

'FIRST CLASS' RESULTS

- using top tips from the pro's



First Class Results for Writing Cover Letters

'Make it simple, but significant'

Cover letters are a significant part of the recruitment process today. In fact, an impactful letter can be one reason why the recruiter will go on to look at your CV. But you only get a short window of time to make an impression, so your words count! A boring covering letter will probably mean that your CV will go on the reject pile, without even getting read.

There is a simple framework to follow when writing cover letters, and I'll give you the 'secret recipe' below. Follow it to the letter and you won't go far wrong!

- 1. HOT TIP 1** Your cover letter should *never* be more than 1-page long. Please do not be tempted to write more!
- 2. HOT TIP 2** Always try to get the name, title and address of the person who it is going to. Most adverts will give this information. Copy names carefully! Attention to detail says a lot about a person.
- 3. HOT TIP 3** Date your letter. Type out the date in full, for example 4th December, 2017. Don't be tempted to abbreviate.
- 4. HOT TIP 4** Salutations. If you know who you are addressing the letter to, write for example, Dear Ms. Ware, or Dear Mr. Smith. Do not put their Christian name in that line, or indeed just address them by their Christian name. For example, no – Dear Christine, or Dear Christine Ware. If you don't know who the letter is going to then just address it Dear Sir/Madam.
- 5. HOT TIP 4** This is the body of your letter.

Paragraph 1 You need to state in this 2-line opening what you are applying for (the position) and where you saw it advertised. This will get you brownie points with the recruiter as: a) they don't have to 'guess' the role you want, and b) it will give them an indication of what advertising works for them. I would always put the title of the role in bold lettering so it stands out.

Paragraph 2 Answers the question *'why them?'* This gives you an opportunity to admire the company (without going over the top). You need a reason why you have 'chosen' them. Perhaps it is a company you know about? Or you know people who work there? Perhaps you have heard good things about their placement opportunities from other undergrads? Or you follow them on social media. Whatever it is, you just need a short paragraph to let them know they have been 'specially selected' 😊

Paragraph 3 Answers the question *'why you?'* This is where you need to look very closely at their requirements and mirror and match back why you fit the bill. Don't just regurgitate words you have used in your CV, but really think about how you can impress on them how you can 'add value' to this role and make a difference. If you need to, you can extend this to a fourth paragraph, but not more than that.

Paragraph 4 Is your **close** and **'call to action'**. This can be a 2-liner again to say something like 'If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on (insert your mobile number in bold lettering).'

- 6. HOT TIP 5** Your farewell. If you addressed your letter Dear Sir/Madam, you end it Yours faithfully (small f). If you addressed your letter Dear Mr. Smith, then you end it Yours sincerely (small s).