

How to Write a Brilliant CV

What is an apprenticeship?

A good CV will help you to get the work placement, job, or apprenticeship that you want. Here are five tips to make yours stand out.

You can apply these tips to any CV, whether you're using Unifrog's [CV builder](#), a word processor, or something else. If you're writing a CV for a work placement rather than a job, take a look at the examples in our guide to work placements.

1. Give your CV a clear structure

Employers should be able to quickly find the information they need. Use standard section headings like 'Education', 'Work Experience', and 'Skills'. This makes it easier to read and shows that you can present information well.

Put the most important details at the top. Employers often skim CVs, so make sure your main achievements and skills are the first things they see. To check this, save your CV as a PDF and open it on a computer – whatever's visible before scrolling should be strong and relevant.

Most people list all their experience in reverse order, with the most recent first. But if you have some older experience that's more relevant, you can list that first. Add a section for 'Relevant Experience', followed by another section for 'Other Experience'.

Your CV should include:

- **Contact information:** List your phone number, email, and city. You can also add your LinkedIn profile if it's up to date.
- **Skills:** Focus on the skills mentioned in the job description. Don't claim skills you don't have—you might be tested on them in an interview.
- **Work experience:** Include jobs, internships, placements, and volunteer work. Briefly list the things you were responsible for, plus two or main achievements per role.
- **Education:** Mention your qualifications and where you studied. You don't have to include your grades if don't want to. Writing '5 GCSEs including Maths and English' is fine.

- **Other achievements:** Include awards, certifications, completed courses, or hobbies.
- **References:** A referee can be anyone who's known you for six months or longer. They can't be a friend or family member. You can write 'References available on request' instead of listing names and contacts. Make sure your referees agree to vouch for you.

Your CV should not include:

- **Your age:** Employers can't ask your age unless legally required for the job.
- **A photo:** Photos aren't needed unless the employer has asked for one. If you do add one, make sure it looks professional.

2. Be professional

Avoid unusual fonts, bright colours, or images. Unifrog's [CV builder](#) will help you to format your CV professionally. But if you're working offline, keep your font plain (use Arial or something similar) and at size 10-12, with headings no larger than size 12.

Your email address should also be professional. If you need to, create a new one with your name (e.g., `firstname.surname@email.com`).

If you're sending a digital CV, name the file professionally, like 'CV_Firstname_Surname_Year.' This looks more polished than something like 'CV_final123.doc'.

3. Tailor your CV to each job

A generic CV won't impress employers. Adjust it to highlight skills and experiences that **match the job you're applying for**.

Read the job description carefully. Then, reorder sections, emphasise relevant skills, or rephrase achievements to match the role. This small effort shows that you're serious about the job.

Update your CV regularly. Add new skills, projects, and experiences as they happen so you don't forget any details when applying.

Unifrog's [Skills tool](#) helps you record examples of your skills which you can then pull through into the CV builder, making tailoring your CV much easier.

4. Be clear and direct

Your CV should show what you've **achieved**, not just what you've done. Use strong, confident language, like 'developed', 'organised', 'was responsible for', or 'achieved'. Claim your achievements as your own, using 'I' rather than 'we'.

Avoid long explanations. Use bullet points to keep things concise. Your CV should be **two pages** maximum—employers don't have time to read extra details. If they need more information, they'll ask at the interview.

4. Proofread

Spelling and grammar mistakes make you look careless. Check your CV carefully and ask a teacher, friend, or family member to review it. Reading it out loud can also help you to catch errors.

Many employers also require an application form in addition to a CV. Don't just copy and paste from your CV—write thoughtful, original responses to any questions they ask.

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