

Adapting your CV and writing an impressive cover letter

Introduction

As the world of work changes, employers are looking for a CV that demonstrates your transferable skills, like communication and digital skills. This can really help make a great first impression to employers. You will need to already have created a CV to complete this worksheet. If you haven't got a CV yet, try our interactive CV Builder tool before completing this activity.

Once you have a CV to work with, it's also important to think about how your skills can be demonstrated differently depending on the job you may be applying for. These activities will help you do that, as well as write a brilliant cover letter to help your CV stand out even more when applying for jobs.

Worksheet one: Adapting a CV for different audiences

Read through and choose one of the following job adverts, or you can use an advert for a real job you are already interested in.

Office manager needed for busy doctor's surgery

Our busy surgery needs a new office manager to deal with patient queries and appointments, and other administration tasks contributing to the organisation and running of the surgery.

A good telephone manner, patient and respectful personality and the ability to stay positive under pressure are vital. IT skills are preferable but not essential as training can be provided for the right person, but thorough attention to detail is a must.

Web designer

You have a great eye for design, good knowledge of coding for the web, and you're up-to-date on all things digital.

Adaptable, observant and ready to roll up your sleeves, you can manage your own projects and build stunning websites on time and to meet our clients' needs.

We're a tight knit team and seek a bright personality with initiative, attention to detail and a solution focussed approach to problem solving.

The successful candidate will also need up-to-date experience of HTML/CSS, Javascript and Adobe Creative Suite.

Trainee teaching assistant required

We are looking to recruit a trainee teaching assistant to provide learning support for students aged 11–14.

The successful candidate will be able to demonstrate a strong ability to understand the needs of others and show patience, adaptability and enthusiasm.

They will need to have good numeracy, organisation and communication skills and work well within a team, as well as being responsible and able to manage their own time and priorities.

Farm manager

The farm manager will be responsible for selling of the farms products, as well as coordinating the daily activity of the farm. You will be highly organised and a proactive person with an interest in business and animals. It's a broad role that's all about communication, organisation and building relationships as well as suggesting solutions.

We're looking for people with patience, numeracy skills and relevant qualifications and/or demonstrable experience working on farms.

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Worksheet one: Adapting a CV for different audiences (cont'd)

What important skills are mentioned in the job advert?

Why is it useful to look at the key skills that job adverts include?

Which of the key skills mentioned in the job advert could be added into your CV, and what example can you give to demonstrate this? (These could be related to school, or activities such as clubs, social action or volunteering and other interests.)

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Worksheet two: Writing an impressive cover letter

A cover letter is a message sent alongside a CV when applying for a job. It's similar to a personal advert, highlighting the most important things you want a prospective employer to know, and why you are a great match for the job. An impressive cover letter can help you stand out and encourage employers to read your CV. They are also an opportunity to emphasise your passion for the role and organisation.

Using the hints and tips on the next page, have a go at creating your own cover letter in the box below. Make sure you use a specific job to write this – it could be a dream job you already have in mind, or find a job advert online to work with. Remember that you can use social media to search for jobs too.

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Top tips for writing a great cover letter

The top tip for any cover letter is keeping it to the point and ensuring it grabs an employer's attention. You should aim for 200–250 words broken into short paragraphs and focus on including key information including:

- ✓ The job you're applying for
- ✓ The documents you have enclosed (CV, application form, portfolio, test answers)
- ✓ Why you want to do the job, and work for the organisation specifically
- ✓ Why the employer should hire you: highlight your most relevant skills and experience and what separates you from other applicants
- ✓ Achievements you are particularly proud of that demonstrate relevant or desirable skills and attributes
- ✓ When you can start

Need more inspiration and guidance?



Take a look at our [How to write a cracking cover letter](#) interactive tool which provides more handy tips on creating your letter.