

# Creating a winning CV

## What is a CV for?

- Providing prospective employers a summary of you as a potential employee, your skills, experience and qualifications
- A means of applying for a particular job position or future opportunities
- To persuade an employer to offer you an interview

## CV Do's:

- Keep your CV to a maximum of two pages
- Keep your CV current and up to date
- Use positive language – suggest what you can do and what you have the potential to develop
- Create a CV which is easy to read, logical and well word-processed
- Always check for spelling and punctuation mistakes – get at least three different people to read it
- You do not need to be good at everything - show what you are specifically good at
- Stick to white or cream paper, a font size between 10 and 12, clear font type with pages stapled together – presentation is the number one reason employers may bin your CV
- Tailor your CV to the job role – this does not mean making things up, but highlighting key skills, personal qualities and experiences that the employer/ job role is looking for

## CV Don'ts

- Never make things up
- Provide every small detail of your life so far - the average employer will take 30 seconds reading your CV
- Use too formal language or jargon words
- Avoid saying what you do not have experience of
- Never send a CV to an employer without a cover letter (see cover letter section)
- Try not to use a CV wizard or builder – create your own document

## Typical CV format

1. Contact details
2. Personal profile
3. Key skills and achievements
4. Education and qualifications including training courses
5. Employment history including work experience and voluntary experience
6. Personal/ Interests
7. References

Each of these sections are explored in more detail in this booklet but first let's look at developing the content of your CV.

## The essence of what you want to communicate with your CV

The following three areas are crucial to creating your CV, but also form the essence of what you will want to communicate in an interview in order to successfully achieve the job:

- Your skills
- Your experience of work/ or transferable experience
- Your personality

## Your Skills

Include:

- Communication skills – being able to talk, listen and present information
- Interpersonal skills – being able to relate to other people, mix well, interested in people
- Numerical skills – being confident with numbers, basic arithmetic, maths etc
- Analytical skills – being able to analyse information and make sense of it
- Problem solving skills – being able to offer solutions to problems, being able to work through tasks
- Team work skills – the ability to work with others to achieve something

- Leadership skills – being willing to take responsibility, and encourage others
- Information technology skills – the ability to use computers at basic or advanced levels
- Initiative skills – the ability to work on your own without constant supervision
- Organisational skills – the ability to organise your time and work to deadlines

Rather than listing that you have any or all of these skills it is important to do the following

1. Think of examples where you have used these skills and work this into your CV content
2. Identify the main two or three relevant skills that you possess and that are also most relevant for the job role

### Your experience of work/ or transferable experience

Think about the work related experience you have had and if you feel you have very little, consider transferable experience such as helping out at a school fete, organizing a charity event or having to present in your lessons to the rest of your class. Even being a captain for a sports team provides experience of leadership, communication and responsibility. Dealing with a difficult customer during your Saturday or summer job is good transferable experience and equals customer service experience.

### Your personality

It can be quite challenging to talk about and sell yourself. Some people feel they are being boastful and proud. However, you have to allow yourself to shine. Besides if you do not, others will and they will get the job! To help you on your way, ask a few friends and family members to list words or describe how you are as a person. Ask them to be honest and not suggest you are anything you are not.

Use the following worksheets to help you develop the content of your CV:

**Activity 1:** Highlight the activities, experiences and hobbies you do or have done that are developing your employability:

Example of an experience/ activity/ hobby you do or have done:	The employability skills and personal qualities this gives you:	
Learning an instrument Cooking/ Baking Arts & Crafts	<b>Dedication and commitment to learning and practicing a new skill</b> Working towards a goal Following instructions Developing creativity	
School club e.g Science Club, computer Club	<b>Passion and enthusiasm for a subject</b> <b>Improving academic knowledge and skills beyond the classroom</b> Project work	<b>Taking on feedback to improve</b> <b>Communication skills</b> <b>Dedication and commitment</b> <b>Problem Solving</b>
Playing a sport for a team	<b>Passion and enthusiasm</b> <b>Dedication and commitment to your team and your skills/ ability/ game/ activity</b> <b>Team work and cooperation with others</b> <b>Working towards a goal</b>	<b>Leadership</b> <b>Using initiative</b> <b>Following instructions and orders</b> <b>Taking responsibility</b> <b>Using initiative</b>
Duke of Edinburgh St John's Ambulance Scouts/ Guides	<b>Dedication and commitment to your team, skills, ability</b> <b>Team work and cooperation with others</b> <b>Working towards a goal</b> <b>Supporting charity/ others</b> <b>Building resilience</b> <b>Expedition and outdoor skills</b> <b>Strategic thinking</b>	<b>Leadership</b> <b>Following instructions and orders</b> <b>Working towards deadlines</b> <b>Problem Solving</b> <b>First aid skills</b> <b>Taking responsibility</b> <b>Using initiative</b>

Blogging/ vlogging	<p>Dedication and commitment to learning and practicing a new skill</p> <p>Working towards a goal</p> <p>Writing skills</p> <p>Developing creativity</p>	<p>Performance skills</p> <p>Technical skills</p> <p>Social Media Marketing</p> <p>Devising skills</p>
Learning a language	<p>Dedication and commitment to learning and practicing a new skill</p> <p>Following instructions</p>	<p>Taking on feedback to improve</p> <p>Communication skills</p> <p>Developing confidence speaking</p>
DIY Project	<p>Dedication and commitment to learning and practicing a new skill</p> <p>Following instructions and orders</p> <p>Taking on feedback to improve</p>	<p>Communication skills</p> <p>Working towards deadlines</p> <p>Team work and cooperation with others</p> <p>Taking responsibility</p> <p>Using initiative</p>
Helping neighbours/community/ family Volunteering	<p>Supporting charity/ others</p> <p>Following instructions and orders</p> <p>Strategic thinking</p> <p>Leadership</p> <p>Problem Solving</p>	<p>Using initiative</p> <p>Taking responsibility</p> <p>Taking on feedback to improve</p> <p>Communication skills</p> <p>Representing/ advocating for others</p>
Enterprise activity	<p>Working towards a goal</p> <p>Developing creativity</p> <p>Improving academic knowledge and skills beyond the classroom</p> <p>Project work</p> <p>Team work and cooperation with others</p> <p>Supporting charity/ others</p> <p>Strategic thinking</p> <p>Leadership</p> <p>Following instructions and orders</p>	<p>Working towards deadlines</p> <p>Problem Solving</p> <p>Taking responsibility</p> <p>Social Media Marketing</p> <p>Taking on feedback to improve</p> <p>Communication skills</p> <p>Using initiative</p> <p>Business skills and knowledge</p> <p>Customer service skills</p> <p>Numerical skills</p>
Tutor rep/ Prefect	<p>Team work and cooperation with others</p> <p>Supporting charity/ others</p> <p>Strategic thinking</p> <p>Leadership</p> <p>Following instructions and orders</p> <p>Representing/ advocating for others</p>	<p>Working towards deadlines</p> <p>Problem Solving</p> <p>Taking responsibility</p> <p>Taking on feedback to improve</p> <p>Communication skills</p> <p>Developing confidence speaking</p> <p>Using initiative</p>
Part-time work or work experience	<p>Dedication and commitment to learning and practicing a new skill</p> <p>Business skills and knowledge</p> <p>Customer service skills</p> <p>Project work</p> <p>Team work and cooperation with others</p> <p>Strategic thinking</p> <p>Leadership</p> <p>Punctuality and attendance</p>	<p>Following instructions and orders</p> <p>Working towards deadlines</p> <p>Problem Solving</p> <p>Taking responsibility</p> <p>Numerical skills</p> <p>Taking on feedback to improve</p> <p>Communication skills</p> <p>Developing confidence speaking</p> <p>Using initiative</p>
Drama club/ taking part in a play Singing/ Choir Band Public speaking Debating	<p>Dedication and commitment to your team, skills, ability</p> <p>Team work and cooperation with others</p> <p>Working towards a goal</p> <p>Following instructions and orders</p> <p>Developing creativity</p>	<p>Performance skills</p> <p>Working towards deadlines</p> <p>Communication skills</p> <p>Problem solving</p> <p>Devising skills</p> <p>Representing/ advocating for others</p>
Dog walking/ looking after your pet	<p>Taking responsibility</p> <p>Dedication and commitment</p>	<p>Problem Solving</p> <p>Communication skills</p>

What are your most commonly developed employability skills and personal qualities?

Write down what you feel is your best example of where you use these skills and qualities?

Skill/ personal quality	Best example you highlighted:
Building resilience	
Communication skills	
Dedication and commitment to learning and practicing a new skill	
Developing confidence speaking to others	
Developing creativity	
Expedition and outdoor skills	
First aid skills	
Following instructions and orders	
Improving academic knowledge and skills beyond the classroom	
Leadership	
Passion and enthusiasm for a subject	
Performance skills	
Problem Solving	
Project work	
Social Media Marketing	
Strategic thinking	
Supporting charity/ others	
Taking on feedback to improve	
Taking responsibility	
Team work and cooperation with others	
Technical skills	
Working towards a goal	
Working towards deadlines	
Writing skills	

**Activity 2: Match your skills, qualifications and experience against each of these common part-time jobs for young people.** Give a brief example of when/how you have demonstrated these skills – don't forget to refer to page 5 – your employability self-assessment

Role outlines	An example of when you have demonstrated these skills
<p>Sales Associate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numerical skills to manage cash and debit transactions</li> <li>• A good eye for detail</li> <li>• Friendly, approachable, and willing to take the initiative to help customers</li> <li>• Creative ability to merchandise stock in a visually attractive way</li> </ul>	
<p>Lifeguard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swimming proficiency in all types of water conditions</li> <li>• Ability to analyse/judge water conditions and swimming abilities of customers</li> <li>• Interpersonal and communication skills, to ensure that customers swim according to safety rules</li> <li>• Leadership and initiative, to anticipate danger and take action</li> <li>• Organised, maintaining safety of swimming area and equipment</li> </ul>	
<p>Building labourer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fit and active</li> <li>• Ability to analyse/judge safety concerns and take action accordingly</li> <li>• Organised, completes tasks efficiently and without supervision, keeps equipment available and usable, following methods of work to complete tasks</li> <li>• Numerical ability to calculate materials required, and trigonometry</li> </ul>	
<p>Dog walker/pet sitter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpersonal skills, to engage with customers' particular requirements and instructions for their pet</li> <li>• Able to take responsibility and report any illnesses/injury immediately</li> <li>• Reliable and organised</li> <li>• A customer service focus, respecting clients' homes and property, and providing additional services such as picking up mail, watering plants etc</li> <li>• Must love animals!</li> </ul>	
<p>Sports referee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full knowledge of sports rules and regulations</li> <li>• Visual acuity, assess rule infringements quickly and fairly</li> <li>• Interpersonal and communication skills to apply rules and penalties assertively</li> <li>• Take responsibility for ensuring game area and equipment is safe and set up correctly</li> <li>• Work with other sports officials</li> <li>• Organised, ensuring that event timings are kept on schedule, verifying scoring, recording and following up on issues</li> </ul>	

<p>Car technician</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analytical skills, looking at information and diagnosing issues</li> <li>Problem solving, identifying issues and ways of fixing them</li> <li>Organised, keeping equipment available and usable, following methods of work to complete tasks</li> <li>Dependable, reliable, can work under own initiative</li> </ul>	
<p>Tutor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emotionally mature and stable</li> <li>Patient, flexible, consistent, dependable and cooperative, with a sense of humour</li> <li>Adaptable, able to take supervision and correction constructively</li> <li>Leadership, takes responsibility to positively supervise students</li> <li>Problem solving with a curious mind and critical thinking skills</li> <li>Interpersonal skills to collaborate with parents to maximise student performance</li> <li>Sound academic subject knowledge</li> </ul>	
<p>Holiday club assistant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Takes initiative to lead activities assertively, in a friendly and positive manner</li> <li>Maintain a safe environment and take action where issues are identified</li> <li>Works with customers/children creatively and collaboratively</li> <li>Calm, emotionally mature and stable</li> <li>Organised</li> <li>Team worker</li> </ul>	

### Activity 3: CV Template – putting the format and content together

#### Section 1: Contact Details

This is a very necessary section otherwise how will the employer know how to contact you!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

(make this a slightly larger font size than the rest of the document)

Address including postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

(make sure you have an email address to put on a CV that is formal and professional sounding – for example [crazyrach@internet.com](mailto:crazyrach@internet.com) may put employers off!)

## Section 2: Personal Profile

Here is a mini template

“A \_\_\_\_\_ (add personal quality), \_\_\_\_\_ (add personal quality) and \_\_\_\_\_ (add personal quality) person \_\_\_\_\_ (describe your current situation, e.g. student, graduate, job title) with strong/ or excellent \_\_\_\_\_ (describe best skills), seeking \_\_\_\_\_ (state work you are looking for or eventual career aim)

Check out the next page for words to help you describe yourself and your skills

## Section 3: Key skills and achievements

Aim for three to four bullet points with your best skills or achievements and give evidence at the same time.

Remember show how and why. E.g.:

- Organisational Skills, developed through college coursework and co-ordination of staff charity bake sale at my recent part-time job
- Chosen to represent my school at the Regional Science Awards where my team came 3<sup>rd</sup>.

CV Power words

Accurate	Confident	Helpful	Reliable
Active	Consistent	Honest	Resourceful
Adaptable	Creative	Imaginative	Responsible
Analytical	Dedicated	Independent	Self-motivated
Ambitious	Dependable	Innovative	Sensitive
Articulate	Discreet	Keen	Skilled
Artistic	Dynamic	Logical	Successful
Bilingual	Efficient	Loyal	Systematic
Business minded	Energetic	Methodical	Tactful
Calm	Enterprising	Motivated	Tenacious
Capable	Enthusiastic	Observant	Thoughtful
Considerate	Experienced	Organised	Thorough
Commercially minded	Expert	Persistent	Trustworthy
Committed	Flexible	Perceptive	Versatile
Competent	Friendly	Proficient	Willing
Competitive	Hard-working	Practical	

Skills

Remember to always have an example of when and how you have used your identified skill:

- A good organiser
- Able to work unsupervised
- Flexible and receptive to new situations
- Effective under pressure
- Able to communicate with people at all levels
- Dependable team member
- Reliable and punctual
- Numerate/good head for figures

- Able to learn and apply new skills quickly
- Confident and concise communicator
- Able to maintain a high standard of work
- Good written communication skills
- Excellent attendance record
- Confident personality
- Ability to demonstrate initiative
- Good team leader
- Ability to maintain accuracy under pressure
- Organised and logical thinker
- Able to set and achieve personal goals
- Computer literate
- Excellent telephone manner
- Sound administrative skills
- Able to supervise others effectively
- Possess common sense
- Can solve problems and resolve queries
- Can work to tight deadlines and time tables
- Able to delegate effectively
- Innovative and imaginative
- Good listening skills and sensitivity to others needs
- Able to lead and motivate others
- Good practical skills
- Able to use hand tools/machinery
- Able to work from written instructions
- Good customer service skills

**Section 4: Education and qualifications including training courses**

Date \_\_\_\_\_ School/ College \_\_\_\_\_

Qualification

Subject/ Result

E.g

September 2010 – June 2015 Markendone School, Oxon

Achieved 5 GCSEs: English Literature (B), Maths (C), Science (B), Additional Science (C) and Drama (A)

As you obtain more qualifications, you will add these to this section. Your most recent qualifications or the qualifications you are working towards currently will always be at the top the section.

As a sub-section you can add any relevant training courses which are not nationally recognised qualifications.

**Section 5: Employment history including work experience and voluntary experience**

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Employer \_\_\_\_\_ Job Role \_\_\_\_\_ State if part-time, work experience or summer work

Key tasks and responsibilities (as bullet points)

E.g

May 2011- September 2013 Big Fry Fish and Chip Shop Serving Assistant Part-time

Key tasks and responsibilities

- Serving customers, taking orders and dealing with queries
- Communicating orders and stock with kitchen staff
- Keeping surfaces clean and tidy during service
- Replenishing drinks and sundries in fridges



- Assisting with hot plate and kitchen after service

Voluntary work or experience can also be included as a sub-section. Again remember your most recent experience or work at the top of the section.

### **Personal/ Interests:**

This is an opportunity to include more about your personality and abilities, achievements and also your hobbies and interests.

Please remember that most people like socialising with friends or playing computer games and these type of pursuits are best left off the CV. Reading, sport, creative activities, charity involvement, DIY, voluntary, Duke of Edinburgh, extra-curricular activities are great examples of interests and hobbies.

“I am.... In my spare time I .....”

### **References:**

Make sure you have contacted two people to be your references. At this stage in your life, it is appropriate if one of those is a school or college teacher or member of staff and the other is either an employer you have worked for or a professional person/family friend that knows you very well and can provide a good character reference.

### **Tailoring your CV**

Never think that your CV is a finished article. Not only will you add to it as you gain experience, develop skills and qualifications, but you will want to change and tailor it depending on the job you are applying for. You may also have different purposes for your CV and therefore it will need to achieve different things for you:

- Speculative CVs – is one that you send to various employers or companies because you would like to work for them even though they are not advertising a vacancy.

You will need to consider and perhaps alter your CV to reflect the kind of possible employee they may look for. Check out their company values and if you are hoping to work for a particular department or team, consider what they would look for/ want.

- Requested/ targeted CVs – is one that has been requested in order to apply for a particular job role.

You will need to consider what the job role/ employer desires which is usually listed in the advert or in a job application pack. A tip here is to use some of the same language or wording when they specify what they are looking for. Employers are more likely to think you are the right fit and what they may be looking for.

### **Cover letters**

A cover letter introduces you to an employer and you should always include a cover letter with your CV. A cover letter enables you to focus the employer’s attention on particular skills and experience that may be relevant for the job role. You can steer their attention to particular examples in more detail within your letter whereas your CV provides more of an overview.

### **Draft Covering Letter - Speculative**

(Employers address here)  
Gardening Services  
44 The Street Somewhere  
Surrey  
KT200PQ

Date

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I am writing to you to enquire whether or not you have any vacancies available in landscaping as I am currently searching for work in this area. I have experience of working on different landscaping and building projects and I am looking for the opportunity to develop my skills further.

I am a hardworking and conscientious individual who can work well in a team. I can work using my own initiative and I would consider myself to be reliable and responsible. I have enclosed a CV for your information. I am available for work immediately and can produce references at your request.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

(Your address here & phone number here)  
Mr A Somebody  
33 Somewhere  
Surrey  
KT205PU  
01372000000

### **Draft Covering Letter - Targeted**

(Employers address here)  
Gardening Services  
44 The Street Somewhere  
Surrey  
KT200PQ

Date

Dear Mr Employer,

I would like to apply for the position of Gardening Assistant as advertised in the Surrey Informer. I am a hardworking and conscientious individual who can work well in a team. I can work using my own initiative and I would consider myself to be reliable and responsible. (You may want to add more reasons why your skills and experience match the job role)

I have enclosed a CV for your information. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

(Your address here & phone number here)  
Mr A Somebody  
33 Somewhere  
Surrey  
KT205PU  
01372000000