
What is a CV

A CV (Curriculum Vitae) is a brief outline of your employment history, qualifications, interests and achievements. Your possible employer would see your CV as a review of you as a person. It's like a film review. You want to go to the cinema but there are ten films on, so you read the film reviews to decide which one to see.

An employer wants to interview five people for a job vacancy; CVs will be used to decide who to interview. It's like a 'person review'.

Your CV should be

Positive, Relevant and Accurate. You should only write down things you can talk about in an interview.

What to include: Personal detail - This is where you write down your address, date of birth, postcode and telephone numbers.

Personal Profile - A personal profile gives you the chance to sell yourself to an employer. It is one of the first things they will read on your CV so you need to make a positive first impression. You only have a limited amount of space so you should make the personal profile relevant to the job you are applying for. You should tell the employer, in a couple of lines, what your important skills and personal qualities are. Skills are things that you can do, for example:

- I can use a word processor,
- I can measure accurately,
- Instead of using the phrase 'I can' all the time, you can use 'I am able to ...'. Personal qualities can be similar to skills but describe what you are like rather than what you can do, for example: I am reliable; I am honest; I am trustworthy; I am a good listener

If you say that you are reliable, you must be able to demonstrate this, e.g. "I am reliable as I turn up to football / swimming practice every week."

References

It is common to include details of two references on a CV. Referees are people who can write a reference for you. A company will normally ask for a reference before an interview. If they do, it means that you have made a good impression and they are considering you for the job / placement.

Make sure that the people you have named as referees will give you a good reference. You don't want a bad reference.

Who can you ask to be a referee? Young people would normally have referees from School or college, work or training. You may also use other people who know you well enough to provide a good character reference. A referee should not be a member of your family. It is a good idea to have a referee from School and one from industry, e.g. work experience or a Saturday / part-time job.

Make sure that your referees are happy to be named on your CV

So, how do I go about writing a CV?

A CV should include information on:

- Personal details
- Personal profile
- Education
- Work Experience
- Training
- Interests
- Other Information
- References
- Qualifications

It should be well presented:

- Word processed
- Accurate spelling and grammar
- Two sides of A4 paper or less
- Clear and easy to read

You want to make a good impression, You want to be given an interview.

Personal Profile

Including a personal profile means you can alter your CV more quickly when you apply for a different job. The basic details of the CV can stay the same and you can just rewrite the personal profile with the new vacancy in mind. e.g. "I am a self motivated school leaver with good communication skills and an ability to use my initiative."

Education

You should include the name of any schools or colleges you have attended. You don't need to write down the full address but the town or city. You should include the date you attended.

Qualifications

You should include all your qualifications and grades. You do not have to write down every time you took an exam - just include your final results e.g. if you took Maths GCSE three times and got grades E, D, C - only write it down once with the grade C as your result as this is your final qualification.

Work Experience

Include the names of the companies that you have worked for even if only on a part-time basis or through a work experience placement. Write down the dates you worked there and list your main duties.

Training

You need to include the names of training organisations you attended and courses or programmes you followed. Don't forget to include dates.

Interests

You can include brief details about what you do in your free time. This section becomes more important if you have been out of education for a while and have little work experience to talk about. In this section, you can show how you have been filling your time.

Other Information

If you have anything else you wish to include in your CV you can add a section for other information to include things like:

I have a full, clean driving licence.

I can start working after ...

I am available for evening work.