



## How to: Write a CV

### WRITING A CV CAN BE A STRESSFUL TASK, ESPECIALLY IF YOU'RE STARTING FROM SCRATCH

And although there's no one-size-fits-all solution for the perfect CV, it should always be clearly formatted and short enough for a recruiter to scan quickly – and most importantly – tailored to the role you're applying for.

Not sure where to start? Here are some basic rules on how to write a CV:

### WHAT INFORMATION SHOULD I INCLUDE ON MY CV?

CVs should never be completely unoriginal, but there are a few things they should always contain:

**Personal details:** It may sound obvious, but you'd be surprised how many people forget to include their name, email, contact phone number and address. To avoid any awkward moments, make sure these are clearly presented at the top of your CV. 'Curriculum Vitae' is an unnecessary title – your name is not.

**Personal statement:** As it's the first thing that's shown on your CV, a personal statement is an essential part of standing out from the crowd. It explains who you are, what you're offering, and what you're looking for. Aim to prove why you're suitable in one short and succinct paragraph.

**Work experience:** This section should include all of your relevant work experience, listed with the most recent first. Include your job title, the name of the organisation, time in post, and your key responsibilities.

**Achievements:** This is your chance to show *how* your previous experience has given you the skills needed to make you a suitable candidate. List all of your relevant skills and achievements (backing them up with examples), and make it clear how you would apply these to the new role.

**Education:** Your educational experience and achievements should be listed here, along with dates, the type of qualification and/or the grade you achieved – although the specific parts of education that you include in your CV will depend on your individual situation. For example, if you have more educational achievements than work experience, placing an emphasis on this section is a good idea.

**Hobbies and interests:** You don't always need to include hobbies and interests in your CV, but mentioning relevant ones could back up your skills and help you to stand out from the crowd – not to mention give you something to talk about at an interview. If it's not going to add value, leave it out.

Any extra information, such as reasons for a career change or reasons for gaps in career history should also be included as required.

## WHAT WORDS SHOULD I INCLUDE IN MY CV?

Figuring out what words to use on your CV can be tough – especially when you’re trying to fit a lot of skills and experience into a short document.

Appropriate keywords for your CV could include:

- Accurate/Adaptable/Confident/Hard-working/Innovative/Pro-active/Reliable/Responsible

In addition to using the right words, you should also back up your attributes up with genuine accomplishments. Not only will you stand out from others with identical skills, you’ll also be able to prove your suitability more effectively.

After all, anyone can say they’re hard-working – but not everyone can prove it.

## HOW SHOULD I PRESENT MY CV?

Your CV is the first thing an employer will see when hiring for a vacancy, and how it looks at first glance will be the reason they decide to read it in more detail. Even if your skills match the role perfectly, a messy and confusing CV probably won’t even get a second look.

To ensure you’re painting yourself (and your skills) in the best light, you should always:

- Keep it short and succinct – two sides of A4 will almost always suffice.
- Choose a clear, professional font to ensure that your CV can be easily.
- Lay it out in a logical order, with sufficient spacing and clear section headings (e.g. *Work experience, Education*)
- Order your experience and education in reverse chronological order to highlight your most recent experience and achievements
- Check your grammar and spelling thoroughly

## KEEP IT UP-TO-DATE

Your skills and experience are always developing, so your CV should be too.

To make sure you keep your information fresh, check back on your CV regularly to see if anything could be improved or updated. You might also find that older experience is no longer relevant, and can be condensed or deleted, for example.

And aside from adding new jobs, qualifications, and skills – you should also be making sure your layout and style is contemporary.

After all, it’s unlikely that certain fonts will get the same reaction they did ten years ago – and there might be a range of new creative CV layouts that weren’t available when you first created your CV.

