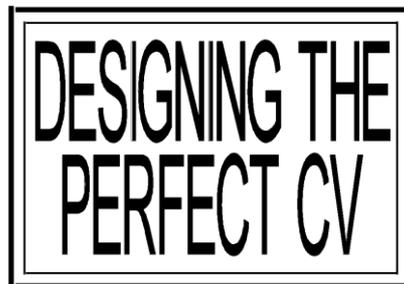


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By Harry Jivenmukta

WHAT IS A CV?

1

CV means Curriculum Vitae which translated from Latin means **'life history'**. The term CV is very outdated but seems to remain popular. There is never any doubt about what you mean when you say CV. Some people like to rename their CV to Personal Information Chart or a similar name. It is up to you what you call it.

The CV is the main **'selling'** document which the job seeker uses in addition to or instead of the application form. The only aim of the CV is to **'sell'** you to a prospective employer. When the employer reads your CV, he or she will be reading about your education, work history, and assessing whether it is in his or her interest to invite you to interview. **REMEMBER THAT WHAT IS CONTAINED IN YOUR CV IS THE ONLY THING THAT THE EMPLOYER KNOWS ABOUT YOU.** If you forget to mention any points or decide to exclude some educational, work, or training experience which you have, then as far as the employer is concerned you never had that experience.

If the employer asks you to apply by enclosing a current CV, in effect that is the document which represents you in the application process. Of the fifty or 100 CVs which the employer receives he or she will give each CV an initial consideration of at most a few minutes. The ones which stand out will be put in a pile for further detailed consideration. The rest will be filed for up to three months then destroyed. It is important that your CV stands out enough to attract the employer to want to give it more attention in the **'Yes'** pile.

Presentation is crucial. Your CV should be written in black ink or typed. A typed CV is by far a more professional looking document. Try to get it typed or word processed if you can. It is best to prepare it on a word processor because you can then get it printed on a high quality printer for an even better result. Print onto A4 sized paper. **THERE SHOULD BE NO SPELLING MISTAKES.** The employer's attitude is that if you cannot be bothered to check your spellings then that indicates a lazy attitude. More than two spelling mistakes will probably find your CV heading for the bin. Be short and precise. Long winded sentences are not as good as a series of short '**to the point**' sentences. Short sentences are also easier to read and easier to register in the brain.

Before you start designing your CV, you must collect the facts. Make a list of all your part and full time work experience and all education and training courses attended. Include any 'on the job' training. Remember that training includes any activities which you can do that cannot be done by anyone who has not received instruction. Include work experience sessions attended whilst at school/college, if relevant.

Let's look at what a CV should include. Your personal details should be presented first. Next you should indicate your educational qualifications. Some people also include training courses in this section. Then you should outline your employment record, (if relevant). The section after that should include specialist skills and knowledge, e.g. languages and leisure interests and hobbies if they can be related to work. Include a separate leisure and hobbies section if they are not at all work related. Be short and precise in this section. Finally, include the names and addresses of two referees who can comment on your abilities and personal attributes. One of these referees should be your present or last employer, or a tutor from your college if you have not yet entered employment.

Before you begin to write your CV it is important to carefully list all the skills and qualifications which you possess. The exercises on the following pages may seem repetitive but they are important for two main reasons. Firstly, if you are logical in your skills assessment you are likely to remember more details of the skills which you have. Secondly, you can also use the sheets to add information as you acquire new skills or as you begin to make more use of the skills which you already have. In the long run this will save you time and effort because all the information will be recorded, up to date, and at hand whenever you require it.

The exercises on the following pages should first be photocopied and completed as rough copies. By the time you complete the exercises for the first time you may well have thought of other information which you could have added. The second attempt will be more comprehensive and could form the basis of your long term copy.

Once you are happy that you have completed the exercises fully, you should keep them for future reference. They will help you when you fill in application forms as well as help you to update your CV.

It is very important to regularly update your CV. If you are between college and work, or if your life is in state where there are many changes occurring, then you need to constantly update your CV to include any positive changes and/or achievements.

Each section of the exercises is asking you to use the same processes. Firstly, think about your achievements. Secondly, write these achievements down starting with the most recent first. Thirdly, add to the list any achievements which you forgot to write down the first time.

It may take you several attempts before you complete these exercises fully. After your first attempt you should leave the exercises for a few days. When you return to them you may well remember things which you did not remember initially. **COMPILING A CV IS AN ONGOING PROCESS, AN EXERCISE WHICH IS NEVER FINISHED.**

SKILLS ASSESSMENT

3

MY EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

A LIST OF SCHOOLS ATTENDED SINCE THE AGE OF 11 **DATES** **SUBJECTS STUDIED** **GRADES ACHIEVED**

COLLEGE ATTENDED (IF RELEVANT) **DATES** **SUBJECTS STUDIED** **GRADES ACHIEVED**

NON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS AT SCHOOL /COLLEGE
(SPORTS, INTEREST GROUPS, ETC.)

SKILLS ASSESSMENT

5

EMPLOYMENT

ACTUAL EMPLOYMENT PART/FULL TIME, HOLIDAY JOBS ETC.

| NAME OF EMPLOYER | FROM | TO | DUTIES |
|------------------|------|----|--------|
|------------------|------|----|--------|

(Most recent first)

EMPLOYMENT INTERESTED IN BUT NOT ACTUALLY UNDERTAKEN

| TYPE OF WORK | SKILLS/QUALIFICATIONS REQ'D | SKILLS I ALREADY HAVE |
|--------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
|--------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|

LONG TERM EMPLOYMENT HOPES

| TYPE OF WORK I WANT | SKILLS REQUIRED | HOW WILL I OBTAIN THE SKILLS? |
|---------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
|---------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|

SKILLS ASSESSMENT

6

LEISURE AND HOBBIES

MY TOP FIVE INTERESTS

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

SKILLS USED IN/GAINED FROM, THESE INTERESTS WHICH MIGHT BE USEFUL IN EMPLOYMENT.

| SKILLS WHICH I HAVE | I COULD USE THE SKILLS IN THESE JOBS |
|----------------------|---|
| E.G. COMPUTER SKILLS | OFFICE WORK, CLERICAL, PROGRAMMER (MAKE A FULL LIST) |

EXAMPLES

When completing the skills assessment exercises you must be very thorough and detailed. Consider the examples below.

A POOR EXAMPLE EMPLOYMENT

| NAME OF EMPLOYER | FROM | TO | DUTIES |
|-------------------------|-------------|-----------|------------------------------------|
| FAST FOOD CO. | JULY 1997 | AUG. 1997 | WORKING IN A FAST FOOD TAKEAWAY |

A GOOD EXAMPLE EMPLOYMENT

| NAME OF EMPLOYER | FROM | TO | DUTIES |
|-------------------------|-------------|-----------|---|
| FAST FOOD CO. | JULY 1997 | AUG. 1997 | WORKING IN A FAST FOOD TAKEAWAY DEALING WITH THE PUBLIC, CASH TILL WORK, PREPARING FOOD, SERVING FOOD, CLEANING, KEEPING RECORDS. |

As you can see there is a great deal of difference between the two examples. You should be at least as thorough as the 'good example'. By listing all of the duties of the jobs, you will find that when you apply for new jobs it will be easier to relate the relevant skills you already have.

YOUR SKILLS

THE SKILLS WHICH YOU HAVE CAN BE CATEGORISED INTO FOUR AREAS.

1. FORMAL QUALIFICATIONS.

These are qualifications for which you will have received certificates and include; GCSEs NVQs.

2. WORK SKILLS.

These are the skills which you will have gained in part time or full time work and include practical skills like filing, computer skills, selling techniques, cash till work, etc.

3. PERSONAL SKILLS.

These include communications skills, your ability to work with others as a member of a team, or to work alone, and your personality etc.

4. TRANSFERRABLE SKILLS.

These are skills which you have obtained in parts 2 and 3 which you can transfer into other work areas. **EXAMPLE:** Experience of working with computers may be an indication that you would quickly understand and operate other types of electronic and computer applications. Transferrable skills are very important because they indicate your ability to adapt to situations and may also show that you have potential to develop and advance in employment terms. Many people fail to mention these skills in their CV.

MAKE A LIST OF YOUR SKILLS IN THESE AREAS.

| |
|-----------------------|
| FORMAL QUALIFICATIONS |
| WORK SKILLS |
| PERSONAL SKILLS |
| TRANSFERRABLE SKILLS |

POSITIVE WORDS

In the jobsearch process you must always be positive when you talk or write about yourself. Below you will find some positive action words which may be of use to you. You should fill in the spaces provided with other positive words. Use a dictionary if required. Once completed, this list can be referred to whenever you need to write about yourself and your achievements.

| | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| ACHIEVED IMPLEMENTED PROMOTED SUPERVISED CONDUCTED IMPROVED SOLVED | DESIGNED INCREASED RE-ORGANISED TRIPLED DECIDED INTRODUCED SUCCEEDED | DELIVERED LAUNCHED SET UP WIDENED DIRECTED NEGOTIATED TRAINED | ESTABLISHED PERFORMED STRUCTURED WORKED GENERATED PLANNED WON |
| | | | |

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE

You should approach the writing of your CV in a positive way. This exercise asks you to experiment with positive and negative words and sentences.

Consider one particular job which interests you. Write down 5 sentences explaining why you should get the job. Try to use at least two positive words in each sentence as well as highlighting your education, work, or other relevant skills and attainments;

e.g. I have **achieved** the required grades in college which **exceed** your minimum educational qualifications target.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

In order to fully understand why it is important to be positive you should now re-write the sentences without the use of any positive words;

e.g. I meet your minimum educational qualifications target.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL DETAILS

NAME
ADDRESS

POSTCODE
TEL. NO.

DATE OF BIRTH

The personal details section is straightforward and needs little explanation. Add other sections if required; (e.g. you may have passed your driving test). For additional information write these under a sub-heading 'ADDITIONAL'.

EDUCATION

NAME OF COLLEGE

SUBJECTS

GRADES

NAME OF SCHOOL

SUBJECTS

GRADES

If you are awaiting results for some subjects, make this point clear. If you do not, it will appear that you studied the subject but did not pass. Always complete this section starting with the most recent first.

EMPLOYMENT

| NAME OF EMPLOYER | FROM | TO | DUTIES |
|------------------|------|----|--------|
|------------------|------|----|--------|

The main problem with completing this section is that you may have little or no work experience. If this is the case use this section to write about the type of work you want and your suitability. Remember to concentrate on transferrable skills; (e.g. you may know how to use a computer, or have some linguistic skills which were learned at school or college but which would be useful in a work context). Refer to the skills assessment examples and exercises on page 7 and 8.

SPECIALIST SKILLS, HOBBIES AND INTERESTS.

Specialist skills are those which only some people have. They are abilities which have been taught to you. These could be foreign languages or a particular ability to do something especially well. Use a separate section for hobbies and interests if you have a lot of specialist skills to list.

REFERENCES

These should be the names and addresses of two people who between them can comment on your academic and work abilities as well as about you as a person. Make sure they are prepared to act as referees and that they will comment on you positively.

The overall design and presentation of your CV is very important. The employer will have only a few minutes to consider each CV. The ones that he or she will prefer will be the CVs which are set out well and in which information is logically presented and easily read.

Do not crowd information on the page. Although it is generally considered that two pages should be sufficient for a CV, it is better to spread out onto a third page rather than squeeze your information onto two if it then means that the information is set out poorly and is not easily readable.

A BAD EXAMPLE

CURRICULUM VITAE

| |
|-------------------|
| PERSONAL DETAILS |
| EDUCATION |
| EMPLOYMENT |
| SPECIALIST SKILLS |
| REFERENCES |

Equal spacing is bad. Some sections require or deserve more space.

many sections for just one page.

This example suggests little or no enthusiasm.

A GOOD EXAMPLE

CURRICULUM VITAE ← Large letters

PERSONAL DETAILS ← Smaller headings

Name
Address
Tel. No.
Date Of Birth

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

| College | From | To | Subjects | Grades |
|---------|------|----|----------|--------|
| School | From | To | Subjects | Grades |

1

Page number

EMPLOYMENT

| Name of Employer | From | To | Duties |
|------------------|------|----|--------|
|------------------|------|----|--------|

SPECIALIST SKILLS

INTERESTS AND HOBBIES

REFERENCES

| | | |
|----------------------|---|----------------------|
| <input type="text"/> | 2 | <input type="text"/> |
|----------------------|---|----------------------|

Allocate space according to importance and amount of information

PERSONAL DETAILS

NAME:

ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE NUMBER:

DATE OF BIRTH:

EDUCATION

| NAME OF COLLEGE | FROM | TO | SUBJECTS | GRADE |
|------------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------------|--------------|
|------------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------------|--------------|

| NAME OF SCHOOL | FROM | TO | SUBJECTS | GRADE |
|-----------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------------|--------------|
|-----------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------------|--------------|

| EMPLOYMENT | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------|----------------|---------------|
| NAME OF EMPLOYER | FROM | TO | DUTIES |
| SPECIALIST SKILLS | | | |
| HOBBIES AND INTERESTS | | | |
| REFERENCES | | | |
| NAME | | NAME | |
| ADDRESS | | ADDRESS | |