

Job Application and Interview Support Pack

This pack contains information to help you:

- Write A CV*
- Write a covering letter*
- Apply for a job vacancy or apprenticeship*
- Preparing for an interview*

What is a CV?

- CV stands for Curriculum Vitae which translated means 'Story of your life'
- This show cases all your best qualities, qualifications and skills – it is how you 'sell' yourself to potential employers
- A CV should help potential employers understand what type of person you are, why you're suitable for the job you are applying for and why they should interview you

Golden rules for what to add onto your CV:

1. If it helps you meet the job description – include it!
2. If it does not help you meet the job description – exclude it
3. If it is general information – only include if there's room!

Things to consider:

- Make sure you highlight your personal qualities – things such as team work, communication, punctuality and resilience. If possible, give examples of where you have developed these skills
- Include your GCSE grades. If you haven't had these yet, include predicted grades
- Don't use underline for subheadings, studies show that most employers prefer bold text as it looks neater
- Avoid including a photograph
- 1 spelling mistake can reduce chance of recruitment by up to 50%
- Use a basic font such as Arial or Times new roman at size 11-14
- Avoid back to back where possible

There are a variety of ways you can describe yourself and your strengths. Try using the following:

Skilled at...	A skilful...	Competent in...
Extremely good at...	Familiar with...	Excellent at...
Able to...	Very good at...	Talented at...
Qualified to...		

Employers are looking for various qualities and characteristics in a potential employee. Use the following list of words to help you when describing yourself, whether in an application or at interview:

Able	Accurate	Adaptable
Alert	Ambitious	Analytical
Articulate	Assertive	Astute
Bright	Capable	Calm
Confident	Committed	Common sense

Competent	Computer literate	Consistent
Cooperative	Cope under pressure	Creative
Decisive	Dedicated	Dependable
Desire to succeed	Determined	Diplomatic
Diverse	Drive	Dynamic
Educated	Effective	Efficient
Energetic	Enjoy a challenge	Enthusiastic
Fast learner	Fast worker	Flexible
Focussed	Friendly	Gifted
Good communicator	Hardworking	Helpful
Highly motivated	Honest	Imaginative
Impressive	Interpersonal skills	Independent
Innovative	Initiative	Intelligent
Keen	Knowledgeable	Leadership skills
Loyal	Mature	Methodical
Objective	Organised	Patient
Persistent	Polite	Positive
Practical	Proactive	Punctual
Rational	Reliable	Resourceful
Responsible	Supportive	Tactful
Team player	Tenacious	Thorough
Trustworthy	Versatile	Willing

Hobbies and interests – if you are struggling to think about what to include, see below for some ideas:

Animals, farms, zoos	Archery	Art / Painting / Drawing
Astrology	Basketball	Bicycling
Bird watching	Board Games / Card games	Boating / Water-skiing
Bowling	Camping / Hiking / Picnics	Cars / Mechanics or racing

Chess	Climbing / walking	Computers
Cooking / Baking	Crafts	Cricket
Dancing / Gymnastics	Dog walking	Duke of Edinburgh Award
Films / cinema	Fishing	Football
Gardening	Golf	Gym / keep fit
Horse-riding	Jogging / Track	
Motorcycles	Music / concerts	Photography
Playing a musical instrument	Pool / Pinball / Video games	Puzzles / Sudoku
Reading	Rugby	Running
Roller-blading	Science / Electronics	Sewing / Needlework
Skateboarding	Space / Aviation	Swimming / Diving
Tennis / Ping-pong	Theatre / musicals	Travel
Walking	Website design	Woodworking
Wrestling	Yoga	

CV Template

Your personal details

Jane Bloggs

11 Hull Road

York

YO10 5ZA

Telephone number: 07785933452

Email address: Jane.bloggs@googlemail.com

Include your name, address and contact details. You don't need to include your age, marital status or nationality. Recruiters can make a decision about your skills and abilities without this information.

Make sure your email address sounds professional and shows you in a positive light.

Your personal profile

This is a mini-advert for you and should summarise your:

- skills and qualities
- work background and achievements
- career aims

It should only be a few lines and needs to grab the reader's attention. Try to make the phrases you use specific to you.

If the job involves working with people, try to show your people skills by uses phrases like: 'effectively dealing with demanding customers', 'handling conflict' or 'showing empathy'. These help the reader build up a picture of your skills, knowledge and experience. Keep it short - you can go into more detail later.

When describing your career aims, think about the employer you're sending the CV to. Make your careers aims sound just like the kind of opportunities they currently have.

Employment history and work experience

You'll usually put your employment history first if you've been working for a few years. If you don't have much work experience, focus on your your education and training.

Start with the job you're doing now, or the last job you had, and work backwards. You need to include your employer's name, the dates you worked for them, your job title and your main tasks. On the jobs that are relevant to the role you're applying for, give examples of the skills you used and what you achieved.

Use bullet pointed lists and positive language. Use 'action' words to describe what you did in your job like: 'achieved' , 'established', 'co-ordinated', 'created' or 'transformed'.

Relate your skills and experience to the job description, person specification or what you think the employer is looking for. Also include any relevant temporary work and volunteering experience.

Education and training

Start with your most recent qualifications and work back to the ones you got at school. Use bullet points or a table and include:

- the university, college or school you went to
- the dates the qualifications were awarded and any grades
- any work-related courses, if they're relevant

If you don't yet have any GCSEs, here is the place to put your predicted grades

Interests and achievements

Include hobbies, interests and achievements that are relevant to the job. If you're involved in any clubs or societies, this can show that you enjoy meeting new people. Interests like sports and physical recreation activities can also show employers that you are fit and healthy.

Don't just put activities that you would do alone like reading, bird-watching or playing video games, unless they relate directly to the job that you are applying for. They may leave employers wondering how sociable you are. Make your activities specific and varied.

Additional information

You can include this section if you need to add anything else that's relevant.

You may need to explain a gap in your employment history, like travelling or family reasons. You could also include other relevant skills here, such as if you have a driving license or can speak any foreign languages.

References

At least one referee should be work-related. Or, if you haven't worked for a while, you could use another responsible person who has known you for some time. Most students use their Head of Year or form tutor as a reference.

Writing a covering letter

This one page letter will accompany your CV when you apply for a position.

Structure:

Introduction

- State what position you are applying for
- State where you saw the advert

How you are suitable

- How did you become interested in the industry
- Reference any similar or relevant work experience
- Express a willingness to learn if you do not hit all required experiences

Why you have chosen to apply to this company

- Why is this company interesting to you?
- Show you have researched the company
- Why do you want to be part of their team?

Signing off

- Sound enthusiastic and keen
- Ensure a word of thanks is included
- Mention availability

J. Bloggs
The Manor
Megatown
Acity
AB12 Z23
j.bloggs@hotmail.com

20th July 2019

Ms M Smith
Manager
Any shop
Any Place
Thistown
AB12 2XX

Dear Mr Smith

RE Retail Assistant – Starting September 2019

I am writing to apply for the position of retail assistant that I saw advertised on [the York Designer outlet website](#). I have recently completed my GCSE examinations at Archbishop Holgate's School and I will be available to start work on 1st August.

During my work experience at XXXX I experienced first-hand the skills and qualities necessary to work successfully in a retail environment. I had a range of duties, including welcoming customers, organising the stock room, supervising the changing rooms and serving customers. During this time I was able to develop excellent customer service skills, indeed, I was commended to the store manager by customers who were grateful for my help and positive approach. I understand how important a polite and professional nature is when working in retail and I would bring these qualities to the role.

Throughout my time at AHS I have developed strong communication skills and an understanding of how to treat people with respect. My punctuality record is excellent and my attendance at school has always been above 95%. I have also demonstrated great resilience over the course of the last month, where I successfully completed over 20 GCSE examinations in 9 different subjects, I am predicted to secure very good grades, with all subjects 5 or above.

XXXX is an exciting place to work and I am confident that my enthusiasm and good work ethic will make me a suitable candidate. I am available for interview next month.

I hope to hear from you soon to discuss my application further.

J. Bloggs

Responses to Interview questions

Question: What are your strengths?

GOOD: 'I feel that I have very good communication skills. As a keen team member of a local football team, it is crucial that we communicate constantly when on the pitch to ensure that everyone can work together to win the game. I have been praised by the team captain for the way that I

Other typical 'Employer' questions that you might see could include:

- Why do you feel you are a suitable candidate for this role?
- Why are you interested in completing an apprenticeship?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years' time?
- What experience of dealing with customers do you have?
- What qualities do you think are important in this job role?
- What do you think makes the difference between a good customer experience and an excellent one?

Prior to interview:

- Research the organisation and job that you are applying for
- Prepare at least 2 or 3 questions that show an interest in the job and organisation
- Work out how to get to the interview and how long the journey will take – allow enough time to arrive at least 15 minutes early
- Prepare answers to some typical interview questions e.g. 'why do you want this job?'
- Prepare examples of when you have used skills relevant to the job

Appearance:

- Take a bath or shower prior to interview
- Wear clean and ironed clothing
- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear formal shoes, not trainers e.g. see back page
- Wear matching socks
- Polish/clean your shoes
- Make sure your hands and fingernails are clean
- Wear conservative makeup, accessories and jewellery (including nail varnish)
- Brush your teeth
- Wear subtle perfume/aftershave
- Remove chewing gum prior to interview

Body Language:

- Shake hands firmly
- Smile
- Sit when you are offered a seat
- Use good posture, sit up straight
- Be attentive, nod or take notes

- Make eye contact but avoid staring
- Avoid negative behaviour (yawning, crossing your arms, checking your watch, looking at your feet etc.)
- Be composed (no fidgeting, playing with hair, tapping your feet)

Responsiveness:

- Bring a copy of your CV, the application form and the job advert with you
- Bring a pad and pen to take notes if necessary
- Switch off your phone or set to silent (turn off vibrate as this can still be heard)
- Be on time (even better – be early)
- Use interviewer's title and surname (address as Mr/Ms)
- Refer to the job advert/job description when answering questions
- Show enthusiasm
- Speak clearly, using proper grammar
- Avoid slang, swear words and suggestive language
- Answer questions clearly and concisely
- Focus on your strengths
- Avoid interrupting the interviewer

Attitude:

- Be respectful
- Be positive and enthusiastic
- Be attentive
- Be knowledgeable about the company
- Use the interviewer's name
- Be professional and mature

Closing the interview:

- Ask any questions about the organisation/job that you prepared prior to the interview
- Stand and shake hands
- Thank the interviewer for his/her time
- Emphasise your interest in the job
- Ask when a decision will be made

