

# EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS - CREATING A CV



## Creating a CV

**Level:** Pre-intermediate – Advanced

**CEFR level:** B1 to C1

**Time:** Approximately 90 minutes

**Language objectives:** Creating a CV. This activity is ideally intended for learners who are applying for work experience placements or internships.

**Key life skills:** Gathering and organising information, writing in note form about transferable skills, personal identity, and values

**Materials:** One copy of the 'Creating a CV' worksheet per student, flipchart paper or large sheets of paper to write on

### Glossary:

**Transferable skills:** skills that can be used for different jobs and roles e.g. IT, teamwork, sales

**Job requirements:** the description of the job and what the employer is looking for in a candidate

**CV:** curriculum vitae – the “story” of your life, also called résumé

**Speculative application / to apply on spec:** A speculative application or applying on spec involves sending a CV and covering letter to an employer asking whether they have any jobs or work experience opportunities your skills could fill, even if you haven't seen a position being advertised.

### Procedure:

Ideally learners should be creating CVs and cover letters for jobs, work experience opportunities, or internships that they are actually interested in applying for or intend to apply for. To that end, learners should already have conducted some initial research into their chosen industry or company to identify work-placement or internship opportunities or gathered some background information in order to demonstrate a genuine interest in doing work experience in that company.

Alternatively, if you have less teaching time or learners are not yet applying for placements, it is worth looking at some examples of how companies advertise work experience and internship opportunities, and discussing how people applying 'on spec' can sometimes successfully gain jobs or placements. You can also discuss opportunities for getting access to such opportunities through networking.

Here are some useful links for internships and work experience placements. Learners should be encouraged to look at these or find other suitable ones, and to download application packs where applicable. The aim is for learners to gain a good understanding of the application process and how tailoring or adapting their CV content to be more specific to a particular job or industry can increase the chance of being successful.

[www.totalprofessions.com/university-students/work-placements](http://www.totalprofessions.com/university-students/work-placements) - various industries

[www.e4s.co.uk/docs/internships.htm](http://www.e4s.co.uk/docs/internships.htm) - various industries

<http://joinus.barclays.com/emea/internships/> - banking

[http://internship-uk.com/Catering\\_Hospitality.asp](http://internship-uk.com/Catering_Hospitality.asp) - various industries including hospitality, event management and media

[www.macmillanenglish.com/mind-competition](http://www.macmillanenglish.com/mind-competition) - a competition to win three work experience places with the globally renowned educational publisher Macmillan Education in London. The competition ends on 30 November 2016.

### Lesson stages

1. Ask learners to get into groups of three or four and distribute flipchart / large sheets of paper to each group.
2. Ask learners to brainstorm their answers to the question: “What are the ingredients for success in applying for work experience or an internship?” Responses could include ‘interpersonal skills’, ‘transferable skills’, ‘interest’ etc. Give learners five minutes to work in their groups and write down as many ideas they can think of.
3. Put the completed flipcharts up on the walls and ask the groups to talk about what they have written. The purpose here is to gauge awareness of things like: networking, relationships, a strong CV (here you can ask ‘What makes a strong CV?’), interpersonal skills (‘Which ones?’), great accompanying cover letter (‘What makes a great cover letter?’), confidence (‘What helps create confidence?’), different skills (‘Which skills?’ – you may want to draw out transferable skills here). Work with the answers learners have produced, encouraging them to expand their ideas in the class during the feedback stage. Write up separately any words or have a glossary flipchart up in the classroom to which you can add new vocabulary as you go along.
4. Hand out the ‘Creating a CV’ worksheet and ask students to work in pairs to brainstorm the question in Ex 1 “What is the purpose of a CV?”

*Suggested answer: The purpose of a CV is to give the potential employer relevant information about your abilities and background. It lists qualifications, transferable skills, and details of current or any previous employment.*

5. Ask the pairs to compare their answers and allow about three minutes for discussion to see if there are differences in opinions. You may also want to mention the fact that, on average, employers only take nine seconds to look at each CV, so it needs to be short, concise, and get your key messages across and to ensure immediate impact.
6. Before they start to create their own CV, refer learners back to the key areas identified in the brainstorm stage. They may also want to link these back to the work experience placements or internships they are applying for. Ask them to answer Ex. 2 on the worksheet to list the requirements they want to highlight in their CV.

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7. The next stage is the creation of the remainder of the CV. Ask learners to choose at least six of the categories in the list and place them in the order they believe to be the most appropriate. There is no correct answer to this and it depends on the status and experience level of the learner and the intended use of the CV. However, if the group has previously written personal profiles at school, university, or on LinkedIn® professional networking services, this is a good time to emphasise the importance of using them at the beginning of a CV. Please note, students should look at writing a more concise version of any existing personal profile, in order to make it more suitable for CV use.

8. The learners then use their chosen categories to complete Ex. 4 and make notes on the content of their CV. They may not have the necessary information to hand at this stage. Before they start, discuss issues such as: In which order should the dates be arranged? How much detail should be given? How should it be expressed using note form and bullet points?

**Examples:**

- Responsible for leading the team and ensuring deadlines were met
- Developed my ICT skills by producing a range of leaflets, presentations, and PDFs for marketing campaigns
- Passionate about music: give tuition to young pianists in my spare time

9. Learners should then have an opportunity to produce a draft of their CV for correction and get feedback from the teacher. They could start this in class then complete it for homework.

**TIPS for writing CVs and cover letters:**

1. Do tell your learners to look at some samples of both good and bad CVs and cover letters. There are plenty of websites with tips on writing applications such as the ones suggested here.
2. Do discuss with learners the importance of being resilient and the impact of taking the time to carefully tailor letters and CVs to address specific requirements rather than sending out the same applications to everyone.
3. Do discuss the need for networking and word-of-mouth contacts when it comes to searching for work experience. Learners may well have to do some research and preparation here before sending off a CV and cover letter!
4. During every stage of writing and correcting, keep reminding learners that accuracy of language is vital in CVs and cover letters and even minor mistakes can result in their application being rejected.
5. Do consider setting a research task *before* the class so that learners can find out more about how to apply for internships and work experience placements by themselves, as application procedures always vary from company to company.

[www.theguardian.com/careers/cv-templates](http://www.theguardian.com/careers/cv-templates)

[www.theguardian.com/careers/covering-letter-advice-tips](http://www.theguardian.com/careers/covering-letter-advice-tips)

[www.theguardian.com/careers/cv-graduate-skills](http://www.theguardian.com/careers/cv-graduate-skills)

[www.theguardian.com/careers/2016/feb/01/spring-clean-your-cv-and-cover-letter-for-job-success](http://www.theguardian.com/careers/2016/feb/01/spring-clean-your-cv-and-cover-letter-for-job-success)

[www.theguardian.com/careers/2015/dec/29/the-best-cv-writing-tips-of-2015](http://www.theguardian.com/careers/2015/dec/29/the-best-cv-writing-tips-of-2015)

[http://offers.hubspot.com/marketing-resume-templates?\\_ga=1.50508969.1295782438.1450884438](http://offers.hubspot.com/marketing-resume-templates?_ga=1.50508969.1295782438.1450884438)

[www.theguardian.com/careers/covering-letter-examples](http://www.theguardian.com/careers/covering-letter-examples)

[www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/applying-for-jobs/how-to-write-a-speculative-job-application](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/applying-for-jobs/how-to-write-a-speculative-job-application)