

write

The Write Checklist for Writing a Winning CV

This checklist covers the most important elements of writing a winning CV. If you can tick all the statements below, your CV is much more likely to get you the interview.

How to use the checklist

A recruitment consultant or employer will spend only 15 to 20 seconds on your CV when they first see it. This means that your CV needs to make a great first impression.

- Use this checklist before you start writing to focus your thinking on what to include in your CV.
- Apply the principles in this checklist to your cover letter or email as well.
- To make writing about yourself and your career easier, get a friend or workmate to help you draw out your skills and attributes — they'll be able to help you emphasise your strong points.
- Download the [Write Plain Language Standard](#) (free to use under Creative Commons) to polish the writing in your CV and cover letter even more.

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1. Your CV stands out and makes a good first impression

- Your CV looks clean and clear, with an up-to-date format
- Your CV is easy to read
- You use strong, active language to connect with the reader

2. Your full contact details reflect you in the best light

- Your email address is professional
- Your phone and mobile messages are clear and appropriate
- Your Facebook settings and LinkedIn profile present you well

3. Your personal statement relates to the job

- Your statement is tailored to the job you want
- Your statement talks directly to the employer, using 'you'
- Your statement shows you have researched the organisation or company
- Your statement conveys the kind of person you are

4. You reflect the employer's needs and use their language

- You use the same words the job description or advertisement uses
- You show you understand the employer and what they need
- You explain how you can help the employer with what they need

5. You show you are willing to learn and grow

- You include any relevant courses you have taken
- You include responsibilities you have taken on at work or outside it
- You include any volunteering work you've done



6. Your job history and skills reflect your achievements

- You show how your work led to clear results
- You include your most relevant work only
- You use short, focused paragraphs of no more than six lines

7. Your writing is clear and easy to read

- Your sentences contain one main idea and an average of 15 words
- You use precise, familiar words and no unnecessary words
- You use direct language, strong verbs, and the active voice as much as possible
- You avoid jargon or clichés, and have used technical terms sparingly
- You avoid acronyms and abbreviations

8. Your tone supports the purpose

- Your language makes you seem approachable
- You use words like 'you', 'we', and 'I' where appropriate
- Your tone is appropriate for the reader and conveys your intended impression

9. The layout looks professional and helps the reader absorb your messages quickly

- The text is left-aligned and ragged right
- The layout includes plenty of white space and high-contrast headings
- The font size is appropriate (at least 11 points)
- Coloured text contrasts sufficiently with the background
- Your CV is free of visual clutter

10. Your CV is free of errors

- Your CV has correct spelling
- Your CV has correct grammar and punctuation
- Your CV uses accurate dates and figures
- Your CV is accurate and consistent