

What makes a good CV?

There is no single "correct" way to write and present a CV but the following general rules apply:

- It is **targeted on the specific job** or career area for which you are applying and brings out the relevant skills you have to offer
- It is carefully and **clearly laid out**: logically ordered, easy to read and not cramped
- It is **informative but concise**
- It is **accurate in content, spelling and grammar**. If you mention attention to detail as a skill, make sure your spelling and grammar is perfect!

If your CV is written backwards on pink polkadot paper and it gets you regular interviews, it's a good CV! The bottom line is that if it's producing results don't change it too much but if it's not, keep changing it until it does.

How long should a CV be?

There are no absolute rules but, in general, a CV should cover **no more than two sides of A4 paper**.

Tips on presentation

- Your CV should be **carefully and clearly laid out** - not too cramped but not with large empty spaces either. Use bold and italic typefaces for headings and important information
- Never back a CV - **each page should be on a separate sheet of paper**. It's a good idea to put your name in the footer area so that it appears on each sheet.
- **Be concise**: a CV is an appetiser and should not give the reader indigestion. Don't feel that you have to list every exam you have ever taken, or every activity you have ever been involved in - consider which are the most relevant and/or impressive. The best CVs tend to be fairly economical with words, selecting the most important information and leaving a little something for the interview: they are an appetiser rather than the main course. Good business communications tend to be short and to the point, focusing on key facts and your CV should to some extent emulate this.
- **Be positive** - put yourself over confidently and highlight your strong points.
- **Be honest**: although a CV does allow you to omit details (such as exam results) which you would prefer the employer not to know about, you should never give inaccurate or misleading information. **CVs are not legal documents** and you can't be held liable for anything within, but if a recruiter picks up a suggestion of falsehoods you will be rapidly rejected. An **application form** which you have signed to confirm that the contents are true is however a legal document and forms part of your contract of employment if you are recruited.
- The **sweet spot** of a CV is the area selectors tend to pay most attention to: this is typically around the upper middle of the first page, so make sure that this area contains essential information.
- If you are posting your CV, **don't fold it** - put it in a full-size A4 envelope so that it doesn't arrive creased.
- If you are emailing your CV, ensure you have a sensible email address. Not:

- death_metal_kitty@hotmail.com
- demented_bovine@gnumail.com
- so_kiss_me@hotmail.com
- busty-beth@gnumail.com

- virgin_on_the_ridiculous@hotmail.com
- yourmywifelowgraham@gnumail.com
- circle-of-despair@gnumail.com
- sexylikewoaaaah@hotmail.com

Research by (recruitment and volunteering for the not-for-profit sector) suggested:

- **There was a direct link between the number of CVs sent out and the number of interviews gained:** the more CVs you send out the more interviews you will get.
- **Applicants who included a covering letter with their CV were 10% more likely to get a reply.**
- **60% of CVs are mailed to the wrong person:** usually the managing director. Applicants who addressed their application to the correct named person were 15% more likely to get a letter of acknowledgement and 5% more likely to get an interview
- **Applicants sending CVs and letters without spelling mistakes are 61% more likely to get a reply and 26% more likely to get an interview.** "In the age of the spell checker, there is no excuse for spelling mistakes". The most common mistakes to not show up in a spell check were: fro instead of for, grate instead of great, liased instead of liaised and stationary instead of stationery.
- **Set your spell checker to UK English** or you will get **center** instead of **centre**, and **color** instead of **colour**.
- **Other turn-offs include:**
 - misspelling the name of the company or the addressee,
 - not having a reply address on the CV
 - trying to be amusing.
 - Using lower case i for the personal pronoun: "*i have excellent attention to detail*"

"To say things like 'I get on well with people' is meaningless unless it is backed up by example"

Selector for a retail bank

Why you need to use a spell checker!!

- I would like a job in the servillian police
- i am a perfectionist and rarely if if ever forget details.
- Proven ability to track down and correct errors.
- I have good written comunication skills.
- Lurnt Word Perfect computer and spreadsheet pogroms.
- Develop an annual operating expense fudget.
- Good custermer service skills.
- In my 3rd year of BA houners English.

And why you must read it carefully as well.....

- I was a prefect and pier mentor
- I would like to do a law conversion cause
- Extra Circular Activities
- But I was not aloud to be captain
- At secondary school I was a prefix
- In my spare time I enjoy hiding my horse
- I hope to hear from you shorty
- I have a desire to work with commuters
- Dear Madman (instead of Madam)
- My hobbits include - instead of 'hobbies'
- I am sicking and entry-level position

- I have a friendly manor
- Restaurant skills: Severing customers
- In charge of sock control - instead of 'stock control'
- I'm an accurate and rabid typist
- Over summer I worked for an examinations bored.
- Ability to meet deadlines while maintaining my composer
- Cleaning bathrooms and hovering hallways.
- Have made speech's at Open Days
- Instrumental in ruining an entire operation for a chain operator
- I was an administrator in a busty office.
- For a PR job: I have a long term interest in pubic relations
- I want experience in a big sex practice
- A ' full shit system' instead of 'a full shift system'
- Enthusiasm was needed in order to communicate information in an interesting manor.
- I own and maintain a volts wagon beetle.
- On an application to work with teenagers – I am experienced in teaching marital arts
- My role included typing in details of accounts, customer liaison and money-laundering duties.
- I am a genital person (instead of gentle!)
- I am still under sided on my career.
- I'm from the European Onion.

Thesauristitis (using the wrong synonym!).....

- I am a strenuous student.
- Reason for leaving last job: maturity leave
- i am a conscious individual with good attention to detail
- Received a plague for salesman of the year.
- I was formally in a music group in which I performed in three conservative years.
- I have a degree in orgasmic chemistry.
- I have a doable award in science

When asked what would make them automatically reject a candidate, employers said:

- CVs with spelling mistakes or typos 61%
- CVs that copied large amounts of wording from the job posting 41%
- CVs with an inappropriate email address 35%
- CVs that don't include a list of skills 30%
- CVs that are more than two pages long 22%
- CVs printed on decorative paper 20%
- CVs that detail more tasks than results for previous positions 16%
- CVs that include a photo 13%
- CVs that have large blocks of text with little white space 13%