

PAIGNTON ACADEMY

(part of Bay Education Trust)

Careers Department

How to write 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...

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. Here are some tips to help you make your CV sell.

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.

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.

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.

Keep it positive

Reason for leaving a job, setbacks, failed initiatives, etc. do not have a place on the CV. Employers are looking for people who can contribute, have a positive attitude, are enthusiastic, and have successfully performed similar job skills in the past.

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!

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 a 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.

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

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

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!

Employment

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.

Hobbies and Interest

Additional Information

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.

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 Good Example of a CV

ANTHONY BRILL

23 Bridge Road • Paignton • Devon • TQ42 784

Home: 01803 987778 • Mobile: 07777888888

Email: email@yahoo.co.uk • Date of Birth: 1st December 1994

ABOUT ME

I am a friendly and approachable person. I am a good listener and I am often asked to help friends out with their problems. I currently attend Paignton Community and Sports Academy 6th Form, I am in my second year and studying ICT, Law and Travel and Tourism. I am studying a variety of different subjects my favourite being ICT, I like this subject because it enables me to use my knowledge and design skills.

I was a Senior Prefect at school in year 11 which means I was a key team member for a variety of events. My attendance is excellent and I have received a number of awards highlighting my excellence in English, Math, Science, ICT and Art. I have also received numerous hard work and effort awards from my teachers, one being for my recent ICT coursework. I enjoy using computers and I am a member of a local swimming pool where I often go to enjoy a swim and have a few hours in the gym. My hobbies include kayaking, swimming, painting, cooking, drawing, technology, and social activities.

When I leave 6th Form I hope to do an essential computing course at South Devon College, this will teach me everything I need to know about computing and give me a boost into a career with computers. Then after that I plan to go onto University and study ICT.

EDUCATION

2007 - 2011 Paignton Community and Sports Academy

GCSEs:

- English Literature – C
- English Language – B
- Math – B
- Science – Pass
- Core IT – Distinction
- Art & Design – Merit
- Business Studies – Merit
- Option IT – Distinction
- General Studies – B
- Functional Skills Adult Numeracy Level 2 – Passed
- Functional Skills Adult Literacy Level 2 – Passed

I was in the 'Gifted and Talented' Programme for the last two years at school.

I have gained 'Principal Commendations' in 2008.

I have completed a 'Music Production' course at South Devon College.

I was a Prefect in 2009 and went on to be a Senior Prefect in 2011.

I have completed two 'Water Sports' courses on the Egremont of Salcombe in 2007 and 2009

I have successfully completed three 'Chef Academy' courses at South Devon College levels 1-3 in 2008 and 2009.

WORK EXPERIENCE

2008 – Present Sally Taylor – Park Lodge Hotel Waiter/Cook

- I prepared meals so I know how to cook basic food e.g. Pizza, Chips, pasta etc.
- I know about food hygiene, health and safety and ensuring a good standard of food preparation.
- I serve food to guests and serve with a smile.
- I also organise trips out, in and around Devon, this helped develop trust, provide a quality service and dealing tactfully with complaints.
- I entertain local residents with my keyboard and guitar performances.
- My work experience has involved working within a team-based culture. This involved planning, organisation, co-ordination and commitment.

December 2010 Curledge Street Primary School Year 5 Teaching Assistant

I completed a week of work experience at Curledge street primary school in Paignton. During the week I worked with children year 5 and during this time I help children with their work and supervise them at break and lunch times. I thoroughly enjoyed helping the children during the week. The children took part in a variety of activities including Math, English and Science. My favourite part of the week was when the children made Christmas cards for their families by using their thumbs and fingers in white paint. During the placement I learned how to look after the children in school and how to communicate with other employees in the work place. I have also learnt how to understand children's needs and help them in the right way. I enjoyed working at the primary

school so much and because of it I am more dedicated to my studies at college and possibly like a job as a teacher in the future.

17th June – 8th September 2011 Working With The RSC!

During my GCSEs I was chosen by my school to work with the Royal Shakespeare Company to prepare my school for a visit by the Company and to advertise etc for the performance. I worked for 2 hours a week but also extra hours at home creating spreadsheets, adverts and press releases for newspapers and radio stations.

I enjoyed this experience very much because it showed me how much I enjoy working with computers and how well I work with them. My favourite part of this experience was when I saw my picture and my press release in my local paper I was so excited.

During my time working with the Royal Shakespeare Company I have learned how to talk to customers on the phone, show my authority as a leader of the marketing and advertising groups and how to create adverts that work for the customers age groups. This experience has encouraged me to go for it and get stuck in to my studies by going to college and getting a placement in university.

SKILLS

- I have completed three junior cooking courses at South Devon College over two years.
- I have excellent knowledge with computers, I can use all Microsoft Office programs with confidence, I also have confidence with website, and leaflet and poster making this is something which I know will be needed in the future.
- I have great people skills so I will be able to deal with customers in any workplace making things easier on the customers and on the remaining staff.
- I can work with money with no problems and as I have a B in my maths GCSE this provides evidence for this skill.

CHARITY WORK

During my spare time I have helped out at Argos who were working with teenage cancer trust to raise money for cancer patients in their teens, I had so much fun working with other people to raise the money we did, I believe we raised £589.56 just at our one store so I'm very proud of myself and hope it help people with cancer. Doing these kind of events always inspires me to do more work for charity and help people who aren't as fortunate as me.

REFERENCES

Mr T. Willcocks - Head of Year

Paignton Community and Sports College

Borough Road

Paignton

Devon

01803 403003

A Poor Example of a CV – Can you find all of the mistakes?

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 par 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, 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
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 enjoying 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