

# Writing your Curriculum Vitae

Mr Walker

# Agenda

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- What makes a good CV? Presentation?
- What makes a good CV? Content?
- What to avoid

# What makes a good CV? Presentation

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- Concise – two sides of A4 at most
- Professional font, adequate spacing and clear headings
- Logical layout with experience and education in reverse chronological order
- Correct grammar and spelling
- (Targeted to the role)

# What makes a good CV? Content

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- Personal details
- Summary Statement
- Work experience
- Achievements
- Education
- Skills, hobbies and interests
- (References)

# Personal details

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- Your name, email, phone number and address
- Clearly presented at the top of your CV.
- ‘Curriculum Vitae’ is an unnecessary title – your name is not!

# Summary statement

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- Often the first part of your CV, a summary statement is an essential part of attracting the attention of the reader
- Explains who you are, the skills and experiences you can offer and what you are seeking.
- The aim is to prove why you are a credible candidate in a short, focused paragraph.

# Work experience

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- This section should include all of your relevant work experience, listed with the most recent first.
- Include your job title, the name of the organisation, time in post, and your key responsibilities

# Achievements

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- Show how your experience has given you the skills needed to make you a suitable candidate.
- List your relevant skills and achievements (with examples), and make clear how you might apply these to the new role.
- Always use “I” not “we”



# Education

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- Your educational experience and achievements should be listed here, along with dates, the type of qualification and the grade you achieved.
- If you have more educational achievements than work experience then placing the emphasis on this section is clearly beneficial.

# Skills, hobbies and interests

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- Mentioning relevant skills can emphasise your abilities and help differentiate you.
- Be prepared to talk about your skills at an interview.
- Beware - if something doesn't add value then leave it out.

# What to avoid

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- Most roles are oversubscribed and employers look for ways to reduce the number of CVs they need to read
- So avoid
  - poor grammar,
  - spelling mistakes,
  - irrelevant waffle, or
  - negative comments
- Of course you can be positive but you must be honest
  - Remember you will be asked about your CV

# Appendices

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# What makes a good CV?

**Mandy Good**

23 Black Dragon Lane, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 2DE

Mobile: 0778 123456

[mg999@kent.ac.uk](mailto:mg999@kent.ac.uk)

## Personal Statement

A Business Administration graduate from the University of Kent. I have skills and knowledge essential for managing key areas of an organisation and the problem solving skills needed in finance. I am looking for a graduate trainee post in marketing where I can use my strong influencing skills.

## EDUCATION

### 2004 - 2007 University of Kent

#### BA (Hons) Business Administration 2:1

Modules included:

- Human Resource Management
- Marketing
- Strategic Management
- Accounting and Finance
- E-commerce
- Business Mathematics

#### Completed two dissertations in final year:

developed a marketing communications report and presentation on a new travel agency for the elderly and developed a fully working website for an estate agency. Both projects received good results and gave tremendous experience in project management.

### St. Mungos School, Bedford

#### A Levels 2004

History A  
Geography B  
Psychology B

#### GCSEs 2002

8 GCSE passes including English grade A and Mathematics grade B

The **name** is in a large font size to stand out.

The **address** is in a neat, space-saving format.

Make sure you include your **email address** as it's often the most convenient way for recruiters to contact you. Also include your **mobile number**. **Date of birth** is no longer essential due to age discrimination legislation, but you can add it if you wish to.

If you use a **personal statement** it needs to be short, punchy and targeted at the skills required for the job you are applying for. If you are not sure, leave it out and use your covering letter to sell your skills.

See our pages on [Covering Letters](#).

And our page on [Personal Statements](#)

Here key **modules** relevant to the candidate's career are mentioned as are relevant **projects/dissertations** which demonstrate research, planning and possibly group work skills. Note that the modules are neatly ordered in **two columns**. This saves space, suggests a well organised person and also hints at good computing skills to achieve this layout.

This CV is in **reverse chronological order** where the most recent (and usually most important) comes first. See our [other CV examples](#) for **skills-based** and **creative CVs**

Here **A Levels** are spread out to draw attention to the good grades.

**GCSEs** are summarised. However if you have a string of A grades it's probably best to list all of these in two columns.

**Spelling and grammar** on the CV have been checked carefully, giving the impression not just of someone whose

# What makes a good CV?

## WORK EXPERIENCE

**June - Sept. 2006 Iceland Stores Margate, Kent  
Store Assistant**

Worked in a busy team sometimes under pressure. Provided a quality service to customers

**2004 - 2005 Barmaid, The Plough Pub (Part-time)**

Was often left in sole charge of the bar and learned the valuable art of dealing sensitively but firmly with drunken individuals near closing time.

All of my work experiences have involved working within a team-based culture. This involved planning, organisation, co-ordination and commitment e.g., in retail, this ensured daily sales targets were met, a fair distribution of tasks and effective communication amongst all staff members.

## INTERESTS

**Leadership.** Project Leader for our Third Year MIS project, where my planning and organisational skills came to the fore, Have found "active-listening" a very useful skill when working in a group.

**Sport.** I believe a healthy body is the key to a focused mind in today's hectic society. Enjoy a range of martial arts which require a high level of dedication and motivation.

**Living Life.** We only get one shot at this life so I aim to get the most out of it. I love the thrills of gliding, skiing and caving as well as travelling to different countries. Have recently returned from a trek across the deserts of Peru.

## SKILLS

- **Computing.** ECDL qualifications in MS Word, Access, PowerPoint and Excel. Can write basic web pages
- **Languages.** Good conversational French
- **Driving.** Full current clean driving licence

References are available on request

Here the focus is on **people skills** developed in the job. See our [skills pages](#) for help with how to do this.

Many students question the need to mention menial jobs such as waitressing in the CV, but it is important to do so. This nicely worded paragraph shows how effectively the skills gained in these jobs can be sold.

**Interests** are divided into groups, and flags up a key skill by starting with leadership. Again sports are not just listed, but the key qualities are brought out. "Living Life" is a rather unusual heading but this section is written with panache and suggests an outgoing, active individual.

Here **skills** are listed using **simple but effective bullets** which give order and clarity to the page. **Computing skills** are carefully detailed, as is the precise level of French language skills.

You shouldn't need to include your **references** at this stage (although it is perfectly OK to do this). References are normally taken up at the interview stage. The exception of course is when the advert for the job explicitly asked you to apply giving references.

# What makes a poor CV?

**Curriculum Viti**  
Mandy Poor

Address  
23 Black Dragon Lane  
Canterbury  
Kent  
CT1 2DE

Nationality: British

Personnel Statement  
I have good teamworking and comunication skills.  
I would like job in business.

EDUCATION  
St. Mungos School, Bedford  
GCSEs 2002  
I have 8 GCSE passes including English grade A and  
Mathematics grade B

A Levels 2004  
History A, Geography B, Psychology B

2004 - 2007 University of Kent  
BA (Hons) Business Studies  
2:1

Work Experience  
June 2006-Sept 2006 Iceland Frozen Foods

[boozyfloozy@hotmail.com](mailto:boozyfloozy@hotmail.com)

You don't need the words **Curriculum Vitae** at the top. It's obvious what the document is and just adds clutter to the CV. If you do put it in, at least spell it correctly!

Make sure you include your **email address** as it's often the most convenient way for recruiters to contact you. Also try to have something sensible: *boozyfloozy* might not make the best impression!

You don't need an **"Address"** title above your address. It's pretty obvious what it is! If however you have a home and term time address you will need headings to specify which is which. You also don't need to give your **nationality** if you are British. Other unnecessary items include **National Insurance Number** and **place of birth** unless specifically asked for these.

It should be **Personal Statement** not **Personnel!** Personal statements mentioning teamworking and communication (not **comunication** of course) skills send selectors to sleep. A very vague career aim. See the [skills map](#) for more powerful and specific words.

This CV is in **chronological order**. (with schools before university). Normally **reverse chronological order** is best as then the most recent (and usually most important) comes first.

Here **A Levels** are pushed together which hides the good grades. Comic Sans MS is a nice font for letters, but a little too informal for most CVs

No mention of relevant modules here. As this is a vocational degree, you should **include modules** relevant to the careers you are interested in e.g. Finance, Marketing. Also there is **no mention of projects** which demonstrate a range of skills. There is no space between degree and A levels and no emboldening of the degree title.

The candidate **has split her work at Iceland over two pages**: this looks very disjointed and suggests a poorly organised individual.

# What makes a poor CV?

21 Station Road, Margate, Kent  
Store Assistant  
Involved stocking shelves and operating the tills

2003 - 2004 Bar person, The Plough Inn

## INTERESTS

I enjoy all types of fitness, and do martial arts, and skiing I have a high level of fitness. I also enjoy train spotting, reading and playing computer games.

## SKILLS

- COMMUTING
- \* LANGUAGES. I SPEAK FRENCH
- \* SWIMMING. I HAVE A BRONZE CERTIFICATE

References available on request

*There is a large empty space at the end of the page giving the impression that the applicant has run out of things to say. It's best to try to use one full sheet or two full sheets: spread the content out if necessary.*

Only the menial parts of the job are mentioned. **Focus on the people skills** instead: "Working in a busy team sometimes under pressure. Providing a quality service to customers" would sell the job related skills involved much better. You don't need to give full addresses of employers, just the town. For the second job, even less detail is given. See our [action verbs page](#) to sharpen your CV text.

No evidence of **contact with other people** here. This candidate comes across as a loner who doesn't get on with other people. Also sections like this are easier to read if in **bulleted lists**. This section is also **misaligned** with the rest of the page. Note also the **change in font**. This looks messy. Try to be consistent in font styles. It's OK to use one different font for headings and subheadings.

**Bullets are used in the skills section**, but they are inconsistent: a mixture of dashes and asterisks. Dashes make poor bullets. Also this section is entirely in CAPITAL LETTERS which should only be used for headings. Also no details of **computing** (which they have mistyped as **commuting** which would get through a **spell checker**) **skills** are given. Can they use Access or Excel for example? You need to carefully read the CV for such mistakes. And what is their level of **French**: basic or fluent? Should **swimming** be in this section unless they are applying for jobs where it may be required?

You shouldn't need to include your **references** at this stage (although it is perfectly OK to do this). References are normally taken up at the interview stage. The exception of course is when the advert for the job explicitly asked you to apply giving references.