Essential CV Help: 10 Top Tips

1. Do yourself justice

A standard CV should come as close to two pages as you can get it and it's important to use this space to inform the employer of the qualifications that you have and about the things that make you great. This is no place for modesty. Do 'big-up' any relevant outstanding achievements such as impressive university grades or external qualifications. For example:

I'm well on-track to achieving a 2:1 overall in my degree. In my second year of university, I achieved 75% in my Advanced Astrophysics module and was awarded a special commendation for my final presentation on Cosmology.

You may also like to mention some irrelevant achievements that are important to you, but place these towards the end of your CV and keep it brief.

2. Be genuine

It's important that your style of writing is authoritative but also conveys your individual tone of voice as it will set you apart from other applications. Don't be afraid to convey your passion for a subject and avoid sounding stiff. For example:

During my time mentoring at Stanford Primary School I learnt the most effective methods of working well with children of mixed ages. I found the work extremely rewarding and it was here that I developed a real passion for working with young people.

3. Tailor it

Most employers will only spend up to 30 seconds skimming a CV, especially if the job application is popular and they have a pile of other CV's to wade through. Every job you apply for should have its own tailored application to give yourself the best chance of being selected from the stack and put into the interview pile. Carefully structure your CV so the most relevant topics are positioned near at the top to catch their attention from the word go. If the job description calls for applicants with experience using a particular software and you have this experience, you may like to include this in your key skills and position it nice and clearly near the top of the page so it's the first thing they see.

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For instance, if applying for a job in graphic design, you could consider placing the following near the top:

Key Skills

- Digital Design	*- Serif DrawPlus*	*- CorelDraw*
- Adobe Illustrator	*- Adobe Photoshop*	*- Fine Art*

4. Details and personal statement

You must list your name, phone number, email address and postal address at the top of your CV using a clean font. We recommend you use a larger font size for your name to help it stand out. Underneath your details you may like to include a **brief** personal statement to summarise why you're an ideal candidate for the job and give a quick insight into your world. This should only be a few lines and remember it's the first thing your employer will see, so don't waffle, only include what is relevant. See our example below:

Joe Blogs

Email: joeblogs123@gmail.com

Mobile: 07712 345678

5 Gregson Road, Stockport, SK5 7SS

My First Class degree in English Literature has developed my skills in research analysis, and strengthened my presentation and writing skills. I'm a very strong communicator with excellent interpersonal skills, which I hope to put to good use working in Public Relations.

5. Structure

It's important to create clear sections within your CV so your employer can efficiently navigate his/her way through to the bits they're interested in. You can achieve this using section headers that are underlined, written in bold, or with capitals but be wary of using capitals too much as it can look as though you're shouting. A good CV will include sections on the following: **Key Skills, Relevant Work Experience, Education** and you may also like to include brief sections on **Other Skills** and/or **Other Activities** if you need to bulk it out a little. You should state your education and work history

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chronologically and you may like to highlight key points to your employer in **bold** or *italics*, although these should be used in moderation.

Bullet points are another useful technique as they help to break up the page whilst keeping your information tidy and accessible. They're ideally used for smaller lists such as in your 'Other Interests' section, and if you're short of space you can consider splitting bullet points into two columns across the page to keep it compact.

6. Transferable Skills

These are one of the most crucial things to put into your CV as it demonstrates that you've taken learnings onboard which you can now apply to your next role. Employers **love** these and you'll always have more than you think. For example:

Having spent the last three years playing in my university Symphony orchestra, I am no stranger to commitment and have developed an immaculate attention to detail. I was a reliable member of the orchestra and years of concerts has seen my confidence grow tenfold.

This example highlights commitment, attention to detail, reliability and confidence all of which can be applied elsewhere outside of a musical capacity. You should aim to provide examples of any transferable skills mentioned when you go on to talk about your experiences. A list of common transferable skills can be found at the end of this guide.

7. Discuss your experiences

The most common mistake that people make when writing a CV is to create a great long list of their past and relevant experiences without explaining what they've learned as a result. For example, stating that you took a short course in Marketing may look like good experience but what separates you from other applicants who have also taken courses in Marketing? Include a summary of the key skills you picked up along the way and show how your work has improved your skillset. For instance:

I completed a two-day course focusing on PR and Marketing for the launch of a new company to improve my skills in a business environment. Activities included data analysis, budgeting and project planning

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before giving a final presentation. I learned to work effectively in a small group under time pressure and to think on my feet when problems arose.

8. Make it look attractive

There's a lot to be said for the presentation of a CV. It says a great deal about a person's character and professionalism. Keeping your CV neat and tidy not only makes it easier for the employer to read (and want to read) but it also conveys that you take pride in your work and will likely take pride and care over the work you do for their company.

9. Spellcheck and double check.

Put simply, you cannot afford to make simple spelling mistakes in your CV. It's unprofessional, suggests you haven't taken the time to read your own work and will easily be the difference between you getting that interview call and not.

10. Print a copy

We highly recommend printing a paper copy before the final send off in case the formatting skews or the font is too small. It's always good to read your CV through on paper as it often helps to spot any mistakes you may have missed while viewing again and again on screen. Finally, have someone else read it over before you send it off, two pairs of eyes are better than one.

Common Transferable Skills: CV Help

- Attention to detail
- Team player
- Good communication skills
- Excellent presentation skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Time management
- Customer service
- Delegation
- Budgeting
- Good research skills

- IT literate
- Can meet deadlines
- Work under pressure
- Results oriented
- Problem solving
- Organisation
- Work independently
- Creative thinking
- Logical
- Accuracy

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