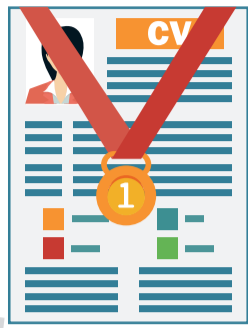




European Commission



MAKING YOUR CV STAND OUT 6 Tips



1 GET THE BASICS RIGHT

There is no right or wrong way to write a CV but there are some common sections you should include:

- personal and contact information
- education and qualifications
- work history and/or experience
- relevant skills for the job in question
- language skills
- own interests, achievements, hobbies
- references



Tip: Think twice about using your photo. If it looks good in colour, but not in black and white or it is very small, don't use it.

2 INCLUDE A SHORT PERSONAL STATEMENT



Explain why you are the best person for the job. Tell an interesting story about yourself that the reader wants to take in.



Tip: 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 (emphasize your accomplishments, with numbers if possible). This should be reflected in your cover letter.

4 MIND THE LANGUAGE

- ✓ consistent (one language used consistently)
- ✓ clear expressions that make sense
- ✓ short sentences
- ✓ neutral in writing (not using 'I' all the time)
- ✓ specific (not too generic)
- ✓ assertive and positive, dynamic (develop, organised, achieved)
- ✓ no use of jargon, abbreviations, etc.
- ✓ error free, no spelling mistakes
- ✓ keyword friendly



Tip: Instead of using the 'I' pronoun, such as I did this, I did that', use positive action words to lead bullet points e.g. 'Initiated this, created that', which will seem much more dynamic. This will give a very energetic feel to your CV and help reinforce the message that you are a 'can-do' type of candidate.



Make it **keyword friendly**: help a search engine pick out your CV from the pile by using words that are commonly mentioned when you input your job title.

3 KEEP IT REAL and MAKE IT LOOK GOOD

Usually a CV should be no more than **two pages** – and that's two pages of A4 paper! Employers spend, on average, just 8 seconds looking at any one CV. Keep it to the point, and save those little details for the interview.

- ✓ clean and neat presentation
- ✓ short and concise (aim for a two-page CV)
- ✓ clear and well-structured (organised, readable, bullet points ...)
- ✓ easy-on-the-eye layout
- ✓ consistent formatting
- ✓ interesting/creative

Tip: Be consistent with formatting, especially if you do copy-pasting. Too many special features (bold, underline, italic) can make your CV confusing.



Remember the **CV hotspot** – the upper middle area of the first page is where the recruiter's eye will naturally fall, so make sure you include your most important information there.

5 TAILOR IT: MAKE IT RELEVANT and EVIDENCE BASED

- ★ specific and relevant information (tailored to the job, not too generic)
- ★ specific skills and experiences within the first half page
- ★ included examples of achievements and improvements
- ★ achievements backed up with numbers
- ★ sufficient evidence (examples)
- ★ information/candidate is interesting



Tip: Create a unique CV for every job you apply for. You don't have to re-write the whole thing, just adapt the details so they're relevant. Use the job advert to work out EXACTLY what skills you should point out to them.



Show that you have the specific skills, experience and approach required within the first half page of your CV, so the recruiter can quickly see your suitability. Make the most of interests, experience and skills – are they relevant to the job and do they make you interesting?

You need to prove you have what they need. So instead of your CV saying you have 'good communication skills', give an example of where you demonstrated this to good effect e.g. 'write monthly blog on company developments as part of our social media strategy'. Prove what a great candidate you are by including examples of achievements, improvements you made at work or problems you solved: "This position involved planning, organisation and leadership as I was responsible for a team of people".

6 TELL THE TRUTH!

- ✓ consistent dates/time line
- ✓ no gaps
- ✓ references



Tip: References should be from someone who has employed you in the past and can vouch for your skills and experience. If you've never worked before you're OK to use a teacher or tutor as a referee. Try to include two if you can.



Don't leave gaps!