

Introducing yourself as a potential tenant.

Looking for housing can be stressful, especially if you've had unsafe or unstable housing in the past. This exercise helps you focus on one small but important step of the process, which is introducing yourself to someone who you may want to rent from.

You'll be writing a draft letter you can use when you're applying for housing. This has been designed with private market rentals in mind, but being comfortable sharing what makes you a great tenant and neighbour can be useful no matter what kind of housing you're looking for.

There's no rush to finish this all at once. Take breaks, skip questions you're not ready for, and remember there's no "perfect" way to do this. **This is just a tool to help you practice.**

There are two parts to this exercise:

Part 1: questions with short answers, mostly about specific information you'll need when you are applying to become a tenant in a private rental unit.

Part 2: you'll write your own letter to an imaginary landlord that you will be able to use in applying to real rentals. Some example letters and guides are attached to help you do this. The details of the place you're applying to can be fictional, but it should be your real self you're talking about.

Note: You may choose to keep your answers to Part 1 private, and not share them, but the letter you write for Part 2 should be something you're comfortable sharing. Please complete both parts of the exercise, even if you will not be sharing your answers to Part 1.

If you'd like feedback on the letter, please indicate what kind of input you would like (e.g. spelling/grammar corrections, phrasing, information that should be included, positive feedback only, etc.)

Part 1

1. **Your best features.** Think about what would make you a good choice for a landlord. You can start by circling some of your great qualities from the list below, or write your own words that capture how awesome you are.

Respectful	Friendly	_____
Helpful	Responsible	_____
Good communication	Tidy	_____
Reliable	Handy	_____
Quiet	Non-smoker	_____

These are great things to keep in mind as you're applying for a new place!

2. **Your household.** Tell your landlord who will be moving in. Remember you don't need to get into too much detail. Landlords just want to know how you take care of your space, how you get along with other people, and how reliable you are. You could mention:
 - What you do with your time
 - Any reliable income sources you have
 - What your educational and work-related goals are (if applicable).

Keep it short, sweet, and **clear**

If you live with other people, if you have children, or if you have pets write down a sentence or two that will help them understand your situation. You don't have to say as much about them as you did about yourself.

3. Previous addresses.

Your previous living situation might not be easy to talk about, or it might put you at risk. You are never required to explain unsafe situations, violence, or personal trauma to a landlord, but at some point, someone will probably ask you about why you left your last housing. Many tenancy applications will ask about all the places you lived in the past 5 years.

Examples of simple reasons for leaving:

“End of tenancy”

“Relationship ended”

“Looking for a better fit”

“Safety reasons”

“Change in family situation”

“Housing no longer available”

Take a minute to practice sharing this information in ways that feel comfortable to you.

Previous residence:

Length of stay:

Reason for leaving:

Previous residence:

Length of stay:

Reason for leaving

Previous residence:

Length of stay:

Reason for leaving

Previous residence:

Length of stay:

Reason for leaving

4. References. If you are comfortable with someone contacting your previous landlord as a reference, this part will be easy!

If you can't or don't want to provide a previous landlord's contact here, that's okay too, and you're not alone. Think about other personal or professional references you can offer instead who will be willing to talk to your new landlord why you would be a good tenant, like:

- Support workers, case managers, or other people working with you
- Employers or coworkers
- Elders, community leaders, teachers
- Past neighbours

Reference #1 Name:

Contact info:

How do they know you?:

Reference #2 Name:

Contact info:

How do they know you?:

Reference #3 Name:

Contact info:

How do they know you?:

(It's a good idea to contact these people ahead of time. This way you know for sure that you have their up-to-date contact information, and if you would like them to keep certain details private, you can make sure they understand what they should or shouldn't say.)

Part 2: Your introductory letter

A quick note about sharing information: If you read through the sample letters in the next pages, you'll see that some of them include details about credit, income, or personal history. You **MAY** choose to include this information, but you are **NOT** required to. If something feels uncomfortable to include, trust that feeling—it's okay to leave it out at this stage.

You **don't** need to bring up things like:

- Criminal history (unless legally required)
- Substance use
- Medical or mental health information
- Your full housing history
- Personal explanations for leaving past homes
- Details about trauma, violence, health, or family breakdown

Instead, focus on what BC landlords usually care most about:

- Rent being paid on time
- Stability / likelihood of staying
- Clear, polite communication
- Not going to bring unnecessary stress

The exercise: on the next two pages, please write your own introductory letter to an imaginary (or real) landlord explaining who you are, and why you are the tenant they've been waiting for!