



Guide to writing a CV

WHAT IS A CV?

A CV is to persuade an employer to interview you and demonstrate that you are the best person for the job. It's a chance to highlight your skills and experience, and what you can bring to the company and job.

BEFORE YOU START

- Gather as much information as possible including education and training, qualifications and dates.
- Make a note of your employment history, volunteering and work experience.
- Think about how to turn any gaps in employment into positives.

TOP TIPS

- Consider **re-vamping your CV**, rather than just adding a new job or qualification. This is an opportunity to ensure you are using the best format and have captured everything important.
- Look at **recruitment websites for tips** on up-to-date CV styles and formats.
- **Don't overload** your CV with everything you have ever done, only include the information most useful and relevant. Employers spend on average of six to ten seconds reading CVs, so, it's important to make it easy to skim read. Once you've got their attention, they're more likely to read the rest.
- **Tailor your CV** to each job you are applying for. Look at the job description or advert, and highlight the skills and experience you have that is relevant to that role.
- Make your **skills and attributes clear** in your CV. Don't assume the recruiter will know what you can do – spell it out for them!
- List the **most recent first** – whether that's your education or work history, ensure the most recent is always the first seen.
- Keep it **simple and clear** - i.e. font size 12, Arial or Calibri, and no more than 2 pages if possible.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

✓	✗
Name, email address and telephone number (in the header).	Postal address.
Profile or career objective.	Keep personal information to a minimum to safeguard yourself, especially if uploading your CV online.
Skills and achievements.	Age – be mindful of clues in your CV such as dates. You can leave dates out if they go back more than 10-15 years. If you want to include something relevant beyond this time, list it under a section called 'Prior experience/employment' without dates.
Education, qualifications and training.	Religion – be careful with clues about your religion to avoid discrimination.
Work and volunteering history.	References - employers will ask for references when they need them, so don't waste valuable space on your CV. Although it's worth thinking about who you will ask now as you will need to get permission before you give their contact details.

ADDRESS ANY CONCERNS FROM THE START

Employers don't like taking risks – if there's anything in your CV you think might worry them, reassure them and explain this, for example:

- If you've any gaps in employment, explain what you were doing during this time e.g. training, learning new skills, volunteering or looking after family
- If you've worked for one employer long term, some might think you don't like change. To counteract this, mention the different projects or jobs you've done within the company that shows your flexibility
- If you've had a series of short term jobs, reframe this as a positive by showing your adaptability
- If you've been on a long term sick leave, highlight your resilience whilst reassuring them that you are fit and ready to return to work.

PROFILE OR CAREER OBJECTIVE

This is a short paragraph to demonstrate your skills, abilities and ambitions. Keep it to a few sentences and mention the following key points:

- Introduce who you are
- What you can offer the company with your skills
- Your career goals – what you are looking for or want to achieve.

Example

A conscientious and dedicated support worker with many years' experience in the care sector. Pride myself on providing the best possible patient centred care, in a patient and caring way. Looking to continue building on these skills working with adults with learning disabilities.

SKILLS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

This section is your chance to showcase your relevant skills; you can list these in bullet point format. Try to give examples, such as if you mention problem solving, give a time you did this and what the result was.

Think about covering different types of skills and the different ways you might have gained them:

- **Informal** – looking after family, hobbies and interests
- **Formal** – work and volunteering
- **Hard skills** – technical or job-specific knowledge e.g. using Microsoft Word and Excel
- **Soft skills** – things that make you a good employee, such as team working, communication, resilience and time management.



Look at the job description – what is the employer looking for? Use this to list the skills you have that are relevant to the job.

To help you identify your skills, ask yourself:

- What are your strengths?
- What have others praised you for?
- Is there anything you've done that you're proud of?
- What do you enjoy?

USEFUL LINKS

- <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/cvs-and-cover-letters>
- <https://www.reed.co.uk/career-advice/cv-examples-and-samples>
- <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/careers-advice/cv-sections>



EDUCATION, QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING

Include the following Information:

- The date you gained the qualification or did the training
- The provider e.g. name of the school, college or training organisation
- The qualification e.g. GCSE in Maths or NVQ in Bricklaying
- The grade e.g. C or pass. Leave blank if there was no grade given.

Example

2018 – 2020: East Surrey College - Bricklaying Level 3 Diploma (Merit)

2009 – 2013: The Warwick School

GCSE's: Maths – C, English - C, Food Technology – B

WORK AND VOLUNTEERING HISTORY

Include the following Information:

- **Dates**
- **Name of organisation**
- Description of your **role and responsibilities** – can be bullet points or a short paragraph
- Don't forget to add **volunteering** work – never underestimate the value of this type of experience. Think transferrable skills!



Example

2016 -2018: Raven Housing Trust – Customer Service Adviser

- Dealing with customer enquiries via phone and email.
- Ensuring customer complaints handled in a sensitive and timely manner.

INTERESTS

It is completely optional to add an 'Interests' section to your CV. If you don't feel it adds any value then leave it out. However, interests can help demonstrate any transferrable skills you might have. It can help you stand out and show that you are a well-rounded individual.

Be sure to pick hobbies or interests that are relevant to the job you're applying for– think about what your hobbies say about you. For example:

- Team sports show you are a good team player, and being captain shows you have leadership skills
- Other sports or exercise shows that you have self-discipline and have a good level of fitness
- Arts or crafts shows you are creative – good for jobs that require creativity.



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