WRITING A CV RESUME

If you are looking for a job, then it is very important that you understand how to offer yourself in the best way to an employer. This is done by writing a 'CV' (curriculum vitae - Latin for 'life story'), called in some countries a 'resume'.
Different countries may have different requirements and styles for CV resumes. So you must follow the correct practice for your culture and country. However, we will try to give you important principles and advice.

WHAT IS A CV RESUME FOR?

A CV resume is quite simply an 'advert' to sell yourself to an employer. You should send a CV to an employer when they ask for one in a job advert, or when you are enquiring if any jobs are available. So the purpose of your CV is to make you attractive, interesting, worth considering to the company and so receive a job interview.
An employer may have several hundred enquiries about a single job, he or she will only choose a few people who appear suitable for interview.
Therefore, your CV must be as good as you can make it.

GENERAL ADVICE

If you are a student, there is probably a career advice office in your place of study. They are there to help. They may have fact-sheets of advice on how to prepare a CV. Make full use of them. However, employers do not want to see CVs which are all written in exactly the same way. Therefore, do not just copy standard CV samples! Your CV should be your own, personal, and a little bit different.
A CV should be constructed on a word-processor (or at least typed), well laid out and printed on a good quality printer. Do use bold and/or underline print for headings. Do not use lots of different font types and sizes. You are not designing a magazine cover! **Do use** plenty of white space, and a good border round the page. **Do use** the spell-check on your computer! (Or check that the spelling is correct in some way) **Consider** using 'bullets' to start sub-sections or lists.

As you are using a computer or word-processor, you can easily 'customise' your CV if necessary, and change the layout and the way you write your CV for different employers.
Picture yourself to be a busy manager in the employer's office. He (or she) may have to read through 100 CVs in half an hour, and will have two piles - 'possibles' and 'waste-bin'.

So yours must be easy to read, short and attractive.

There are two communication principles to remember:

***'Keep it simple,**.
***'If they didn't hear it, you didn't say it'**.
So, when you have written a first attempt at your CV, get someone else to look at it, and tell you how to make it better. Ask your friends, your tutors or teachers, your career office, family friends in business. **What you have written may seem simple and obvious to you, but not to an employer!** Go through it again and again with a red pen, making it shorter, more readable, more understandable!

Before you start

Sit down with a piece of paper. Look at the job(s) that you are applying for. Consider how your skills, education, and experience compare with the skills that the job requires. How much information do you have about the job description?

Sometimes employers do not give enough information. Ask for more detail if needed. Spend time researching detail about the job(s) that interest you and information about the employer - their structure, products, successes, and approach - from:

Their own publicity, reports and publications
A library (business reports, trade papers)
College career office
Newspaper reports
The Internet

WHAT TO INCLUDE

Personal details

Name, home address, college address, phone number, email address.
Do you have your own web homepage? Include it (if it's good!).

Education

Give places of education where you have studied - most recent education first. Include subject options taken in each year of your course. Include any special project, thesis, or dissertation work.
Pre-college courses etc should then be included, including grades. Subjects taken and passed just before college will be of most interest. Earlier courses, taken at say age 15-16, may not need much detail.

Work experience

List your most recent experience first. Give the name of your employer, job title, and very important, what you actually did and achieved in that job. Part-time work should be included.

Interests

They will be particularly interested in activities where you have leadership or responsibility, or which involve you in relating to others in a team. A one-person interest, such as stamp-collecting, may be of less interest to them, unless it connects with the work you wish to do. Give only enough detail to explain. (If you were captain of a sports team, they do not want to know the exact date you started, how many games you played, and how many wins you had! They will ask at the interview, if they are interested.) If you have published any articles, jointly or by yourself, give details.
If you have been involved in any type of volunteer work, do give details.

Skills

Ability in other languages, computing experience, or possession of a driving licence should be included.

References

Usually give two names - one from your place of study, and one from any work situation you have had. Or if this does not apply, then an older family friend who has known you for some time. Make sure that referees are willing to give you a reference. Give their day and evening phone numbers if possible.

Length

Maybe all you need to say will fit onto one sheet of A4. But do not crowd it - you will probably need two sheets. Do not normally go longer than this. Put page numbers at the bottom of the pages - a little detail that may impress.

Style

There are two main styles of CV, with variations within them.

Chronological

Information is included under general headings - education, work experience, etc., with the most recent events first.

Skills based

You think through the necessary skills needed for the job you are applying for. Then you list all your personal details under these skill headings. This is called 'targeting your CV', and is becoming more common, at least in UK. But it is harder to do. So take advice on whether it is OK in your country and culture, and how to do it best.

Optional extra

It can be good to start with a Personal Profile/Objective statement. This is a two or three sentence overview of your skills, qualities, hopes, and plans. It should encourage the employer to read the rest.

Presentation

You may vary the style according to the type of job, and what is accepted in your country and culture. So a big company would normally expect a formal CV on white paper. But, just perhaps, a CV applying for a television production job, or graphic designer, could be less formal - coloured paper, unusual design, etc!

Consider using a two column table to list your educational qualifications and courses taken.

Covering letter

When sending in a CV or job application form, you **must** include a covering letter. The purpose of the letter is:

To make sure that the CV arrives on the desk of the correct person. Take the trouble to telephone, and find the name of the person who will be dealing with applications or CVs, and address your letter, and envelope, to that person by name. (In a small company, it may be the managing director. In a medium size company, it may be the head of section/department. Only in a large company will there be a Personnel or Human Resource Department.)

To persuade the person to read your CV, it must be relevant to the company, interesting, and well produced.

To clearly say what job you are interested in. If you are sending in a 'speculative' CV hoping that they may have work for you, explain what sort of work you are interested in. Do not say, 'I would be interested in working for Widgets Ltd', but say 'I believe my skills equip me to work in the product development department/accounts office/whatever'. When sending a speculative CV, you may try telephoning later to push your enquiry further.

To say why you want that particular job with that particular employer.

To draw attention to one or two key points in the CV which you feel make you suited to **that** particular job with **that** particular employer.
Start your letter with an underline heading giving the job title you are interested in. (If you saw the job advertised, say where you saw it.)
Use the style and pattern of a business letter suited to your culture and country. Ask for advice about this. Try to find sample business letters so that you can follow style and layout.
Your career office may have a sheet about this, or show you a sample.
The letter should only be on one side of A4 paper. It must be polite and easy to read.
Also mention when you are available for an interview.
Ending your letter with a request for specific extra information may give a positive response.

Your Name

07712 345678
99 Example Street, Example Town, EX4 3PL

PERSONAL STATEMENT
Your personal statement is perhaps the single most important part of you CV. Get it wrong and your chances of being invited to interview are drastically reduced. Its aim is to highlight your professional attributes and goals, summarizing why someone should consider your application.

EMPLOYMENT
Job Title
Company Name -
Location
Dates of Employment

You should give your reader a brief introduction to what the company does and explain a bit about the responsibilities your role covered

Key Achievements:
· Provide a list of the key achievements you have made in your job
· Try to show evidence such as percentage increases or financial figures
· Provide enough information to entice your potential employers to call you
· Always keep examples relevant to the role you are applying for

Job Title
Company Name - Location
Dates of Employment

For older jobs you should keep the details slightly shorter, only offering information that will help you reach the next stage in your career.

Key Achievements:
· Try to avoid cliché phrases that don't differentiate you as a candidate
· Always tailor your CV for each job application to match the requirements
· If something isn't relevant, don't be scared to leave it out

KEY SKILLS
Technical Skills
Show that you have the relevant knowledge required to succeed in the role
Include computer software you have used, relevant training courses and any accreditations you have achieved.

Personal Skills

Include some of your main attributes that are vital to the role
Flexibility, problem solving abilities, good communication and creativity are qualities that all employers look out for,
If you are changing career these transferable skills will add weight to your application

EDUCATION
Professional Body
Location
Course Title, Grade
If you have gained any qualifications specific to your industry be sure to list these first. Employers can then clearly see that you have the knowledge and ability to take on the role.

University Name
Location
Course Title, Grade
Explain how your course helped you develop your knowledge in the areas that are relevant to the position you're applying for. If you have switched direction from the topic you studied, you may want to briefly explain the reasons behind this decision.

College Name
Location
Course Title, Grade

School Name
Location
Grades
List a small selection of the courses you took that are relevant to your career path.

PERSONAL INTERESTS
Outside interests enable a potential employer to gain an understanding to what motivates you, what personal skills you may have and how you will integrate into the team.
Look at how job advertisements stipulate certain personality traits required for positions. Identify what they are and show how your hobbies can relate to their requirements.
REFERENCES
References are available on request.