

CVs

When looking for a job, you will often be asked to send a CV either on its own or with an application form. A CV is a document which tells potential employers what you have done in your life so far. The aim of a CV is to get you an interview – use it to sell your skills, experience and achievements.

- **Be positive** – it's a sales document and the product is YOU
- **Keep it short** – one or two sides of A4, if it's longer it may not be read
- **Be relevant** – what does the reader need to know about you?
- **Make it readable** – be clear, be clear, use headings and bullet points
- **Use a standard font** – such as Arial or Times Roman
- **Produce one CV** and adapt it for different applications
- **Match your skills and achievements** to the job you are applying for
- **Be truthful** – or you may get caught out later
- **Ask someone you trust** to check it
- **Always include a covering letter** and keep a copy of your application

All CVs should include...

- Personal details
- A personal profile
- Your education and qualifications
- Your employment or work experience
- Interests
- Other information

Referees – a referee is someone who knows you well and will say positive things about you and you will need to put two on the CV. If you are still at school or have recently left, you should include your Head Teacher or other teacher – check with school. If you have worked, put your employer. Any other adult is OK, but don't include family members or close friends. Workshops are offered at the Connexions Centres to create a CV – contact them to book a place if you need help.

Application forms

Many employers use an application form so that they can standardise the information they receive from applicants. Always enclose a covering letter with the form. Before you start filling in the form:

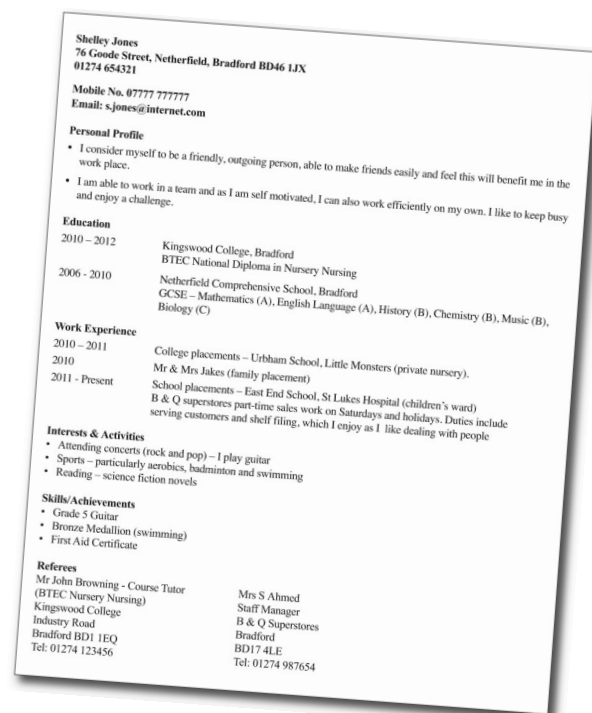
- **take a few copies so you can practise**
- **read through it carefully so you understand what you need to do**
- **complete all sections if they are relevant to you**
- **if a section is not relevant put "not applicable" or put a line through it**
- **read any notes that accompany the form carefully**

Filling in the form

Here are some typical sections or instructions you may find on an application form, with some guidelines on how to tackle them. You will usually be asked to use BLOCK CAPITALS and black ink.

The vacancy:

- position applied for – put the exact title of the job, e.g. 'Administrative Assistant ref: JE/100' – quote reference number if the vacancy has one
- how did you hear about this vacancy? – write down where you saw it advertised e.g. 'The Yorkshire Post'



Personal Details (information about yourself):

- surname/family name: e.g. Bloggs
- first Names: e.g. Joe
- address: put your house number, street name and town and full postcode
- National Insurance Number: this is usually a mix of letters and numbers – you should automatically receive this shortly before your 16th birthday. If you don't receive it, contact the NI Registrations Helpline on 08459 157006
- have you worked for this organisation before? – delete YES or NO as appropriate
- do you have any relatives working for this company? – answer honestly
- are you a British Citizen or a national of another European Economic Area: – delete YES or NO as appropriate – if you were born in the UK you just need to delete NO.

Education:

- name of school or college attended: you may be asked to put your most recent one first in the list
- dates of attendance: e.g. September 2005 – June 2010
- name of course/academic results: e.g. GCSEs in English grade C, music C, science DD, design technology D, history D etc. If you haven't got your results yet list your subjects and put your estimated grades and state that they are estimates.

Employment History:

Start with your most recent job. If you have only ever done part-time jobs or work experience, put them in as well, stating that they were part-time or work experience.

- position and duties: e.g. sales assistant on a market stall, paper round, hairdressing assistant
- reason for leaving: e.g. holiday job, to do another job etc.
- references: you should normally put your head teacher or college principal, or an employer you have worked for, or someone else who knows you well, but not a relative or friend. Put their full contact details (address and phone number). Make sure you check that the person is happy to be your referee.

Additional Information:

Have you any health issues that could affect your future employment with the company?

- be honest, employers are not allowed to discriminate on grounds of disability but they do need to know if you have any special requirements.

Have you ever been convicted or cautioned by the police for any criminal offence, or have you got a prosecution pending?

- again, it is worth being honest here, but be positive that, if you have committed an offence it is now behind you and you have moved on from it. Ask your Connexions Personal Adviser for help if you are not sure how to word this.

Equal Opportunities monitoring:

- most companies should have an equal opportunities policy and information you are asked to put in here is to help them check that they are following it.

Other information to support your application:

- this is the most important part of the application form. It is where you can highlight your skills and achievements and show how they make you a good candidate for the job you are applying for. If there is a list of 'essential' and 'desirable' requirements for the job make sure that you cover at least the 'essential' ones.

Each application form you complete will be different in this section, to match the particular requirements of the job. Be positive, but be honest! Keep a 'rough' version and ask a Connexions Personal Adviser, teacher or parent to have a look at it.

All application forms are different! Take your time over it and pay close attention to what you are asked to do.