



Careers Education and Guidance

Writing A CV...

This booklet contains the following information:

- Introduction on how to write a CV
- Template for writing a CV
- Examples of a good CV and a poor CV



CV Advice

Introduction

CVs do not get jobs -- but CVs do get interviews. One of the key elements of success in a job search is the CV, and can often be one of the more difficult documents to develop. A CV is the job seeker's primary marketing document that sells the product -- the skills and experience of the candidate. To be effective, a CV must grab the attention of the reader in 25-35 seconds. A good CV will extend that attention span to over a minute. In effect, the success of the job search revolves around the effectiveness of the first step -- the CV.

No one knows your background and experience better than you. Many people can get the basics of their projects and experience down on paper in a sensible fashion. What most people who write their own CVs have difficulty with is making that sell to the reader. Here are six tips to help you make your CV sell.

1. **Select the best organisational format.**

Most CVs are written in chronological (reverse time order) format, but that does not mean that the chronological choice is best for you. A combination format may be best. The combination format is evenly balanced between skill set description, achievements, and employment history, with the advantage being that projects can be highlighted for greater impact.

2. **Make absolutely sure your document is error free.**

An error in a CV can often be the killer between two closely matched candidates. Professionals are expected to be detail-oriented so an error in the CV reflects badly on possible future performance.

3. **Find a balance between wordiness and lack of detail.**

Employers need to see details about your work history and experience, but they don't need to know everything. Keep information germane to the goal of attaining an interview. Discerning what to exclude is just as important as knowing what to include. If a project was your 'baby' and you gave your blood, sweat and tears to it, you may be inclined to write too many details whereas just a two or three line overview would be best.

4. Think "accomplishments" rather than "job duties".

This is difficult for most people, because we are not objective about ourselves. Think about what made you stand out from the crowd: How did you come up with a way to do things better, more efficiently, or for less cost? What won honours for you? Information such as this will be what makes you grab the attention and put your CV on the top of the stack.

5. Keep it positive.

Reason for leaving a job, setbacks, failed initiatives, etc. do not have a place on the CV. Employers are seeking people who can contribute, have a positive attitude, are enthusiastic, and have successfully performed similar job skills in the past. Concentrate on communicating these issues and avoid any detracting information.

6. Be prepared.

Most first-time job interviews are conducted via telephone rather than in person so be sure to be prepared for that telephone call when it arrives. Many people are not and are caught off guard and ruin their only chance with that organisation.

7. How long should it be?

Your CV should be:

- easy to read with space between each section
- no more than two pages long - only senior executives with a lot of experience should have longer CVs!

8. What should I definitely include?

Start with your personal details; your name, address and contact details. It's up to you whether you include your age, marital status and nationality - it's not essential.

9. Tailoring your CV to the job

Your CV shouldn't be your life story but should be tailored for the job you're applying for, focusing on the parts that are important. Look at the job advert or the person specification and think about what the job involves, and what the employer is asking for. Take some time to find out about the main activities of the employer.

10. Your personal profile

Underneath your personal details, your 'Personal Profile' outlines your:

- skills and qualities
- work background and achievements.

It should only be a few lines but must spark the reader's interest. For example, if the job involves working with people, you could say you're a good team-worker and an effective communicator. Be brief - you can highlight examples of your skills in later sections.

11. Education and work experience

This part of your CV depends on your background and the type of job you're applying for. Some jobs require experience, while for others your qualifications are more important. If you've been working for a while, put your employment history first; if you're younger and don't have much work experience, focus on your education and training.

12. Employment history

Start with your present or most recent job and work backwards, using bullet points.

Include:

- each employer
- the dates you worked for them
- the job title
- your main duties

Employers want to see how your experience will be useful to them, so be brief about jobs that are totally different from the one you're applying for. Relevant jobs should be listed in more detail, showing not only your main duties and responsibilities but giving examples of the skills you used and what you achieved. This is the information the employer uses when deciding whether to interview you or not. Your employment history shows your experience and suitability for the job. Include useful information but leave out anything that's not relevant.

Relate your skills and experience to the job description and what the employer is looking for. Also include any relevant temporary or unpaid work. Avoid unexplained gaps

in your employment history, as employers may think you have something to hide! You can provide reasons for them further on where necessary.

13. Education and training

Start with your most recent study and go back to the qualifications you got at school. Using bullet points or a table include:

- the university, college or school you went to
- the dates the qualifications were awarded and any grades
- any other courses, if they're relevant.

14. Hobbies and interests

Some employers like to read about your interests, as it can give them an idea of your strengths and what you'd be like to work alongside. As with your employment history, it should be relevant in some way to the job. For example, if you're involved in any clubs or societies this can show that you enjoy meeting new people. People often put on their CV that they enjoy cooking or reading, but these activities are too general and widespread to be of interest to an employer.

15. Additional information

If you need to add anything else that's relevant, such as a gap in your employment history for travel or family reasons, you could include a further section titled 'Additional Information' after your interests to explain this.

16. References

Finally, you should state that references are available if required, although you don't need to include referees' contact details on the CV. At least one referee should be work-related; or if you haven't worked for a while, some other responsible person who has known you for quite a while.

17. How should it be presented?

Print your CV on white A4 paper, using just one style and font. It should be concise and easy to read. Check it for spelling and grammar mistakes. You can use a computer spelling and grammar check but it's also good idea to get it checked by somebody else.

A common mistake is to use bold type everywhere. It's good for section headings such as 'Employment History' or 'Education' but many people use it to highlight dates and previous employers' names - this draws the reader's eye away from what's important.

18. What are the different styles of CV?

There are four main styles:

- chronological CV - the most widely used, listing work history then education in reverse order
- functional - has a section near the beginning that describes skills and abilities acquired through many jobs. Often used by those who've had a very varied career
- targeted - similar to the functional CV, and useful for those with varied or patchy employment histories
- alternative CV - for jobs requiring creative flair.

Examples of different CV styles can be found on the following websites.

- totaljobs.com
- cvspecial.co.uk
- workthing.com
- alec.co.uk
- bradleycvs.co.uk

In Short

Do:

- use positive language - when describing your work achievements use power "doing" words like "launched", "managed" and "improved". Quote figures if possible to back up your claims;
- use good quality paper - first impressions count!
- use a word processor on a computer - typed or written CVs won't impress;
- include other skills that might be useful to an employer - driving, languages, IT skills etc.

Do not:

- lie - employers have ways of checking what you put is true, and may sack you if they take you on and find out you've lied to them;
- include a photo unless requested.

A good CV Example

Curriculum Vitae

NAME Kermit frog

DATE OF BIRTH 10/11/1955

ADDRESS

24, Riverbank Road

Mississippi

MI5 5IP

TELEPHONE NUMBER 4444 444444

EMAIL kermitthefrog@worldbeyondtheswamp.co.uk

Personal Profile

I am an organised trustworthy, reliable individual. I wish to pursue a career that will allow me to expand and use my individual qualities and experience. I am an adaptable frog who is willing to lend a flipper to any situation.

Education

- **Date:** 1983-1985

School: Swamp Lane Secondary School 6th form, Mississippi

Qualifications: A level Biology Grade D
A level Dance Grade A
A level Drama Grade A
A/S level Media studies Grade C
A/S level General studies Grade C

- **Date:** 1978- 1983

School: Swamp Lane Secondary School, Mississippi

Qualifications: I obtained GCSE's in the following subjects:

Mathematics grade C
English Language grade B
English Media grade A*
Science GCSE grade B
Additional Science grade B
Dance GCSE grade A*
Drama GCSE grade A
French GCSE grade C
Online testing Certificate in Health and Safety awarded in 1983

- **Date:** 1972- 1978

School: Little Tadpole Primary School, Mississippi,

Employment

- Feb 2001- Present
Co-Director for Disney Film Productions, Hollywood
I currently manage a large group of performers, help in the casting and directing process and have also taken part in a number of productions during my employment.
- Aug 1988- Bookkeeper, Scrooges London Nov 2001, Bookkeeper, Scrooges London
During my employment as Chief Book-keeper I was responsible for 14 Co-Workers, I was in charge of all aspects of account management including marketing and sales support I dealt with customer queries, inquires and complaints, I set up new customer accounts and dealt with all invoicing.
- Sep 1980- Oct 1988 The great Muppet Caper, New York, Crime Reporter
This role required me to complete various office based tasks including; Administration (including filing and typing), investigative techniques, report writing, communicating with a variety of different persons from other organisations, meeting tight deadlines.
- June 1985- Sep 1986
Till operator at Swamps Supermarket, Mississippi
Responsibilities included dealing with cash and card transactions, customer interaction, and general computer and till operating skills
- June 1983 (One week of work Experience)
Frogs-Ville Housing Association, Mississippi
During my week of work experience I shadowed the Chief Housing Officer who was preparing documents for a new housing development, I helped on the reception and also attended a number of partnership meetings where I took minutes I then distributed these to all members.

Hobbies and Interests

I am an energetic and creative individual these attributes are particularly highlighted by the hobbies that I participate in; I enjoy tap dancing and have reached grade 5, singing, swimming and diving. I also take great enjoyment from writing scripts and have developed a number of these into shows, films and stage productions.

Additional Information

Member of School Council from 1978-1983

I was a school Prefect from 1982-1983

Hold the Swamp Lane secondary school record for the long Jump

Hold a current first aid at work certificate

References:

References

Mr E. Scrooge

Mr C. Brown

Scrooges
Carriage Road
London
LD6 666

Disney Film Productions
Walt Disney Studios
Hollywood
HD5 222

Curriculum Vitae

Name
Date of Birth
Address
Telephone number
Email

Personal Profile

Short and sweet make sure what you say about yourself is interesting, relevant and positive!

Education
Date
School
Qualifications

Date
School
Qualification

Employment

Hobbies and Interest

The date you started to the date you finished (if you are still studying at the school you will need to write the words: to date
E.g. Sep 2000- To date

You need to start with your most recent place of education and go as far back to your primary school (refer to good CV for appropriate layout)

Your qualifications can be ones that you are currently studying for -you need to make sure that you say that the grades are provisional/ estimated
Do not lie about any of your qualifications an employer is allowed to find out whether you are telling the truth!

Don't forget to list any work experience you may have done you must start with your most recent job through your first job (date order) be brief about what it was you did and make sure you include transferable skills e.g. Communicated with other staff/ customers, listened too... etc.

Be honest and don't lie you don't want to look a full if the employer asks you lots of questions about hobbies that you don't actually have.

Additional Information →

References →

Your references should be from someone who knows you personally (but not an immediate family member) and someone who knows you professionally you should ask these individuals if they mind you putting them as a reference. Do not write personal addresses of reference use there work address - sometimes people write the names of the references and instead of putting contact details they write: contact details are available upon request.

A poor

Curriculum Vitae

NAME Kermit frog

DATE OF BIRTH 10/11/1955

ADDRESS

The swamp

Riverbank Road

Mississippi

MI5 5IP

TELEPHONE NUMBER 4444 444444

EMAIL kermitthefrog@worldbeyondtheswamp.co.uk

Personal Profile

I am organised trustworthy, reliable, dedicated, honest

• **Education**

• **Date:** 1972- 1978

School: Little Tadpole Primary Skhool, Mississippi,

• **Date:** 1983-1985

School: Swamp Lane Secondary School 6th form, Mississippi

Qualifications: A level Biology

A level Dance

A level Drama

A/S level Media studies

A/S level General studies

• **Date:** 1978- 1983

School: Swamp Lane Secondary School, Mississippi

Qualifications: I got GCSE's in the following subjects:

Mathematics

English Language

English Media
Science GCSE
Additional science
Dance GCSE
Drama GCSE
French GCSE
Online testing Certificate in Health and safety awarded in 1969

- Feb 2001- Present
Co-Director for Disney Film Productions, Hollywood
I currently manage a large group of performers, help in the casting and directing process and have also taken part in a number of productions during my employment.
- Aug 1988- Bookkeeper, Scrooges London Nov 2001
Bookkeeper, Scrooges London
During my employment as chief bookkeeper I was responsible for 14 other workers, I was in charge of all account management which included marketing and sales support I dealt with customer queries, inquiries and complaints, I set up new customer accounts and dealt with all invoicing.
- Sep 1980- Oct 1988 The great Muppet caper, New York,
Crime Reporter
Administration (including filing and typing), investigative techniques, report writing, communicating with a variety of different persons from other organisations, meeting tight deadlines.
- June 1985- Sep 1986
Till operator at Swamps Supermarket, Mississippi
dealing with cash and card transactions, customers, and general computer and till skills
- June 1983 (One week of work Experience)
Frogs-Ville Housing association, Mississippi
During my week of work experience I shadowed the chief housing officer who wrote documents for a new housing development, I sat on the reception and also went to a number of partnership meetings where I wrote down some notes I then sent them to all the members.

Hobbies and Interests

I do not have many hobbies but I enjoy hanging out with friends I'm good at writing scripts.

Additional Information

Member of School Council from 1978

I was a school Prefect from 1982-1983

Hold the Swamp Lane Secondary school record for the long Jump

Hold an up to date first at work certificate



References

Mum
The swamp
Riverbank Road
Mississippi
MI5 5IP

Mr C. Brown
Disney Film Productions
Walt Disney Studios
Hollywood
HD5 222