

Cover Letter Prompts for ChatGPT

A practical guide to shaping a clear, relevant cover letter with your own experience and the job advert as the source material.

Use ChatGPT as a drafting partner, not as a source of personal facts. Start with the job advert and your own notes. Replace every square bracket with accurate, non-sensitive information, and ask for questions rather than letting the tool fill gaps. Review every sentence before you send the letter.

A practical cover letter structure

1. Open with purpose

Name the role and give a genuine, specific reason for applying. Avoid a generic opening that could fit any vacancy.

2. Show relevant evidence

Choose one or two real examples that connect your skills to the advert. Explain what you did and what changed, without claiming results you cannot support.

3. Make the fit clear

Explain how your experience, including transferable skills, meets the role's needs. Be direct about a career change rather than implying experience you do not have.

4. Close clearly

Restate your interest, thank the reader and finish professionally. Check the employer name, role title, dates and contact details yourself before sending.

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Group 1: Match the letter to the advert

Use the advert to set priorities. Supply only information you can safely share and support with your own records.

01 Find the advert's priorities

Read this job advert and identify its main responsibilities, essential requirements and desirable requirements. For each, quote or accurately summarise the relevant wording. Do not infer anything about the employer. List what evidence I would need to provide from my own experience. Job advert: [paste advert with identifying details removed].

02 Map my evidence to the criteria

Compare the job advert with the experience notes below. Make a table with each key requirement, the strongest matching evidence I actually supplied, and any gap or question. Do not invent examples or treat a skill as proven unless my notes support it. Advert: [anonymised advert]. My notes: [non-sensitive experience notes].

03 Draft from verified material

Draft a tailored cover letter for [role] at [organisation] using the advert and my notes below. Include only facts I supplied. Connect two relevant requirements to my evidence, keep the language natural and do not copy whole phrases from the advert. If a detail is missing, mark it as [check this detail] rather than guessing. Advert: [anonymised advert]. Notes: [verified experience].

04 Check relevance and missing evidence

Review my draft against the advert. List which requirements are clearly addressed, which are weak or missing, and which claims need evidence. Do not rewrite it yet. Base your review only on this advert and draft. Advert: [anonymised advert]. Draft: [cover letter draft].

05 Adapt the emphasis for this role

Suggest which parts of my existing cover letter deserve more or less emphasis for this vacancy. Give a short reason for each suggestion, tied to the advert. Preserve my facts and voice. Do not add new qualifications, responsibilities, results or claims. Advert: [anonymised advert]. Existing letter: [draft].

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Group 2: Build a stronger opening

Use these prompts to explore different truthful ways into your letter. Choose an opening that sounds like you and reflects your real reasons.

06 Create distinct opening options

Write five distinct opening sentence options for my application to [role] at [organisation]. Use only this genuine motivation: [why I want this role]. Make each option specific, professional and concise, without clichés or invented knowledge about the organisation. Label the options 1 to 5 and do not draft the rest of the letter.

07 Lead with a relevant strength

Offer three opening sentences that introduce my strongest relevant capability for [role]. Use this verified evidence: [specific skill and supporting experience]. Keep the tone [tone] and avoid claiming that I am an expert unless my evidence supports that wording. Provide only the alternatives.

08 Explain a specific motivation

Turn my notes into two possible opening lines that explain why this particular work interests me. My actual reasons and relevant detail are: [motivation and verified detail]. Do not invent a connection to the employer, its mission, products or recent work. Flag any statement that needs checking before it is used.

09 Make a formal opening less generic

Revise this opening so it is direct, warm and specific while staying suitable for [industry or role]. Keep its meaning and all facts unchanged. Give three alternatives and briefly note how their tone differs. Opening: [my current opening].

Avoid clichés, unsupported praise and invented details.

10 Compare and choose an opening

Compare these opening lines for clarity, relevance to the advert and whether they sound credible based on my notes. Rank them, explain the trade-offs briefly, and suggest one edit to the strongest option. Do not add facts or rewrite my motivation. Options: [opening lines]. Advert requirements: [relevant requirements]. My evidence: [verified notes].

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Group 3: Turn experience into evidence

Give the model real material to work with. Keep your examples accurate, and check any suggested wording against what you personally did.

11 Shape an evidence paragraph

Use my notes to draft one concise paragraph showing how I meet [requirement]. Preserve what I personally did, the context and the outcome. Do not add scale, numbers, responsibility or impact that I have not stated. If an essential detail is missing, ask me a question first. Notes: [non-sensitive account of my experience].

12 Select the strongest example

From the experience notes below, identify up to three examples that best support [job requirement]. For each, explain the connection and what evidence is still needed. Do not assume that a job title proves a skill. Notes: [non-sensitive work, study, volunteering or project notes]. Requirement: [requirement from the advert].

13 Use figures only when supplied

Improve the clarity of this achievement statement using only the figures and facts I provide. If a number, comparison, date or result is absent or unclear, do not estimate it. Mark the gap for me to verify and offer a version that works without an unsupported figure. Statement: [draft]. Confirmed details: [verified facts and figures].

14 Make transferable skills concrete

For [requirement], connect my experience in [previous context] to the role using a specific, truthful example. Explain what transfers and what is different in this new role. Do not imply that my previous context is the same as this job.

Evidence: [verified task and outcome].

15 Keep a claim in my own voice

Rewrite this paragraph in a clear, natural voice while keeping every claim within the evidence I supplied. Keep my level of responsibility and contribution precise. Identify any wording that sounds stronger than my evidence.

Paragraph: [draft]. Evidence I can stand behind: [verified notes].

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Group 4: Tailor, refine and verify

These prompts help with a career change and the final editing pass. Treat every suggestion as a draft that needs your judgement.

16 Explain a career change honestly

Draft a paragraph explaining my move from [previous field] towards [target role]. Use only my genuine reasons, relevant skills and evidence: [non-sensitive notes]. Acknowledge where my experience differs from the role. Do not suggest direct experience, qualifications or motivation I have not stated. Ask me about any missing detail instead of filling it in.

17 Shorten without losing substance

Edit this letter to approximately [target word count] words. Remove repetition and unnecessary wording, but keep the strongest relevant evidence, all essential facts and my natural voice. Do not delete an important qualification or invent a replacement. Return the revised letter and a brief note of any content that may need my review. Letter: [draft].

18 Proofread in British English

Proofread this cover letter for spelling, grammar, punctuation and clarity using British English. Preserve my meaning, facts and voice. List suggested edits separately and explain anything that could change the meaning. Do not add achievements, qualifications or employer details. Letter: [draft].

19 Audit facts, figures and citations

Audit this draft for every factual claim, figure, date, named organisation and citation. Compare each with the source material I provide, list anything unsupported or inconsistent, and mark it for checking. Do not create or repair a citation by guessing. Draft: [letter]. Source material: [my records or verified sources].

20 Run a final consistency check

Check that this final letter matches the advert, my supplied experience and my intended tone. Flag any unsupported achievement, qualification, figure, date, citation, incorrect role or employer name, repeated point or placeholder I have not replaced. Do not silently change facts. Letter: [final draft]. Advert and verified notes: [anonymised source material].

Check before you use it

You must supply true experience. Never let ChatGPT invent achievements, qualifications or results. Never enter personal or confidential data into ChatGPT, including client, patient, staff or customer personal data. Check every fact, figure and citation against reliable source material before you use the letter. For current details about ChatGPT features, settings or data controls, check OpenAI Help pages because information can change.

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