

# Writing a CV

- 1) Structuring your CV
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## ■ Structuring your CV

You've researched yourself and identified your dream job. You've researched the market and found a vacancy. So how do you put together a CV that will guarantee you an interview?

### 1 a In pairs, discuss the following questions.

- 1 What does CV stand for?
- 2 What is a CV commonly called in American English?
- 3 What is the main purpose of a CV?
- 4 What are the key qualities of a successful CV?
- 5 How many sections are there in a typical CV? What are they?
- 6 What is the best way to structure the contents of your CV?

### b ▶21 Listen to Silvia and her friend, Sophie, discussing CVs. In pairs, discuss the following questions.

- 1 What are the two most popular ways of structuring a CV?
- 2 What are the key differences between the two most popular ways of structuring CVs?
- 3 Does any of Sophie's advice surprise you?

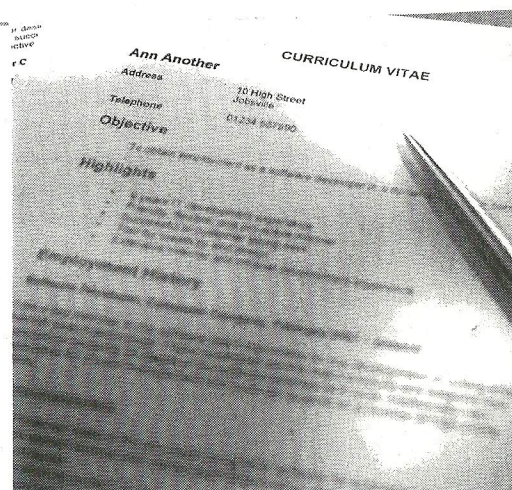
### c ▶21 Listen again and complete the following CV structures.

#### Chronological CV

- 1 Your name in large letters
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ details
- 3 ( \_\_\_\_\_ )
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ / Academic qualifications
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 Activities and \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 Additional \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 \_\_\_\_\_

#### Skills-based CV

- 9 \_\_\_\_\_ in large letters
- 10 \_\_\_\_\_
- 11 \_\_\_\_\_ / Career profile
- 12 Key \_\_\_\_\_
- 13 \_\_\_\_\_ details
- 14 \_\_\_\_\_ / Professional qualifications
- 15 \_\_\_\_\_
- 16 \_\_\_\_\_



d Look at the two versions of her CV that Silvia prepared. Which approach has she followed for each version? Which CV do you prefer?

e Complete the following CV using a past form of the verbs in the box.

achieve	complete	coordinate	develop	hold
organise	persuade	represent	research	work

## Silvia Carnali

**Home address:** 42 Hampstead Rd  
London NW3  
**Telephone:** 44 (0) 207 862 4567  
**Email:** s\_carnali@hotmail.com

**Date of Birth:** 14 February 1986  
**Nationality:** Italian

### Education

**2008-present** The School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)

- MSc (Hons) Development Studies (2.1 expected)
- 7000-word dissertation on reforestation in Kenya

**2004-2007** University College London (UCL)

- BA (Hons) Geography (2.1)

**2004** Diploma Maturità Scientifica (58/60) – Liceo A.Tosi, Milano

### Professional Experience

**2008** Project Volunteer: *Sustainable Solutions* (NGO), Kenya (6 months)

- 1 Worked as part of an international team to increase awareness of sustainability in Kenya
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ communication strategies to ensure that our message was delivered effectively
- Established, managed and maintained relationships with key stakeholders
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ local community leaders to increase the level of reforestation in Kenya

**2006-2007** Communications Officer: *University College London* (1 year)

- Organised and managed catering for more than 10 separate UCL events for up to 300 students
- Liaised with student council board members, catering suppliers, venues and performers
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ University College London at a series of event conferences
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ two-week event management training course

**2005** Activity Leader: *Concord College Summer School*, Shropshire, UK (2 months)

- Led sports and drama activities for 200 international students
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_ weekend adventure trip in Wales, including leading a walking expedition for twenty students
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_ daily meetings with other members of the activity team. Provided training and support for less experienced members of the team

### Activities and Interests

**2007 Sept** Mountain Trekking in South America (1 month)

- 8 \_\_\_\_\_ and planned group mountain expedition in the Andes, Argentina
- As sole Spanish speaker I acted as spokesperson for the group. Reacting to unforeseen events required frequent revision of plans, responding to group members, tour operator and airlines.
- 9 \_\_\_\_\_ aims of crossing the remote central part of the Southern Patagonian ice cap in Los Glaciares National Park, improved Spanish language skills, stayed within budget

**2003-present** Greenpeace Active Member (5 years)

- 10 \_\_\_\_\_ a campaign against nuclear power. Persuaded 1000 people to write to their local MP demanding the Government to reconsider renewable energy resources as a viable alternative to nuclear power.

**Languages** Italian (mother tongue), English (fluent), Spanish (upper intermediate)  
**Computer Skills** Full command of Microsoft Office Suite  
**Driving** Full current driving licence  
**References** References available upon request

**f Complete the following CV using the skills headings in the box.**

Adaptability and resourcefulness    Communication and teamwork  
Energy and motivation    Research and computer skills

**Silvia Carnali**

42 Hampstead Rd, London NW3  
Tel: 44 (0) 207 862 4567  
Email: s\_carnali@hotmail.com

*Well-organised, highly motivated communications strategy adviser. Geography graduate with recent professional experience developing communication strategy for positive change. Currently completing Master's in Development Studies with specific focus on sustainability. Fluent spoken and written English. Self-motivated, resourceful and able to motivate others, with excellent communication and interpersonal skills.*

**Education**

2008 – 2009    The School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, MSc (Hons) Development Studies (2.1 expected)

2004 – 2007    University College London, BA (Hons) Geography (2.1)

1

- African NGO 'Sustainable Solutions': Six-month volunteer project to educate Kenyan people about the importance of reforestation. My role was to assist the project team in devising and implementing strategies to communicate this message to local residents in different regions in Kenya. To do this effectively, I had to remain calm, polite and persuasive when talking to community leaders. (2008)
- As communications officer at UCL I represented the university at conferences and organised student union events. As part of the student union team I was responsible for dealing with suppliers, bands, etc. and I also worked in collaboration with the marketing team advertising and ticketing events. I assisted in organising and managing 12 successful events, all of which made a profit. (2006–2007)

2

- In Sept 2007 I successfully completed an eight-person expedition to Austral Andes in Argentina, in the south-west of Santa Cruz on the border with Chile. Three months of training and fundraising preparation resulted in the successful crossing of the remote central part of the Southern Patagonian ice cap in Los Glaciares National Park. As the sole Spanish speaker I acted as spokesperson for our group, organising bookings and negotiating the expedition itinerary. (2007)
- I organised and led sports and drama activities for 200 international students at a summer school in Shrewsbury. My role included motivating and supporting the less experienced members of the activities team. I devised a number of sporting tournaments for the summer school students and motivated the children and staff to get fully involved, culminating in an international volleyball competition. (2005)

3

- I worked with a large international team in Kenya. The nature of the project meant that I had to travel regularly throughout the country at short notice, and share basic living conditions. (2008)
- I handled a wide variety of tasks and projects throughout the six-month project, each requiring different skills and approaches in order for targets to be achieved and obstacles to be overcome. I suggested an alternative communication strategy of meeting with local community leaders to discuss sustainability. I convinced community leaders to implement alternative farming methods. The successful approach was adopted by the entire team across the country. (2008)

4

- I researched top international universities for my degree course. I am currently completing in-depth research on reforestation techniques for the African subcontinent for my Master's degree dissertation. Research for my dissertation includes substantial use of the Internet and professional journals, and interviewing experts in the field. I have an excellent command of Microsoft Office Suite.
- I updated and modified the website for Sustainable Solutions, resulting in a 40% increase in website traffic. (2008)

**Employment History**

Sustainable Solutions (NGO)	2008	Project Volunteer, based Kenya
Concord College summer school	2005	Activity Leader, based Shropshire, UK

**Languages**

Italian, English, Spanish

References available upon request

**g In pairs, discuss the following questions.**

- 1 Why are skills-based CVs particularly popular with career changers and recent graduates?
- 2 Which approach is more common in the country you are applying for work in?

## Avoiding common CV mistakes

- 2 a In pairs, think of five mistakes that people commonly make when writing a CV.
- b ▶ 2.2 A German student, Alex Mencken, has recently decided to apply for two administrative assistant jobs at London theatres. He is in the process of writing his CV. Listen to Alex discussing common mistakes people make with CVs with his friend Ella, an HR officer, and answer the following questions.
- 1 How many of your ideas in Exercise 2a does Ella mention?
  - 2 Does Ella talk about anything that you hadn't thought of?
- c ▶ 2.2 Listen again and answer the following questions.
- 1 According to Ella, what words are commonly misspelt in CVs?
  - 2 Why does she believe short, concise CVs are preferable?
  - 3 Why shouldn't you lie in a CV?
  - 4 According to Ella, should you use the same CV for all your applications?
- d Ella mentions the importance of correct spelling. Look at the following extracts from CVs. Identify and correct the spelling mistakes (the number of mistakes is given in brackets). Use a dictionary to help you.
- 1 In my prevous job I was responsible for dealling with my bosses' correspondance, passing on their telephone massages, and arrangeing apointments with visitors. (7)
  - 2 Apart form the academic benefitts, the experiance off studing abraod enabled me to practice my foriegn language skills and develope my strenghts in non-academic areas. (10)
  - 3 During my time as an assistent in the personal department, my main acheivement was when I lead a project witch focused on improveing startegic buisness planing. (9)
- e Which of these mistakes do you regularly make? Are there any other words that you often spell incorrectly?

### practice

**practice** noun (C) [See at practise 'verb', practise 'verb',  
practise 'verb'] */'præktɪs/* noun [U] action rather  
than thought or ideas: *It seemed like a good idea before  
we started, but in practice it was a disaster.* *Officially  
Robert's in charge, but in practice Hannah runs the  
office.* *I can't see how your plan is going to work in  
practice.* *How do you intend to put these proposals into  
practice, Mohamed?*

**practice** (REGULAR ACTIVITY) */'præktɪs/* noun (C or U)  
something that is usually or regularly done, often as a  
habit, tradition or custom: *What can European  
companies learn from Japanese business practices?* *It's  
common practice in the States to tip the hairdresser.*  
*This is a cruel practice which should be banned  
immediately.* *What is standard practice (= what is  
usually done) in a situation like this?* *Newspaper  
editors have agreed a new code of practice on the  
issue of privacy.*

• **make a practice of sth** *UK OLD-FASHIONED* to do something  
regularly: *I'll do your washing for you this time, but I'm  
not going to make a practice of it.*

**practise** *UK, US* **practise** */'præktɪs/* verb [I] to do some-  
thing regularly, often according to a custom, religion or  
set of rules, or as a habit: *The new government has  
promised all citizens the right to practise their religion.*  
*Practising safe sex is an important way of avoiding  
HIV infection.* *The company denies that it has practised  
discrimination against any of its employees.*

• **practise what you preach** to do the things that you  
advise other people to do: *He's such a hypocrite! He  
practises what he preaches.*

**practising** *UK, US* **practising** */'præktɪsɪŋ/* adj (before noun)  
actively involved in a religion: *a practising Muslim,  
Jew/Christian*

**practise** (TRAIN) *UK, US* **practise** */'præktɪs/* verb [I or U]  
to do or play something regularly or repeatedly in order  
to become skilled at it: *I'm quite good at tennis but I don't  
practise my serve.* *She practises the violin every day.*  
*His written French is very good but he needs to  
practise speaking it.*

**practice** */'præktɪs/* noun (C or U) when you do some-  
thing regularly or repeatedly to improve your skill at  
doing it: *I need to get some more practice before I take my  
driving test.* *Are you coming to cricket practice this  
evening?* *She's slower at home because she spends all her  
time practising.*

## Creating a strong first impression

### Writing a personal statement

A personal statement is a brief statement of the type of person you are, your skills and your achievements. It always comes near the top of the CV, before the main body, and presents the facts in the most positive way. A well-written personal statement will immediately capture the attention of the employer and make them want to find out more about you.

- 3 a Read Silvia's personal statement from her skills-based CV and find words and phrases which demonstrate the following points.

- |             |              |           |
|-------------|--------------|-----------|
| 1 education | 3 knowledge  | 5 success |
| 2 character | 4 experience |           |

*Well-organised, highly motivated communications strategy adviser. Geography graduate with recent professional experience developing communication strategy for positive change. Currently completing Master's in Development Studies with specific focus on sustainability. Fluent spoken and written English. Self-motivated, resourceful and able to motivate others, with excellent communication and interpersonal skills.*

- b Each sentence in Silvia's personal statement has a different main function. Write the sentences next to the questions that they answer (a-e).

- a What sort of person am I? Self-motivated, resourceful and able to motivate others, with excellent communication and interpersonal skills.
- b What is my area of professional expertise? \_\_\_\_\_
- c What is my most important qualification? \_\_\_\_\_
- d What is my most relevant skill for the job? \_\_\_\_\_
- e What am I doing at the moment? \_\_\_\_\_

- c Complete the following personal statements using the phrases in the box.

confidently and effectively    experience in  
full-time professional    proven ability    well-organised

- 1 Professional, \_\_\_\_\_ individual. Communicates \_\_\_\_\_ at all levels; demonstrates initiative and confidentiality both independently and within a team environment.
- 2 Enthusiastic PA with three years' \_\_\_\_\_ experience. Excellent written and oral communication skills have enabled me to establish a strong network of professional contacts in your area. \_\_\_\_\_ to meet deadlines and prioritise whilst maintaining consistently high standards. Substantial \_\_\_\_\_ organising meetings and conferences gained whilst providing PA and secretarial service to main board director.

- d In pairs, discuss the following questions.

- 1 How do these statements compare with Silvia's?
- 2 Which of the questions in Exercise 3b does each statement answer?

e The personal statements in Exercise 3c were taken from CVs written in response to the following job advertisement. Read the advertisement and decide which personal statement you think is more appropriate.

f Find an advertisement for a job you would like to apply for. Make a list of the key points that the employer is looking for. Plan your personal statement with those key points in mind. Think about the following questions.

- How long will your personal statement be?
- How many sentences do you want to include?
- What key questions will you address with each sentence?
- What additional information will you include?
- In what order will you put your sentences?

g You can create impressive sentences for your personal statement by choosing a word or phrase from each column in the following table. For example, *Highly experienced accounts manager with excellent communication skills*. Complete the table using the words in the box. In pairs, try and add more words and phrases to each column.

ability to interest in    broad motivator    consistently high professional    enthusiastic team leader

Modifier	Adjective 1	Sort of person	Adjective 2	Experience/skills
	creative	accounts manager		...
	customer-oriented	English speaker		communication skills
Extremely			deep	experience in ...
Highly	experienced	recent graduate	excellent	...
		sales professional	extensive	knowledge of ...
	resourceful	self-starter	proven	range of transferable skills
	results-focused		recent	skills in ...

h Use the table to write five true sentences about you.

i Use your answers in Exercises 3f and 3h to write your personal statement.

### Writing eye-catching headings

4 a Imagine you only had 20 seconds to look at Silvia's CV on page 21. What would you look at? What would your impression of Silvia be?

b In her skills-based CV, Silvia used personal strengths and competencies as section headings. Look at the following section headings and try to add more to each group.

Areas of professional experience	Business skills	Personal strengths and competencies
Marketing	Dealing with customers	Innovation and creativity
Presentations and publications	Financial management	Leadership
Sales	Managing people	Strategic thinking

c In pairs, discuss the following questions.

- 1 Which titles would you use for your skills-based CV?
- 2 Would you use the same categories for every job you apply for?
- 3 Would you use the requirements stated in each job advert as titles?

**Our client is looking for someone who can fill the shoes of a busy PA for 9 to 12 months.**

In addition to the usual diary management, organising of travel and coordinating of interviews and meeting rooms, you will be expected to facilitate new starters in the department, issue contracts, write up commission schemes and job descriptions and coordinate the company's subscription library.

The ideal candidate will be highly organised and able to multitask. Your written English must be of the highest standard, and as you will be liaising with executives at all levels, you must have excellent interpersonal skills. Previous experience essential.

## Identifying your key skills

Key skills may form the body of your CV (in a skills-based CV) or they may be demonstrated throughout (in a conventional chronological CV).

- 5 a** Look at the following list of transferable skills. In pairs, discuss how you could demonstrate these skills in your CV. Use examples from your work experience, your studies and your hobbies and interests.

- Communication skills (written and oral)
- Foreign language skills
- Intellectual skills (e.g. critical, analytical and problem-solving skills)
- Interpersonal skills (e.g. working with or motivating others, flexibility)
- IT skills
- Numeracy skills (e.g. statistical skills, data handling)
- Organisational skills (e.g. working independently, meeting deadlines)
- Research skills

- b** The following sentences are taken from Silvia's skills-based CV. Cross out the transferable skill which is not demonstrated in each sentence.

- 1 My role was to assist the project team in devising and implementing strategies to communicate this message to local residents in different regions in Kenya.  
(communication / teamwork / creativity / ~~organisation~~)
- 2 In Sept 2007 I successfully completed an eight-person expedition to Austral Andes in Argentina.  
(motivation / teamwork / achievement / creativity)
- 3 As the sole Spanish speaker I acted as spokesperson for our group, organising bookings and negotiating the expedition itinerary.  
(interpersonal skills / communication / analysis / negotiation)
- 4 I organised and led sports and drama activities for 200 international students at a summer school in Shrewsbury.  
(organisation / leadership / motivation / writing)
- 5 The nature of the project meant that I had to travel regularly throughout the country at short notice, and share basic living conditions.  
(flexibility / teamwork / research / interpersonal skills)
- 6 I am currently completing in-depth research on reforestation techniques for the African subcontinent for my Master's degree dissertation.  
(independence / analysis / research / teamwork)

- c** In pairs, tell each other which of the transferable skills in Exercise 5a you have developed at university or at work. Provide examples that demonstrate the development of these skills.

- d** Complete the following sentences so they are true for you.

- 1 My role was to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 As the \_\_\_\_\_ I acted as \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 The nature of \_\_\_\_\_ meant that I had to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 Within this role I was responsible for \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 To do this effectively, I had to \_\_\_\_\_.

**e** Look at the following extracts from Silvia's skills-based CV. What kinds of word are missing?

- 1 I assisted in organising and managing 12 \_\_\_\_\_ events ...
- 2 In Sept 2007 I \_\_\_\_\_ completed an eight-person expedition to Austral Andes in Argentina ...
- 3 Three months of training and fundraising preparation resulted in the \_\_\_\_\_ crossing of the remote central part of the Southern Patagonian ice cap ...
- 4 I devised a number of sporting tournaments for the summer school students and motivated the children and staff to get \_\_\_\_\_ involved, culminating in an \_\_\_\_\_ volleyball competition.
- 5 I handled a \_\_\_\_\_ variety of tasks and projects throughout the six-month project ...
- 6 The \_\_\_\_\_ approach was adopted by the \_\_\_\_\_ team across the country.
- 7 I researched \_\_\_\_\_ international universities for my degree courses.
- 8 I am currently completing \_\_\_\_\_ research on reforestation techniques ...
- 9 Research for my dissertation includes \_\_\_\_\_ use of the Internet ...
- 10 I have an \_\_\_\_\_ command of Microsoft Office Suite.

**f** Complete the sentences in Exercise 5e using the words in the box.

entire    excellent    fully    in-depth    international  
substantial    successful (x3)    successfully    top    wide

**g** Choose five of the key skills in Exercise 5a. For each skill, write one or two sentences to highlight that skill, using examples from your work, studies and private life. Remember to mention your role, using sentences from Exercise 5d, and add positive adjectives and adverbs to make your sentences more impressive.

## ■ Highlighting your work experience

This is the section in the CV where you highlight your professional achievements which are directly relevant to the position you are applying for. As well as highlighting periods of full- and part-time employment, the work experience section may also include professional training, voluntary work, and any extended periods in which your life focused on a particular activity (e.g. travelling abroad).

**6 a** Think about a job or position of responsibility you have held. In pairs, tell each other about the position.

- What were your duties?
- What did you do?
- How did you do it?
- What were the positive results of the action you took?



**b** Match the CV approaches (1–2) to the effect (a–b) they will have on the layout of the work experience section of a CV.

- 1 chronological CV
- 2 skills-based CV

- a With this approach your relevant achievements are listed separately under skills headings at the top of your CV. The names, dates and locations of your work experience are listed towards the bottom of your CV.
- b With this approach your work experience is listed in chronological order, starting with your most recent job. Your main achievements and skills are tied to a specified job, at a specified time, in a specified place.

**c** When you give information about past work experience and achievements in a CV, use verbs in the past simple without a personal pronoun: *Chaired weekly meetings* (not *I-chaired weekly team meetings*). Look at the following table of action verbs commonly associated with professional experience. Select five verbs and write sentences suitable for your CV that are true for you.

achieved	compiled	edited	improved	operated	researched
anticipated	consulted	established	increased	organised	resolved
approved	convinced	evaluated	interpreted	persuaded	scheduled
arranged	coordinated	examined	investigated	planned	supervised
budgeted	created	facilitated	led	presented	taught
calculated	delegated	formulated	listened	recommended	trained
chaired	demonstrated	identified	motivated	repaired	translated
clarified	designed	implemented	negotiated	represented	wrote
collaborated	developed				

**d** In pairs, tell each other about your professional experience using the verbs in Exercise 6c.

**e** Look at Silvia's chronological CV on page 20. Which verbs in Exercise 6c did she use? Which other verbs did she use?

**f** Rewrite the following sentences using the verbs in brackets. Leave out any information that is implied by the verb itself or is simply irrelevant.

- 1 There were five employees in my team. I was their boss and it was my job to keep an eye on them and help them when they needed my support. (managed)  
Managed a team of five employees.
- 2 I enrolled on and successfully finished a financial management course in order to improve my knowledge in this area. (completed)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 When I arrived, the company website was only in Polish. As well as Polish, my mother tongue, I also speak English, German and French, and so I decided to write the website information in English, German and French. (translated)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4 The company's database system had a problem, which I found. Afterwards I talked to my boss about a different way of doing things, which would solve the problem. (identified/recommended)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5 While I was working at the hotel I noticed that there were some ways in which the customer feedback system wasn't working effectively. Therefore I developed a new system and put this in place. A result of this was that customer satisfaction levels increased by 20%. (designed/implemented)  
\_\_\_\_\_

**g** Rewrite the following sentences using the verbs in Exercise 6c so that they are more concise and impressive.

- 1 I made recommendations regarding the most effective allocation of resources.  
Identified most effective allocation of resources.
- 2 I was the front-office staff representative on the implementation team for our new ICT strategy.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 I was responsible for coming up with the training plan.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4 I looked after the budget for running the office.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5 I looked for new suppliers. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 I gave a presentation of our client feedback questionnaire.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 7 I looked into ways to reduce waste. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 I was in charge of the design team. \_\_\_\_\_

**h** ▶2.3 Listen to a discussion between Klaudia, who is looking for her second serious job, and Tom, who has just proofread her CV, and answer the following questions.

- 1 What are Klaudia's responsibilities as a secretary?
- 2 What skills does Tom relate to these responsibilities?
- 3 What other jobs has Klaudia done?
- 4 What skills does Tom relate to these jobs?

**i** Write the work experience section of Klaudia's CV. Then compare your answer with the suggestion in the answer key.

**j** Think of a job you would like to apply for and write the work experience section of your CV. Use words and phrases from this section to help you. Demonstrate only the skills and experience required for the position.

## Detailing your education and qualifications

If your education and qualifications are your strongest selling point, then you'll want to put this information close to the top of your CV. This is especially true if you are a recent graduate, obtained excellent academic results or have gained a professional qualification which is a prerequisite for the job you're applying for.

**7 a** In pairs, discuss the following questions.

- 1 Where should you put the education section of your CV?
- 2 What qualifications should you include?

**b** Read the article about how to write about your education in your CV and answer the following questions.

- 1 Why should recent graduates put the education section near the top of their CV?
- 2 What term does the author use to mean *just the main pieces of information, nothing more*?
- 3 Under what two circumstances would you include your A-level results in a CV?
- 4 What qualifications should you mention first?
- 5 What should you do if you're searching for employment in the IT field?

# Education Education Education

■ Should your education be proudly at the top of the CV or among the optional sections at the end? It all depends on who you are and what job you are trying to get. If you have just left school, college or university, your education experience is going to be more immediately relevant and should therefore be prominently displayed early on. Your potential employer may be keen to hire recent graduates and will wish to see exactly what your educational attainments are. This means you can give plenty of detail of curricula, theses and grades. However, if you have been in the world of work for 20 years, your education is of little interest to an employer and should go in skeletal form near the bottom of the CV. What you have achieved since leaving full-time education is

obviously more indicative of your value.

Another thing to bear in mind is that higher qualifications imply lower ones. If you have only got GCSEs, fine. If, however, you have a bachelor's degree, it is unnecessary to mention your GCSEs, or even your A-levels, unless they are spectacularly good. A recruiter will simply assume they were taken at the usual time and is unlikely to be interested in how many there were and what grades they were. The same applies to a Master's degree or PhD. The higher qualification makes the mention of any lower ones redundant.

If you feel you need to mention more in the way of academic attainment, for example as a recent graduate or as someone with professional

qualifications or other postgraduate training, the section should be organised in reverse chronological order, like your work experience section.

Finally, the education section can be the place to mention the all-important computer skills that continue to dominate working life. Different jobs and professions will require you to have an understanding of different computer packages, and if you have good working knowledge of these it is worth mentioning that you know they exist, or have been trained to use them. If you are applying for a job more closely related to IT, your technical proficiencies should have a relevant section of their own (entitled 'computer efficiency' or 'computer skills' or 'technical expertise') much higher up the priority list.

**c** What five types of qualification are mentioned in the text? Put them in order from highest to lowest.

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_

**d** In pairs, discuss the following questions.

- 1 What are the equivalent qualifications from Exercise 7c in your own country?
- 2 Would the advice in the text be relevant if you were applying for a job in your own country?
- 3 At the moment in the UK most university students study for three years (four years in Scotland) to gain a bachelor's degree. Some students then decide to continue at university for one or two years to do postgraduate studies and gain a Master's degree. How does the higher education system in your country compare to this system?

**e** In pairs, tell each other about your qualifications. Compare them to the qualifications in Exercise 7c using the phrases in the box.

something like    which is equivalent to

*I have a Physics degree from Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich, which is equivalent to a BSc in Physics in the UK.*

*I have a licentiate degree from teacher training college. It was a three-year course, so something like a BEd in the UK. I got my Master's a few years ago.*

M

**f** Look at the extract from the education section of a CV. In pairs, discuss the following questions.

- 1 Why has the writer given additional information about their qualifications (in brackets)?
- 2 Will you need to explain any of your qualifications? How?
- 3 What other details has the writer included in this section?
- 4 What else could you include in the education section of your CV?

**University of Ulster**

- BSc Hons (2.1) European Regional Development (human geography and macro economics)
- 3-month work placement: Economic Researcher, Northern Ireland Civil Service, Belfast
- Exchange year: Diploma in Area Studies, University of Zaragoza, Spain (economic geography and Spanish)
- Dissertation: The role of EU funds on regional development in Aragon, Spain

**g** Think of a job you would like to apply for and write the education section of your CV. Use examples from this unit to help you.

**h** Look at Silvia's skills-based CV on page 21. Apart from the list of dates and places she has studied, identify five sentences which mention her education and qualifications.

**i** Rewrite some or all of her sentences so they are true for you.

## **Demonstrating your interests**

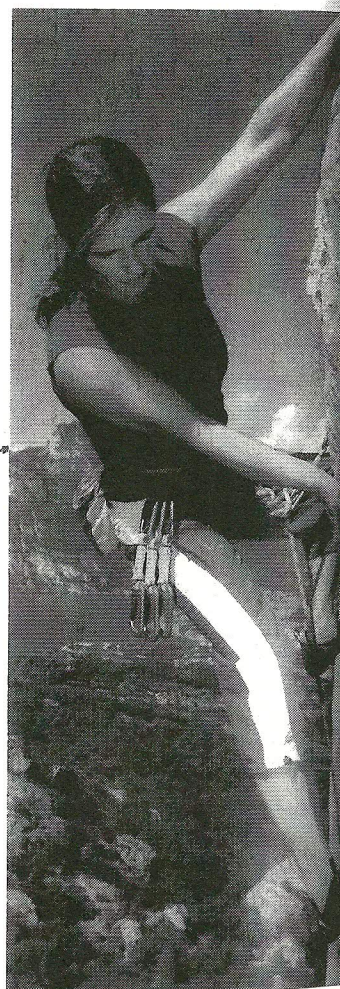
The things you like doing in your free time say a lot about you as a person, and your personality is relevant to every job application.

**8 a** In pairs, discuss the following questions.

- 1 If you have produced a CV before, what did you put in the personal interests section?
- 2 Why do employers want to know about your interests?

**b** ▶24 Listen to two recruitment experts, Grace and Oliver, discussing personal interests and answer the following questions.

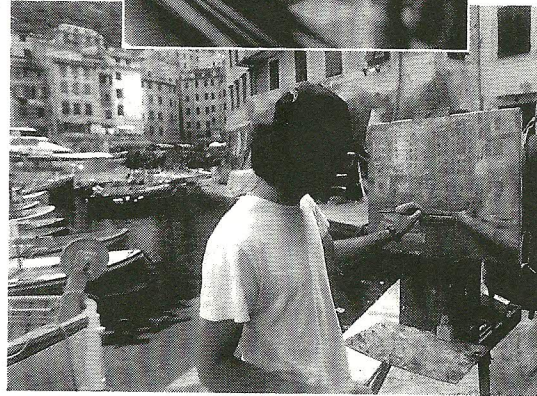
- 1 What does the V in CV stand for? Why is this relevant to your interests?
- 2 What did Oliver think was wrong with putting 'captain of the football team'?
- 3 Why is it a good idea to list a broad spectrum of interests?
- 4 What personal interests does Grace usually put in her CV?
- 5 What new achievement is Grace hoping to add?



**c** Match the skills and personal characteristics in the box to the interests (1–5).

analytical skills   creativity   determination   intelligence  
intercultural awareness   interpersonal skills   language skills  
leadership skills   resourcefulness   self-motivation

- 1 Team sports (football, volleyball, etc.)  
interpersonal skills
- 2 Individual competitive sports (cycling, climbing, etc.)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Travelling (backpacking, expeditions, etc.)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Mind sports/activities (chess, sudoku, etc.)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5 Artistic interests (painting, photography, etc.)  
\_\_\_\_\_



**d** Add some more interests to the list and identify the skills and personal characteristics they suggest. Think about what your own interests say about you.

**e** It can be more effective to present your interests in terms of who you are, instead of what you like doing, using adjectives and nouns to describe yourself. In pairs, try and add more words and phrases to each column in the following table.

**Adjectives**

active   former  
avid   keen  
committed   proficient  
dedicated   qualified  
experienced   regular  
expert   successful

**Nouns**

ballroom dancer   rock guitarist  
blogger   sailor  
jewellery maker   ski instructor  
mountain climber   stamp collector  
Portuguese speaker   tennis champion  
reader   volunteer

**f** Match the adjectives with the nouns in Exercise 8e to make true phrases for you.

*avid reader   regular blogger*

**g** Write the interests section of a CV for the following topics. Use adjective and noun combinations, the phrases in the box and your own ideas.

Active member of   Currently attending   Excellent working knowledge of  
Particularly interested in   Recently completed   Responsibilities included

- 1 **Reading** Avid reader: Economist subscription. Particularly interested in reading about recent developments in science and technology.
- 2 **Walking** \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 **Photography** \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 **University Social Coordinator** \_\_\_\_\_

**h** Write sentences about your own interests. Be as specific as possible and highlight the skills you need to achieve the things you enjoy doing.

- i** In pairs, take turns to talk about your personal interests. Start with the question, 'So what do you like doing in your free time?' Encourage your partner to highlight the skills that their personal interests demonstrate.
- j** Think of a specific job you want to apply for and write the interests section of your CV. Highlight the skills that are relevant for the job.

## Providing references

References provide further evidence to potential future employers that you are who you say you are, and that you have done what you claim to have done for previous employers. It is highly likely that your referees will be contacted if you are shortlisted, so it is essential to select them carefully.

### 9 a In pairs, discuss the following questions.

- 1 Why are references important?
- 2 How many referees do you need, and who should you choose?
- 3 When is a referee no longer useful?
- 4 What happens if you don't get on with the most obvious choices for your referees?
- 5 Is it OK to use someone you know well who works for the organisation where you are applying for a job?
- 6 Do you have to give your current employer?
- 7 How can you find out what a reference says about you?

### b Match the questions (1–7) in Exercise 9a to the following expert advice (a–g). Do you agree with the advice?

- a Usually two – an academic one and either an employer or a personal/character referee. They should be of professional standing so that they can comment on your suitability for the job. Do not use a relative; a family friend is OK. Always ask permission before using someone as a reference. Provide them with a copy of your CV and an indication of the jobs you are applying for. Let them know how you got on, and thank them afterwards. 2
- b Yes, but they may feel uncomfortable, so be sensitive. They are putting their reputation on the line. \_\_\_\_
- c You can't easily – that's the point of a confidential reference. If you suspect a poor reference is causing you problems, try changing your referee. \_\_\_\_
- d It is normal to ask for your current employer not to be contacted yet. Offer another referee. Ask to be alerted before your employer is contacted. \_\_\_\_
- e When they don't remember who you are or become uncontactable. \_\_\_\_
- f Choose another who will represent you in the best light. \_\_\_\_
- g References provide confidential information about your character, skills and experience. A positive recommendation will greatly support your application. \_\_\_\_

### c In pairs, discuss the following statements. Do you agree with them?

- 1 It is better to choose professional or academic referees than personal friends.
- 2 As long as your references back up the facts on your CV, then you don't need to worry.
- 3 You don't need to provide the names and contact details of your referees in your CV.

**d ▶ 25** The opinions in Exercise 9c are expressed by the recruitment consultants, Grace and Oliver, in a discussion about providing references. Listen to the conversation and answer the following questions.

- 1 Who expressed which opinion (1–3)? Write O (Oliver), G (Grace) or B (Both).
- 2 What reasons did they give in support of their opinions?
- 3 What phrase does Oliver use to say you can provide references if they are needed?

**e** Think of a specific job you would like to apply for and, using the models presented in this unit, write your CV. Remember to highlight only your skills and experience that are relevant for a job.

**f** In pairs, evaluate each other's CVs. Think about the following questions.

- Is the English natural and accurate?
- Does everything make sense? Do you get a good idea of your partner's life by reading their CV?
- Is the language impressive and persuasive? If not, how can you improve it?
- Is the layout attractive and logical? If not, how can you improve it?
- Does your partner's CV demonstrate a wide range of transferable skills? If not, where could you add more proof?
- Does your partner's CV demonstrate that your partner is suitable for the job they want? If not, why not?
- Is the CV too long? If so, which words/sentences/sections would you delete or edit?

When you are happy with the feedback you have received, rewrite your CV. Repeat the process until your CV is perfect.

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