

How to write a CV

Many years ago I was told that a person takes 2 seconds to look at a CV to decide if a person is suitable or not for their vacancy. This was well before the recession and when there weren't such high volumes of people applying for each role, it could be worse now!

This is your pitch/sales document on you.

Companies will decide if you are right for a role based on this CV – take your time to make sure you get it right.

When a company is presented with lots of CV's they look for reasons to exclude rather than include.

Make it easy for them to put you in the yes pile, with a clear, precise CV, that is easy to read in a language style that is easy to understand, don't use lots of acronym that are unique to your previous experience. Don't use small text to cram information in. Think about spacing on the CV, so it looks clear; use some bold type in headings to make it more interesting. Creative candidates can add a little creativity but please don't go mad.

The most important information they will want to read is your current or most recent employment. So write your CV in numerical order from recent to past. Get your latest employment on the first page. This should be the longest description, unless the recession has meant you have had to make a career detour, in which case explain this & make your most relevant experience more detailed. Jobs over 10 years ago only need basic information. If your career has been at lots of places just make sure the descriptions are larger in the experience that is relevant for the role you are aiming for.

Dates make sure they follow on correctly and any gaps are explained

Do not put a photo on - this is so 80's

No spelling/grammar error this could cost you the job, it'll be a reason to reject you.

Here is an example of how to write a CV and a basic style. Try to keep your CV to 2 pages but for more experienced candidates this may need to go into 3 pages

Here's how I read a CV, what job has a person done, where have they worked, where do they live, does the background fit my clients requirement. If it does match I then read the profile and the recent relevant job and decide yes or no to interview (obviously for creative candidates skills and ability are assessed based on their portfolio of work as well).

Education: Put this at the end, keep it short, you could just put qualifications rather than the places you studied. If you are early in your career then you usually need to add more info in here.

References: I suggest you put 'available on request', rather than listing names as this lets you control who and when your referees are called.

Hobbies: Personal preference whether you add this, I personally don't read them but they can be used as an icebreaker in an interview situation.

This is just intended as a guide on how to write a CV unfortunately it doesn't guarantee interviews but might help point you in the right direction.

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