



BRISTOL
WATER
THE FOUNDATION

CV Buster!

“Believe you can and you’re half-way there.”

- Theodore Roosevelt

It all starts with education.

What's a CV?

It's simple

CV stands for Curriculum Vitae. It's Latin and means 'the course of one's life'. You didn't even really need to know that...

All you need to know is that a CV is pretty simple. It should be a short and breezy snapshot of your brilliant skills, education and experience to date.

Recruiters will use this as the first step to decide who to invite to an interview.

There's likely to be many good candidates going for the same role. In fact, one role can attract between 10 - 100+ other candidates on average! So making your CV as good as possible can really give you the best chance of securing that interview.

You should consider your style, content and layout, which we'll cover in this super handy guide. A good CV should also be targeted around the role, so once the basics are in place, you should tweak it for the role you're applying for.

Top tip! You're great

Try not to get too disheartened if you aren't invited for an interview. I promise you're amazing. In fact JK Rowling's Harry Potter was rejected 12 times, now she's one of the richest people in the planet.



Ady'ya do?

This is Ady, our Head of HR here at Bristol Water. He's been recruiting for over a decade and has interviewed maybe 1,000 candidates over the years and just as many CVs. So trust we have lots of great tips for you!

Layout basics

Just some simple stuff...

No one expects you to be a graphic design extrodinnare, but the basics go a long way!

A good design improves how easy it is to read, impresses us with your design and IT skills, and makes you look super professional.

Often, CVs are scanned first by fancy automatic systems, so a simple clean design is best so not to upset it and risk missing out on the job!

It's also a great way to stand out from the crowd and show a glimpse of your personality.

Layout

Your CV should have a clear, simple structure.

As an example, we've simply used a 2 x 2 table, merged the top row and made the right hand box larger to easily fit your sentences in.

This design ensures plenty of white space to prevent your CV from looking overcrowded and overwhelming your poor re-cruiter.

Name	
Contact	About
Skills	Education
	Experience
	Voluntary roles
	Hobbies

Make it pretty

Let's up the wow

Great! So we have the basics but it looks well boring doesn't it?
Let's look at the exciting stuff

Topography

Topography is a fancy word for font! Use one that's easy to read, like Ariel. You can show your creativity in other ways. Keep on reading for how!

Pick a different style for headings, sub-headings and body text so that the information is super clear.

Colour Scheme

Pick a complimentary colour scheme. More of a maths whizz than an art pro? Use a colour palette picker online to help you out like Canva. Keep it simple, using just one or two colours can look fantastic.

Great!



Not so great!



Order

In each section, list everything in time order so it's easy to follow.

You can shuffle around your skill, education and experience order if you like—but always start with your most impressive section first!

Finishing touches

Extra wow

Great! We have a basic structure and a set style, but there's plenty more yet!

Create whitespace

Proper formatting creates white space to stop it looking all crammed in:

- ◆ Use a 1.15 line spacing option
- ◆ Add wide margins to add a distance from the side of the page
- ◆ Play around with ways to break up information
- ◆ Don't be afraid of some blank space!

Fancy things

- ◆ Icons can look really slick, like these ones



- ◆ Present your skills in a fun way, there's nothing wrong with bullet points but things like word clouds can be fun too!
- ◆ Integrate some artwork or photography! Like we have on this page on the left. But remember, your text should always be on a clear background. Readability is far more important

Stand out

Why not think outside the box! An example might be a video CV, simply include a link or QR code that leads straight to a video of you! You can list on private mode on YouTube so that no one else can see your video.

Short is best

CV = step 1

Remember, your CV is only the first step. It might sound counterinitative, but sometimes, less is more.

If you met a new friend, you wouldn't go into a long speech about yourself, now would you? Remember that recruiters have many CVs to look through.

Without getting super technical, there's been lots of research showing we humans can only hold a limited amount of information in our minds. By focusing on the important bits only, you can help yourself be remembered!

So here's our tips on keeping it choppy:

- ♦ Keep your CV to just one page if this is your first job. Even for people with lots of prior work, we'd suggest 2 pages as a maximum.
- ♦ Check your sentence lengths – they shouldn't spill over more than 2 lines.
- ♦ A CV is not the place for lots of detail, remember that you can expand a little more in your cover letter, and again at the actual interview!
- ♦ Make sure every sentence has a clear point.
- ♦ Proofread – not only your spelling and punctuation, but whether you can make your wording any simpler.
- ♦ Throw out the big words – get off that word synonym function! Use simple words that you'd use day-to-day

About statement

Which is best?

At the top of your CV, it's a nice idea to include a couple sentences which summarises yourself. Remember, you should also write a short cover letter to go with your CV so don't talk for too much!

Which do you think is better, example 1 or example 2?

Job advert: Sales Assistant for a corner shop (8hrs per week)

Essential characteristics: good customer service skills, able to work effectively in a team, friendly and approachable.

Desirable: prior customer service experience in a similar role.

Must be available to work both weekends and evenings. Apply by CV.

Example 1

I am a hardworking, dedicated and ambitious individual and I truly never let anyone down. I successfully secured a position last year at my local grocery store and here I served customers on some of the busiest of days, working in a large team with many other sales assistants. I enjoy performing in local plays, my most recent of which was The Lion King in which 50 people attended.

Example 2

I'm an approachable customer services experienced student, available to work flexible hours, including weekends. I offer excellent interpersonal and team skills.

Which was best?

Example 2 was best

Why example 1 was bad

- ♦ Too long
- ♦ Sentence lengths are too long
- ♦ Irrelevant information: it doesn't matter that you enjoy video games or how many people you performed in front of
- ♦ Too many adjectives (describing words) without backing them up: anyone can say they're driven, hard-working, ambitious, friendly but it needs to be backed up!
- ♦ Does not link to, or address the advert

Why example 2 was good

- ♦ Short and concise, which is much more memorable
- ♦ Tailored around the characteristics wanted in the job advert, e.g., the advert wants someone who can work weekends and evenings and someone who can work in a team
- ♦ Leaves the others bits, like the theatre information, to go in the hobbies section of the CV

Padding out your CV

CV a little empty?

Not to worry! We all start somewhere. Here's our tips:

Show enthusiasm

If you've put a lot of time into applying, it's going to make you stand out! And it's going to make us think you'll be enthusiastic on the job. Examples of what you can do:

Research the company well

Don't take a one size fits all approach to your CV. Once you've made your template CV with our useful guide, tailor it to the company and role. E.g., if it's a pet care company, tell them what animal you'd be and why!

Show them

If you don't have the experience, show them how you'd approach the situation. For example, you could film yourself acting out an interaction with a pretend customer! It's wacky, but they'll notice you

Volunteer

If you're struggling to get a part time retail job between your studies, why not volunteer at a charity shop for a little bit first?

Learn

If you want to stand out from the crowd and show you're serious, read an interesting book in the area you're interested in, or find an online course in the area.

Aspiring meter fitter with retail experience



Contact

Email

petey@gmail.com

Number

07749369685

Address

45 Meadow Drive
Bristol
BS9 3AA



Hobbies

- ♦ Woodwork
- ♦ Swimming
- ♦ Cooking

About

I'm a friendly people oriented professional, seeking a hands on apprenticeship. I have a clean full driving licence, alongside 2 years of customer experience and a pragmatic nature (e.g., my main hobby is fixing things!)

Experience

Sales Assistant, Temple Groceries (Jan 20 – Nov 20)

- ♦ Till trained and responsible for locking up on weekends
- ♦ Received Employee of the Month two months in a row

Voluntary work

Bristol Wood Recycling Project (Feb 19 - present)

- ♦ Working within a team to collect and dismantle wood
- ♦ Experience posting on the social media accounts
- ♦ Speaking to customers on the phone to arrange collections

Football mentor (March 17 - present)

- ♦ Helping to coach 10 - 12 year olds, developing my people skills

Education

The Meter School - GCSEs (July 19)

- ♦ 8 A* - C GCSEs including Maths (C) English (B) and Biology (C)

Skills

- ♦ Full UK Driving Licence
- ♦ Microsoft packages including Excel
- ♦ Team work