

Graduate School of Language and Educational Linguistics

WHAT IS A CV?

CV is an abbreviation for curriculum vitae, a Latin phrase which, literally translated, means the course of one's life. In terms of the job search, a CV is a document similar to a resume. The primary difference is the amount of detail that is provided. CVs are generally longer, and, if you are not careful, can be dull. In the US, the use of CVs is generally limited to academically-oriented environments, such as schools and research centers.

CVs are most commonly used to apply for academic or research positions. An effective CV introduces you as a unique individual, and conveys your information as you want it to be perceived. With research and planning, your CV can persuasively address the needs of specific employers. In situations that require a standardized application form, your CV can be attached, thereby improving the likelihood that your accomplishments will be viewed as you wish.

Your CV is a reflection of your self-image. It will show how your experience and background relate to the job you are seeking. It will also show potential employers your individuality, organizational skills and writing ability. **Its primary purpose is to interest and convince an employer to give you an interview.**

Other uses

Your CV, in the hands of friends, relatives and colleagues, will help you gather job information more quickly and thoroughly. The specifics of your CV help others watch out for appropriate opportunities or possible leads for you.

Your references also benefit from reviewing your CV. With more knowledge about your background they can write better letters and speak more confidently to employers on your behalf.

You may also be asked to provide a CV when you are presenting at conferences, participating in a taskforce or committee, or being nominated for an award.

A CV, like a resume, must have these sections:

- Contact information (name, address, phone number, email)
- Education (degrees earned, dates, institutions)
- Experience (applicable jobs, internships, volunteer work)

These sections are optional, but often appear on many CVs:

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Career objective | Publications and presentations |
| Functional specializations | Professional affiliations |
| Activities/interests | Committee work |
| Achievements/honors | Projects and papers |

In developing your CV, consider ALL of your experience initially. Your job will be much easier when you can look at your past jobs and break them down into specific skills. There are many skills that are found in a variety of jobs. Once you can identify the skills, you should re-word your description so that the skills you are highlighting are clearly illustrated.

Elaborate on your teaching experience.

- ✓ Specify which of the four skills (reading, writing, speaking, or listening) you taught.
Describe your students:
 - age and education level
 - native language(s)
 - homogeneity/heterogeneity
 - special status (e.g., engineers, refugees, disabled)
- ✓ Mention the methods used. Did you use any recognized teaching method (e.g., TPR)?
- ✓ Indicate in the text the type of institutions for which you worked if it is important and not clear from the heading.
- ✓ State your contribution to the development of the program. Discuss your involvement in the development of materials, syllabi design, curricula, needs analyses, or testing/evaluation procedures. Have any of these efforts had a long-lasting effect on the ESL or FL program?
- ✓ Indicate if the language you taught was for specific purposes, e.g., engineering, law, business.
- ✓ Include other useful skills you employed in your teaching, e.g., cross-cultural or bilingual abilities, musical talents, sports coaching, etc., targeted to your audience.
- ✓ If appropriate, list various learning activities which you employed, e.g., content teaching, use of role-play or plays, use of audio-visual aids, use of computers.
- ✓ Include tutoring experience, as well as any volunteer work.
- ✓ Describe any professional research you have been involved in, including not only your participation, but also responsibilities such as professional editing and reviewing.
- ✓ Indicate appropriate committee work.
- ✓ Include conference presentations you may have given.

For the US, do not include personal items on your resume, such as height, weight, marital status, political or religious affiliations or ethnicity. Citizenship may be included if it is a plus. For other countries, we suggest you do not include any of these items unless specifically requested.

CV "LICENSE"

Employers are not interested in past experience that does not relate to their needs, so don't tell them every detail of your background. CV license allows you to minimize or omit experiences that do not add to your presentation (but retain substantial job experiences to avoid large time gaps). Slant your past experience to mesh with the requirements of the job you seek.

CV license also allows you to omit extraneous words (such as I, a, an, the) and to use phrases or incomplete sentences. Do not be afraid to eliminate whatever words seem unnecessary, as long as the meaning remains clear without them.

HOW TO WRITE A CURRICULUM VITAE

Inventory your experience. This may include some or all of the following:

Education: name and location of schools attended. Relevant courses, areas of emphasis. Thesis summary. Grade Point Average. Honors and awards received.

Experience: name and location of employers, dates worked. Title of positions held. Internships. Accomplishments. Skills demonstrated. Promotions/commendations.

Extracurricular, volunteer, or community experiences: names of clubs/organizations (if relevant): position or offices held, skills used, successful projects or goals accomplished.

Your special abilities and the personal traits that contribute to your success.

Take the employer's point of view. Complete these phrases to create an outline of employer concerns to address in your CV.

The candidate we want to hire:

knows how to perform these tasks: _____

has had experience in: _____

has demonstrated abilities in: _____

can solve these problems for me: _____

Find the right words to convey benefits to the employer. Use action verbs (see page 5 for list), write in active voice, focus on your accomplishments and contributions.

Prepare a rough draft. Begin weeding out irrelevant material and selecting items to emphasize. You may need to do several drafts. You may even choose to have more than one CV, depending on the variety of employers you are targeting.

Select the best presentation for your material. While various formats may be in vogue at certain times, choose the style that best suits your content and organizes it to attract interest. Use white space and bullets to increase readability. Determine the most effective order of categories and items within them. Decide if, in the Education section, leading with degrees works better than leading with schools; ditto, in the Experience section, decide the same for job titles and employers. Leading with dates may be convenient, but it is the weakest presentation format.

Make it easy to read. There are two types of fonts: serif, which has small end strokes (eg., Times Roman and Perpetua), and sans-serif, which does not (eg., Helvetica, and Arial). Serif fonts are better as text, sans-serifs are better as headings. Use a font size of 10 to 12 points. Some fonts are wider than others even in the same point size, so you may need to experiment to find the one that works best for you. Do not use a script font, or any other that is difficult to read.

For your final copy, use a laser printer. Print or copy onto good quality, white or a neutral tone (ivory, gray) paper. Ideally, the paper should be heavier stock than regular copier paper. Most copy shops sell appropriate paper by the ream, and often have matching envelopes as well.

Critique and edit. Ask others for suggestions about how to make your CV more effective. Focus on the following:

What is your overall impression of me based on the CV?

Is there enough information about my experience and abilities?

Is anything missing or unclear? Is there anything you think I should omit or downplay?

Is the format easy to read? How would you improve the layout?

TYPES OF CVS

The Reverse Chronological CV is most commonly used in the US today. In this type of CV, your experience is listed with your last job first, followed by other jobs listed in reverse chronological order. Reverse chronology is more advantageous when:

- you are staying in the same field as in your prior jobs;
- your job history shows real growth and development;
- your prior job titles are related to your current target;
- your previous employers are well-known in the field.

The Functional CV, also known as a skills-based CV, pre-analyzes your experience for the reader. It correlates jobs by skill or task clusters. The headings are usually summaries of skills and experiences represented from multiple jobs. These functional sections should correspond to the requirements of the job you are seeking. The functional CV is advantageous when:

- you want to emphasize skills from previous experience;
- you are changing careers;
- you are entering the job market for the first time;
- you have had a variety of unconnected or short-term jobs.

The Combination CV

The first two types of CV represent opposite ends of a continuum; there are many ways of combining these styles to highlight your experience and skills in a way tailored specifically to your needs. Use the format that works best for you.

Because education is a traditional field, the reverse-chronology style CV is the expected form. But, if you have little work experience this may not be the best choice. Even those with considerable experience may enhance their competitive advantage by including several functional areas in addition to the usual chronological list.

Functional headings useful for the education field:

Administration	Organization	Supervision
Communication	Presentations	Teaching
Coordination	Program Development	Testing
Counseling	Projects (specify type)	Writing
Curriculum Design	Research	

You may include volunteer positions, internships, and course-related work, as well as paid positions. Make the descriptions concise, and use action verbs to describe your main accomplishments. Quantify or qualify your accomplishments wherever possible.

Show how you:

- saved time or resources;
- increased quality, effectiveness or revenue;
- solved staff, communication or logistical problems; or
- initiated new methods or systems to achieve any of the above

Consider your efforts as part of a team, as well as your individual accomplishments. Look for places where you might use phrases such as:

- Co-authored, -chaired, -presented, -taught, -wrote
- As member of (number)-person team
- Individually, or jointly, responsible for
- Instrumental, participated, or played key role in

USE ACTION WORDS IN YOUR CV

Your CV will be much stronger if you write in the active voice and emphasize verbs rather than nouns. For maximum effectiveness, use the past tense verb form. On the next page is a list of action verbs especially useful for the education field. You are not limited to these words, nor do you have to use them for the category in which they are listed.

INSTRUCTION

Adapted
Aided
Applied
Clarified
Coached
Demonstrated
Educated
Enabled
Encouraged
Explained
Evaluated
Facilitated
Guided
Implemented
Informed
Instructed
Lectured
Modified
Motivated
Observed
Promoted
Reflected
Reinforced
Related
Shared
Stimulated
Strengthened
Supported
Taught
Trained

ACHIEVEMENT

Accomplished
Awarded
Decreased
Diverted
Eliminated
Established
Exceeded
Improved
Increased
Obtained
Overcame
Rectified
Redesigned

Set up

Surpassed
Undertook
Upgraded

COMMUNICATION

Addressed
Assured
Authored
Briefed
Convinced
Disseminated
Drafted
Edited
Engaged
Interpreted
Interviewed
Marketed
Moderated
Narrated
Negotiated
Performed
Persuaded
Prepared
Presented
Presided
Proposed
Recorded
Recommended
Reported
Represented
Responded
Revised
Spoke
Wrote

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

Advised
Advocated
Collaborated
Counseled
Consulted
Cooperated
Employed
Enlisted

Fostered
Influenced
Intervened
Led
Monitored
Participated
Referred
Served
Sponsored

CREATIVITY

Composed
Created
Designed
Developed
Devised
Enabled
Generated
Initiated
Instituted
Introduced
Invented
Launched
Originated
Refined
Reshaped
Resolved
Revamped
Simplified
Solved
Streamlined
Structured
Systematized

ADMINISTRATION

Approved
Arranged
Budgeted
Conducted
Contracted
Controlled
Coordinated
Delegated
Directed
Distributed
Executed

Expanded
Headed
Hired
Implemented
Maintained
Managed
Organized
Planned
Produced
Recruited
Reduced
Retained
Scheduled
Supervised

RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

Abstracted
Analyzed
Assessed
Compared
Compiled
Correlated
Critiqued
Defined
Determined
Diagnosed
Evaluated
Examined
Formulated
Identified
Inspected
Integrated
Investigated
Programmed
Researched
Reviewed
Screened
Studied
Summarized
Surveyed
Synthesized
Tested
Verified

PRESENTATION OUTLINES

The outlines on these two pages are only examples designed to demonstrate the way a CV can be customized to present your experience in an interesting and appealing way. Feel free to expand on the suggestions presented here.

EXAMPLE OUTLINE FOR SOMEONE WITH LITTLE EXPERIENCE:

Objective: (optional) If you use an objective, it should contain at least one of the following:

- the kind of work you want to do
- the type of organization or the area in which you want to work
- the major skills you wish to use.

Education: a brief description of your degrees. Focus on aspects of your education that address your career objective, written in reverse chronological order. Cite your minor or AA degree only if it is related to your current objective. Academic honors may be included here.

You must show all degrees, but other educational experiences may be condensed, omitted or used in another section, e.g., international, if that better suits your purposes.

Teaching/Tutoring: include practicum, and any training, volunteer, or informal experiences.

Communication: focus on teaching skills used in other jobs, such as presentation, writing/editing, and interpersonal skills.

Administration: or coordination, supervision or counseling, depending on your experience, and again focusing on teaching-related skills.

Cross-cultural or International: If relevant and strong, you may even want to place this ahead of the communication category.

Research Projects: or if you want to emphasize a particular body of work, you might use the category as a heading, e.g., curriculum design, testing, writing, and so on. It is acceptable to combine items from various jobs and from academic work in these categories.

Work (or Employment) History: a brief, ideally one-line, listing of significant, i.e., related to education or more than a few months long) jobs. Limit to job title, employer, location, dates. Example: Counselor, Concordia Language Villages, Moorhead, MN, summer 1993

Professional Affiliations: and/or presentations, publications, or committee work

Special Skills: or Computer Skills, Languages, etc.

Interests/Avocations: (optional) Consider the relevance to education. Continue to highlight relevant skills or areas of knowledge that might enhance your classroom presentations. (These can be especially useful to maximize your chances for positions with secondary schools.)

References: List three to five. Use a combination of academic and employer references if you can. If you have only academic references, a least one should be from another institution (i.e., non- Monterey Institute.)

EXAMPLE OUTLINE FOR SOMEONE WITH CONSIDERABLE EXPERIENCE:

Summary of Experience (optional, but useful as overview)

Example:

Five years of experience teaching language courses.
Comfortable teaching both children and adults from basic to advanced levels.
Substantial knowledge and use of communicative teaching methodology.

Professional (or Teaching) Experience: Reverse chronological listing of past positions. If you have had many short or part time jobs, look for logical and creative ways to combine them, such as by level, subject, employer or geography. Consider omitting or minimizing jobs that are not related to education. Definitely put them under a separate heading, i.e., Administration, International, Promotion, etc.

Functional Specializations: If you want to emphasize a particular body of work, you use the category as a heading, e.g., curriculum design, testing, writing, and so on. Combine items from various jobs and from academic work in these categories.

Administration: or any of the other headings mentioned under Professional Experience

Research/Publications/Presentations: these can be combined or each could be a separate heading, depending on your experience.

Education/Honors/Certifications: If you have a large number of items in this category, weed or group them for maximum effect.

Professional Affiliations/Awards: It is useful to list affiliations, but even more effective to demonstrate that you have done something in the organization.

Special Skills: Languages, computer programs, specialized training or licensing.

Interests/Avocations (optional) Not as necessary as for those with less experience, but still an opportunity to show another side of yourself.

References: Even though you have many to choose from, do not list more than five. Use a mix tailored to your job objective. (You may use a different set of references for different jobs.)

RATE YOUR CV.

Is it dynamic, stressing accomplishments?

Is it clear, giving a "picture" of the your qualifications?

Is it focused, omitting irrelevant information?

Is it persuasive, emphasizing benefits for the employer?

Is it attractive, creating a professional image in the reader's mind?

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Letters of Recommendation

If you need information or advice about how to get the best possible reference letters, see:

[Letter of Recommendation: How to Ask for Them, How to Write Them](#)

Portfolio

Many of you will complete a portfolio as part of your program. While creating that portfolio, note the items that would be interesting and useful in an interviewing portfolio.

- Focus on your specialty.
- Be critical and include only your best work so your image is not diminished by the mediocre. Accuracy, conciseness and appearance count.

Be prepared to customize it for every interview by adding, subtracting, or rearranging items for the most effective presentation.

Possible items to include in a teaching portfolio:

CV or resume
certificates/licenses
transcripts
documentation of honors/awards (photos, newsclippings)
evaluations (from supervisors and pupils)
a teaching unit
a lesson plan
a test
photographs of learning centers, bulletin boards, displays, or you in action
learning activity packet or photos thereof
demonstrations of extracurricular activities (brochures, photos, reports, etc.)
subject specific documents
student case study summary or abstract
letters of reference
letters of commendation next to photo or report of project it's about
audio or video tapes may be persuasive, but may be difficult to use effectively

Placement Files

Many students and schools are now opting for self-managed files, but CDO continues to maintain placement files for TESOL and TFL students. These files are most commonly requested for elementary and secondary positions in the US. This process is optional and initiated only by student request. Requirements and procedures for this process are outlined in

[How to Establish an Educational Placement File](#)