Quick CV writing crib sheet

Contact details

- Your name - at the top, in bold and larger than the rest of your text
- Email address (always helpful to hyperlink it - highlight and Ctrl + K in Word)
- Phone number (country code only if you're applying internationally)
- Basic location, not your full address e.g. Birmingham, Northwest or L3
- No need for a photo, marital status or date of birth!

Headline

- Use the title of the role you are applying for to signal your intention and readiness, for example, "Senior Project Manager"
- If you'd prefer not to you can use your current job title or say "Candidate for Senior Project Manager"

Profile or summary

- Three short statements, written either as bullets or spaced-out paragraphs
- Cover who you are, what you do and how you will add value
- This is your elevator pitch so include your unique selling points
- Write either in the first person "I'm a Senior Project Manager…" (try not to start each statement with "I") or first person implied ("a Senior Project Manager…") - never in the third person ("Ashley is a Senior Project Manager").

Key Skills

- List hard skills and knowledge e.g. project management, quality assurance frameworks or employee engagement across the page separated by a pipe symbol (the | on your keyboard) or in three columns using Word's column function
- For 'soft' skills or competencies, such as communication, it's better to write a short sentence to give context and explanation
- Use this section to carefully keyword-match with the job specifications

Career Highlights or Key Achievements

- Choose up to five of your most relevant and significant deliverables
- Keep to one line each
- Use metrics to quantify the value you delivered
- These can be specific bursts of achievement ("boosted employee engagement to 80%…"), summary achievements ("led four IT transformations for three companies over six years") or personal achievements ("secured promotion within a record timeframe")

Professional Experience

- Order using reverse chronology (newest first) and provide a two- or three-line overview of the organisation and your role
- Underneath, use bullet points to showcase what you delivered (rather than your tasks or responsibilities) using past tense power verbs (led, coordinated, coached etc).
- Make sure you can explain the outcome, benefit or impact you had on the business, answering the 'so what?' for each
- Aim for around six to eight achievement-focused bullets for each role, decreasing as you go further back
- Roles over 15 years can be listed under an Early Career Summary subheading

Education and Qualifications

- List the subject, institution and grade if it's a selling point and the date if recent (many people avoid dating their degree to minimise age bias, this is fine)
- Avoid lots of internal unaccredited training unless very relevant to the role (e.g. if you're making an internal application) or you have nothing else to include here
- Use subheadings in this section if you have several different elements to cover (e.g. more than one degree and/or numerous professional qualifications)
- Ditch GCSEs unless you have very recently left full-time education

Additional Information

- A flexible section that adds a final flourish - anything you include here should add to your candidacy such as:
  - Professional memberships or affiliations
  - Languages
  - Technical skills or specific software/tools
  - Publications or media appearances
  - Community leadership or voluntary work
  - NED or trustee positions
  - Interests (if relevant and skill-based, so not gardening baking or socialising!)

Style tips

- Use a clear, modern sans serif font such as Calibri sized at 11 or 10.5
- Avoid design-based templates, gimmicky visuals and two-column layouts
- Use white space, bold, bullets, borders and shading to catch the reader's attention
- Most professional-level CVs are two pages, some need to be two-and-a-half or three but any more than that is likely to be too long
- You don't need to include "references available on request", as the recruitment process will pick this up