

CV Writing & Interviewing Skills



Life Skills Unit

Outline:

- CV layout and format
- CV main sections
- Applying for jobs
- Commonly asked questions
- Interview preparation
- CV review
- Interviewing skills quiz

CV layout and format

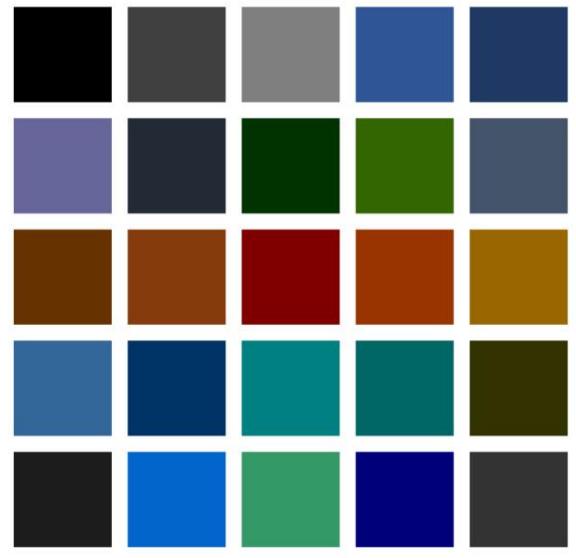
The image shows a sample CV layout with several callout boxes and arrows pointing to specific elements:

- Small Header:** Points to the top left corner of the document.
- Narrow Margin:** Points to the left margin of the main content area.
- Contacts:** Points to the contact information section, noting that icons are acceptable.
- Name:** Points to the name at the top right, stating that large font size (~24:30 pt) and bold/ALL-CAPS are acceptable.
- Clear & large Section Heading:** Points to the "PROFESSIONAL TITLE" section, stating that clear and large section headings (~12:14 pt) and bold/ALL-CAPS are acceptable.
- Line spacing:** Points to the overall line spacing, stating it is ~1.15:1.25.
- Small space between sections:** Points to the space between sections like CONTACT and SUMMARY.
- SUMMARY:** Points to the summary section, stating that it should be clear and large (~12:14 pt) and include your story (education, career goals, personal info).
- Content:** Points to the work experience section, stating that font size (~10:12 pt) is appropriate.
- EDUCATION:** Points to the education section, noting the small space between sections and the indentation of the content.
- WORK EXPERIENCE:** Points to the work experience section, detailing the font size (~10:12 pt) and the use of bold for job position and company names.
- Indentation:** Points to the indentation of the work experience content.

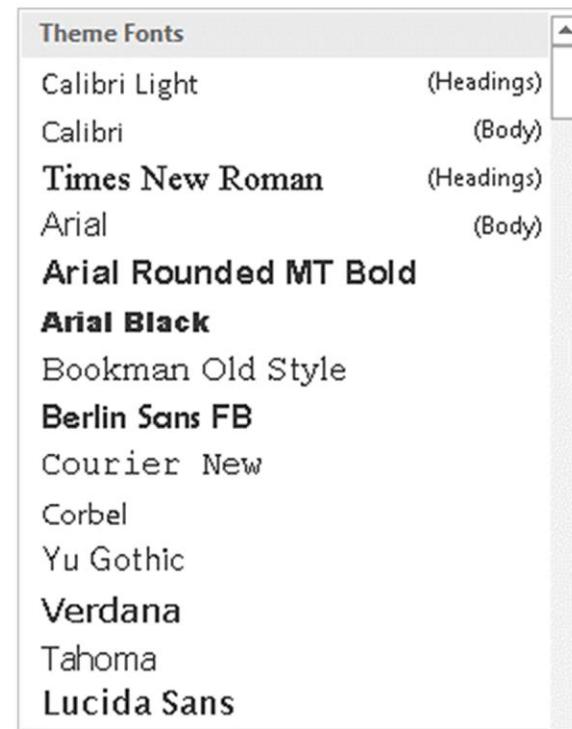
CV layout and format

Cont'd

Use conservative colors

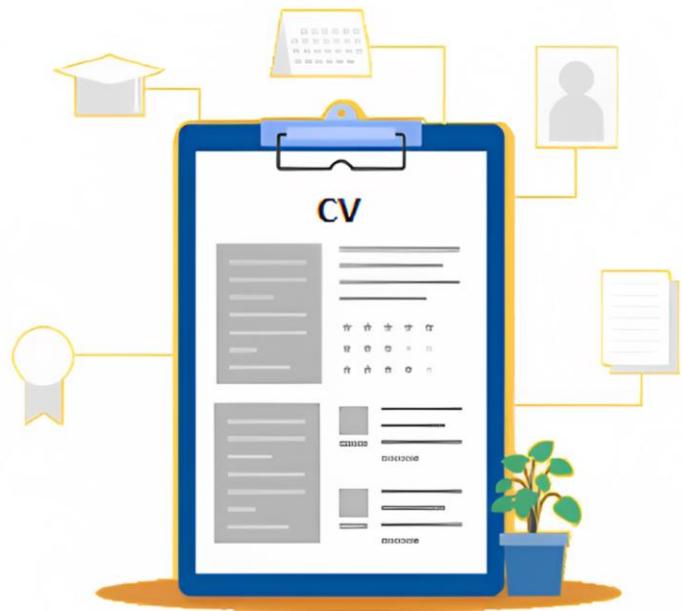


Use professional fonts

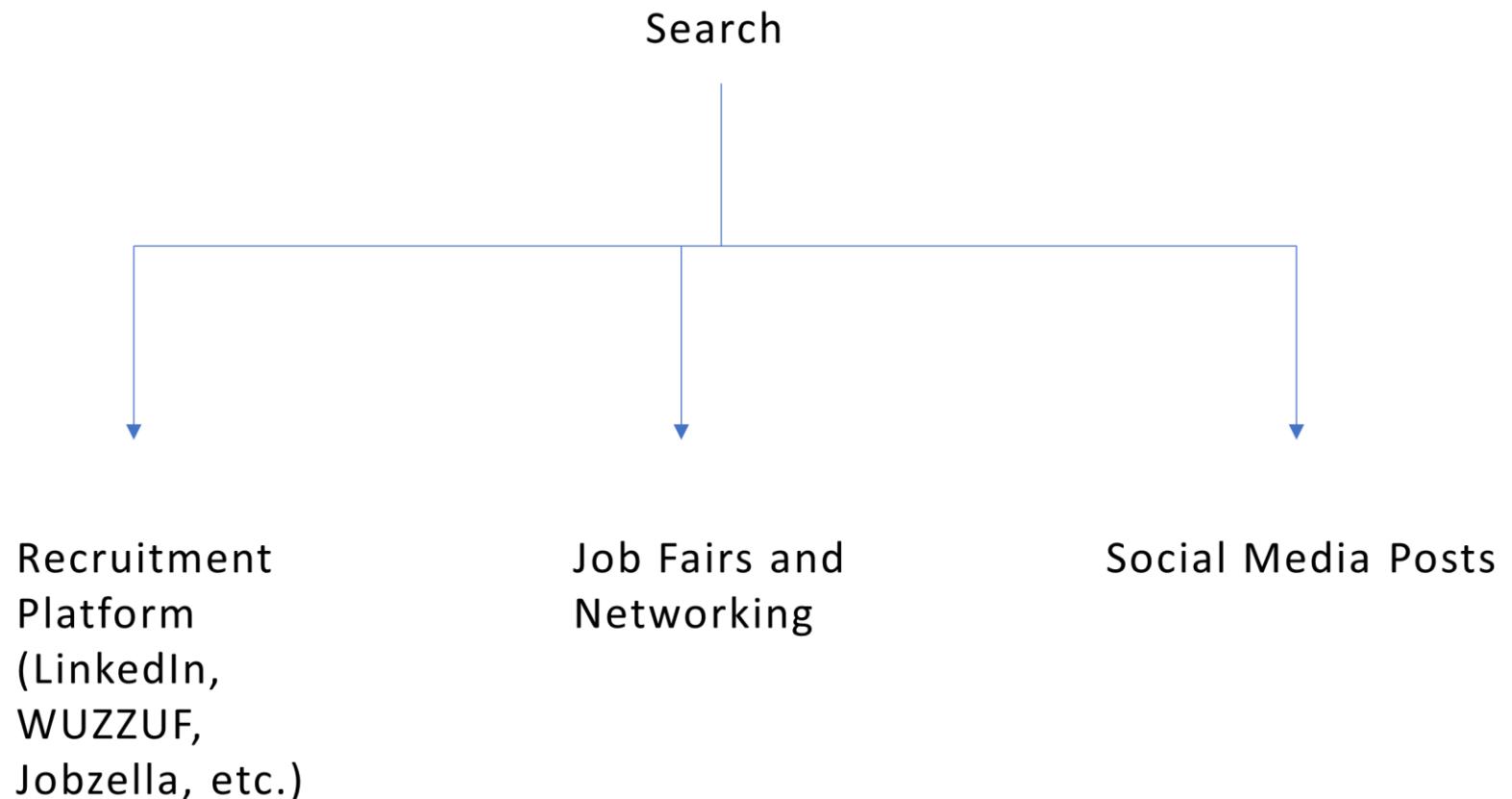


CV main sections

- Contact Information
- Profile
- Internships
- Work Experience / Freelancing Experience
- Education
- Technical Skills
- Courses
- Certifications
- Languages
- Extracurricular Activities
- Additional Information



Finding job openings



Before you apply!

Read the job post carefully! and find connections/ gaps between the job listing and your resume.



**Job Description
and
Specification**

A screenshot of a job posting on a recruitment website. The search bar at the top shows ".net developer in Egypt". The main listing is for a "Senior Software Development Engineer" position at Microsoft in Cairo, Egypt. The listing includes details like "Full-time - Mid-Senior level", "10,001+ employees - Software Development", and "247 school alumni work here". It also mentions skills: "Communication, Object-Oriented Programming (OOP), +8 more". At the bottom are "Apply" and "Save" buttons. To the right, there are three sections: "About the job", "Responsibilities", and "Qualifications".

.net developer in Egypt
24k results

Senior Software Development Engineer
Microsoft
Cairo, Cairo, Egypt
Promoted

Senior Software Development Engineer
Microsoft - Cairo, Cairo, Egypt

Full-time - Mid-Senior level
10,001+ employees - Software Development
247 school alumni work here
See how you compare to 1 applicants. Try Premium for free
Skills: Communication, Object-Oriented Programming (OOP), +8 more

About the job
Responsibilities
Qualifications

Important tips

- Keep your CV short.
- Focus on achievements and mention results with numbers.
- Don't include a "Career Objective" section... it's old fashion.
- Put the best, most relevant information first.
- Keep it in reverse chronological order.
- Don't include your full address! Just the city and the governorate.
- Ditch "References available upon request".

Important tips

Cont'd

- Avoid long paragraphs of text.
- Use bullets (except in the Profile section).
- Ensure there are no grammatical errors or spelling mistakes.
- It's not wrong to add a photo to your CV, but there is no need to!
- Submit you CV in PDF format, and name your file clearly.

(ex: “First Name Last Name _ CV.pdf”)

Commonly asked questions



Commonly asked questions

1. Self-Introduction/Personal statement questions: (should include what is not included in the CV e.g. the why behind the choices, the drives and motives behind the changes and decisions, the candidate's passion about the field and how it started, the short term aspirations and goals.. etc.):

Usually a direct approach at the beginning of the interview

- Introduce yourself to me
- Tell me a little/ more about yourself/ your education/ work experience?



Commonly asked questions

Cont'd

2. Self-Awareness/Self-Assessment (and analytical mind) questions:

a) Strengths

i) Direct approach:

- What is your major strength?
- How would you describe yourself? (what are the most prominent features of your personality?)

ii) Indirect approach:

- Out of all applicants, why should I hire you?
- If I call your ex-manager/professor/leader/colleagues what is the first thing he/she/they will tell me about you?



Commonly asked questions

Cont'd

2. Self-Awareness/Self-Assessment (and analytical mind) questions:

b) Weaknesses /areas for development (also asked to check levels of honesty, openness, resourcefulness and stress management)

i) Direct approach:

- What is your major weakness?
- What is the one thing you would like to develop/change in yourself?

ii) Indirect approach:

- Tell me about a previous failure (failed experience/wrong decision).
- Tell about a time when you made a mistake.



Commonly asked questions

Cont'd

3. Medium/Long term planning, career goals and level of ambition:

- Where do you see yourself in 5/7/10 years?
- What is your career goal?



Commonly asked questions

Cont'd

4. Work Experience:

- Why you are leaving/changing (did you leave/change) your previous job(s)?
- What were the good and bad features of your previous job(s)?
- What do you consider to be your biggest professional achievement?

5. Knowledge of and keenness on the job/organization:

- Why are you interested in this position?
- Why do you want to work here?
- What do you know about us?



Commonly asked questions

Cont'd

6. Checking on a particular skill/trait:

- Are you a (leader, team player, creative, problem solver.. etc.)?
- How do you handle conflict at work?
- How do you cope with pressure?
- Do you prefer working alone or with others?



Commonly asked questions

Cont'd

7. Other topics:

- What is your salary range expectation?
- Is there anything else you would like to add that would help us to evaluate you as a candidate?
- Is there a question you wanted me to ask you that I didn't?
- Do you have any questions for me?



Interview preparation

- Plan your interview attire the night before.
- Look professional; neat, clean, and well groomed.
- Avoid neon colors.



Interview preparation

Cont'd

- Before each interview, review your CV and any application forms you may have completed.
- Have your references ready (*what is a Reference sheet?*)
- Bring a copy of your CV, also a notebook and a pen.



Interview preparation

Cont'd

- Prepare real-life work experiences to showcase your skills and experience.
- You will be asked questions that require you to demonstrate your behavior and/or skills in specific circumstances with examples. Prepare examples using the **STAR** technique; explain the **Situation** you faced, or the **Task** you were given, say what **Action** you took, and finish with the **Result**.



Interview preparation

- Check what time you need to arrive, and make sure that you know how to get to where the interview is being held.
- Rehearse the first 60 seconds of the interview - they matter most.
- Go into the interview with a positive mindset.
- Smile and greet your interviewer formally and with confidence.
- Sit up straight.
- Show you understand the job you're interviewing for.



Interview preparation

- Ask the interviewer to repeat or explain further if you do not understand a question.
- Speak clearly and avoid slang.
- Watch your body language and voice tone.
- Be aware of your verbal tics and work on eliminating them (ie: 'OK!' – 'You Know' – 'in fact' – 'and so forth' – 'actually'.... etc.)
- Don't forget to smile.
- Put your phone into silent mode.
- Remember to keep calm.
- Don't forget to say thank you at the end.



CV review



Case study



Case study - The Do(s) and Don't(s)

Main points covered by the Case study:

- Look after yourself well starting the night before.
- Plan how you would reach the location and take the most comfortable transportation you can afford.
- Be polite to everyone in the office.
- Arrive a few minutes early.
- Don't move around or help yourself to anything that is not for guests. You may use things made for public use such as the water cooler or vending machines.
- Wait to be seated and remember that the host is the one to offer the handshake.

Case study - The Do(s) and Don't(s)

Cont'd

Main points covered by the Case study:

- Don't put anything on the interviewer's desk.
- Never interrupt the interviewer. Listen, take a pause and think before answering.
- Put all the body language skills you have acquired in the communication and presentation courses to use.
- Thank your interviewer at the end of the interview and express that you're keen on the job (you may send a "Thank you" mail next day).
- Leave immediately after the interview.

Interviewing skills quiz



Question 1

You received a phone call to invite you to an interview at a company that you applied for previously. What is the most important point (first priority) to ask about and know clearly before the end of the call:

- a) The salary. Because it is important to set expectations and save efforts in case the salary is very low.
- b) The time, date and location of the interview. It's important to get this information clear and correct.
- c) The names and titles of the interviewers. It's important to collect some information about them and check their profiles online.
- d) The dress code for the interview. To be honest; it's much easier to dress casually so I hope they recommend casual dress code.

Question 2

The reasonable duration for a job task requested by the hiring manager is:

- a) Not more than 24 hours
- b) One to three days
- c) One to two weeks
- d) About one month

Question 3

You have been requested to submit a recorded video personal statement by the hiring manager, the deadline was after 24 hours but for some reasons you failed to submit it before the deadline. You are still interested in the job, what would you do?

- a) Do nothing. You have been rejected anyway.
- b) Send the video anyway and mention nothing about the delay.
- c) Send the video along with a note to apologize for the delay.
- d) Contact the hiring manager and ask him if it is acceptable to submit the video after the deadline.

Question 4

After a job interview, I begin contacting the Hiring Manager to see when a hiring decision will be made. Which of the following is appropriate?

- a) It's important to contact the Hiring Manager every day to show how much you are interested in the job.
- b) You can follow up with the Hiring Manager only the day after the interview, and that's it.
- c) You can contact the Hiring Manager to follow up after 2 weeks or so.
- d) It is wrong to contact the Hiring Manager after the interview.

Question 5

You have a great sense of humor, so you should:

- a) Use humorous greeting on the email (or application) when job-hunting, but never in an interview.
- b) Use your sense of humor during the interview, but first test the atmosphere to make sure it's acceptable, and the interviewer loves jokes and ready to laugh.
- c) Wait for the interviewer to crack jokes first and then you can use your sense of humor.
- d) Avoid being funny at all during an interview, and save your sense of humor for another occasion.

Question 6

As a fresh graduate; what is the most important point (first priority) should you focus on during the interview?

- a) What you can offer the company
- b) The salary you want
- c) Working hours
- d) What the company can offer you

Question 7

What does the S.T.A.R. method of answering interview questions stand for?

- a) Seek, Task, Ask, Result
- b) Situation, Train, Act, Review
- c) Situation, Task, Action, Result
- d) None of the above

Question 8

What should you do if you get nervous during an interview?

- a) Discretely play with a small object, like a coin or pen.
- b) Fidget gently which will discharge your anxiety.
- c) Speak slower and take a deeper breath.
- d) Leave immediately when you start to feel nervous.

Question 9

How do you respond if you do not know how to answer a question?

- a) Take few seconds to think, then answer the question to the best of your ability.
- b) Ignore the question and change the subject.
- c) Ask the interviewer to skip this question and that you are ready for the next question.
- d) Construct a complex answer that looks brilliant but in fact doesn't mean anything.

Question 10

When you write a cover letter you detail:

- a) That you are interested in the open position, that you have a lot of good experience and list your academic qualifications and certifications.
- b) That you have been always dreaming to be a Software Developer since your childhood, your sources of inspiration, your role models, and also that you are fascinated by the company and its products.
- c) Why you interested in the job position, why you are qualified to fill it, where you have received the experience that qualifies you for the position, and what will you add to the job and to the company.
- d) That you are interested in the job position the company advertised in just a few sentences.

Question 11

Is adding the reference's details on your CV important, and why?

- a) Yes, you should add two references in you CV, and include full name, job title, company, phone and email.
- b) Yes, you should add two references in you CV, but include full name and LinkedIn only.
- c) No, no need to mention references in your CV.
- d) No, no need to have references at all.

Question 12

Mentioning influential acquaintances during your interview is a plus; it might increase your acceptance rate. What do you think:

- a) Yes, it is a good chance to gain extra marks.
- b) Yes, but first you have to take permission from your acquaintances.
- c) Yes, but you must provide an evidence, a photo on your mobile with them for example.
- d) No, not recommended to mention any acquaintances.

Question 13

When asked illegal/ irrelevant question, what should I do?

- a) Answer right away, there's nothing to hide.
- b) Refuse to answer politely.
- c) Check the intent behind the question first before deciding.
- d) None of the above.

Question 14

You have to tailor your CV according to the vacancy you're applying for:

- a) Yes, based on detailed analysis for the job.
- b) No, it's better to leave it generic.
- c) It's time wasting as the Hiring Manager will not notice the difference anyway.
- d) Just write everything you have done in your life in the CV and leave it to the Hiring Manager to find what he wants.

Question 15

It's ok to bring a friend or a family member to the building where the interview will be conducted. It will make you feel comfortable:

- a) Yes, of course, and introduce him to the interviewer as well. Why not!
- b) Yes, but ask him to stay at the waiting area inside the building.
- c) No, he will cause distraction and will destroy your focus.
- d) No, it is not professional to bring someone with you.

We Wish You The Best