

Curriculum Vitae Writing

Your curriculum vitae (CV) is the most common way to apply for a job. Employers ask for them as they allow you to tell them about yourself and your key achievements. CV's are used as the basis to decide whether or not you are suitable for the role and will be invited for an interview. So it is important that they look professional and contain all of the relevant information about you.

CVs should generally be kept to one to two sides of A4 paper, always kept up-to-date and must be easy to read. Don't use coloured paper or fancy fonts - keep it simple and professional!

A CV can be laid out in a variety of ways (e.g. according to your skills or your employment history) but should include the following:

Personal information:

Full name, address, a contact number and email (be sure that your email address is professional sounding so you might want to set up a new one for this).

Education:

Start with your most recent qualifications and work back to your GCSEs. Include the name of your school/college, dates and grades or qualifications awarded. Always start by listing your highest grades and work down to the lower ones.

Employment history:

Include the name of each employer (starting with your current or most recent employer and working backwards), the dates you worked for them, job title and your main duties. Try to pick out experiences that relate to the job you are going for.

If you haven't yet had your first job, or if you haven't had much employment experience, include information about other things you have done, for example any work experience or volunteer work, positions of responsibility, membership of any clubs or societies, or anything else that you think is relevant.

Personal skills and interests:

List all relevant interests or achievements such as sports, musical interest, awards received, or any unusual hobby that you might have, e.g. scuba diving, skiing, etc. Also mention memberships of groups and organisations such as amateur theatre societies or charities.

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References:

Usually an academic, work or 'character' reference (someone who can tell the employer about your personality and attitude to work, such as an adult who knows you well, e.g. a sports coach) that the employer may wish to contact for additional information about you or to verify what you have said on your CV. Make sure you've asked their permission before giving their names and details.

Cover letter:

Cover letters usually accompany your CV, and are a way to introduce yourself to your potential employer. Sometimes employers receive quite a few CVs for each job they are hiring for, so a cover letter is a good way to help you stand out.

They will not always be needed so check the job advert to see if they have asked for a covering letter, or ask a friend, teacher or parent if they think you should include one.

If you do it should be polite, interesting and to the point. Include a paragraph introducing yourself - your educational background and employment history/current role - sum this up in a few sentences from your CV and one paragraph about why you are applying for this role.

Get some advice:

You can get advice on writing CVs and covering letters from websites, your local job centre or careers office, or by asking a friend, relative, teacher, youth worker or Connexions advisor. Get them to look over your CV and / or letter, make suggestions and check it to make certain it looks well presented and is free from typos, spelling mistakes and other errors – and, of course, paints a good picture of what you have to offer!