

LESSON 2

Components of a Job Application: CV and Cover Letter

60 minutes

Strand 2.2: Engaging with the Workplace

Applying

Outcome LCW.M2.S2.APP.2

WHAT THIS LESSON DOES

In this lesson you test your current beliefs about job applications, annotate an example CV and cover letter to see how they work together, and produce initial drafts for a realistic weekend, part-time or holiday role you could apply for this year, including all essential components such as referees.

CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

Outcome	What the specification asks for
LCW.M2.S2.APP.2	outline the different components involved in applying for a job and discuss the potential role of AI in this process.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

- Outline components of a job application including education, experience and referees
- Explain how a CV and cover letter work together
- Produce CV v1 and Cover Letter v1 for a realistic weekend, part-time or holiday role you could apply for this year

KEY TERMS

Term	What it means here	For example
CV	A short, factual summary of who you are on paper: contact details, education, experience, skills and referees. It is scanned fast, so every line has to earn its place.	A one-page CV for a part-time retail role listing school, a weekend job and two referees
Cover letter	A short letter that sits with your CV and explains why you want this role and what evidence makes you a fit. It adds voice and motive that a CV cannot carry.	A 200-word letter naming one concrete shop-floor moment that matches the advert
Referee	Someone who knows your work or character and agrees to answer an employer's questions about you. You name them only with their permission.	A teacher who ran a project you led, or a supervisor from a weekend job

BEFORE THE BELL

- Write the true or false statements on the board for the anticipation exercise if you want a non-device backup
- Confirm students can create two files in the Strand 2.2 portfolio folder
- Decide whether any students need sentence starters for the cover letter
- Make sure nobody is inventing referees. If they have not asked yet, they write the role title and 'to be confirmed after I ask' rather than a fake name.
- On screen this lesson: before-and-after check, document annotator, list builder.

Components of a Job Application: CV and Cover Letter

HOW THE LESSON RUNS

5 min	introduction	Getting Started
8 min	activity	What Do You Already Believe?
12 min	activity	Annotate a Sample CV and Letter
28 min	activity	Draft Your Own Pack
7 min	summary	What you covered

STEP BY STEP

5 min Getting Started

Open by asking who has already sent a CV or cover letter for a real job, placement or course. Keep it brief: the point is that today's drafts are practice for something they will actually use.

Confirm every student has their Strand 2.2 portfolio folder open before step 2.

This pack is raw material for later Strand 2 / Portfolio in Action evidence, not a named ALT on this lesson.

8 min What Do You Already Believe? On screen: before-and-after check

Run the anticipation exercise on the board. Hold back your explanations until most of the room has committed to an answer, because once students hear the reasoning they stop guessing honestly and the before-and-after comparison is lost.

Pause after statement 3 (cover letter just repeats the CV): that is the misconception this lesson is built to break.

- A photo on an Irish school-leaver CV is usually unnecessary and can introduce bias.
- One page is normal for a first job, and two pages is rarely needed at this stage.
- The letter has to add the motive and the fit that a CV cannot show.

12 min Annotate a Sample CV and Letter On screen: document annotator

HOW TO RUN THIS

Students annotate the sample themselves first in explore mode. Hold the model back until most of the room has placed at least four labels, so that the reveal tells them something rather than doing the thinking for them.

When you do reveal it, steer the talk towards three things. Education and referees belong on the CV rather than in the letter, which is where students most often blur the two. The letter earns its place by naming the shop and describing one concrete moment, in this case the late family at the championship fixture. And the weak line to catch is "hard-working team player", because it names no occasion a shortlister could picture.

Finish with two minutes of talk about their own writing: ask what they would steal from Aoife's pack for their own drafts, and what they would cut.

28 min Draft Your Own Pack On screen: list builder

SUGGESTED TIMING (28 MINUTES)

- 2 minutes: lock the target role
- 12 minutes: CV v1 full skeleton with real lines
- 10 minutes: Cover Letter v1 focused on motive plus one moment
- 4 minutes: peer screen-swap (one CV line and one letter line still doing no work) and save-check into Strand 2.2

Circulate for: letters that only restate the CV; CVs with no dates or places; skills listed as adjectives with no occasion; missing second file.

If anyone finishes early, they plan the exact ask they will make to each referee (when, how, what role).

Spot-check at the end of this step is fair against the in-class minimum: both files exist, CV headings filled, letter opening + one moment paragraph present.

7 min What you covered

Spot-check that both files exist in Strand 2.2 before dismissal against the in-class minimum: CV headings filled; letter opening plus one moment paragraph. Unfinished polish is fine; missing files or empty shells are not.

Optional exit question: *Name one thing your letter does that your CV cannot.*

Any spare minutes at the end of the period go to peer screen-swap or referee-ask planning, not a new activity.

ANSWERS AND LOOK-FORS

- Before-and-after check: False: An Irish CV for a school-leaver job should include a photo. - Most Irish employers do not expect a photo on a school-leaver CV. Space is better used on evidence. Some specialised later sectors or employer portals may request one; for a first job in this lesson, leave it off.
- Before-and-after check: False: A strong first CV needs to be two pages long. - One clear page is normal when you are still in school. Two pages of thin content reads as padding, not strength.
- Before-and-after check: False: A cover letter just repeats what is already on the CV. - If the letter only restates the CV, it wastes the reader's time. The letter's job is motive, fit for this role, and one or two moments the CV only lists.
- Before-and-after check: False: If you have never had a paid job, you cannot write a useful CV yet. - School projects, teams, volunteering, caring responsibilities and part-time help all count as experience when you name what you actually did.
- Before-and-after check: True: You should list referees on the CV only after they have agreed. - Always ask first. A surprised referee is a risk you do not need, and employers notice when a referee was not expecting the call.
- Document annotator: "Leaving Certificate (current). Subjects include Business and Maths." - CV component: facts and structure - Education belongs on the CV as a clean fact block. The letter should not re-list subjects unless one is uniquely relevant.
- Document annotator: "Ms N. Kelly, Business teacher, St Brigid's Secondary School (agreed)." - CV component: facts and structure - Referees sit on the CV, with permission already secured. Naming them in the letter wastes words.
- Document annotator: "I want this job because I already spend match days helping people..." - Letter adds: motive or story - Motive and fit. The CV can list stewarding; only the letter can say why this shop is the next step.
- Document annotator: "When a family arrived late and stressed at a championship fixture, I..." - Strong evidence: specific moment - A specific occasion a shortlister can picture. This is what turns 'good with people' into proof.
- Document annotator: "comfortable on my feet for a full shift" - Weak: too vague to help - Sounds plausible but could describe almost anyone. Prefer a line tied to a real shift or stewarding day.
- Document annotator: "My CV lists my education, experience and referees." - Letter adds: motive or story - A clean hand-off. The letter points to the CV instead of repeating it, which is how the two documents share the work.

TEACHING MOVES

- Run the anticipation exercise without revealing explanations until most students have committed
- During annotation, wait until most students have placed at least four labels before revealing the model
- During drafting, block invented referees; use 'to be confirmed after I ask'
- Hold the in-class minimum: both files exist, CV headings filled, letter opening + one moment paragraph

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Invented referee details without permission
- CV entries that are too vague to help a shortlister
- Cover letter that only repeats the CV
- Single combined file instead of separate CV v1 and Cover Letter v1

DIFFERENTIATION

- Support: sentence starters for the cover letter; paired annotation
- Extension: add a second evidenced moment or tailor skills lines more tightly to the advert

WHAT STUDENTS ARE LEFT WITH

- CV v1 and Cover Letter v1 for a chosen realistic role