

Top CV Writing Tips

Your CV is an important document highlighting your professional and educational history and is your personal marketing tool when applying for a job. First impressions count so it's important to get it right. Here are some tips to help you to produce a top CV:

- **Personal details:** Remember to include your name, email (this must be a sensible sounding one) and telephone number so that the employer can contact you.
- **Layout & content:** Try to keep it to one page. Make it as easy to read as possible. Ideally use bullet points and avoid long blocks of text. Content should be informative but concise. Accentuate positions of responsibility as opposed to assistance.
- **Personal profile:** These are so often filled with clichés and tend to merely reiterate the job advert. To make this section work, make yours as unique as possible; Try to give a real flavour of the kind of person you are and your most relevant attributes.
- **Reverse chronological order for educational qualifications and experience:** Place your most recent education and career history first, with the dates you attended. Include courses that you are still doing, showing dates to be completed.
- **Extra-Curricular activities and achievements:** include activities both in and out of school, try to group into categories as this makes it easier to read e.g. sports, music, volunteering, awards. mention any courses or additional exams you have passed e.g. music awards, D of E; clubs you are a member of; recent positions of responsibility held e.g. Prefect or sports captain; include relevant prizes or competitions won.
- **Tailor your CV to the role & the company:** Highlight different aspects/use different examples for different companies and roles.
- **Unique Selling Points:** Does it really give the reader a feeling of who you are?
- **Do not leave gaps:** You will be asked about these during your interview, so be prepared to explain e.g. Gap year; travelling; study period; actively seeking employment; family commitments;
- **Be honest:** Embellishments will usually be found out at interview or on the job. Lots of companies will also do background checks to confirm qualifications and employment histories.
- **No mistakes:** Check your spelling and grammar and get a fresh pair of eyes to look over it too.
- **Avoid pictures and graphics:** These can leave emailed CVs caught in an email firewall.

Skills based CV

The example CV below is in a modern format, often called the Skill based CV. Your skills are more prominent than in the traditional format and this makes it easier to give examples.

Covering Letters

For many roles or with popular companies you may well be given a further opportunity to differentiate yourself with a covering letter. This is because the company expects to receive multiple CVs with excellent academics and great extra-curriculars. Use this opportunity to give further relevant examples and to show that you can communicate clearly and concisely in writing.

Top tips:

- Introduce yourself stating your name, the job title, any reference for the advert to which you are replying and that you are enclosing your CV.
- Explain why you REALLY want this job. Demonstrate your passion for the sector/company/ role and highlight your most relevant experience for the role.
- State any periods for which you will be unavailable (in case they try to contact you and take your lack of reply as disinterest)
- Be polite, formal and grammatically accurate.