



A good application isn't a life story

It's a short, personal message that shows the homeowner you've **read their listing, understand what they need, and can offer a sensible match.**

You've found a house sit that looks rather lovely. The pets are adorable, the location appeals, and you can picture yourself there already. There's just one small hurdle: you need to persuade the homeowner to choose you.

Take a breath. You don't need to be a "professional" pet whisperer, a retired veterinarian, or a seasoned house sitting nomad with a suitcase full of five-star reviews. You do need to be honest, thoughtful, and clear about what you can offer.

This Guide is for Silver Nomads in all their glorious varieties: people working online while they travel, retired or semi-retired people, and those whose lives don't fit neatly into any of those boxes.

Your label matters far less than your availability, experience, and suitability for the particular sit.

THE GOLDEN RULE

Don't try to sound like the perfect sitter for every listing. Show the homeowner in this application why you could be the right sitter for this one sit.

1. Before you write: read the listing properly

Read the whole listing, including the details tucked away below the main description. Look for the things that matter most to the homeowner.

Read the listing Checklist

- ☐ **The pets:** names, personalities, routines, feeding, walks, medication, companionship, and anything unusual.
- ☐ **The home:** garden or plant care, pool care, bins, security, and other household responsibilities.
- ☐ **The location:** rural or urban, access to shops and transport, and whether you'll need a car.
- ☐ **The homeowner's expectations:** how long pets can be left alone, whether someone needs to be home most of the day, and any non-smoking or dietary preferences.
- ☐ **The dates and practicalities:** duration, arrival and departure arrangements, and whether you can

Notice what the listing emphasises. If the homeowner describes their dog as their "constant companion" and says the dog is "used to having someone around all day", that is a clue. They may be looking for someone who will spend plenty of time at home – not someone planning to be out sightseeing from breakfast until bedtime.

Use the pet's name, refer to a specific detail, and answer the homeowner's stated needs. It's a simple way to show that your message was written for them rather than copied to 50 strangers.

2. Five rules for a stronger application

RULE 1: BE FRIENDLY, CLEAR, AND PROFESSIONAL

Write in full sentences, check your spelling, and use a friendly tone. You don't need stiff corporate language, but do avoid a message that reads like a hurried text to a mate. If English isn't your first language, don't let that stop you from applying. Clear and sincere is the goal.

RULE 2: KEEP IT SHORT

Homeowners may have several applications to read. Make yours easy to scan. Around 150–200 words is a useful guide, not a hard limit; a simple short sit may need less, while a more involved sit may need a little more. If your message has turned into your autobiography, it's time to edit.

RULE 3: SHOW THAT YOU'VE READ THE LISTING

Mention something specific: the pet's name, a routine, a garden, a feature of the home, or a detail about the area. Be accurate. If you're not sure whether "Sam the cavoodle" is a he, she, or they, use the pet's name until you know.

RULE 4: FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN OFFER

The homeowner wants to know how you'll care for their home and pets. Relevant experience, a suitable routine, comfort with the location, and a responsible approach are more persuasive than a long list of your hobbies or travel plans.

RULE 5: TAILOR EVERY APPLICATION

Use a basic structure if it helps, but personalise the message for each listing. A generic application can make a homeowner wonder whether you've noticed their dog needs three walks a day or that their cat needs medication.

PLEASE DON'T BLUFF

Never claim experience, availability, skills, or a lifestyle you don't have. If you'd need to lie to make yourself sound suitable, this probably isn't the right sit for you.

3. Your first application: start locally

If you have no house sitting reviews yet, a short local sit can be a sensible place to start. You may be able to meet the homeowner beforehand, and you can draw on experience you already have – such as caring for a friend's cat, looking after a family member's dog, or maintaining your own home and garden.

Your first sit doesn't have to be spectacular: it needs to be a good match for your abilities and a commitment you can fulfil. A listing involving a cat and a few chickens, for example, may be manageable for a beginner if the care requirements suit you. Don't assume every cat sit is easy, though: read the actual responsibilities.

Worked example: Applying for your first local short sit

SAMPLE LISTING

This genuine listing appeared on Kiwi House Sitters. Names and identifying characteristics have been changed.

We need a house sitter

Region: Bay of Plenty - Tauranga House Owner: Catherine Posted: 4 September 2022

Kia ora! We are looking for someone(s) to look after our house, cat and four chickens while we are away! Our cat, Harry, is a cuddly, chilled-out, and chatty. She is super easy to look after, just needs feeding really. There is a cat door that she uses freely, and no litter box to clean up.

The chickens don't require much attention, just monitoring, including ensuring their water is full. Chickens not in photos sorry. And also collecting the eggs every day. Please note: no smoking in the house or on the property.

We are in a 3 bedroom house, in Papamoa Beach. We want you to come in and make yourself feel at home! We are about a 10 minute walk to the beach, about a 5 minute drive to Fashion Island and a 5-10 minute drive to Bayfair. We have some bikes and a few other 'toys' you would be more than welcome to use. We are located very close to the waterways in Papamoa which are great for walking, running and biking.

Please send a message if you are interested!

Catherine needs a sitter for three nights while she is away. Her cat, Harry, is described as “cuddly and easy to care for”. The sitter also needs to feed and water the chickens, collect eggs, and look after the home. Catherine mentions that the house is near the beach and offers the use of bikes and other gear and tells you the area is great for walking, running and biking. The listed duties appear relatively straightforward, but you should still confirm the full routine and expectations before committing.

The example below shows how to use those details without turning the application into an essay. Change every detail in square brackets to match your own circumstances. **Never borrow somebody else's experience and present it as yours.**

SAMPLE APPLICATION

Hi Catherine,

Kia ora! Harry sounds like a delightful character. I'd love to look after her while you're away, and I'll make sure your four chickens are well fed, their water is topped up, and you have fresh eggs waiting for you when you get home.

Your home looks lovely, and being so close to the beach and Papamoa's walking and cycling waterways sounds wonderful. Thank you for offering the use of your bikes, too!

I'm new to this house sitting platform, so I don't have any reviews here yet. However, I have [briefly describe your genuine experience caring for pets or looking after a home]. As I live locally, I'd be happy to meet beforehand so we can get to know each other and discuss the arrangements.

Would you be available for a quick meet-and-greet this week?

Warm regards

[Your name]

P.S. I'm a non-smoker. [Include only if true.]

Why this works: it uses Catherine's name, refers to Harry and the chickens, acknowledges the home, explains the lack of platform reviews without apologising excessively, and offers a practical next step. It also leaves room for you to add genuine, relevant experience.

4. No reviews yet? Don't panic.

A blank review section can feel daunting, but it doesn't mean you have nothing to offer. Be straight forward about being new to the platform, then give the homeowner a useful reason to consider you.

- Mention genuine experience caring for your own pets or someone else's pets.
- Describe relevant responsibilities you've handled, such as feeding routines, administering medication if you have actually done so, or caring for plants and a garden.
- Explain why this particular sit suits you.
- Offer a meet-and-greet, if practical, so you can both ask questions and get comfortable with the arrangement.
- Use any relevant references or reviews you genuinely have, and follow the platform's rules when sharing them.

After your first sit, update your message honestly. If you have one review, say you have one review, not "loads of experience". As you complete more sits, your reviews and relevant experience can gradually do more of the talking.

A USEFUL REMINDER

You don't need to explain your entire life history to account for having no reviews. A brief, confident explanation is enough.

5. Make the next application easier

Once you've completed a sit and received a review, you can update the relevant sentence in your application. Keep the parts that work, but still personalise the message to each homeowner.

UPDATING YOUR APPLICATIONS AFTER YOUR FIRST REVIEW

I'm new to this platform and have one review so far. I've also cared for [genuine relevant experience], and I'd be happy to meet beforehand to discuss your pets' routines and the care of your home.

Don't treat three sits or three reviews as a magic threshold you must reach before applying elsewhere. Building local experience can be a useful strategy, but the right timing depends on your circumstances, the sit, and what the homeowner requires.

6. Applying further afield: match the sit to your life

Once you're looking beyond your local area, you need to think about more than whether you like the destination. The real question is whether the sit's responsibilities fit the way you want – or need – to spend your time.

If you're working online

Working remotely can be an advantage when pets need company during the day, but only if your actual work arrangements allow you to provide it. A flexible schedule is not the same as being available every minute. If you're tied to online meetings, a help desk, or set working hours, be honest about that.

Look for details such as how long pets can be left alone, when they need walks or access to the garden, and whether their routine fits around your work. Don't assume you can work uninterrupted just because you'll be using a laptop at home.

If you're retired or semi-retired

You may have flexibility, but don't assume that every retired person is free all day. You might have appointments, family commitments, regular activities, or a packed social calendar. Explain the availability you can genuinely offer.

Some sitters enjoy exploring every day; others prefer a slower pace, reading, gardening, or spending time at home with the pets. Both approaches can suit a sit, provided they match the homeowner's expectations.

If you're a mix of both

You might work a few hours, travel between destinations, or have a flexible routine that changes from week to week. Describe the reality rather than trying to fit yourself into a category. Homeowners need to understand your availability, not your label.

Read between the lines

- *"Used to having someone home most of the day"* may indicate that a sitter who is out sightseeing for long periods won't be a good fit.
- A pet that can comfortably be left alone for several hours may suit someone planning day trips, provided all other care needs are met.
- Regular walks, early starts, medication, or frequent garden access may make a sit unsuitable if those commitments conflict with your routine.
- A rural property may be peaceful and appealing, but check transport, shopping, driving, gates, livestock, and other practical requirements.
- A long list of animal-care duties can amount to a substantial daily commitment. Read it carefully before applying.

Worked example: Applying for a longer rural sit

SAMPLE LISTING

This genuine listing appeared on Kiwi House Sitters. Names and identifying characteristics have been changed.

Region: Bay of Plenty - Whakatāne House Owner: Charles Posted: 20 August 2022

Hi there!

My partner and I will be traveling for a few weeks in Nov/Dec and need a caring and responsible sitter to take care of our wee dog, William, and our home. He is a sweet 10 year old corgi and is the joy in our lives. We live in a little farm house on a beautiful, peaceful property in the country, about 20 minutes from Whakatane. Having some experience with farm life would be preferable as there are gates and cows about. If you'd like some calm time away from it all with a great companion, this might be your ticket =)

Duties will include: A daily walk for William on one of the many trails (no need to drive anywhere); feeding him breakfast and dinner and a bone once a week; playing with him and his many toys daily; letting him in and out throughout the day and keeping an eye on him; hanging out and giving him pets and love; letting him sleep on the bed by your feet; watering and weeding our little garden and house plants; mowing our very small yard once per week.

There will be another opportunity in March/April when we travel again.

SAMPLE APPLICATION

Dear Charles

William sounds like a delightful companion, and we'd love to spend a few weeks keeping him company. We especially like the sound of your peaceful country property and the walking trails nearby.

We'd be happy to keep William to his usual routine of daily walks, meals, playtime, and plenty of company throughout the day. We'd also take care of your garden and house plants as requested. [If true: We're comfortable around farm gates and livestock, too.]

We'll be travelling in [region] from [dates], and your sit looks like it could fit our plans nicely. We'd also be interested in the possibility of returning in March or April, if our schedules line up.

[Briefly describe relevant pet-care, gardening, or rural experience. If you're new to house sitting, explain that you don't yet have platform reviews and mention any genuine experience that would reassure Charles.]

Would you be available for a chat so we can get to know each other and discuss William's routine and the property?

Warm regards
[Names]

This is a framework, not a script to copy word for word. Remove anything that isn't true, and add specific details from the listing you're responding to.

7. Make it easy for the homeowner to say yes or ask a question

End with a clear next step, such as offering a meet-and-greet or suggesting suitable times. Be realistic about your availability, including work hours, appointments, and time-zone differences.

Draft your message in Word before copying it into the platform, so you can edit it without accidentally sending it too soon. (Pets have no respect for word processing.)

Platform interfaces change, so follow current instructions. If sharing a profile or review link, check that it works for people who aren't logged in.

Application Checklist

- ☐ I've read the entire listing, including the care duties and practical details.
- ☐ I've used the homeowner's name if it's provided.
- ☐ I've mentioned the pet's name and at least one relevant detail from the listing.
- ☐ I've explained how my experience or circumstances fit this particular sit.
- ☐ I've been honest about my experience, work hours, availability, and abilities.
- ☐ I've addressed any stated requirements that apply to me, such as being a non-smoker.
- ☐ I've checked spelling, grammar, and names.
- ☐ My message is concise and easy to read.
- ☐ I've included a clear next step, such as suggesting a meet-and-greet.
- ☐ I've checked that the dates and arrangements work for me before committing.

AUNTY KAZ'S FINAL WORD

Your application doesn't need to make you sound extraordinary. It needs to help the homeowner see that you've paid attention, understand the responsibility, and can offer a good match for their home and pets.

Be specific. Be honest. Be yourself. And remember that applying for a sit is a two-way decision: you're also deciding whether the home, pets, and responsibilities are right for you.

Happy sitting! 🐾