



Writing a CV:

How to write a CV

Writing a CV for the first time can seem like an impossible task. You just don't know what to put in or what to leave out. You may feel you've done nothing and achieved nothing that's relevant. Getting started is the hardest part. However, by thinking about your skills and experiences to date you will soon be able to create an accurate summary of all the positive things about you that can help land that job!

There are basically 2 types of CV's (Curriculum Vitae):

- **Chronological CV** – Chronological means “in order of time” and is a way of listing things in date order. This is the most common way to write a CV and puts everything you have done in date order – starting with your most recent experiences and achievements.
- **Functional CV** – Functional means “practical” and is more about your skills and achievements - starting with what you think is most important or relevant to the job you are applying for. In the main, a “Chronological” CV will be the better option, as at this stage in your career you are less likely to have gained enough practical experience to develop a “Functional” CV.

Make sure that your CV is:

- **Typed** - if you don't have your own equipment, use school, college, Connexions Centre or try your local library
- **Clear** - don't try to be fancy! Keep it black print on white paper in an easy to read font such as Arial 12
- **Logical** - start with your name and contact details, work through your school, college and any work experience
- **Accurate** - proof read it and make sure it makes sense and there are no spelling mistakes – it is always worthwhile getting someone else to check it too as they may spot things you don't
- **keep it short and to the point** – don't waffle! A maximum of 2 sides of A4 is plenty.

Along with your CV you will send a covering letter. The attached sheets explain how to put together a Cover letter.

You must be precise - a CV that is too long or too many pages will probably end up in the bin. If you get to interview stage, this is the time to tell the employer more about yourself.

Above all be honest in your CV - remember you will have to support anything you have written when you get to interview stage!



CV Guidelines

What does Curriculum Vitae or CV mean?

It's a Latin phrase that means "Path of life" - in other words it is a kind of life story but not the kind that gives all your secrets away! It should only include things which are relevant to your application for employment, this is basically contact details, qualifications, relevant experience and a statement about yourself showing how keen and enthusiastic you are.

Tell the employer you can do the job by showing them how / why you can.

Work out what qualifications, experience, and skills that are required for the job and think of what you have done that matches those requirements. Give examples of situations where you have used the kind of skills the employer is looking for.

Tell the truth

Remember that the employer is not looking for anyone superhuman - there will always be things that are required of you in any new job that you don't have experience of right now. Don't lie as they will only find out in the end. Instead let them know that you are keen to learn, and emphasize what you can do.

Writing style

- Make sure the spelling is correct. Check it through a word processor such as Microsoft Word. Get at least two people to check and read your CV.
- Print your CV on good quality plain white A4 paper.
- Keep sentences and paragraphs short.
- Use past tense.
- A CV should be no longer than two sides of A4.

What to include and not to include:

- Don't include any negatives or anything critical.
- Don't include poor exam grades, or unfortunate work experiences.
- Don't include details of referees, state that "References are available upon request"
- There is no need to include a photograph, unless it is specifically requested.
- Do not include any humour, you need to be straight talking not a comedian.
- There is no need to show your expected salary.

Personal Details

There is no need to include gender, or marital status, as most employers are not allowed by UK law to take these factors into account when selecting employees.

Education / Qualifications

Where relevant give full details, including School attended as well as the exams taken and grades attained.

Include any additional awards or any other recognition you have gained from School / College or any other training you have done.

Employment / Work Experience

Describe achievements, not just responsibilities. Show what you achieved for the company during your time there. If there are things that you were part of at School or College that were recognised as being successful, make sure you mention them.

Include any voluntary or work placement activities, as well as part time work whether it is a paper round, babysitting, shop work - it all shows you are keen to work and have already gained practical skills. It is also worth remembering that having done any kind of voluntary work shows a good level of motivation and demonstrates how keen you are to work and gain practical experience, so include this too. Try and show how you have gained the skills you have, which are needed for the job for which you are applying. Don't belittle or under value your experience. It is up to you to show how and why it has given you useful skills.



CV Guidelines continued...

Most jobs require:

- The ability to communicate with other people
- Being able to work as part of a team
- Being able to work under pressure
- Being prepared to do your share of mundane tasks.

So, show how you have gained these skills, whether it is through projects at school or actual work experience it all counts!

Skills

You should include:

- Languages.
- Computing skills.
- Keyboard skills.
- Driving ability (provisional or full licence).
- Membership of relevant clubs or societies.

Make sure you list any other skills that will interest an employer if they are relevant.

When listing languages make sure you include your level such as fluent, intermediate, or basic.

For computing skills make sure you mention the packages you have used such as Microsoft Word, Excel, Access, Powerpoint, Outlook, e-mail, internet etc.

Show your ability to type quickly and accurately.

Make sure you spell driving licence the UK spelling (licence) and not the US spelling (license).

