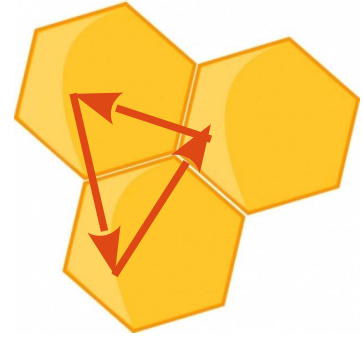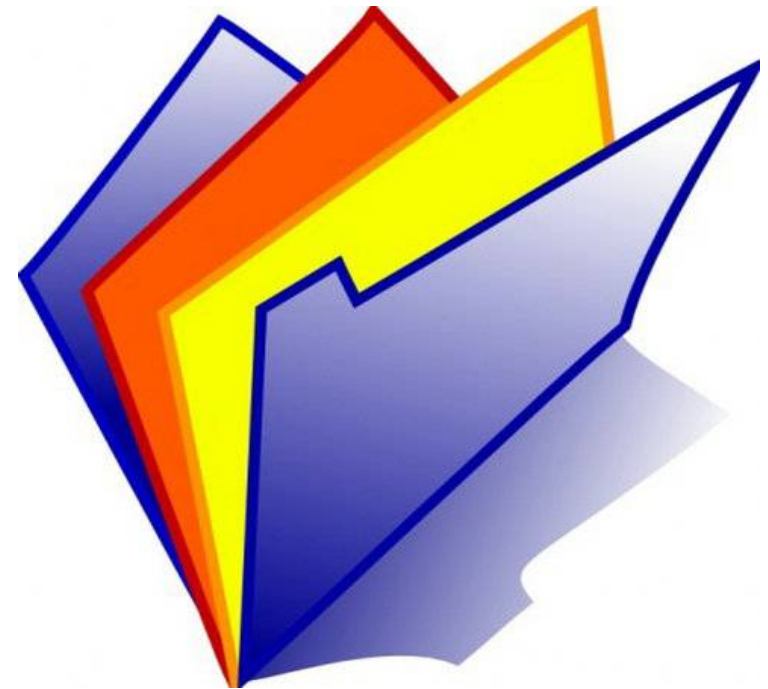# CVs and cover-letters

Contents:

- Fundamentals.
  - Aim.
  - Layout.
- CV.
  - Tips.
  - Managing impressions.
- Coverletter.
  - Tips.
  - Managing impressions.

CV writing is not a one-time thing

- Multiple drafts always improves.

- Targeted CVs good idea.

- Consider a portfolio.

- Pays to be prepared.

→ Start now!

What to send to a prospective employer

- Unless stated otherwise:

  - CV or Resume.

  - Cover-letter.

- Sometimes requested:

  - Transcript.

  - Portfolio (design-type jobs)

  - Writing/programming task.

  - A form to be filled.

What to put in a CV
(the fundamentals)

- Name & contact details.

- Education history.

- Employment history.

- Other experience.

- **Evidence of (relevant) ability**.

  - E.g. awards, projects, interests.

What to put in a cover-letter (the fundamentals).

- At the start:

  - The job being applied for.

  - How you heard about it.

- In the middle:

  - Why you want *this* job (be specific).

  - What makes *you* right for the job (be specific).

  - Connect with concrete examples.

    - E.g. "*The job requires someone who can manage a complete Microsoft web stack; I co-managed a Microsoft Stack 1999-2002 for Kartal-Tek and rolled out a server to Ayşe Ev Malzeme in 2003. I am capable of managing a Microsoft web stack.*"

- At the end:

  - End decisively.

  - Do mention it if your CV is attached.

What is a cover-letter

- It is a formal letter:

  - Use formal letter format.

- Purpose:

  - State an interest in the position.

  - Clarify any important supporting points.

  - Point to CV/resume.

- Usually no more than 1 page.

Considerations when writing a CV & cover-letter

- Step 1:

  - Get your CV read.

- Step 2:

  - Get an interview.

Step 1:
Get your CV read.

- Get reader's attention.

- Differentiate yourself.

  – In the **right** way!

- Make it scannable!

Your CV

Suggestions for getting reader's attention

- Interesting use of colour or design.

- Clear layout.

- Prominent keywords or job-relevant info.

Step 2:
Get an interview.

- Consider your impression:

  - Does it fit the job description?

  - Does it fit the company?

  - Is it professional?

  - Is it competent?

Possible structures for a CV

- Chronological.

  - Shows life history well.

    (message could be lost)

- Functional.

  - Tailored more to target roles.

    (requires more work).

- Chronological with highlights.

  - Best of both worlds?

A chronologically structured CV

- Work history:
  - 2010 – 2013: CEO, Monolithic Mainframes Inc.
  - 2001 – 2009: Cleaner, Disparate Devices Ltd.
- Education:
  - 1996 - 2001: BEng Computer Engineering (Class A Honours), GPA: 4.0.
- Awards.
- Etc.

A functionally structured CV

- Programming experience:
  - 1996 - 2001: BEng Computer Engineering (Class A Honours), GPA: 4.0
  - 2003 - 2005: Contributor: JEdit (open source software project).
- Customer relations experience:
  - 2009 – 2008: Foreign minister, Peru.
  - 2006 – 2008: McDonalds Cashier, Fatih.
- Etc.

Should I put an objective statement in my CV?

- If you do, it should be tailored & specific.

- Too vague:

  – Ambitious individual committed to growing as an individual and contributing to the world.

  – Employer response: "*that's nice*".

- Targeted:

  – Computer engineer looking for programming/design position in fast-moving Microsoft stack web shop.

  – Employer response: "*that'll work!*".

What if I don't have much to put in my CV?

- Pad it out!

  - Relevant extra-curricular activities.

  - Relevant professional memberships.

  - Etc.

- Spread it out!

  - You have design freedom.

CVs for overseas jobs vs Turkey

- **Not** usually included on CV in the US:

  - Photo.

  - Gender.

  - Nationality.

  - Birth date.

  - Marital status.

- For European countries,

  check first.

wikiHow
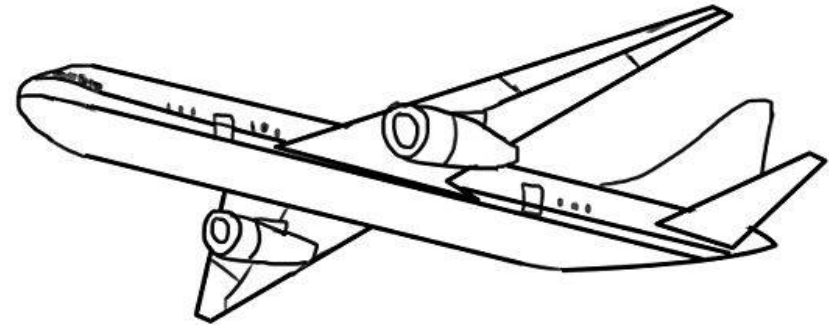
What to put in a cover-letter

- At the start:
  - The job being applied for.
  - How you heard about it.
  - Something eye-catching:
    - Relevant company information, relevant individual, qualification highlight.
- In the middle:
  - Why you want *this* job (be specific).
  - What makes *you* right for the job (be specific).
  - Connect with concrete examples.
    - E.g. "*The job requires someone who can manage a complete Microsoft web stack; I co-managed a Microsoft Stack 1999-2002 for Kartal-Tek and rolled out a server to Ayşe Ev Malzeme in 2003. I am capable of managing a Microsoft web stack.*"
- At the end:
  - End decisively.
  - Lot's of options.
    - https://www.google.com.tr/search?q=how+to+end+a+cover-letter
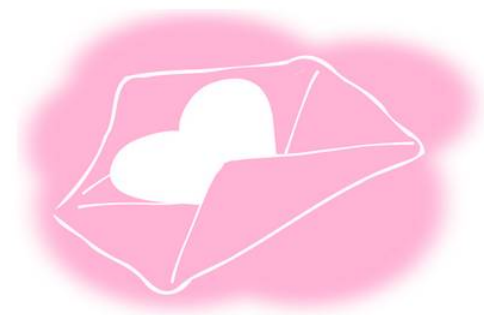
Tone of a cover-letter

- Professional & knowledgeable.

- And... enthusiasm never hurt a job applicant.

- Desirable impressions:

"She knows what she's doing".

"She'll fit right in".

"She'll be effective very quickly".

"She's going to save our lives!"

Things to avoid in cover-letter tone
(Beer & McMurrey)

- Too reserved.

  - Including too modest!

- Egotistical.

  - But do emphasise your strengths...

- Fawning.

  - But do express enthusiasm...

- Desperate.

  - Focus on what you can do.

The messages sent by an error in a CV or coverletter

- Spelling mistakes:

  − "I'm inccompettentt."

- Inconsistent punctuation:

  − "I am not, professional".

- Unpolished grammar:

  − "I don't really care the job".

- Messy design:

  − "I don't 𝒹𝑜 things wel**l**."
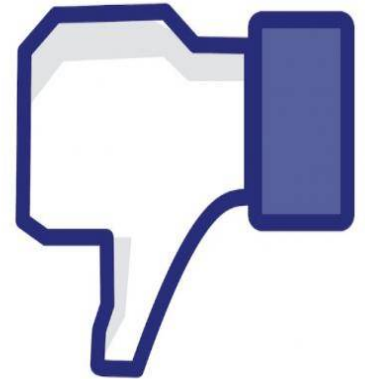
Most common CV mistakes according to jobs.aol.com

- Typos.

- Not targeted.

- No skills.

- Words copied from job posting.

- Inappropriate material (e.g. email address).

- Required information not given (dates of employment).

- Decorative paper!

- Photo included.

This would not happen in Turkey

Final rules on writing CVs and cover-letters

- Every rule is breakable.
- If you're planning to break a rule get lot's of feedback.

Other things that you can do to help secure a job

- Maintain an up-to-date professional online presence.

  - Share your projects.

  - Participate in technical communities.

  - Think about possible negative impacts of your online presence.

  - Make a website:

    - CV style.

    - Projects.

    - Interests.

    - *Keep it clean!*

  - Consider LinkedIn.com

Other things that you can do to help secure a job

- Constantly watch for jobs.

  - Even when not in the market.

  - Use monster.com, kariyer.net, etc.

  - Magazines and mailing lists in interest areas.

Other things that you can do to help secure a job

- Do your research:

  - Research the company.

  - Research the role.

  - Keep reading:

    - https://www.google.com.tr/search?q=cv+writing
    - https://www.google.com.tr/search?q=cover-letter+samples
    - https://www.google.com.tr/search?q=job+interviews
    - http://govcareers.about.com/od/JobSearch/tp/10-Mistakes-That-Will-Get-Y
    - http://jobs.aol.com/articles/2013/09/13/hiring-managers-reveal-12-worst
    - Etc.

Other things that you can do to help secure a job

- Follow up on your application.

  - Make a phone-call.

  - Write a letter/email.

  - If you promised to call, then call.