

CV and Letter to Employers - TIPS

How do I explain my unemployment?

Employers won't refuse your application just because you're unemployed, so don't feel you have to hide it; you can actually use it to your advantage.

When you begin your cover letter, you need to tell the employer why they should hire you, and it's in these opening sentences that you should mention your unemployment. If there are valid reasons for your unemployment (e.g. redundancy, you were looking for a career change etc), certainly don't be afraid to mention it.

If you've been proactive during your unemployment, don't forget to mention that too. So if you've been doing work experience, learning new skills or taken up voluntary work, write it early on your cover letter, it's bound to impress and will show employers you haven't just been sat in front of the television.

Of course, you don't have to tell employers that you're unemployed; you can just mention your skills and accomplishments from previous jobs. Although be prepared to talk about any CV gaps during the interview.

How do I convince them I don't just want the job because I'm unemployed?

You need to make sure they know you aren't just after any job, you want a job at their company, so you're going to need to do some research before you start writing your application.

Find out about their company, go on their website, check out their competitors and make sure you understand what they do and who their customers are. Talk about why you want to work for their company in particular, what you like about them and what you could bring to their working environment. This isn't just useful for your cover letter, but also for your interview.

Without any research, your cover letter could end up looking like a generic application, and employers may assume you've sent the same thing to thousands of other companies in a range of sectors, and that you're not passionate about their vacancy at all.

What if I don't have much work experience?

If you haven't had many jobs, don't worry. Focus on transferable skills and accomplishments you've achieved from hobbies and education instead.

Talk about your personality and work ethos to show that despite not having much work experience, you're still prepared to work hard and learn new things.

Of course some companies will want to see previous experience and particular qualifications before they consider you for an interview, (especially if it's a senior or specialist role), so make sure you read the job specifications before you apply.

If you think your cover letter is looking a little bare, why not take up some extra training or look for work experience or voluntary opportunities in your area?

How do I show I'm employable when I'm unemployed?

Write about any successes or skills learnt in previous jobs (or hobbies etc), and back them up with examples. Explaining your main achievements and the effect it had shows you've made a difference or accomplished something by working hard.

Mention any existing skills that would be useful in the role, even it's from a hobby (e.g being in a drama group means you can work well with others) and back it up with why it would be an asset to their company.