

Tips on the 7 Sections of a CV outline

CV Tips 1: Your personal details

You should include your name, address and contact details.

It's up to you whether you include your age, marital status and nationality. Recruiters should be able to make a decision about your skills and abilities without this information.

If you're adding your email address to your contact details make sure that it sounds professional and creates the right impression. You may also want to add a link to a professional social media website like LinkedIn. If you do, check that the website shows you in a positive light and doesn't contain anything you wouldn't want an employer to see.

CV Tips 2: Your personal profile

Your personal profile is a mini-advert for you and should summarise your:

- skills and qualities
- work background and achievements
- career aims

It should only be a few lines and must grab the reader's attention. Try to avoid over-used terms, such as 'reliable', 'hard working', 'team player', 'good communication skills' etc.

These general terms are heard very often and they don't help an employer to build up a picture of you.

For example, if the job involves working with people, try to highlight relevant, specific people skills such as: negotiating, effectively dealing with demanding customers, presentation skills, handling conflict, or showing empathy.

These help the reader build up more of a picture of your skills, knowledge and experience. Be brief - you can go into more detail and highlight examples of your skills in later sections.

When you're summarising your career aims, think about the employer you are sending the CV to. It will hit home with employers if your career aims sound exactly like the kind of opportunities they currently have.

CV Tips 3: Employment history and work experience

If you've been working for a while, you could put your employment history first. If you don't have much work experience, you might like to highlight your education and training.

In this section you should start with your present or most recent job and work backwards. You should include employer, the dates you worked for them, job title and your main duties. Provide more detail on the relevant jobs you've had and give examples of the skills you used and what you achieved.

Use bullet pointed lists and positive language. Try thinking of 'action' words that you can use to describe what you did in your job, like achieved, designed, established, supervised, co-ordinated, created or transformed.

Try to relate your skills and experience to the job description, person specification or what you think the employer is looking for, if you're sending your CV on spec. Also include any relevant temporary work and volunteering experience.

Avoid unexplained gaps in your employment history. If you had time out travelling, job seeking, volunteering or caring for a relative, include this along with details of what you've learned and skills you've gained.

CV Tips 4: Education and training

Start with your most recent qualifications and work back to the ones 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 work-related courses, if they're relevant

CV Tips 5: Interests and achievements

You can include hobbies, interests and achievements that are relevant to the job. For example, if you're involved in any clubs or societies this can show that you enjoy meeting new people. Interests like sports and physical recreation activities can also show employers that you are fit and healthy.

Try to avoid only putting activities that you would do alone like reading, bird-watching or playing video games, unless they relate directly to the job that you are applying for. They may leave employers wondering how sociable you are. Make your activities specific and interesting!

CV Tips 6: Additional information

You can include this section if you need to add anything else that's relevant.

Such as explaining that a gap in your employment history was due to travel or family reasons. You could also include other relevant skills here, such as if you have a driving licence or can speak any foreign languages.

CV Tips 7: Using References:

At least one referee should be work-related. Or, if you haven't worked for a while, you could use another responsible person who has known you for some time.

You can list your referees on your CV or just put 'references available on request'. If you decide to include their details you should state the relationship of each referee to you – for example 'John Turner, line manager'.