

1. Your CV is you - if *it* looks bad, you look bad

Companies and recruitment businesses alike receive hundreds of job applications, if your CV has spelling mistakes, grammatical errors, too much information or not enough then you could be crippling your job prospects from the get-go.

Spelling mistakes and grammatical errors are common occurrences, but easily resolved. By leaving these mistakes on your CV you are telling employers that you lack attention to detail.

Putting too much information bores the person reading your CV, every part of your CV needs a reason for being there. Look through each line of your CV, if it doesn't add any value then get it out!

Not having enough information is just as harmful! Employers want 'this' qualification, 'that' experience and some of 'those' skills. If this information cannot be found on your CV then your application will most likely be disregarded.

TOP CV TIP:

Name Contact details (mobile, home phone and email address) Address
<u>Profile</u> Write down what you are looking for in a job, whether that is a big company, career progression opportunities or training, etc.
<u>Career history</u> Job title – company name – employment dates (from mm/yyyy) – (to mm/yyyy) <i>Write your responsibilities and/or duties, either in bullet point form or long text (try to keep it to the point)</i> <i>It is important to add all of your roles (in the last 10 years, more or less) to your CV. Just because a job may not be relevant to the role you are applying for does not mean there are no transferable skills there. It can also be a red flag when there are large stints of unemployment on your CV with no explanation, so if you were out of work for any reason write a sentence explaining why.</i> Also, don't forget that employers look for skills that you have gained both in your career and outside of your career. <i>For example, taking time out of work to have children is likely to have allowed you to learn many useful skills that you can relate to in a working environment; time management, working under pressure, etc.</i> Remember to add any voluntary work here too, including any work experience completed through school/college.
<u>Education</u> Write your school/university/college name and dates, then add the grades/qualifications that you achieved. <i>You may not think that your GCSE's are relevant to the role you are applying for and you may be right. Sometimes they aren't relevant but other times they are so it's best to keep this on there... just in case.</i>
<u>Other skills/qualifications</u> If there is anything else that doesn't fall under any other heading then add it here. <i>Maybe you have taken other courses, earned certificates, or studied for other qualifications, e.g.</i>

first aid. Remember to add dates, if any qualifications or certificates expire then you must write their expiry date.

In terms of reference details, it is best not to add contact information on your CV.
Instead, write:

"References are available on request"

2. Knowledge is power

A passionate employee is what every employer wants. If you go into an interview having done little or no research about the company (and job role) it will show. Every single employee is a representation of the company, employers want to know that you care enough and are passionate enough to uphold the company values, reputation and to do your job well!

The best way to do this is to really research the company before your interview, knowledge is power! The more of this you've done the easier the interview will be, if you struggle with nerves the best thing you can do is arm yourself with as much knowledge, about the company and job role, as you possibly can. The less you know, the more likely it is for you to become flustered when asked a question.

Top Interview Tip: Don't discuss salary in the interview, unless the interviewer brings this up first. An employer wants to know that you want this job because of the job and the company itself, not just because of the salary (& potential benefits). If you are only interested in money then chances are, you'll flee as soon as offered a higher salary somewhere else.

3. Practice makes perfect

You've done your preparation, now to put it into a form that you can use in the interview. It's not advisable to learn a script off by heart, but spending time looking at various interview questions and working out how you would answer the question is time well spent!

TOP INTERVIEW TIP:

A useful structure when answering competency-based interview questions is the STAR method.

Situation: this is where you set the scene, explain what problem or challenge you faced. Try and be as specific and detailed as you can.

Task: now you need to explain what you needed to do – what you needed to achieve, what your goals were and what you were aiming for as an outcome.

Action: so, what action did you take? What did you do to resolve, or deal with, this and why?

Result: you should state as many outcomes as possible here, showing a high level of awareness.

Why not give it a go with this question;

"Give an example of a time when you had to make a difficult decision"

S:

T:

A:

R:

4. Eyes first...

You need to show that you have made an effort and are serious about this position. You want the employer to see you as a company fit. The first thing they will see is you!

As soon as you arrive in the interview ensure you keep your body language open. Remember to smile, keep eye contact, and dress smart!

