

A job seeker's guide to...

Creating a good CV

This CV Guide has been designed to help you feel confident enough to produce your own CV.

A good definition of a CV is...

"An accurate, precise account of your relevant skills, experiences and qualifications in relation to the specific job or occupational area being canvassed."

A CV should ideally be a maximum of two sides of A4 paper in length.

We hope the process of creating your CV will be a positive experience and that the finished document will boost your confidence as you embark on your job search.

Don't be surprised if it takes some time to work through this guide. The best CV's often take a significant amount of time and effort, but it will be worth it when you get the job you want.

Below is an informative guide to each of the seven sections of a CV. If you think the sections are not relevant for your circumstances you can leave them out.

1. Personal Details

For this section all you really need is: -

- Your Name
- Your Address and Postcode
- Your Telephone Number (Home/ Mobile)

2. Profile

The profile is a brief description of your skills and experience to date. It should ideally be about 3-6 lines in length. The profile should, where possible, be directed towards the job or occupational area you are seeking.

Do include:

- A description of yourself.
- A snapshot of your experience which is relevant. This may include specific qualifications or use of specific equipment or procedures.

Examples

- A highly skilled and experienced Fitter-Inspector with 22 years' experience working to the exacting standards of the MOD and Aerospace industries. Conscientious and thorough, with a good eye for detail and excellent communication skills at all levels.
- A passionate, committed Housing Professional with experience at all levels of delivery within local government, including at senior level. Fully conversant with the balance between quality of service and cost control. Significant experience of inter-departmental working and the relationships between different local authority departments.
- A reliable person with extensive experience in accounts and administration. Friendly and sociable, maintaining good relationships with colleagues and customers at all levels. Takes pride in reputation for accuracy and ability to learn quickly. Having recently received notice of redundancy, is looking for a similar position in Finance or Administration with part-time hours.

Other Points to Consider:

Description of job titles may vary and you may need to alter yours to suit e.g. A Diesel Mechanic in one company may be called an Automobile Technician in another.

At the end of the profile you may want to add a further comment regarding your **current objectives** e.g. After taking time out of formal employment to raise a family, I am now keen to re-enter the job market as an administrator.

Activity 1

This activity will help you think about the types of word to use in your CV (profile section).

Take a look at the following list of words, which people often use to describe themselves. Circle the ones which best describe you. Limit yourself to 5 or 6.

Organised	People-orientated	Resourceful
Reliable	Conscientious	Energetic
Enthusiastic	Expert	Punctual
Thorough	Determined	Quick-learner
Decisive	Adaptable	Co-operative
Dedicated	Ambitious	Creative
Dynamic	Articulate	Calm
Diplomatic	Assertive	Competent
Efficient	Flexible	Friendly
Hardworking	Honest	Innovative
Personable	Knowledgeable	Motivated
Responsible	Successful	Practical
Versatile	Thorough	Skilled
Talented	Trustworthy	Tenacious
Imaginative	Experienced	Accurate

Try to use these words in a few sentences, which sum up your experience and qualifications to date. Don't forget to have another look at the examples above before you start.

3. Key Skills and Achievements

3.1 Key Skills

Key skills fall into four broad categories:

- Dealing with people
- Dealing with ideas
- Practical skills
- Dealing with information and data

All occupations will require the above skill areas in different measures. In practise, the majority of jobs will generally focus on two particular key skill areas, such as dealing with people and ideas.

Your key skills should focus on your most recent experiences and those which are most applicable to the job you are applying for. Look closely at the job description or advertisement. This will reveal the qualities which the employer is seeking and which you need to stress in your key skills. Try to identify the 'buzz' words which appear in the advertisement and incorporate them carefully into the CV if you have the relevant background. List your most relevant key skills first.

For example:

ADVERTISEMENT - PACKING SUPERVISOR

The job requirements are:

- Supervising 12 staff with the help of 2 Team Leaders
- Ensuring package output targets are met daily
- Experience of flow-wrapping machinery desirable
- Normal working hours 08.00 – 16.30 Mon to Fri, although responsibility covers the 04.00 start to 18.30 finish, therefore flexibility will be required
- Computer literacy an advantage, but training given
- Reporting to the Distribution Manager, the role requires proven First Line management skills

If you were applying for the job of Packing Supervisor, you would emphasise the following:

Key Skills

- Supervising up to 15 staff and regularly reporting to line manager
- Consistent record of meeting package output targets
- Two years experience of flow-wrapping machinery
- Maintaining computerised record system
- Flexible working attitude
- Order picking and assembling. Working from order sheets, noting inconsistencies, checking state of stock and re-ordering as necessary.

Graduate and managerial posts are increasingly focussing on essential key skills and attributes which often include:

- Teamwork
- IT Skills
- Problem Solving
- Communication
- Time management
- Adaptability
- Using initiative
- Decision-making
- Willingness to continually train (often in own time)
- Networking and negotiating within and outside the organisation
- Assuming responsibility and willingness to take on a challenge
- Customer care
- Self motivation and organisation
- Negotiation
- Presentation
- Leadership potential
- Planning

It may be helpful to keep some of these in mind as you compile your key skills.

Key skills are active and current. To stress this it can be useful to place an action word ending in 'ing' at the start of some of your statements.

Activity 2

Have a look at the following list and select the key skills which you use regularly. You will need to personalise the statements, for example dealing with complaints in a polite and friendly manner. Aim for a maximum of 10 key skills in total and a minimum of about 5.

Dealing with People	Dealing with Information & Data
Encouraging people to talk & listening to them	Keeping accurate records
Explaining things to people individually or in a group	Making accurate measurements or calculations
Working in a team	Following written instructions or diagrams
Answering queries	Working out costs
Dealing with complaints	Checking information for accuracy
Conveying understanding & warmth	Writing letters, memos and reports
Organising people	Extracting information from reports/books
Selling, persuading & negotiating	Researching/gathering information
Initiating conversations with people	Organising paperwork systems
Motivating others	Recording information accurately
Being supportive to people from a wide range of backgrounds	Budgeting
Relating to people from a range of backgrounds	Estimating costs
Leading others	Organising of classifying information
Managing / supervising	Analysing numerical information
Practical Skills	Dealing with Ideas
Keyboard skills	Creating new ideas or solutions to problems
Using hand tools to cut/shape/make things	Thinking of improvements or alternatives
Operating powered equipment	Evaluating different ideas

Maintaining equipment & machinery	Planning ahead and setting goals
Mending & repairing equipment	Developing other people's ideas
Diagnosing faults & testing equipment	Sizing up a situation quickly and accurately
Using physical strength	Adapting ideas from one situation to another
Handling materials or equipment with precision and speed	Deciding between alternative courses of action
	Planning how to deal with things that have gone wrong

Some people find it easier to think about their key skills if they begin with a simple phrase, such as 'Able to' and then go on to list their skills underneath.

For example:

- Job Title: Nursery Nurse

Able to:

- Deal with young children in a considerate and patient manner
- Coach young children in literacy and numeracy, sporting activities and music
- Demonstrate a knowledge of IT systems
- Work in a team situation and help others without being first asked.

- Job Title: Warehouse Operator

Able to:

- Load and unload lorries using a Forklift truck in strict compliance with Health & Safety regulations
- Move heavy stock around a warehouse using a motorised pump-truck
- Operate electric and gas counterbalance forklift trucks effectively
- Use a computer to rectify mistakes

- Job Title: Motor Vehicle Repair

Able to:

- Remove, repair and replace radiators from a range of vehicle types
- Diagnose electrical faults using ammeter
- Set timing and emissions on vehicles prior to M.O.T. testing
- Remove and replace tyres, exhausts and brake systems using a range of equipment

3.2 Achievements

We would encourage you to think about the things you have achieved or with which you have been particularly pleased. These achievements may be work related or voluntary activities. Both are equally valid. Some people like to include their achievements in their CV, others chose to leave them out and discuss them at interview.

Work related achievements could include details of:

- Gaining promotion
- Meeting targets
- Being selected to represent the company
- Being selected to positions of responsibility
- Improving profit
- Improving productivity
- Managing projects.

For example:

Awarded 'Employee of the Month' award for having reached a record output for a single shift.
Promoted to the position of Supervisor while at GPT, Card Technology.
Negotiated flexible working hours arrangement for team of telesales staff in order to be able to offer customers a longer working day in which to place orders.
Gained NVQ Level 3 Customer Service, involving considerable work in my own time.

Personal Achievement could include details of:

- Voluntary activities
- Travel and work abroad
- Being selected for post-graduate funding
- Foreign language ability
- Fundraising activities
- Successful completion of a part-time course
- Sporting achievements
- Running or helping to run a club.

For example:

Successfully completed a 20 - week evening course in French for Beginners at a local college. Have now progressed to the Intermediate class.
Competently organised a range of children's activities and evening events while acting as a Campsite Representative in Spain.
Raised £2000 for Cancer Research following successful completion of a parachute jump.

Activity 3

Go through the following list and tick which examples apply to you. Use the space to provide details of what you have done.

Gaining promotion
Voluntary activities
Meeting targets
Travel and work abroad
Representing the company
Selected for post-graduate funding
Selected for a responsible position
Foreign language ability
Improving productivity
Fund-raising activities
Managing projects
Successful completion of a course
Winning prizes or awards
Sporting achievements
Running or helping to run a club
Improving profit
Any other achievements you would like to include

Select two or three achievements which you are pleased about and then write your own list. Take another look at the examples on the previous page to help you get started.

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4. Employment History

Since you have already focussed on your key skills and achievements earlier in the CV, this section is essentially for you to list the jobs you have done.

It is best to begin with your most recent experience first and then work backwards. If you have been working for many years, it is probably advisable to include the last 10-15 years and omit the years prior to this because they are less relevant.

You don't need to give reasons for leaving a job on a CV as you often do on an application form. It makes sense to emphasise your company and job title prior to the date as in the example below.

For example:

ABC Warehouse, Coventry
Packing Supervisor
Nov 2008 – To date
Duties / Responsibilities:

- Managing and Supervising 12 staff
- Ensuring package output targets were met on a daily and monthly basis
- Developing and implementing effective packaging and distribution processes
- Regularly liaising with suppliers

123 Logistics, Nuneaton
Warehouse Operative
Aug 2006 – Oct 2008
Duties / Responsibilities:

- Load and unload lorries using a Forklift truck in strict compliance with Health & Safety regulations
- Move heavy stock around a warehouse using a motorised pump-truck
- Operate electric and gas counterbalance forklift trucks effectively
- Use a computer to rectify mistakes.

Possible scenarios

"I've had gaps between jobs"

If the gaps include voluntary work, training or relevant experience such as travel, put these down as part of your skills, qualifications and achievements. Otherwise, giving the year of employment, rather than the month and year will cover short employment gaps.

"I've had lots of jobs"

Condense your employment record, focusing attention on the skills you have achieved through your experiences, and only giving details of your **most recent and most relevant** positions. If you have a period of unsettled employment it may be helpful to place all the jobs together under a particular heading.

5. Qualifications and Training

For the majority of adults their most recent training and qualifications will be the most relevant for the job being advertised. Which secondary schools you attended and how many GCSEs you have is of less importance. Avoid references which date you, for instance referring to O levels.

For example:

The following details are taken from an individual who is 49 years old, but without many formal qualifications. She had however attended various training days which are worth including on her CV.

2008	German Language Training
2007	3 day Developing Management Skills
2007	2 day Contract Law/Finance
2006	3 day Negotiating Skills
2006	3 day Coaching for Performance

The following details include more formal qualifications.

2008	B.Eng Honours Degree - Mechanical Engineering Coventry University
2004	BTEC HNC Mechanical Engineering City College, Coventry
2000	City and Guilds – Vehicle Mechanics (Level 3) City and Guilds – Auto Electronics (Parts 2 & 3)
1992	GCSE Maths, English, Science, I.T, History, Geography, Art - Grades A-C Smith School, Coventry

6. Interests

This section is not compulsory, however, you may wish to include some details to give a prospective employer an insight of the kind of person you are and the activities you partake in out side of work.

For example:

I enjoy keeping fit and am a member of my local gym. I play five-a-side football, where our team has been promoted to the 3rd division. I enjoy the sporting side of football together with the team work.

I am a keen gardener and have an allotment. I am also an active Governor at Smith School, Coventry and help the School undertake fund raising activities.

7. References

It may be useful to document the names and addresses of your referees in the following way:

Mr Peter Smith
Managing Director
123 Warehouse
First House
123 The Lane Road
Town
CV1 2BC
Tel: 0123456789

Mrs Jane Smith
Operations Manager
ABC Logistics
Town Industrial Estate
123 Street Avenue
Town
CV1 3DE
Tel: 0123456789

Remember to include the **position of your referee**. Their telephone number could be included, but check that your referee is happy to receive phone calls about you. It is usual to include two referees, one from

your most recent workplace and the other from a previous job. You may like to ask someone who has worked with you in another situation, for example a college tutor or perhaps a religious/community leader, or someone you may have worked with in a voluntary capacity. It is advisable not to ask personal friends to provide references.

Another way to tackle the question of referees is to simply write a statement like this:-

References are available on request.

The advantage of a statement like this is that should your referees change you do not need to up-date your CV.

Final Checklist

Appearance:	Does it look good, even before it is read?
Accuracy:	Has it been checked for spelling and grammatical errors?
Length:	Ensure you do not exceed two A4 sides
Evidence:	Is there evidence of skills and experience?
Focus:	Is it easy to see what type of work you would be good at? Is your CV tailored to the job you are applying for?

Need more help?

The National Careers Service provides information, careers and skills advice to help you get on in work and life. To find out more call 0800 100 900 or search online for the National Careers Service.



