

Lesson 2: Business English Writing «Writing a CV»

What is a CV?

CV is short for Curriculum Vitae. It is a written demonstration of a person's work history and experience. It is commonly used to indicate whether or not they are a match for the job which they are applying.

So, when you're looking for work or applying for a new job, you will always need to submit a CV. You need an attractive, clear and memorable CV that shows your potential employer all the skills and experience you have for the job.

What should you include in a CV?

1/ Contact details:

Make sure the potential employer has a way of contacting you. Include your full name, telephone number and email address.

What about Photo? In many countries, employers expect to see a professional-looking photo on a CV. In others, like the UK, Canada and the USA, the law prohibits employers from asking for a photo, and it is better not to include one. Try to find out if it is usual to include a photo in the working environment you're applying to.

2/Education:

List and date the most important qualifications you have obtained, starting with the most recent. You can also include any professional qualifications you have.

3/Work experience:

List and date the jobs you've had and the companies you've worked for, starting with the most recent. It's usually enough to cover the last ten years of your work history. Include your job title, responsibilities and achievements in the job. If you have a lot of work experience, give the job titles but be selective about which responsibilities and achievements you highlight. Reduce the detail about jobs that are less relevant to the role you're applying for and draw attention to the most important experience you bring.

4/Skills:

These could include the languages you speak, the computer programs you can use well, the class type of your driving licence and any other professional skills you might have that are relevant to the job you're applying for.

Tips for writing a CV:

- 1. Keep it short:** but not too short! Your CV should be one to two sides of A4 paper. If you find you've got too much information, summarise and select the most relevant points. If it's shorter than a page, consider including more information about your skills and the responsibilities you had in your previous roles.
- 2. Use active verbs:** When you describe what you have achieved in previous jobs, use active verbs for a strong positive effect on the reader. For example, to make a change from was responsible for, use verbs like led or managed (a team / a project); created or developed (a product / a positive atmosphere); delivered (results/training); and provided (support/training).
- 3. Fill in the gaps:** Avoid leaving gaps in your employment history. If you were travelling the world, on maternity leave or looking after small children, include that in your CV.
- 4. Make sure it's up to date:** Always ensure your CV is up to date. Include your most recent experience at the top of each section.
- 5. Don't exaggerate or lie:** Your potential employer can easily check information about where you have studied and worked. Don't be tempted to lie or exaggerate about your expertise, because sooner or later this will be discovered and may result in you losing the job.
- 6. Spend time on the layout:** Make sure your CV is clear and easy to read. Use bullet points and appropriate spacing, keep your sentences short, line up your lists neatly and use a professional-looking font (e.g. Arial font size 12).
- 7. Check for mistakes:** Mistakes on a CV create a bad impression. Use spell check, reread your CV and ask someone else to check it for you too before you send it.
- 8. Include a cover letter:** When you send your CV to apply for a job, you should send it with a cover letter or email to introduce your application. The cover letter should show your personal interest in the role, highlight the skills and experience you bring and encourage the employer to read the attached CV. Writing a good CV takes time and is hard work, but these tips and your effort will help you get the best possible start in your job search. Good luck!

Practice:

Home Work: Write your own CV

This home work is meant to be submitted in a written form

