

English job applications typical mistakes and useful phrases

Choose one of the things below and explain how big a mistake you think it is or not, and why it is or is not important. (Some of them probably don't matter much). See if your partner agrees, discuss for longer if you like, then take turns doing the same.

- A 20-page CV
- A CV in a format that they can't read or can't open
- A CV which has obviously been written just for that specific job
- A CV which hasn't been changed at all when applying for that job (so has just been recycled from previous applications for other jobs)
- *A cover letter which is too informal*
- A half-page CV
- A handwritten CV
- A limp handshake
- An overly forceful handshake
- Asking 20 questions when you are given the chance in the interview
- Asking about sick pay
- Asking how much holiday you will get at the interview
- Asking no questions when you are given the chance in the interview
- Avoiding eye contact
- Bad style or formatting of your CV
- *Being informal or too direct in your questions*
- *Being too shy or too modest to mention your achievements*
- Blanks in your employment history
- *Explaining your weak points without putting any positive spin on them*
- Grammar mistakes
- Looking and sounding nervous
- Mixing British English and American English
- No job reference from your present employer
- *No mention of job references on your CV*
- Not knowing anything about the company which you are applying to work for
- Not putting the most important information top on your CV
- *Not quickly getting to the point in your cover letter*
- Slouching in your chair
- Spelling mistakes
- *Starting your cover letter with "Dear Sir or Madam"*
- *Statements about your strong points without any evidence*
- The style or formatting that you put on your CV lost when they open it
- Turning up half an hour before the interview
- Writing the name of the company you are applying for on your CV

When your teacher stops you, ask about anything above you don't understand, are not sure about the badness, etc, discussing as a class each time.

Brainstorm language for doing the opposite of the things in italics above, e.g. super-formal language for an email?