Writing a CV

A CV is a document that sums up the things an employer normally wants to know about you, such as your education, qualifications, skills and work history. The purpose of a CV (full name: Curriculum Vitae) is to get you an interview by showing you meet the requirements of the job.

If you have a CV you can apply for apprenticeships and jobs quickly when they become available. You can also send it to any companies where you would like to work - called a 'speculative application'.

Some activities that often go on a CV, such as work experience and sport, haven't been possible during the recent lockdowns. But don't worry - everyone your age is in the same situation and this leaflet will cover ways of tackling it.

CV tips

It's been said that some employers reject a CV after looking at it for just five seconds. First impressions really count so here are some ways of getting your CV onto the 'Read again' pile:

- Keep it clear and easy to follow. Use a plain font, a simple layout and avoid any eye catching or amusing touches as these are just as likely to annoy as attract attention!

- Check spelling and grammar.

- Keep it short. If you're just out of school or college then 2 sides of A4 is normally enough.

- There are few fixed rules about laying out a CV, but put the most important information first so that the employer sees it straight away.

- Be positive about yourself.

- Be truthful. If you get an interview you could be asked about anything you have written.

- Keep to the point, which is to show that you can do the job and would fit into the company.

Avoid using exactly the same CV for every application. Always go through the job description, pick out the main requirements and then tweak your CV so that it highlights those same points.

What to include in a CV

Personal details
Give your name and contact details, such as address, email and a phone number, so that the employer can invite you to interview. Avoid joke email addresses – no-one will laugh!

Profile
Write a short outline (e.g. two or three sentences) describing who you are and what you have to offer, for example: '*I am a hardworking school leaver with a good attendance and punctuality record and I am hoping to enter a career in…... I have good communication and IT skills, and I can work both in a team and independently, without supervision.*'
Check your profile every time you make an application so that it fits with the job requirements.

Education and qualifications
List the secondary schools / colleges you've attended and any qualifications you've taken, with dates. If you don't know your results, use predicted grades (but state they're not final).

Skills
When you describe your skills, highlight any that are listed in the job description, e.g. IT (name any software packages you can use) or languages. Always include personal ('soft') skills such as organising your work, communication, working in teams or problem solving; these kinds of skills are in high demand. Give examples of when you've used them, e.g. school projects.
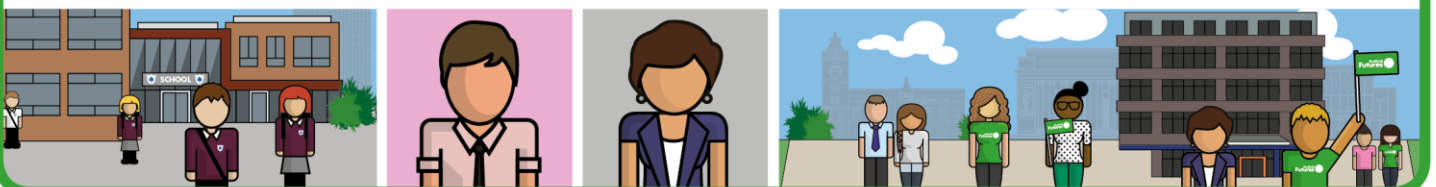
Employment history
List any previous jobs and employers along with dates, job title(s) and your main duties. Include work experience, part time jobs and volunteering. If you're about to leave (or have recently left) school or college then you might find this a challenge because the lockdowns left few opportunities for work or volunteering. Be positive and creative and include any virtual work experience and any jobs (whether paid or not) that you've done for other people, such as dog walking, car washing or shopping for neighbours. Also describe (here or in the 'Skills' section) what you've learned from these activities, e.g. timekeeping and handling money.

Interests
Briefly describe one or two things you enjoy doing, and any positions of responsibility. If you haven't been able to follow your interests during the lockdowns, explain why you're keen to get back to them. Remember to keep it positive!

References
You are normally expected to give contact details of two people (not family) who will recommend you for the job. One should usually be your school / college or current employer. Remember to ask them first. You can say their details are 'available on request' but you should still choose them and ask beforehand.

Layout for a CV

Sheffield Futures SF
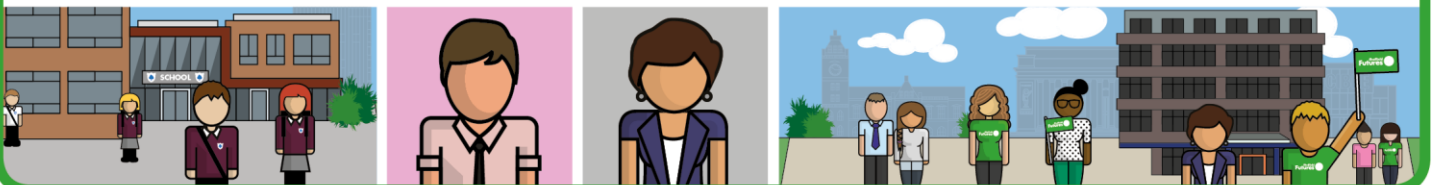
CV
Personal details

Name	
Address	
Telephone	
Email	

Profile

Education and qualifications

Skills

Employment history

Interests

References