

ING1

Applying for a job

Over the next few weeks, you are going to learn how to produce a curriculum vitae and cover letter to apply for a job or internship in an English-speaking environment. This will involve studying advice from careers professionals about structure, layout and content of the CV and letter as well as seeing some authentic samples.

Introduction : key vocabulary

Do you know the English terms which correspond to these definitions?

1. **n.** a letter that is sent with one's CV; letter of application
2. **n.** the course of one's (professional) life
3. **n.** an activity outside work in which one is interested or concerned; hobby
4. **n.** the language one first learned to speak
5. **n.** jobs held, including dates, posts etc; work history
6. **n.** an ability, expertness or aptitude in a particular activity
7. **n.** a written statement by another person about one's character and ability
8. **adj.** able to use two languages with equal ease
9. **adj.** various; mixed [eg: nationality, languages spoken, marital status]
10. **n.** the process of learning a particular skill
11. **adj.** able to speak and write a foreign language easily
12. **n.** the day on which one was born, usually as day/month/year
13. **n.** training and instruction at school, university etc
14. **n.** a difficult or demanding task that needs special effort
15. **n.** the kind of work or challenge that one is looking for
16. **n.** the whole of one's education, training and experience
17. **n.** the education and experience that make one suitable for a particular job
18. **n.** the American word for curriculum vitae

Find the answers in the box below:

background bi-lingual career challenge cover letter date of birth education experience fluent
interest objective miscellaneous native language qualifications reference resume skill training

Elements of a CV

1. What are the different headings in a CV? What details should you include under each heading? Discuss your answers in pairs. Write a list.
2. Now watch the video at the link below and make a note of any additional information and advice given about writing your CV.

<http://career-advice.monster.co.uk/cvs-applications/cv-advice/basic-elements-of-a-cv-video-advice/article.aspx>

3. Look at the sample CV. Match the missing words to the appropriate spaces.

EDUCATION

- Indicate the all certificates and diplomas you have obtained during your studies
- Use **reverse chronological order** (most recent first)
- **Put the name of the institution and the dates (month/year).**

Match these French diplomas to their English or American equivalents:

<i>Baccalauréat S</i>	<i>Bac technologique</i>	<i>BTS</i>	<i>DUT</i>	<i>Licence</i>	<i>Maîtrise/Master</i>	<i>Doctorat</i>
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First degree	Ph.D	BTEC National Diploma	High School Diploma (US)/A-levels in science (GB)
Master's Degree	HND (Higher National Diploma)	A two-year specialized diploma	

NB: THE FRENCH AND GB/US EDUCATION SYSTEMS ARE NOT IDENTICAL, SO.....

- **Always write the full French title of your qualification**, then put “equivalent to” and a description in English. The qualification you will obtain at the end of your three-year engineering course is a **Master of Science in Computer Science Engineering**.
- **Explain what the term “Classes préparatoires” means** (it does not exist in the GB or US systems). Suggested translation for CPGE students: **“2-year highly selective scientific curriculum in preparation for nation-wide competitive entrance examination to Engineering Schools”**. Or for CPI students: **“2-year scientific curriculum in preparation for entrance into Engineering School”**
- **If institution names are acronyms, write them in full**, and explain what they are. Eg: **Ecole Internationale des Sciences du Traitement de l’Information** - “A leading French Engineering School awarding a Master of Science in Computer Science Engineering”. *Don’t just put “EISTI” – it is meaningless to anyone who doesn’t know the school!*

Here’s an example of an “Education” section of a typical EISTI student:

2012-2014: **2-year scientific curriculum in preparation for entrance into Engineering School**, Ecole Internationale des Sciences du Traitement de l’Information (EISTI) – *a leading French Engineering School awarding a Master of Science in Computer Science Engineering*- Pau, France.

2012: **Baccalauréat S** (*equivalent to A-levels/High School Diploma*), Lycée Louis Barthou, Pau, France.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Use one of the following headings if you have work experience (paid work or volunteering):

- Work experience
- Employment history

The components in this section are:

- The name of the company
- Nature of the business
- Location
- Dates
- Position
- Description of tasks/responsibilities (see ACTION VERBS below)
- Achievement/accomplishments (see ACTION VERBS below)

The following **ERRORS** are frequently made by French students.

1. **LACK OF PRECISION WITH DATES.** Dates are very important to Americans so make sure you are accurate (month/year).
2. **THE NATURE OF THE BUSINESS IS NOT MENTIONED.** If the business is well-known, this is not necessary (HP, IBM, Carrefour...). However, if you write *Fly* on a CV, the employer may think that it is a company that is in the aeronautics field or perhaps it sells insects!
3. **INSUFFICIENT DESCRIPTION OF DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES.** The American CV especially is a tool which you use to sell yourself. The name of the position you held is not enough. You must say exactly **what you accomplished** while working at the company.

ACTION VERBS

Action verbs are used to describe **responsibilities held/tasks accomplished**. These describe **dynamic actions** rather than states. Recruiters frequently use them in **job advertisements**. When applying for a job, **identify the action verbs used** in the advertisement and try to **include them in your own CV and cover letter**.

Here are some typical action verbs categorized by skills. Match the skill categories in the box to the lists.

Teaching	Creative	Research	Financial	Communication	Technical	Management
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_____ **skills** : address, arbitrate, correspond, draft, edit, lecture, mediate, motivate, negotiate, persuade, present, publicize, reconcile, speak, write

_____ **skills** : collect, define, detect, diagnose, evaluate, examine, explore, extract, identify, inspect, interpret, investigate, summarize, survey

_____ **skills** : assemble, build, calculate, devise, engineer, fabricate, maintain, operate, overhaul, program, remodel, repair, solve, upgrade

_____ **skills** : conceptualize, create, design, fashion, form, illustrate, integrate, invent, originate, perform, revitalize, shape

_____ **skills** : administer, allocate, analyse, appraise, audit, balance, budget, calculate, control, compute, develop, forecast, project

_____ **skills**: assign, attain, chair, co- ordinate, delegate, direct, execute, organise, oversee, plan, recommend, review, strengthen, supervise, train

_____ **skills**: advise, clarify, coach, elicit, enable, encourage, explain, facilitate, guide, inform, instruct, persuade, stimulate, train

Practice

Look at the sample CV again. Discuss these questions with a partner.

1. How many examples of action verbs can you find? Are they in the past or present form? Why?
2. Think about your own work experience. Choose some of the action verbs above and make phrases with them to describe your tasks, duties and accomplishments. OR.....
3. If you have no work experience, think of other experience you have in which you have accomplished tasks and/or had responsibilities (eg: teamwork and projects at school...). Give examples using action verbs.

SKILLS

The most obvious skills for an EISTI student to mention are clearly **IT (Information Technology)** and **language skills**. Detail your computer knowledge and, in the case of languages, give some indication of your level.

Eg:

Languages:

- **English** –fluent (TOEIC 900, numerous trips to USA 2008-2011)
- **Spanish** –basic level (2 years' study)

Computer skills:

- **Programming languages:** C/C++, PHP/Mysql, Java. etc...
- **Web knowledge:** XML, XHTML, CSS, SVG, MathML, XSLT, XPath, Smil.
- **Operating systems:** Windows, Linux and MacOSX
- **Software:** 3DS Max, Maya, Autocad, LightWave, DreamWeaver

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- This section is particularly important for **students seeking initial employment**.
- Include any interests, sports or hobbies that have enabled you to acquire **personal qualities and skills that can be transferred to a professional role**.

Practice

- 1) With a partner, discuss the **personal qualities or skills** that someone who has the following interests and activities might have:
 - Member of the college basketball team
 - Member of an amateur dramatics society
 - Player of individual sports
 - Travel
 - Student's Union treasurer
- 2) Look at the selection of job advertisements provided by your teacher. Make a list of all the different types of skills and qualities required. With a partner, discuss whether or not you have these skills, and if you have them, how you acquired them: through your studies ? through your work experience ? through your extra-curricular activities ?

For more tips and examples, see the following documents on AREL:

- New graduate annotated CV
- Engineering student resume samples
- Student resume samples, various fields
- Comment rédiger son CV en anglais