

CV Writing Tips

Firstly, there is no correct way to write a CV, however, there are plenty of opinions and these are based on personal preference.

Your CV is your sales tool. The aim of the CV is to grab the attention of the recruiter, with the hope that after glancing at your CV, they will invite you to an interview.

Who is going to read your CV?

We always advise that you have two people in mind when writing a CV, the hiring director and the personal assistant. One who knows exactly what they are looking for and one who just knows the buzz words and has to reduce the pile of CVs from 10 to 5.

The Right Structure

A good structure should follow this order:

- Name and Contact Details
- Key Skills
- Employment History (most recent first)
- Education including relevant qualifications
- Interests

Many people may also add a personal statement or summary after the personal details and this can certainly look good on a CV, as long as it's kept short and to the point.

Use a clear and consistent layout and format with headings and bullet points.

Keep your CV punchy and relatively short, 2-4 pages is the standard length for a CV.

Pay attention to detail on dates, company names and skills used. Don't undersell yourself but certainly don't exaggerate, your CV is a factual document outlining the experience and skills gained to date.

Make sure there are no spelling mistakes.

Content

The content should be clear and concise. Examples of skills gained in your previous two places of work will ideally be the information that will gain you an interview.

If there is a job spec for the role it may be worth matching the points in your CV, assuming you have gained the skills.

We often recommend that CVs are tailored to specific jobs, highlighting the skills that are most relevant for each specific client.

To review the previous points made, here are our Top 10 points for your CV:

1. Keep it real. Keep it punchy and to the point.

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2. Tailor it. Take the time to change your CV for each role that you apply for. Research the company and use the job advert to work out exactly what skills you should point out to them.
3. Include a personal statement. Don't just assume an employer will see how your experience relates to their job. Instead, use a short personal statement to explain why you are the best person for the job. This should be reflected in your cover letter as well.
4. Avoid Gaps. If you've been out of work, it can be a worry but just put a positive spin on it. Did you do a course, volunteer work or develop soft skills such as communication, teamwork or project management?
5. Keep it Up to Date. You should keep your CV up-to-date and mention significant times in your career, for example a particular achievement.
6. Double Check. Check your spelling and get someone else to proofread your CV to avoid mistakes.
7. Be honest. Lying on your CV can land you in trouble; employers will check your background and references. You also may get caught out at the interview stage.
8. The maths. This may sound dull but by backing up your achievements with numbers it makes selling yourself much easier. When writing your work history, don't just say that you increased sales; tell them you increased sales by 80% over a 10-month period.
9. Making the most of your skills. Under the skills section of your CV don't forget to mention key skills that can help you to stand out from the crowd. These could include communication skills; computer skills; team working; problem solving or even speaking a foreign language.
10. Make it look good. Appearance is key, use bullet points and keep sentences short. Use the graphic design trick of leaving plenty of white space around text and between categories to make the layout easy on the eye.

And Finally

Your CV is your sales pitch, your online factual presentation of you.