

## Hints, tips and common English errors in CV and letter writing

Correct examples are printed **bold text**. *Incorrect* examples are printed ***bold italic text***

PUNCTUATION	HOW TO USE	EXAMPLE						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apostrophes</li> </ul>	<p>Use an apostrophe in place of a letter that has been removed, but do not use these shortened words in letters and CVs.  <b>it's</b> is short for 'it is'. Do not use for any other meaning.</p> <p>Use an apostrophe to show possession (singular and plural and plural nouns).</p> <p><b>its</b> This shows 'possession' but does not need an apostrophe.</p> <p><b>Important:</b>  <b>Its'</b> is always incorrect: do not use it!</p> <p>Plural acronyms and other abbreviations do not need an apostrophe.</p> <p>Do not use an apostrophe when adding an 's' for plural words or in verbs.</p>	<p><b>They've</b> received my application. (<i>They have received my application</i>)</p> <p><b>It's</b> a good opportunity. (<i>It is a good opportunity</i>)</p> <p><b>The university's</b> campus is outstanding (<i>the campus of the university</i>)  <b>Students'</b> assignments should be handed in next week (<i>the assignments of the students</i>)  <b>We need new members for the men's and women's</b> hockey teams ('men' and 'women' are plural nouns)</p> <p><b>When you write a covering letter, make sure the first sentence clearly explains its purpose</b></p> <table border="0" data-bbox="1198 901 2105 997"> <tr> <td><b>Singular</b></td> <td><b>Plural</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>one student's</b> assignment</td> <td><b>two students'</b> assignments</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>one man's</b> seminar group</td> <td><b>two men's</b> seminar groups</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>NGOs</b>      <b>CVs</b></p> <p><b>I used three books and two journals</b> for my research (<i>not 'I used three book's and two journal's for my research'</i>)  <b>She researches</b> her subject on the internet (<i>not 'she researche's..'</i>)</p>	<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>	<b>one student's</b> assignment	<b>two students'</b> assignments	<b>one man's</b> seminar group	<b>two men's</b> seminar groups
<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>							
<b>one student's</b> assignment	<b>two students'</b> assignments							
<b>one man's</b> seminar group	<b>two men's</b> seminar groups							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capital Letters</li> </ul>	<p>Do use capitals for proper nouns.</p> <p>Do use capitals for a person's title in an address.</p> <p>Do use capitals for subjects derived from a proper noun.</p>	<p><b>Example</b>    <b>Wales</b>      <b>England</b>      <b>North Road</b></p> <p><b>David Brown, Manager</b></p> <p><b>Welsh</b>      <b>English</b></p>						

PUNCTUATION	HOW TO USE	EXAMPLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capital Letters</li> </ul>	Do not use capitals for general subjects of study. Do use capitals for titles of qualifications.	history, geography, art BA History (or BA in History)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Colons/semicolons</li> </ul>	Use a colon to introduce a list, after a complete sentence.  Use a semicolon to combine two related sentences.  Use a semicolon before introductory words; such as, “e.g.”, “i.e.”, “namely”, “for instance”.  Use a semicolon to separate units of a series when one or more of the units contain commas.	I was asked to bring several items: a copy of my CV, a draft covering letter and a task list.  Contact me next week; I will let you know my decision.  My work experience is very varied; for example, I spent six months in a finance office and three months in a high street bank.  This conference includes people from Cardiff, Wales; Los Angeles, California; and Beijing, China.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commas</li> </ul>	The comma marks a brief pause in the flow of a sentence, and separates one phrase from another.	If you are not sure about this, let me know now. Complete the application, using the guide, before the closing date. To apply for this job, you must have previous experience.
	Do not join two clauses with a comma.	<i>Time flies when we are having fun, we are always having fun.</i> (incorrect) Time flies when we are having fun and we are always having fun. Time flies when we are having fun; we are always having fun. Time flies when we are having fun. We are always having fun.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spacing</li> </ul>	Use only one space after a full stop, comma, semi colon, colon, exclamation mark, question mark and quotation mark.	
<b>ERRORS, HINTS and TIPS</b>	<b>affect/effect</b> Affect is a verb meaning “have an influence on” Note the use of effect as a noun.	The advice I received did affect my decision. My work placement had a positive effect.
	<b>British/English</b> Use “British” to indicate all UK people and “English” or “Welsh”, for example, if you are referring to the people of a specific nation.	The British like to talk about the weather. The Welsh have a tradition of myths and legends.
	<b>college/collage</b> A collage is made from bits of paper, but a place of education is a college.	

ERRORS HINTS AND TIPS	HOW TO USE	EXAMPLE
	<b>criterion/criteria</b> You can have one criterion or many criteria.	
	<b>due to the fact that</b> Use “because” or “since”	
	<b>into/in to</b> “into” refers to “entering” “in” and “to” are separate words that may sometimes appear next to each other in a sentence	She went into business. I was invited in to discuss my application.
	<b>led/lead</b> “led” is the past tense of the verb “lead”	I led a team of four people. I took the lead role in the group activity.
	<b>licence/license</b> “licence” is a noun “license” is a verb	a full, clean driving licence The licensing law is clearly explained.
	<b>quite/quiet</b> “quite” means “rather” “quiet” refers to the level of noise/sound	This report is quite long. This is a quiet area of the library.
	<b>practice/practise</b> “practice” is a noun “practise” is a verb	Regular practice of interview techniques may improve your job prospects. You can practise your interview skills using a software package.
	<b>there/they’re/their</b> “there” is an adverb that shows place/location “they’re” means “they are” “their” is a possessive pronoun and refers to “belonging to”	There were three tasks to complete. They’re looking for evidence of your ability. Their main advantage is an excellent training scheme.
	<b>to/too/two</b> “to” refers to a direction “too” means an excess “too” means “in addition” or “also” “two” is a number	Come to the Careers Service. My covering letter is too general. I would like information about a vacancy and some advice too. Your CV is two pages long.