

Action Words for Applications

Using active, positive words (these are normally verbs) in a CV or in an application form can give it additional impact and make a stronger impression on potential employers. Use action words (also called buzz words) to put over what you have achieved in vacation jobs or posts of responsibility - not just the tasks you have carried out.

For example, rather than writing:

"For my final-year project, I **had to** carry out a survey of patients' attitudes to health care services for the elderly. This **involved** interviewing patients in hospital and in their homes. A database **was used** to keep track of data collected. This project was **finished** on time and was awarded a 2.1 grade."

You should instead write:

"**Devised** and **prepared** a survey of patients' attitudes to health care services for the elderly as my final-year project. **Interviewed** 70 elderly patients and **obtained** a substantial amount of data. **Created** a database to **analyse** and **interpret** this material. **Completed** this project three weeks ahead of schedule and **achieved** a 2.1 grade."

The first example starts with a number of weak and **passive** verbs (in red) whereas the second example contains strong targeted **active** verbs (again in red) such as devised and created which suggests a person who has initiative and takes action.

Action words help to give an impression of a positive, motivated person who knows how to present themselves in a businesslike way and will be likely to succeed in a variety of work areas whereas passive verbs such as had to and went suggest the opposite.

Planned	Devised	Achieved
Developed	Liaised	Evaluated
Supervised	Co-ordinated	Managed
Administered	Controlled	Selected
Created	Instructed	Negotiated
Designed	Researched	Analysed
Discovered	Recommended	Tested
Diagnosed	Budgeted	Monitored
Evaluated	Examined	Assessed
Promoted	Sold	Advised

Selected	Trained	Taught
Explained	Presented	Conducted
Distributed	Organised	Solved
Represented	Persuaded	Calculated
Completed	Arranged	Responsible for

Source: <https://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/cv/actionverbs.htm>