

Suggested rules for a CV and cover letter

A good Curriculum Vitae (CV) and covering letter can get you an interview and help you get the job, a bad one will get your application thrown out.

Here we suggest a few general rules to follow. But you do not need to stick to them. Depending on the role you are applying for, you may consider a CV in another medium, for example video. Be sure to follow the instructions given by the employer.

If you are applying for a creative role then it may be appropriate to disregard some of these rules if appropriate in order to show off your creativity

Do

- Include a covering letter written specifically for each job
- Use a computer to write / type up your CV and covering letter
- Use white A4 paper (unless emailed)
- Use white A4 or DL sized envelope
- Keep your CV to less than 2.5 pages long (including references)
- Use a clear font (Arial or Times New Roman) and size (usually 10 or 12 point)
- Make sure the paper and envelopes you use are clean, unstained and look brand new
- Check your spelling, punctuation and grammar and keep your language simple, clear and direct
- Explain any gaps in your employment or training
- Make sure your CV looks good when stripped of any formatting such as bullets, subheadings and bold (many online web forms strip these out anyway)
- Make it easy to find the most important information, generally this means having it higher up the CV
- Be specific and use examples
- Check that you have included everything that was asked for

Do Not

- Use coloured paper
- Write CV or covering letter by hand
- Use small envelopes
- Fold more than 3 times before putting into an envelope
- Have a CV less than 2 pages long. (It looks like you haven't tried)
- Have a CV over 3 pages long
- Use fancy borders, clip art and pictures (unless you are applying for a post in design and can make it look really professional)
- No BLOCK CAPITALS or **bold text**, except in headings
- Use poor quality photocopies
- Use the same covering letter for many generic jobs
- Use dirty or creased paper or envelopes
- Forget to include relevant information
- Be chatty, personal or try to be funny
- Lie or include misleading information
- Give information that's not relevant to work
- Waffle – keep it short and to the point
- Include a meaningless introduction
- Say anything bad about a current or previous employer