

## Writing your first CV – the basics

Writing your first CV can be a bit of a challenge, but it needn't be a problem.

A CV, or Curriculum Vitae, is basically a marketing tool. Its job is to set out your skills, qualities, qualifications and work experience in a way that will persuade the employer to interview you.

You can set out your CV in lots of different ways. Getting it right is largely a matter of following a few basic rules in terms of its structure and content, and choosing a style or format an employer will find attractive and easy to read.

Once you are happy with your basic CV you can try different designs and formatting. Remember to tailor your CV to the specific job and type of work you are applying for. This is really important.

A skills-based CV is a good idea if you have little or no work experience. It emphasises your skills rather than your work history. This is one way of setting out and writing a skills-based CV.

### CV structure

#### Contact details

Include your full name, full address including the postcode, your landline phone number (including the area code) and/or your mobile number, and your email address.

#### Personal profile

A personal profile is a short statement, just two or three sentences, highlighting your very best skills and qualities. It isn't essential, but is a great way to catch the employer's attention. For example:

"I am a friendly and creative school leaver with a strong interest in fashion. I have excellent communication skills, love working with people and enjoy being part of a team."

#### Skills and achievements

List your strongest skills. Focus on those that are most relevant to the job. If possible make each skill a heading, and then give one or two brief examples of situations where you've used the skill, or achievements that demonstrate you using the skill. For example:

##### Communication

- Able to listen to customers and respond in an effective manner. Skills developed in my part time job at a local supermarket.
- Able to make people feel welcome and provide clear information to others. I volunteered to show visitors around our new school when it opened.

#### Education and qualifications

Give the details of the secondary schools and colleges you've attended. Start with the most recent and work your way back. Include the name of the school or college, and the dates you attended. Under each school or college list your qualifications. Again, start with your most recent qualifications and work back. Include the subject or course name, level of qualification and grade you achieved. For example:

2012 – 2016      New Fields High School

National 5: English (B), Administration and IT (C), Art and Design (B)

National 4: Mathematics (Pass), Biology (Pass), French (Pass)

### **Work experience**

List your most recent work experience first, and work back. Include work experience placements and any part time or voluntary work you've had. Give the dates, the employer's name, your role and a short description of what you did.

If you don't have any work experience, don't worry. Just remove this section. Instead focus on your skills and any interests or activities you've taken part in that might be relevant to the job.

### **Interests**

Keep this section fairly short. Remember to mention any interests or activities that show you have skills relevant to the job. Interviewers may ask questions about your interests, so don't be tempted to make them up!

### **References**

You don't have to name your referees on your CV. Instead, you can add a statement saying that 'References are available on request.'

However, you will need two referees. One will usually be a teacher from your school or a tutor from college. Your second referee could be a work experience placement provider, employer, coach or a similar professional. Always ask for their permission before you add them to your CV.

If you are including them on your CV, give their: name, job title and employer's name (where appropriate), phone number and (where possible) email address.

## **And finally...**

You can use [EasyCV](#), our CV building tool, to help you get started. You can choose a range of different styles and save your CV to your Portfolio.

You can also look at the articles [CV Example](#) and read [CV hints and tips](#) to keep you on the right track. You'll also need to know [How to write a covering letter](#) to send with your CV. Using our **Skills Words** and **Qualities Words** lists will also help (at the end of this article).