

# Written communication

**Written communication** is when people communicate or talk to each other using written words. Today, this can come in many forms:

- Text messages
- Books
- Instant messages
- Twitter, Facebook or other social media
- Poems
- Graffiti
- Newspapers
- Emails
- **Application forms**
- **CVs**
- **Cover letters**
- Actual letters - yes they are still used!

## Why is it important?

When you are job hunting, written communication is a very important skill. A CV, application form or email is usually the first type of contact that a future employer will receive from you, so you have to get it right and communicate the best **impression** of yourself that you can.

This section will help you to improve your written communication skills and understand:

- when to use written communication on the job hunt
- what **format** or type of document to use for each type of written communication
- how to use professional language
- how to structure what you write
- how to make sure your spelling and grammar are good

There is a difference between talking and writing. When writing, you have to be very clear about what you mean as you are usually not there to explain to the reader if they don't understand what they are reading. You have to make sure that you use words the reader will understand and that you fully explain all of your ideas.

## Format

The first thing you have to think about is **how** you are going to communicate with your potential employer. The format that you use to send your information is really important.

- **Application forms** are usually online or on paper - the format is generally chosen for you
- **CVs** and **cover letters** are usually written in a word processing tool, like Microsoft Word, so you can keep them and update them as you move through your career
- **Emails** are generally used to discuss the times of interviews as they are quick to write and send - remember to re-read your emails before you send them and check for spelling mistakes

- **Texts** might be appropriate for the type of job that you are applying for if your interviewer needs to change times at the last minute – remember to stay professional at all times and do not shorten your words

**REMEMBER:**

**Think about the information you want to send and choose the right way to send it.**

**TOP TIPS:**

In the professional world, people sometimes receive hundreds of emails and applications every day. To give yourself the best possible chance of having your email read, follow these tips:

- Make sure that you put in a subject line so that the person you are emailing knows what the email is about
- Always try and find the name of the person that you are emailing (it makes a much better impression as it shows that you have taken the time to find out who to write to)
- If you don't know the name of the person that you are emailing, use 'Dear Sir/ Madam' to be polite
- Don't make the email too long! Be short (but polite) and get to the point
- You should sign off appropriately:
  - o If you know the name of the person you are writing to, sign off with 'Yours sincerely'
  - o If you don't know their name, sign off with 'Yours faithfully'
  - o To cover all situations, sign off with 'Kind regards'
- Check that the email address is correct before sending
- Make sure that your spelling and grammar are correct; small mistakes can give the impression that you are careless

## Activity

Using the tips above, draft a short email – including a subject line – which introduces yourself as if you were applying for a job. Then discuss this with your mentor at your next meeting.