

Damascus University
Faculty of Arts and Humanities
Department of English
Third Year / Second Semester

Module: Writing for the Workplace

Third Lecture

How to write your first CV

Hello everyone..

The term 'CV' comes from the Latin words 'curriculum vitae', which means 'a short account of a person's education and work history'. It is sometimes called a résumé, although in the United States a CV is considered more detailed than a résumé.

Writing a CV is the first step in searching for a job and then if you are given an interview, you can expand on what is in your CV. The CV is an important document which shows your experience, qualifications and skills. Since it is often an important first step in getting a job, it needs to be carefully written and updated each time you apply for a new job.

Always include a cover letter with a CV (we will talk about cover letters next week). Think about the CV and cover letter from the employer's point of view. After reading your cover letter and CV, would the employer want to employ you above all other applicants? Remember the person reading your CV may have only an hour or two to look through hundreds of CVs to make a decision who to choose for interviews.

Your CV creates the first impression. Presentation is key. Your CV must be readable and coherent, and the information must be easy to find. A good CV will get you the interview; a good interview will get you the job.

Before you write your CV

Spend time researching the job for which you are applying. Read the company's publicity, reports and publications. Find out possible information from the Internet, the newspaper, the social media, or even talk to people who know the company. Tailor your CV to suit the job application.

Parts of a CV

1. General information

At the start of your CV, you need:

- Name
- Address
- Telephone number
- E-mail address

2. Profile (optional)

Here you can briefly introduce yourself. Write about your main strengths or qualities. Make sure you do not oversell yourself – that is, be honest. You can also mention your career goals and aspirations here.

3. Education

Write the places of education where you have studied –most recent education first. Include subject options taken in each year of your course. Include any special projects or extracurricular activities in which you had a central role.

4. Work experience

List your most recent experience first. This is called reverse chronological order. You only need to include the year you started and the year you finished each job. Give the name of your employer, the job title, and what you actually did and achieved in that job.

Part-time work should be included, especially if you do not have much full-time work experience.

5. Skills

Ability in other languages, computing experience, or possession of a driving license should be included.

6. Interests

Keep this short, but since teamwork is important in a workplace, show activities where you have demonstrated leadership or responsibility, or which involved you in relating to others in a team.

If you have been involved in any type of volunteer work, give details.

7. References/Referees

Usually give two names – one from your place of study, and one from any work/volunteer situation. Speak to referees and make sure that they are willing to give you a reference. Give their phone numbers if possible.

You do not have to list your referees, but you should have confirmed them in case they are required.

After writing the CV

Check it carefully for errors. Ask someone else to check it for you and offer suggestions.

Keep copies of all letters, application forms and CVs sent as well as records of telephone calls and names of those people you spoke to, in case you are invited to an interview.

Points you should keep in mind when writing a CV

There is not just one way to write a CV. The following are given only as suggestions.

- Your CV must be typed on the computer and be easy to read.

- Use good quality plain white A4 paper and leave white space to make it look attractive.
- Keep it short and simple – just include the necessary items and expand at the interview. One or two A4 pages should be enough.
- You do not need to put your age, gender or nationality on a CV.
- Unless it is asked for, do not include a photograph.
- Use page numbers if your CV is more than one page. You may use a header or footer, in case one page gets separated from the other.

Example of a CV

Joey Cheung Ka Man
Flat 4G Block 17
Wong Wing Mansions
Shatin NT
Hong Kong
Tel: (852) 2323 2323
joeycheung@hatmail.com

Profile

An English student who is keen to find a position as a part-time assistant kindergarten teacher. Reliable, trustworthy and loves children. Worked at a kindergarten last summer in Yunnan as a volunteer and gained a good understanding of what is required of an English kindergarten teacher. Able to work on own initiative or as part of a team.

Education

2002-2009 Yeung Kwong Secondary School
HKALE: English Language [B], Chinese [D], Geography [D], Art [C], Chinese History [D]

Experience

- Summer 2008 Voluntary Assistant Teacher, Kunming Happy Kindergarten No. 1, Kunming
- Summer holiday job working at a privately-owned kindergarten
 - Ran classes with the local English teacher about using Art to teach English
- Summer 2007 Camp instructor, Talk Easily Kindergarten, Sai Kung
- Summer holiday paid full-time job
 - In charge of group for English 'Fun Activities Week'
 - Coordinated team of 5 volunteer assistants conducting English learning activities

Skills

Computer: IBM Compatible PCs running Microsoft Office Windows 2007
Language: Spoken and written English (IELTS overall 6.5), Cantonese (native speaker), Putonghua (intermediate)
Other: Head Prefect S6 (leadership skills)

Interests

Organised a charity English quiz in 2007 with Form 6 and 7 students at Yeung Kwong Secondary School, which raised \$10,000 for the Chinese Red Cross, to be used for extra teaching staff to be employed in kindergartens in rural areas of China.

Red Cross (volunteer tutor), swimming, art, badminton

Referees

Dr Michael Chan Kwok Min, Principal, Yeung Kwong Secondary School, 1 Tin St, Shatin, Hong Kong
E-mail: drmikechan@hatmail.com
Tel: (852) 2678 4512 (work)

Ms Eva Chong, Principal, Kunming Happy Kindergarten No. 1, 2 Huang St, Kunming, Yunnan, China
E-mail: evachong@hatmail.com
Tel: (86 871) 808 1111 (work); (86 871) 808 2222 (home)

Web sites

There are many web sites giving tips on 'how to write a CV'. Check out some of the sites. There are plenty of CV examples to look at. For example, go to google.com, click on 'Images' and search for 'CV' or 'résumé' to see lots of sample CVs. Your homework for next time is to choose an example you like. Why do you like it? Do you like the layout, the content? Use this good example as a template for your CV. BUT, remember to tailor your CV to suit you, the position and the company you are applying to.

Thank you!