

CV Guidelines

What is a CV?

A CV or Curriculum Vitae (Latin for 'course of life') is a professional document that shows your experience. A CV is usually split into the following sections:

- ❖ **Contact Information:** name, address, email, and phone number (so the employer can get in contact with you if they invite you for an interview).
- ❖ **Personal Profile:** One short paragraph that highlights your individual abilities and best characteristics, particularly those that are relevant to what you are applying for.
- ❖ **Professional Experience:** a list of your professional or work experience, including any current part-time employment, or any paid or voluntary work you have done in the past. This could include work experience you might have undertaken through the school.
- ❖ **Education and Training:** a list of your educational or vocational achievements. This will include details of the secondary school(s) you have attended, the GCSE's/ subjects you are studying and your expected grades.
- ❖ **Achievements and Interests:** A list of achievements that you are particularly proud of (e.g. anything that you have won, anything you have been involved in that has received recognition, any positions of responsibility). In addition, a list of interests which could include hobbies (e.g. drama, sports), and any clubs you are/ have been a part of. Where possible, try to think about any skills you have gained from your interests.
- ❖ **References:** the name, job title, address and telephone number of two key current/previous employers. If you do not have a current or previous employer, provide details of your Form Tutor and Head of House.

Why is a CV important?

Your CV provides employers and colleges with an overview of your qualifications, skills and work experience. This helps employers and colleges to decide if you would be a good fit for a particular job, apprenticeship or course. They will form their very first impression of you on the basis of your CV, so producing a strong CV is important. When writing your CV, remember:

- ❖ Employers and colleges will judge your CV on **what is in it and how it looks**
- ❖ You should **use positive words** and **avoid negative words**
- ❖ It's important to have a **'general' CV** which is a **record of all your skills and achievements**
- ❖ You will need to **change your CV when applying for different jobs** to make sure you are **demonstrating the right skills** for that job
- ❖ **REMEMBER:** Look at the job advert to find out what skills they are looking for.



Identifying your skills

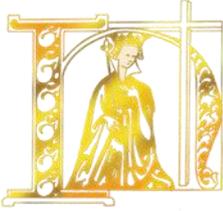
Your CV needs to give an overview of the skills you possess, especially those which are relevant to the job, apprenticeship or college course you are applying for.

Transferable skills are the types of skills that you can apply and make use of in a number of different roles. This section aims to help you think about the transferable skills you have gained through different experiences in your lifetime. Examples of transferable skills are:

Action Planning	Adaptability	Computing skills	Creativity	Customer service
Decision making	Delegation	Demonstrating initiative	Fast learner	Good organisation
Language skills	Leadership	Literacy	Managing money	Negotiating
Presenting	Prioritising	Problem solving	Professionalism	Reliability
Striving for excellence	Team working	Time management	Written communication	Verbal communication

VIDEO: The following video from 'Barclay's life skills' can help you to get thinking about your interests and how they might have helped you develop skills

<https://www.barclayslifeskills.com/i-want-to-develop-my-skills-for-work/school/develop-your-skills-and-discover-new-ones>



Activity one: identifying skills gained from experience

It can be difficult to think of examples where you have displayed skills that employers are looking for. This process can be made easier by thinking about your experiences in the following categories:

- ❖ School
- ❖ Work experience
- ❖ Home life

REMEMBER: When you're talking about your skills, make sure you're always able to back yourself up with examples - you don't want to get caught out.

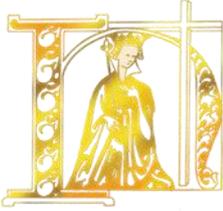
EXAMPLE

Question	Your experience	Skills
What clubs are you currently in/have previously been in (at school or outside of school)?	I played on the football team as the goal keeper, I also organised our weekly matches.	Team working, good organisation, verbal communication, demonstrating initiative, decision making

Task: Work through the tables below using the above example and list of transferable skills on the previous page to help you.

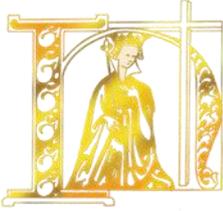
School life

Question	Your experience	Skills
What clubs are you currently in/have previously been in (at school or outside of school)?		
What positions of responsibility have you had at school? (E.g. captain of a sports team, role within a club, prefect)		
What examples do you have of presenting in front of other people? (e.g. assemblies, speaking in front of the class, drama classes)		



Question	Your experience	Skills
Have you been involved in creating something? (think about technology classes, drama, music or arts)		
What are your hobbies?		
Have you achieved any awards or recognition? (E.g. certificates, medals, trophies)		
Have you done anything at school that you are particularly proud of?		
Do you have (or have had) a weekend job? (E.g. babysitting, paper round)		
Do you do any volunteering? (E.g. Duke of Edinburgh award, help in the community during citizenship lessons, charity bake sales, church)		

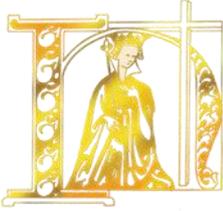
REMEMBER: These skills can also be used in interviews to give examples of when you have demonstrated certain skills or behaviours.



Home life

Question	Your experience	Skills
Have you done any courses or training? (E.g. first aid training at brownies/ scouts)		
What role do you play in your friendship group? (E.g. do you organise them, stop people arguing)		
Do you do any volunteering outside school (or have you previously)? (E.g. sports coaching, looking after a relative)		
What are your hobbies?		
Have you helped your family by contributing money or looking after relatives?		

REMEMBER: These skills can also be used in interviews to give examples of when you have demonstrated certain skills or behaviours.



Work experience

Question	Your experience	Skills
Who do/did you work with?		
What were your responsibilities?		
What experience have you gained working as part of a team?		
What did you do that you were proud of in your job?		

Turning responsibilities into achievements

It is important to highlight your achievements in your CV, rather than only focusing on your responsibilities. Rather than simply listing your responsibilities/ duties, you can highlight your achievements by briefly explaining how you carried out your responsibilities/ duties in an effective manner and the skills you applied to accomplish this.

EXAMPLE

Responsibility: had to organise a daily stock check

Achievement: Organised the daily stock check, making sure that any problems were directly communicated to my manager.

REMEMBER: You should never lie on your CV. Not only are you likely to be caught out at the interview stage, but if you really don't have the qualifications or skills for the job, you will not be able to do the job.

What's the difference between responsibility and achievement?

Responsibility: something which you have a duty to deal with

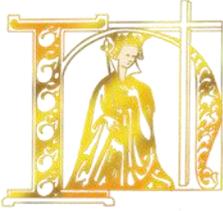
Achievement: something which you have done successfully, by effort or skill



Positive verbs

You can use positive verbs (doing words) to make sure your actions and achievements stand out:

assembled	assisted	attended	communicated
designed	developed	directed	edited
encouraged	ensured	established	evaluated
expanded	experienced	improved	informed
led	motivated	organised	planned
prepared	produced	proposed	proved
provided	repaired	reported	researched
reviewed	selected	strengthened	supported



Activity two: rewriting responsibilities as achievements

The statements in the table below provide examples of responsibilities you might have at work. Re-write these to turn them into achievements, using the example above to help you.

Responsibility	Achievement
1. Tasked with arranging the shop shelves	
2. In charge of creating the menu for the café	
3. Add in your own from a previous job/work placement/home life	
4. Add in your own from a previous job/work placement/home life	

1. I arranged the shop shelves according to the shelving policy communicated to me 2. I created the menu for the café and managed the design and printing processes with the printers

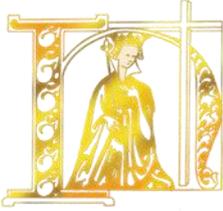


CV ‘buzzwords’

CV buzzwords, are words which will impress the person reading the CV. They are positive and are usually verbs or ‘doing words’ that will help you show off your skills. However, be careful not to use too many or your CV will look like a dictionary and won’t sound like you.

Example buzzwords; the following are examples of buzzwords you may wish to include in your CV:

articulate	awareness	competitive	determined
driven	enthusiastic	flexible	good communicator
leadership	motivated	organised	practical
professional	problem solver	punctual	reliable
responsible	teamwork	thorough	understanding



Creating your CV

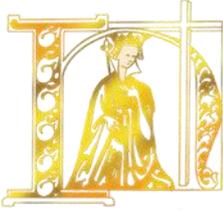
You can use what you have learned in the previous sections to help structure your CV. Below are some tips that will help you to create your CV.

- ❖ **Length:** your CV should be no longer than 2 pages. If it is too long, it may not be read at all and some important information might be missed.
- ❖ **Hobbies and interests:** these can provide a greater insight into who you are as a person. In addition, it could demonstrate that you are a well-rounded person.
- ❖ **Exam results/ predicted grades:** you should include any qualifications (predicted or achieved) in Maths, English and Science. Apart from these, you may only need to include those which are C or above and which are relevant to the job you are applying for.

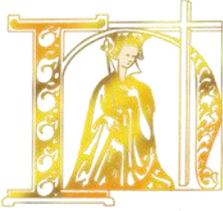
Activity three: preparing the information to include in your CV

The table below can help you think about the information you would like to include in each section of your CV. This is an opportunity for you to make some notes **before** recording the information onto the **CV template**.

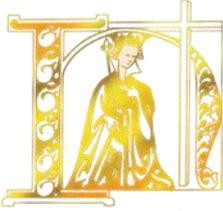
Personal Profile	My Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ What are your best characteristics?✓ What are your key strengths and skills?✓ What makes you stand out professionally?✓ What are your personal and professional goals? <div style="border: 1px solid orange; padding: 5px;"><p>TIP: Think about what will make you stand out and be specific - why are you suitable for this job? Remember that this will need to be changed when you apply for each job.</p></div>	



Professional Experience	My Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Where have you worked? What were your key roles and responsibilities?✓ What were some key achievements for each job? <div style="border: 1px solid orange; padding: 5px;"><p>TIP: remember if you don't have much formal work experience you can include voluntary work, work experience undertaken whilst at school and any work you may have done for a family member</p><p>TIP: You can use your answers from activity one</p></div>	<p><i>List in date order, with the most recent first:</i></p>
Education and Training	My Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ What qualifications do you have?✓ If you have not yet taken your GCSE's what are your expected grades?✓ Have you done any training courses? (e.g. first aid training at brownies/ scouts) <div style="border: 1px solid orange; padding: 5px;"><p>TIP: Include subjects and grades/expected grades - in particular Maths, English and Science.</p></div>	<p><i>List in date order, with the most recent first:</i></p>



Key Skills	My Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ What are you good at?✓ What skills have you gained through life experience?✓ What examples do you have to back up each of these skills? <div style="border: 1px solid orange; padding: 5px;"><p>TIP: You can use your answers from activity one</p></div>	
Key Achievements	My Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ What are you most proud of?✓ What have you done/achieved which will make you stand out from other candidates? <div style="border: 1px solid orange; padding: 5px;"><p>TIP: Think about times when you have done more than you were expected to</p></div>	



Interests	My Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ What do you do in your free time?✓ What clubs are you/ have you been a part of?✓ Can you draw any skills from these interests? <div style="border: 1px solid orange; padding: 5px;"><p>TIP: don't include shopping, watching the television or video gaming – these are taken as given.</p></div>	
References	My Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Who could write you a good professional, educational or character reference?✓ Select 2 individuals, ideally a previous employer or current employer. However, if this is not possible, you might want to provide the contact details of a Form Tutor or Head of House instead. <div style="border: 1px solid orange; padding: 5px;"><p>TIP: You can say that your references are available on request, but if you want to include anybody's name, check in advance that they are happy to give you a reference.</p></div>	



The St Helena CV template

(Please note a separate copy can be obtained at the careers office or on the school website)

Name

House number and street,
Colchester,
Essex, Postcode

T: 01206 | M: 07 (If you have a personal voicemail, ensure its professional)

E: p.khan@gmail.com (sensible email only i.e. NOT sillysuzy@gmail.com)

Personal profile

I am a highly self-motivated, well organised and hardworking individual and am keen to develop my skills in the workplace. I am a strong communicator and am able to work independently and as part of a team. **-this is just an example;** your personal profile should highlight your own abilities and best characteristics, summarising why someone should consider your application. Where possible, look at the job description you are applying for and include any skills/ abilities/ characteristics they are looking which you already have

Professional Experience (any paid or voluntary work experience)

Month 20XX- to Month 20XX Company Name

Job Role

Key responsibilities

- Organised the daily stock check, making sure that any problems were directly communicated to my manager.
- Serving customers in a timely friendly and cheerful manner, receiving positive feedback on the quality of my communication skills
- Applying IT and numerical abilities to successfully operate the tills
- **The above are just examples:** It's important to highlight how your responsibilities turned into achievements (as shown above). Rather than simply listing your responsibilities/ duties, highlight how you did them in an effective manner and the skills you applied to achieve this

Month 20XX- to Month 20XX Company Name

Job Role

Key responsibilities

- Ensure you use bullet points which are easy to read. Keep each point to less than 2 and a half lines
- Ensure these are presented clearly and without errors or spelling mistakes

Education and training

Month 20XX- to Month 20XX St Helena School

I am currently in year 10 and studying:

- GCSE: English, Maths, Science, ICT, (fill in rest of your subjects and predicted grades if you want to)

Achievements and Interests:

- **ACHIEVEMENTS:**
- Anything that you have won an award for that would of interest
- Anything you get involved in that has got some recognition
- Something of which you are really proud to have done
- Think about times when you have done more than you were expected to
- Any positions of responsibility
- **INTERESTS:**
- What do you do in your free time? E.g. Drama, Basketball, Sport
- What clubs are you/have you been part of?
- Can you draw any skills from these interests?
- Please don't include shopping, watching the television or video gaming – these are taken as given.

References

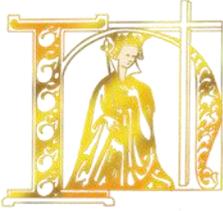
Choose 2 from a previous employer, current employer, Form Tutor, Head of House and set it out as below

Name

Title

Address

Telephone Number



Other CV formatting links

The following websites will have a careers section that can also help you format your CV:

REMEMBER: Your CV is yours. It reflects your personality and doesn't have to look a particular way but should always look presentable and professional.

- ❖ <http://www.aimapprenticeships.co.uk/advice-centre/how-to-write-a-cv>
- ❖ <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/getajob/cvs/Pages/formats.aspx>
- ❖ <http://www.totaljobs.com/careers-advice/cvs-and-applications/which-cv>

Tailoring your CV

This section will help you to tailor, or make small changes to, your general CV to the particular job which you are applying for. Employers looking to fill a job may read through a lot of CVs - so tailoring yours will really help to make your CV stand out. There are several steps involved in tailoring your CV:

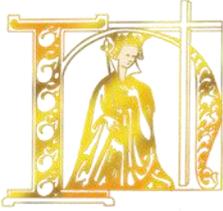
1. Tailor your personal profile

Your personal profile is the first impression an employer will form of you. Where possible, write it to match the job/ apprenticeship or college course you are applying for by highlighting any relevant skills and experience.

2. Focus on relevant skills and experience

Go through your CV and pick out the experiences and skills that match what the employer is looking for. Add detail, so that they really show the employer that you are the kind of candidate they are looking for.





3. Missing skills

If there are any areas of the job description which you haven't been able to show you are suitable for (e.g. if the job requires Microsoft Excel skills which you do not have), there are a number of things you can do:

- ❖ Show that you are trying to develop these skills (in the example above, you might do an online Microsoft Excel course)
- ❖ Demonstrate that you are a fast learner (use activity one to help you with this)
- ❖ Highlight skills related to the missing skill, which again might illustrate your ability to learn quickly (e.g. in this example, general IT skills).

4. Remove irrelevant skills & experience

The employer might only take a few seconds to read through the CVs they receive, especially if there are a lot of them! Therefore it might be a good idea, if you have a long CV, to remove those parts which are not really relevant for the job you are applying for.

5. Review your tailored CV

Using the job description, check that your CV is what the employer is looking for. Do the skills and experiences you have shown match with what the 'ideal candidate' might have?



REMEMBER: There is no need to include your date of birth or a photo.