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CV Writing

Your curriculum vitae is the single most important weapon in your armoury when it comes to job hunting.

A prospective employer will often make a snap judgement the second they read it and even the most qualified people on the planet can find themselves rejected if the resume fails to come up to scratch. So how can you give yours the edge?

Avoid making it too fancy and complicated. You only have about five seconds to grab the attention - if it is too clever and unreadable it will go in the bin.

Don't try to make jokes and never bad-mouth previous employers.

CV length

There are no set rules governing the length of your CV - this will be decided on your career history, education and achievements. If possible try to keep it to one page, but if this looks too cramped then feel free to spread it out over two sheets.

Everyone has a different theory when it comes to CV design. Don't get too bogged down over this, just make sure everything is clearly marked. Include your career progression, education and achievements prominently so your prospective employer doesn't have to search.

Here is a basic format: Start off with your name, address and contact details clearly listed at the top of the page. Follow this with a profile of yourself which should include an outline of your skills, experience and immediate career goals.

After this you can put in your career history - in reverse chronological order over the past 10 years - with brief descriptions of your responsibilities and achievements. Then comes education, interests/personal details and references.

Stick to the truth

Make sure it is printed on good quality A4 size paper and never attach extra documents, letters or certificates - save these for the interview. Read and re-read your CV, and then ask a friend or family member to read it as well.

Make sure there are no spelling errors or coffee stains (on printed copies!) as these will be fatal.

It might sound obvious, but be truthful. Never try to smudge dates and jobs to hide periods of unemployment. The most basic of checks will expose your deceit and ruin any chance of getting the job.

Follow all instructions on the job advert. If they want four copies of your CV then you should send four. It is also vital to get it in on time. The covering letter should be customised for each job you apply for as this is your chance to tailor your skills to the demands required – more on this can be found in the following document – “creating the perfect cover letter”