





# Cover Letters in British and American English

INSA Centre de Ressources en  
Langues

# **Cover letters in British & American English have a few differences.**

*To show differences during this presentation:*

## Cover Letter Example Key

- UK: 
- USA: 

# What is a Cover Letter?

It's a letter written to a potential employer to explain:

- ***Who you are***
- ***Everything you've learnt during your experience that makes you a good candidate for this job***  
(studies; academic projects; professional and volunteer experience; technical and personal skills)
- ***Why you want to work for them and how you would use your skills to their benefit***

# What is a Cover Letter?

The opportunity for you to sell yourself:

*What makes you unique?*

- Highlight your **best qualities**
  - Experiences that show intelligence, responsibility and dedication
- Speak to a **specific audience**
  - Show what you can bring to this particular company

## **Before you start,**

- Research the company
  - Company Website
  - Company Advertisements
  - Company Culture
  - Job Description
- Adapt your letter to the job description
  - Make it easy for the employer to visualize you working/studying in their establishment

# Heading

Contact name

Title

Company

Address

Applicant's Name

Address

(USA) Monday, December 15, 2013

(UK) Monday, 15 December 2013

*RE: Application for internship in the Electronics department, ref. 4180*

Dear Mr. Palmer, or Dear Sir/Madam,

# **FIRST PART:**

## ***Introduce yourself***

- Who you are
- Why you are writing
- Where you heard about the job

### **Examples:**

- I am a fourth-year student currently studying for my Masters in Engineering at INSA (National Institute of Applied Sciences) in Lyon, France...
- I am writing to enquire about the possibility of...
- I am writing to apply for the position of...

## **SECOND PART:**

# ***Experience, Skills, Qualities***

- Highlight ONLY the *skills and qualities* that correspond to the job description
  - Technical Skills: software, hardware, laboratory research
  - Personal skills: team-work, leadership, time- management, **organisation/organization**
  - Qualities: creativity, motivation
- Show how you developed and improved these *skills and qualities*
  - Education: academic projects, courses
  - Experience: internships, summer work, volunteer work



# **Second Part:**

## ***Example***

### ***Using an academic project to highlight management skills:***

- During my third year at INSA, I was a team manager for an academic project in my thermodynamics class. I oversaw a team of four students who all had different needs and skills. Over the course of three months, I learned how to divide up the project tasks in ways that suited each individual's work methods and skill set. Thanks to this management experience, I discovered how important it is to a successful outcome both to challenge your team and to make the best use of their strengths and skills.

## **THIRD PART:**

# ***Application of your skills to job position at company***

- WHY and HOW the experiences and skills *that you have already discussed* will be useful to the company/ establishment you are applying to

## ***Also...***

- What motivates you to work or study in this particular field at this particular organization

# THIRD PART:

## *Examples*

### ***Application of Skills:***

- The strong teamwork and communication skills that I developed as a manager of [Association Name] will help me to integrate quickly and efficiently into your company.
- Because of my willingness to exchange ideas with others, I look forward to collaborating with the members of your research team.
- Thanks to my experience working with international students on school projects, I would be excited to be part of a multicultural environment once again.

### ***Motivation:***

- I am looking for an opportunity to deepen/further this knowledge/these skills...
- [Company name] attracted me because of your globally renowned success in...
- I am especially interested in your laboratory because of the research you do concerning...

# Closing

## Closing Examples

- Please find my resume/CV enclosed.
- Please do not hesitate to contact me for further information.
- I remain at your disposal for further information.
- I look forward to hearing from you soon.

## Closing Formalities

**Yours faithfully,** (if you started with Dear Sir/Madam) **(UK only)**

**Yours sincerely,** (if you started with their name) **(UK only)**

**Sincerely,** **(USA)**

**Remember to sign the letter using a pen!**

## How to Translate French Education/ Qualifications into English

<b>FRENCH</b>	<b>ENGLISH</b>
Prépa	Intensive Undergraduate Program/Course in Engineering Sciences
Premier Cycle	Undergraduate Program/ Course in Engineering Sciences
ASINSA/AMERINSA/ EURINSA	Department with emphasis on foreign exchanges and international scientific connections in Asia/Latin America/Europe

## How to Translate French Education/ Qualifications into English

<b>FRENCH</b>	<b>ENGLISH</b>
Baccalauréat	<p>Baccalaureate (Equivalent to A-Levels)</p> <p>Advanced High School Diploma</p> <p>High School Certificate (Australia)</p>
BTS ou DUT	<p>Higher National Diploma (HND)</p> <p>Associate's Degree</p>
Licence	<p>Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.)</p> <p>Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)</p>

## How to Translate French Education/ Qualifications into English

<b>FRENCH</b>	<b>ENGLISH</b>
Diplôme d'ingénieur français	M.Eng Master's degree in Engineering
Mastères specialises/DEA	Advanced Master of Science
Doctorat	PhD in...

# ***In a Cover Letter,*** ***DO NOT:***

- Forget to sign the letter
- Be repetitive [Look on CRL WEBSITE FOR ACTION VERB LIST](#)
- Use contractions (**isn't**)  
*Instead:*
  - “Is not...”
- Say you want to improve your English
- Say you HAVE TO do an internship  
*Instead:*
  - “During my fifth year at INSA, I *have the opportunity* to do a semester-long internship.”
  - “I *would like to complement* my studies and experiences by becoming a member of your team.”



# Once you have written your resume and cover letter...

## ***Come to the CRL to:***

1. Make an appointment for a consultation **AND**
2. Leave your CV/cover letter for review **THEN**
3. Come back the next week for your 20 minute consultation with Jill or Shannon (lectures in the CRL)

## ***Consultation hours:***

Jill: Mondays 19h-20h, Wednesdays 13h – 14h

Shannon: Mondays 13h-14h; Thursdays 13h-14h

Recommended website for extra Cover Letter guidance

<http://career-advice.monster.com/resumes-cover-letters/cover-letter-tips/jobs.aspx>

# Thank you for coming!

*We hope to see you soon  
in the CRL whether you come to...*

- Edit your CV / Cover letter
- Participate in our workshop sessions:
  - English TOEIC (every Thursday from 15:30-16:30)
  - Conversation (every Thursday from 16:30-17:30)
- Work with your class
- Watch a movie or a TV series
- Prepare for your TOEIC / TOEFL