

# Writing the perfect CV

COMMUNICATION

LEVEL  
Upper-intermediate

NUMBER  
EN\_BE\_3A04X

LANGUAGE  
English

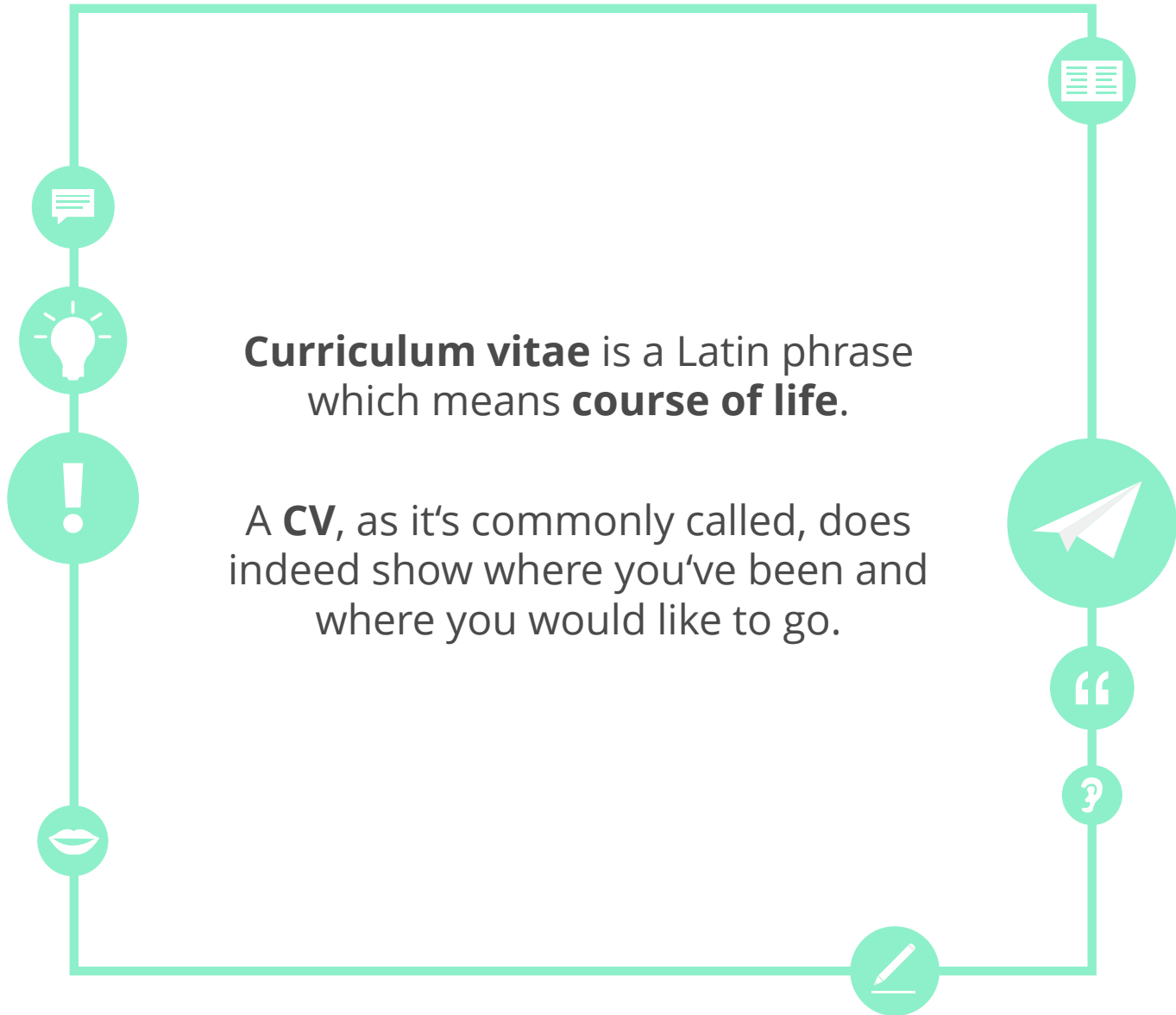




## Goals

- Can understand the purpose of a CV and recognise the important information to include
- Can read, proofread and write portions of a CV







## Curriculum vitae

- Your CV is like a **biography of your professional life** that someone can read and understand quickly. It contains the **highlights** in an **easy-to-read** format.



In this lesson, we'll discuss what your **CV** should include and how to describe your experiences in this document.



## Discuss

# What is your definition of the perfect CV?





## What does every CV need?

- All CVs are different – your CV is probably very different from that of a world-renowned surgeon or an opera singer or even your best friend.
- However, they all contain the same basic information.

Be sure to include:	Example:
personal details e.g. name, title, etc.	Mr Benjamin Turner
work experience	Head of Finance, Holly Hills Hospital
educational background	MSc Finance, first class honours
skills	proficient in statistical software
references	Mrs Linda Holmes, former supervisor



## What should you highlight?

- How do you sum up work experience in just a few sentences?
- Your employment descriptions should **highlight** the **positive contributions** you make or made as an employee.

Consider highlighting:	For example:
<b>quantifiable achievements</b>	I increased quarterly sales by 5%.
<b>responsibilities</b>	I oversaw our customer feedback line.
<b>general accomplishments</b>	I secured new clients.



On your CV, you should also include your **position** or **position title**, your **duration of employment** and a brief **summary of your role**.



## Talking about professional experience

**You will hear four people describe recent work experience.**



1

Listen to the individuals describe their work.

2

Take notes on what you hear.

3

Complete the activity on the following page.





## Match the person to the job description, as it might appear on their CV

1. George

2. Kerry

3. Ray

4. Anna

A

Created innovative video content about local tourist attractions. Significantly increased social media presence.

B

Executed multi-country product launch. Coordinated with engineering and design teams to facilitate a flawless product development process within a specific timeline. Planned training sessions and campaigns to enhance product launch.

C

Led public awareness campaign about environmental issues, contacting upwards of 50 individuals per day. Developed stakeholder support on local environmental issues. Implemented outreach strategy to maximise impact.

D

Managed day-to-day business of an executive officer in a high-pressure environment. Coordinated meetings and schedules. Produced and edited documents and reports.



## CV style: short and sweet

- You may have noticed that the writing style in a CV is very **concise**.
- We typically use **short, active sentences** and even drop **pronouns**.
- The boxes below show how CV writing differs from our usual way of communicating.

### CV-appropriate

- Thoroughly planned well-organised trips and events for corporate clients.

### not CV-appropriate

- At Comet Corporate Travel I had to plan trips and events from start to finish for corporate clients. I'd develop the itinerary and make sure everything was perfect!



## CV style up close

- Key features of CV-style writing include: short, **condensed sentences**; **limited use of pronouns**; using the **past simple**; beginning sentences with an **action verb**; and using **descriptive phrases and words**.

### Employment experience:

- Office of Foreign Affairs  
*Training and Learning Manager*
- Facilitated new employee onboarding.
- Evaluated and analysed professional learning needs.
- Implemented new professional development opportunities, including a technology skills seminar and lunch-and-learn series.

### Why is this effective?

- Verbs like **facilitate**, **evaluate**, **analyse** and **implement** are **specific** and **show leadership** and **skill**.
- This description provides a **thorough** picture of the role and highlights achievements and projects that were put into practice.
- It offers a mix of **general responsibilities** and **specific examples of achievements**.



## What else makes your CV perfect?

- Below are some other sections that can be included in your CV.

<b>skills</b>	Can you build databases? Or plan events? Do you have any certifications?
<b>hobbies and interests</b>	This section can highlight that you are a well-rounded individual.
<b>references</b>	Pick professional references who can vouch for you at work.



These sections aren't always necessary, but most people will include at least one of these so their CV is more than just their employment and education history.



## A sample CV (1/2)

**Read through the sample CV.**

**Pay attention not only to the text itself but also to how it is laid out.**

Olivia N. Hayes  
29 Burbage Lane, Harewood, Leeds, UK, LS17 9LE  
01604 333 259 [ohayes@uni.leeds.co.uk](mailto:ohayes@uni.leeds.co.uk)

### **Education**

Bachelor of Arts: Art History with distinction

Relevant coursework: Pedagogy of Art Education; summer course in Curatorial Studies

### **Employment Experience**

Elwyn-Merwyn Art Collection

*Curatorial Intern*

May 2015 – May 2016

Planned special exhibitions in partnership with visiting artists and museum staff.

Developed educational programmes around current exhibitions for adults and children.

Facilitated exhibition openings, including management of event budget, supervision of event staff and event marketing.



## A sample CV (2/2)

Department of Classics

*Administrative Assistant*

September 2013 – May 2016

Managed department correspondence, including enquiries from potential students.

Coordinated guest speakers and lecturers for department events, including arranging transportation and accommodation for visiting academics.

Developed and implemented course sign-up system for university students.

### **Skills**

Languages

Fluent in French (C2 Certificate)

Familiar with all major office software programs

Experienced budget manager

### **Personal Interests**

Leeds Literacy Organisation volunteer

Women's Choir Association

### **References**

[www.lingoda.com](http://www.lingoda.com)

Dr Ronald J. Percy: Department of Classics Chairperson



## Fill in the gaps

Fill in the gaps with the action verbs from the CV.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ a calendar system that resulted in increased participation in and satisfaction with team meetings.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ a team of 6 people and coordinated all major projects that the team was responsible for.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ multiple team-building events, from idea conception to travel arrangements.
4. Designed and \_\_\_\_\_ materials for both the marketing and product departments.
5. Planned and \_\_\_\_\_ events that helped to improve inter-departmental communication.

**developed**

**planned**

**coordinated**

**implemented**

**managed**



## Which section does this belong to?

Sort each item into the correct list.

a. led and analysed  
training  
procedures

b. formulated  
guidelines for  
overseas branding

c. intermediate  
competency in  
Mandarin

d. courses in  
statistics and  
theoretical  
mathematics

e. public speaking

f. coordinated  
multiple teams to  
meet deadlines

g. managed a multi-  
million Euro  
fundraising  
campaign

h. doctorate in  
Mathematics

i. oversaw product  
launch

j. certified  
mediator

k. Master of  
Business  
Administration  
candidate

l. proficient in Excel

educational  
background

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employment  
history

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skills

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## Cultural and professional differences

- If you're applying for a job abroad, make sure you find out what the **typical expectations** of a CV are before sending off your application.
- Also consider any **special requirements** that **specific industries** have.
- Sometimes, **job adverts** also **specify** what you should include on your CV.

- For example:
  - A CV in the UK does not usually include a photograph.
  - An American CV doesn't usually include a date of birth.
  - A CV for an academic job should include papers, publications and conference attendances.
  - Some jobs in the USA might ask for a **resume**, which tends to be shorter than a CV.





## Discuss

**Think about CVs in your home country. What sort of things are normally included?**



**Have you ever applied for a job outside of your home country? If yes, did you find it difficult?**



## proofreading

We all make mistakes – it's only human! However, you should try to **avoid errors** when writing your CV.

**Proofreading** your application, i.e. checking for errors, is **essential**, and asking someone else to proofread it for you is even better than doing it yourself.

Too many mistakes in your CV might give a **bad impression** to potential employers!



Remember that spell check won't catch every error!



## Proofreading

### **Oxford Foundation for international Peace and Development**

Oxford, uK, August 2010 – August 2012

*Junior Communications Assistant*

- Wrote and edited press. releases and issue briefings on wide rang of foreign policy topics.
- Write daily analysis for Oxford Foudnations award-winning website.
- Organised press events, visits by high-profile government officials and policy conferences.
- I helped craft and implement proactive social media strategies.

**Proofread this section of a CV. Correct any errors that you find and offer suggestions about tone, style or phrasing as needed.**



## Let your CV reflect you

- Below are a few **final tips** for writing a high-quality curriculum vitae.

- Balance general statements with **specific examples** of work achievements. Use numbers and statistics when possible.

- **Never lie or exaggerate.** We want to make ourselves sound good but overselling your experience can harm you in the end.

- Use **consistent formatting, style and language.** For example, stick to British English throughout your whole CV.

- Do you feel ready to deal with your own work history? We'll now take some time to practise CV writing.



## Make notes

**What are or were your responsibilities at your current or most recent job?**

**What's the best job you've ever had?  
And the worst?**

**What qualities make you a good candidate for a job?**

**What accomplishments can you name from past work or academic experience?**



## Building up your CV

Now use your notes from the previous slide as well as the words below to help you write descriptions of two prior employment experiences. They could be jobs, internships or volunteer placements.



motivated, dedicated, reliable, responsible

lead

manage

organise

plan

execute

coordinate



## Reflect on the goals

Go back to the second slide of the lesson and check if you have achieved all the goals of the lesson.

yes

no







## Reflect on this lesson

Think about everything you have seen in this lesson.  
What were the most difficult activities or words? The easiest?



If you have time, go over  
the most difficult slides again



## Answer key

**Exercise p. 9**  
1b, 2c, 3d, 4a

**Exercise p. 15**  
implemented, managed, planned, developed, coordinated

**Exercise p. 16**  
Educational background: d, h, k  
Employment history: a, b, f, g, i  
Skills: c, e, j, l

**Exercise p. 20**  
Oxford Foundation for **International** Peace and Development  
Oxford, **U.K.**, August 2010 – August 2012  
*Junior Communications Assistant*  
Wrote and edited **press releases** and issue briefings on a wide **range** of foreign policy topics.  
**Wrote** daily analysis for Oxford **Foundations'** award-winning website.  
Organised press events, visits by high-profile government officials and policy conferences.  
**Crafted** and **implemented** proactive social media strategies.



## Transcription (1/2)

### Exercise p. 8

*Please be sure to read all names clearly.*

**George:**

I liked my last job a lot. I worked in product development for an electronics company. I got to work with talented people all over the world because we launched products everywhere! For example, I worked on a big campaign where I ended up talking with engineers and graphic designers, helping them stay on schedule. I was also doing stuff with shops that sell our products and led a big training session for our sales reps. It was a busy time but so much fun.

**Kerry:**

I certainly learnt a lot when I spent the summer working on an environmental campaign a few years ago. The job involved talking to strangers all day, asking them to sign petitions and trying to inform them about a proposed new law that would have hurt the local river. I had to talk to at least 50 people a day and get at least 25 signatures – quite a challenge!

[transcription continues on next page]



## Transcription (2/2)

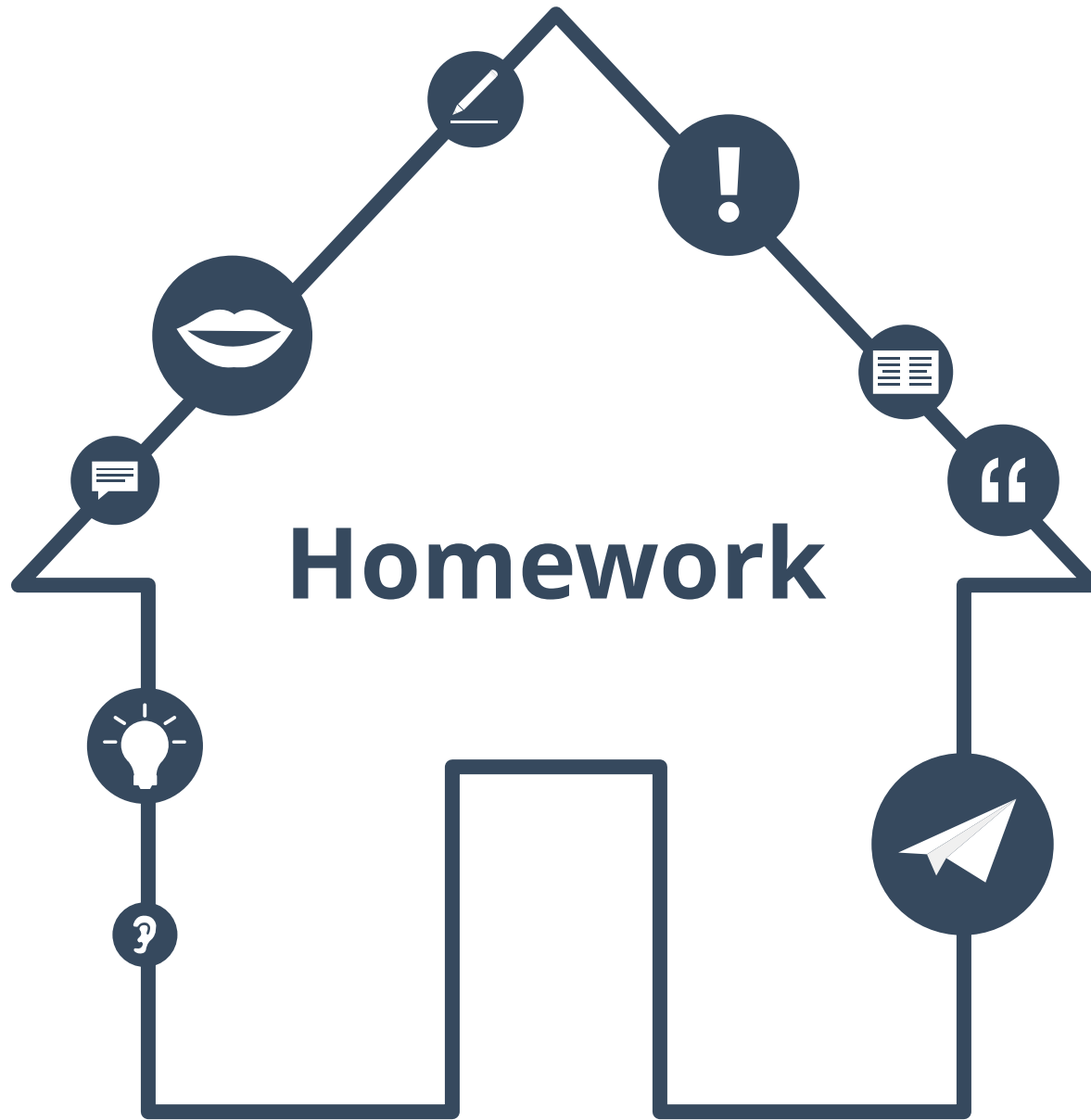
### Exercise p. 8 continued

**Ray:**

Before I started this job, I was the executive assistant for Tim Carlson. It was a good way to get into the automotive industry. Tim was the CFO of the company, and because I was writing e-mails for him, prepping reports and arranging meetings, I was learning all the time about our sales, our weaknesses and where there were growth opportunities for our brand.

**Anna:**

I worked part-time as a video editor at a regional tourism office for a number of years while I was juggling other jobs. I'm proud of the work that I did there. Before I worked there, the videos were nothing more than slideshows of pretty pictures, whereas I did interviews with people, invited local musicians to play, found funny hosts, all sorts! Now there's a decent following on social media, and I like to hope that this helped to attract more tourists to the region.





## Fill in the blank with the word that fits best

1. \_\_\_\_\_ new social media marketing strategies, resulting in an increase in site traffic.

- a. Made                      b. Motivated                      c. Arranged                      d. Implemented

2. \_\_\_\_\_ logistics including managing deliveries, transportation and security teams.

- a. Executed                      b. Created                      c. Studied                      d. Graduated

3. Expanded company service offerings with \_\_\_\_\_ consulting packages.

- a. reasonable                      b. innovative                      c. idiotic                      d. responsible

4. \_\_\_\_\_ an international team of researchers.

- a. Coordinated                      b. Created                      c. Facilitated                      d. Arranged



## Complete your CV

**Using the material you began writing on p. 23, complete your CV.  
Be sure to include all sections: personal details, employment  
background, educational background, skills and references.**

○	_____ My CV _____
○	_____ Personal Details _____
○	_____ Employment _____
○	_____ Education _____
○	_____ Skills _____
○	_____ References _____
○	_____
○	_____
○	_____
○	_____
○	_____
○	_____
○	_____



## Homework answer key

**Exercise p. 30**  
1d, 2a, 3b, 4a





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