ausbildung