# Writing a cover letter

This activity pack will guide you through the key elements of writing a cover letter, including what a cover letter is, what it includes, and tips on how to write a good cover letter. It includes worksheets to guide you through the process and videos from businesses who will share their expert advice. By the end, you'll be able to write a cover letter to apply for a job.

## 1. What is a cover letter?

**Activity:** Take a few minutes to think about what a cover letter might be. Have you heard of cover letters before? What is a cover letter and what is its purpose? Write down your ideas.

**Watch:** Writing a cover letter Video 1 – What is a cover letter?

**Reflect:** How did your ideas compare to what Harshul told you? Was your definition correct? Did you know what the purpose of a cover letter is?

### KEY LEARNING

- A cover letter is sent alongside your CV to apply for a job.
- A cover letter can support an application for a particular job, or it can be 'speculative' – that means you send it to an employer you would like to work for to let them know you are available for work, if an appropriate vacancy comes up in their company.
- A cover letter expands on your CV and gives more detail about your skills and experience, and why you are a good match for the job and company you are applying to.

## 2. What is included in a cover letter?

**Watch:** Writing a cover letter Video 2 – What is included in a cover letter?

**Activity:** Choose a job from the **Job adverts** document. Now use the **My Day, My Skills** worksheet to think of three extracurricular activities or hobbies you currently partake in that would be relevant to your chosen job. Use the **Skills Buzzwords** sheet to identify and write down the skills you've gain from your daily activities.

If you completed the **My Day, My Skills** worksheet for the CV writing activity, choose up to three examples from this that showcase the relevant skills needed for your selected job. Or, you might be able to think of more examples that are more relevant to the job advert.

**Reflect:** Match your identified skills to those listed in your chosen job advert. Have you got examples of when you have used each skill? If not, are there other examples you can draw on, or are there areas you want to build on?

### KEY LEARNING

- Every cover letter you write should be tailored to the job you are applying for.
- Expand on relevant skills, qualities and experiences you have obtained from extracurricular activities or hobbies that will make you the best person for the job.
- This is a key opportunity for the employer to get to know you and for you to explain why you are interested in the role.

## 3. What makes a good cover letter?

**Watch:** Writing a cover letter Video 3 – What makes a good cover letter?

**Activity:** Now you are the judge. Look at the **three cover letter examples** for the customer advisor role at Leicester City Council. Using the **cover letter scoring worksheet**, assess each cover letter and give them a total score. Think about what they did well and what they could improve. Finally, choose one cover letter that you would take through to the interview stage.

**Reflect:** Are there any common mistakes that the students who wrote these cover letters made? What will you bear in mind when writing your own cover letter?

### KEY LEARNING

- Ensure your cover letter is addressed to someone specific; this gives you a better chance of having your cover letter read.
- Make sure your personality shines through in your cover letter.
- Think about what you can offer the company; this is an opportunity to showcase the skills you can offer in the role.
- Once your cover letter is complete, read it aloud to spot any typos or ask someone else to read over it for you.
- Make sure your letter looks neat and tidy. Use an easy to read font.

## 4. Write a cover letter

Now that you know what a cover letter is, what they include and how to write a good cover letter, it's time for you to have a go at writing one yourself! Pick one of the **job adverts** in the pack (you can use the same one you worked with in part 2 if you want) and write a cover letter to apply for the role.