

# CV and Cover Letter Writing

---

Sasanjalie Jayasinghe

# What is a CV?

- A CV, which stands for **curriculum vitae**, is a document used when applying for jobs. It allows you to summarize your education, skills and experience enabling you to successfully express your abilities to potential employers. Alongside your CV, employers also usually ask for a cover letter.
- In the USA and Canada CVs are known as résumés.



# A Sample CV Format

1. Personal Information
2. Personal Profile
3. Professional Experience
4. Education
5. Publications
6. Projects
7. Awards
8. Skills
9. Voluntary Work
10. Referees

# 1) Personal Information

Name

Address

Telephone number

Email address

LinkedIn

Name: Shihani Jayathilake

Address: No. 501, Main Street, Colombo

Telephone number: +94771552323

Email address: [shihani@gmail.com](mailto:shihani@gmail.com)

LinkedIn: : [linkedin.com/in/....](https://www.linkedin.com/in/....)



Formal Photograph

## 2) Personal Profile

- A personal statement is a concise paragraph or summary, which details what you can bring to a job or company. It's also known as an opening statement or executive summary.
- If you're struggling with what to write, break your personal statement into three parts.

Focus on:

Who you are

What you can offer

Your career aims

- The personal profile sits at the top of your CV so any error will be immediately apparent.
- Read it aloud once you've finished writing to make sure it flows.

## Example

As a recent graduate from University of Kelaniya, with a first-class honours degree in Marketing, I have undertaken internships at industry-leading agencies such as Beyond Imagination and Noah Freemans. These placements have allowed me to develop sector knowledge and gain hands on experience, as well as expand transferable skills such as commercial awareness, communication and negotiation and analytical skills. My career aim is to gain a role which allows me to further my expertise and take on increased responsibility at a market-leading digital marketing agency.



### 3) Professional Experience

List your work experience in reverse date order, making sure that anything you mention is relevant to the job you're applying for. Include your job title, the name of the company, how long you were with the organization and key responsibilities.

Name of the position, Duration, organization,

A brief description about the position

Software Engineer, March 2019 to May 2020, ABC Marketing, Colombo 3

Developed a software application for Colombo Private Hospital

Trainee Net Developer, November 2018 to February 2019, Athlena Cooperation, Colombo 5

Developed a design using object-oriented design principles

## 4) Education

List and date all previous education, including professional qualifications. Place the most recent first. Include qualification type/grades, and the dates. Mention specific modules only where relevant.

Name of the degree, University, Area of specialization, Time period (from ... to ...)

Bachelor of Science in Information Systems (BSc.), University of Moratuwa, Specialized in Information Systems, from 2016 to present





## Secondary Education

Name of school, Time period (from ... to ...) (grade, year)

Daramaraja College, Kandy, from Grade 6 (2006) to Grade 13 (2013)

Kingswood College, Kandy, from Grade 1(2001) to Grade 5 (2005)

## Other Educational Qualification

Qualification, Institution, year

CIMA – Operational Level, Achievers Business School, 2014

Software Engineering for Data Scientist by Data Camp, 2018

## 5) Publications

Authour(s), “Title of the publication”, year

D. Herath, N. Sugathapala et al., “Chronic Kidney Disease Prediction from Machine Learning Classification”, 2020

## 6) Projects

### **Name of the project**

A brief description of the project

Contribution

### **Sinhala Letter Recognition (ongoing research)**

A neural network to learn the Sinhala letters using OCR

Contribution – Designing and developing the neural network

### **Voice Recognition**

An application which uses to recognize voice by using Fourier transformation and Machine Learning

Contribution - Designed and built Machine Learning model and Fourier transformation

## 7) Awards

Position, name of the award, year

Second place, Network & Systems Category - ACES Hackathon, 2017

First place, Dialog App Challenge, 2016



## 8) Skills

This is where you talk about the foreign languages you speak, and the IT packages you can competently use. The key skills that you list should be relevant to the job. Don't exaggerate your abilities, as you'll need to back up your claims at interview.

Spring boot (Mention the period)

Java

## 9) Voluntary Work

Position, Name of the committee/ organization, Time period (from ... to ...)

Local Committee **Vice Precedent - Business Development** (AIESEC Sri Lanka), 2017

**President** and Cofounder of Astronauts Club of University of Colombo, 2018

**Volunteered in Perth, Australia** as a (Visiting Facilitator) for High Schools –  
Communication and IT, 2017



## 10) Referees

Include contact information of at least two non-related referees **related to the field** you apply for  
Make sure that you inform the referees and get their consent to include such information.

Name

Dr. W.D.C. Fernando

Designation

Senior Lecturer,

Address

Department of Computer Science,

Contact information

University of Colombo,

Sri Lanka.

+94771234567

[fernando@colombo.ac.lk](mailto:fernando@colombo.ac.lk)



# Tyler Vader

**Address:** 10 Manchester street N21, Madison, WI 53703  
**Phone number:** (999) 999-9999 **Email address:** hello@kickresume.com  
**Web:** www.kickresume.com/cv/tyler

## Profile

Hardworking business-management graduate with proven leadership, organisational, and product-development skills seeking to apply my abilities to the position of [position] at [company name]

## Experience

09/2013 – present  
Dodgeville

### Associate Sourcing Manager Lands' End

- Manage the product-development process, from concept through introduction to market, ensuring design intention, merchant pricing and assortment strategies are achieved
- Primary interface for design group, merchandising and vendors through all stages in the product-development cycle (concept to customer)
- Responsible for overall costing of each component of the product so as to attain year-on-year increase in gross profit
- Negotiate pricing, quantity and lead-time delivery terms for key product inputs from factories, producers and suppliers
- Verify that data documented within internal software systems is entered accurately and in a timely manner by team members
- Designed reporting format, leveraging multiple database systems, to streamline data used by members of global product team

10/2007 – 01/2013  
Milwaukee, WI

### Rental Office Assistant Manager Concours Motors

- Responsible for logistic management of a multi-site 75+ car rental fleet
- Developed understanding of customer service and relations

## Education

07/2013

### Supply Chain and Operations Management University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee

- Study abroad – Australia
- Dean's List

## Achievements

- Manage category driving over \$40 million annually
- Lead costing negotiations to increase gross margin by 15% on key products
- Excellent reporting and presentation skills
- Highly proficient with MS Excel, MS Access, PLM (product lifecycle management) software
- Completed course work in ERP software implementation

# Some Useful Tips

- **Avoid titling the document 'curriculum vitae' or 'CV'.** It's a waste of space. Instead let your name serve as the title.
- **Section headings are a good way to break up your CV.** Ensure they stand out by making them larger (font size 14 or 16) and bold.
- **Avoid fonts such as Comic Sans.** Choose something professional, clear and easy to read such as Arial, Calibri or Times New Roman. Use a font size between 11 and 12 and single spacing to make sure that potential employers can read your CV. Ensure all fonts and font sizes are consistent throughout.
- **Set one-inch margins for all four sides. Stick to a single dates format on your CV.**
- **Don't think that you must include every single detail about your life to the CV.**

- **List everything in reverse chronological order.** Then the recruiter sees your work history and most recent achievements first.
- **Keep it concise by using clear spacing and bullet points.** This type of CV layout allows potential employers to skim your CV and quickly pick out important information first.
- **Name the document when saving** - Don't just save as 'Document 1'. Make sure the title of the document is professional and identifies you, such as 'Subhagya Jayathilake-CV'.
- **Unless the job advertisement states differently (for example, it may ask you to provide your CV and cover letter as a Word document) save with a PDF file extension to make sure it can be opened and read on any machine.**
- **If you're posting your CV, print it on white A4 paper** - Only print on one side and don't fold your CV - you don't want it to arrive creased.

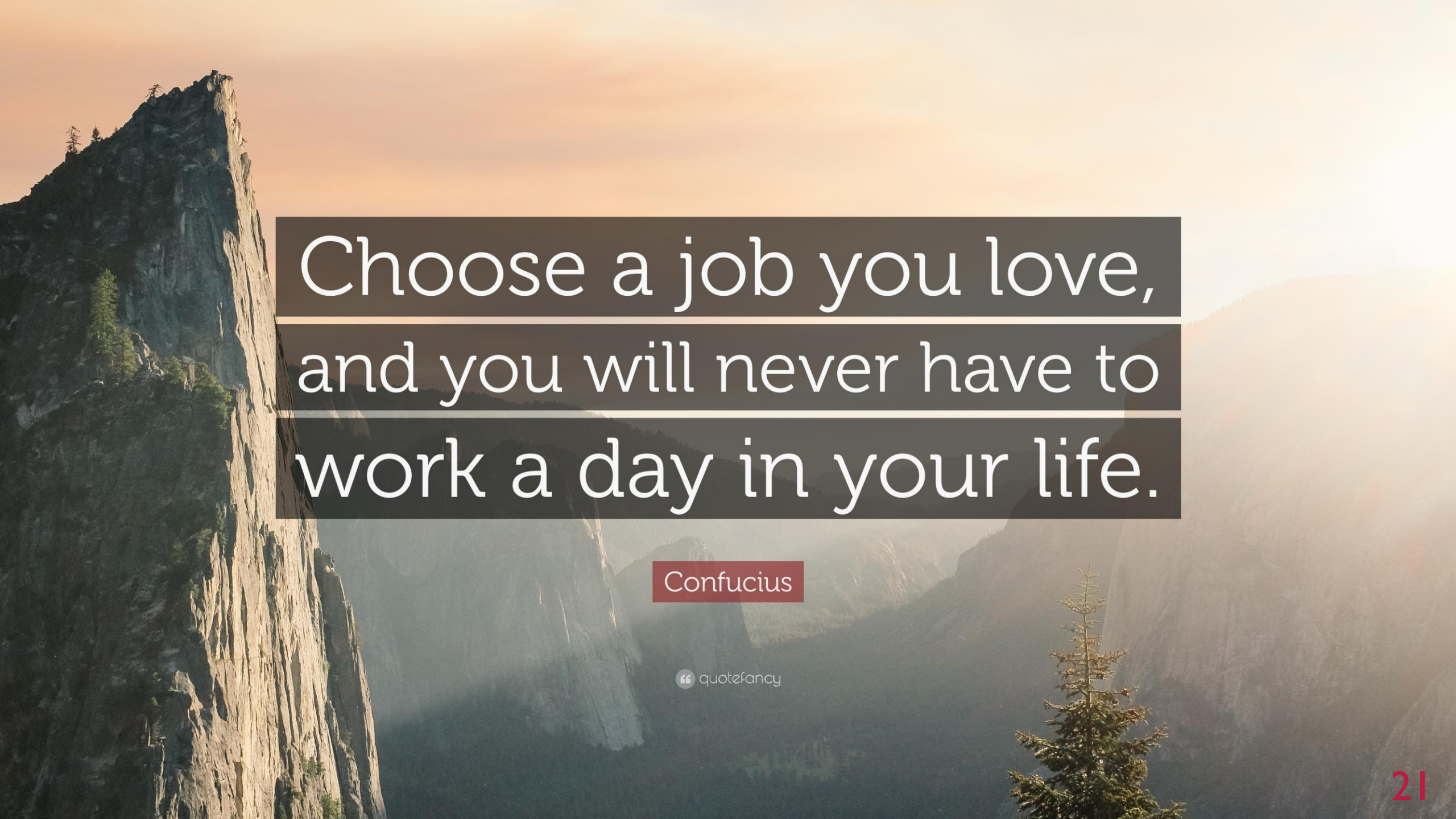
- **Use active verbs when possible.** For example, include words like 'created', 'analyzed' and 'devised' to present yourself as a person who shows initiative.
- **A good CV doesn't have any spelling or grammar mistakes.** Use a spell checker and enlist a second pair of eyes to check over the document.
- **Avoid generic, over-used phrases** such as 'team player', 'hardworking' and 'multitasker'. Instead, provide real-life examples that demonstrate all of these skills.
- **Make sure your email address sounds professional.** If your personal address is inappropriate create a new account for professional use.
- Try to keep the CV at one page length. Always strive to incorporate **only the most relevant facts**. Communicate all the key information in a single page. You can exceed one page if required. Yet, you should not exceed two pages.



**When your interview is in  
10 mins and you see the  
cover page of your CV that  
says Curriculum Vitamin.**







Choose a job you love,  
and you will never have to  
work a day in your life.

Confucius

“ quote fancy

# What is a Cover Letter?

---

- A cover letter is a document sent alongside your CV when applying for jobs. It acts as a personal introduction and helps to sell your application. A cover letter is necessary as it gives you the chance to explain to an employer why you're the best candidate for the job.
- You do this by highlighting relevant skills and experience; therefore, you should always write your cover letter with the position you're applying for in mind.



# The Purpose of a Cover Letter

When writing a cover letter, you should:

- mention the job you're applying for
- mention why you are interested in the job
- show that your skills and experience match the skills and experience required for the job
- encourage the reader to read your CV
- finish with a call to action (for example, asking for a quick, favourable response)



- Before writing your cover letter it's important that you do your research.
- Reading the job description thoroughly is essential.
- To help you craft a successful cover letter discover more about:
  - who will be reading your cover letter
  - the organization and its culture
  - the industry it operates in and any relevant news
  - company competitors and market position
  - the organizations goals over the next five years

- In Sri Lanka and most other Asian countries, we commonly use a brief cover letter which **does not exceed one page**.
- **Use a different cover letter for each job you apply for.**
- Applications should always include a cover letter unless the job advertisement instructs you differently.
- Don't fill up space by repeating what's already covered in your CV.

# A Sample Cover Letter Format

---

- 1) Sender's address
- 2) Date
- 3) Receiver's address
- 4) Salutation
- 5) Tittle (optional)
- 6) Content
- 7) Closing Remark
- 8) Sender's name, signature



- Refer to the lesson on “Email Writing and Letter Writing” to refresh your knowledge on point 1,2,3,4,5,7, and 8.

## 6) Content

When writing your cover letter keep it brief, while making sure it emphasizes your suitability for the job. It can be broken down into the following sections:

- **First paragraph** - The opening statement should set out why you're writing the letter. Begin by stating the position you're applying for, where you saw.

With reference to your advertisement published on the Sunday Observer 10<sup>th</sup> June 2021, I wish to submit my CV for your kind perusal.

- **Second paragraph** - Highlight relevant experience and demonstrate how your skills match the specific requirements of the job description. Summarize any additional strengths and explain how these could benefit the company.
- **Third paragraph** - Cover why you're suitable for the job, what attracted you to this type of work, why you're interested in working for the company and what you can offer the organization. This is a good opportunity to show off your knowledge of the company.

\*\*\*You can **combine** the second and the third paragraphs as well.

- **Last paragraph** - Use the closing paragraph to round up your letter. Reiterate your interest in the role and indicate your desire for a personal interview.

Jane Smith  
737 Springfield Street  
Vancouver, B.C. V6R 2R7  
604.555.5555  
jane\_smith@email.com

January 23, 2010

Robert Taylor  
Software Development Team Lead  
Software Builders Inc.  
25 Corporate Way  
Vancouver, B.C. V6R 3L6

Dear Robert Taylor,


I am submitting my resume for consideration towards the **C#.NET Software Developer** position advertised in the *Globe Daily*. I am confident that my experience in C#.NET and professional web development skills are an excellent match for this job.

I would bring a range of programming experience to Software Builders Inc., including:

- Developing financial software using over five years experience in C#.NET and AJAX.
- Programming web-based financial applications in Java, C++, and C#.Net.
- Coding a web-based shopping cart supporting 85,200 customers using C#.NET.

I welcome the opportunity to further discuss this position with you. If you have questions or would like to schedule an interview, please contact me by phone at 604.555.5555 or by email at jane\_smith@email.com. I have enclosed my resume for your review. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,  
Jane Smith



'Create the highest,  
grandest vision  
possible for your life  
because you  
become what you believe.'

Oprah Winfrey



# References

---

- How to write a CV

<https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/cvs-and-cover-letters/how-to-write-a-cv>

- How to write a Cover Letter

<https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/cvs-and-cover-letters/cover-letters>