

Tutorial: Standing out from the crowd

Academic level

This activity is suitable for level 1, 2 and 3 students.

Time needed

60 minutes

Aim

To help students prepare a strong CV. Using a range of practical activities, students will identify their unique selling point and how to bring their personal story to life in their applications. Students will create a personal storyboard and identify their core strengths and characteristics.

Activity outcomes

By the end of the tutorial students will:

- Understand the key factors that make a good CV
- Be able to identify their strengths and characteristics
- Identify how these strengths can be interpreted into a storyboard to help them write their CV

Key learning point

To help students identify their core strengths and characteristics in order to write a strong CV.

Resources provided:

- Handout 1: Sample CV
- Handout 2: Model CV
- Handout 3: My storyboard
- Handout 4: My characteristics
- Handout 5: Writing a personal profile

Resources you need to provide:

- Whiteboard or flipchart to collate feedback
- Flipchart paper and pens

Method	Time
<p>1. Explain to students that having a good CV is very important as it is their opportunity to impress prospective employers. Point out that most employers only spend about 20-30 seconds scanning a CV.</p> <p>Ask students what they think makes a good CV. Collate their ideas and compile a shortlist on the whiteboard or flipchart.</p> <p><i>Suggested answers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Clear and easy to read</i> • <i>Clutter free</i> • <i>No more than 2 pages</i> • <i>Chronological – in date order</i> • <i>Clearly defined sections</i> • <i>No spelling errors</i> • <i>Provides evidence of your relevant skills and experiences</i> 	5 mins
<p>2. Ask students to get into groups of 2-4 and give them a copy of Handout 1: Sample CV. Ask each group to identify four errors or areas for improvement on the CV. Collate the feedback from groups on the whiteboard or flipchart.</p> <p><i>Suggested answers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Unprofessional email address</i> • <i>Incorrect spelling, punctuation and grammar</i> • <i>Inconsistent and messy formatting (e.g misaligned bullet points, inconsistent use of italics and fonts)</i> • <i>Missing information (e.g dates, grades)</i> • <i>Alex could expand on what his interests are and the skills linked to these</i> <p>Once you have collated answers from the groups, give students a copy of Handout 2: Model CV and let them know that this is an example of a good CV.</p>	10 mins
<p>3. Explain to students that a good way to help them to identify their strengths and build a strong CV is to develop a storyboard about their life. Give each student a copy of Handout 3: My storyboard. Go through the example provided in the handout and then ask students to complete the blank grid with their own examples, identifying their key characteristics.</p>	5 mins
<p>4. Next, ask students to use Handout 4: My characteristics grid, to rate their particular strengths.</p> <p>A free resource that students can use in their own time to help them to identify their character strengths can be found at: www.viacharacter.org</p>	10 mins

Method	Time
<p>5. Explain that the personal profile on your CV is very important, particularly when you don't have much work experience. It is one of the first things that an employer will see when looking at a CV and you want them to be interested enough to keep reading.</p> <p>Let students know that the personal profile is about highlighting your unique selling point (what makes you stand out). It should be a short summary covering your:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualities and characteristics • Skills based on your experiences • Career aspirations <p>Let students know that they are now going to write their own personal profile and give each a copy of Handout 5: Writing a personal profile, which contains some examples which they might find helpful.</p>	5 mins
<p>6. Next, write the following headings on the flipchart or whiteboard:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As a person I am... 2. I am good at... (based on your experiences) 3. When it comes to my career I want to... 	5 mins
<p>7. Using the strengths that they identified when developing their storyboard and completing the characteristics grid, ask students to complete the above statements on paper.</p>	5 mins
<p>8. Explain that by focusing on the personal strengths that they have identified and the key words they have written down, they should now be able to write their personal profile. They can also refer back to Handout 5: Writing your personal profile, as a guide. Suggest that they keep the word limit to around 60 words. Remind students that they may be applying for jobs across different sectors and it is important to tailor their CV and personal profile to the job that they are applying for. You can refer to Handout 2: Model CV to highlight to students that Alex's CV is tailored to a role in customer service.</p> <p>If there is time, once students have completed the task, you may wish to ask a couple to share the personal profiles they have written.</p>	10 mins
<p>Optional extension:</p> <p>Encourage students to look at the resources for CV writing on the Barclays Lifeskills website in their own time. Let them know they can access a downloadable CV template at www.barclayslifeskills.com</p>	

Handout 1: Sample CV

Alex Brown
Mobile: 077283522
Email: badboylexy@yahoo.co.uk

Personal profile

I am a very ambitious and enthusiastic person who works well on my own and as part of a team. I am confident and motivated to do my best, and I have a strong desire to develop a career in customer service.

Education and qualifications

2009-2012	Tower Hamlets College	Business Management BTEC National Certificate
2004-2009	Northvale Park Secondary	GCSEs
		Maths
		English C
		Science B
		Design & Technology C
		IT B
		Geography C

Employment and work experience

- 2010-2012 Customer Assistant, Tesco Express
- Collected, replenished and managed stock, handled cash and credit transactions and dealt with a range of customers of different ages and backgrounds.
 - Worked under pressure and learned to adapt in a diverse environment
 - Strengthened my communication, numeracy and customer service skills.
- Mentor, Poplar Youth Club
- Worked with young learners at a local youth club

Other skills and achievements

- Leadership: a successful captain for the school football team, with a proven track record.
- Employee of the month.
- Class President
- Level 3 certificate in 'Introduction to Mentoring Skills'.
- Received certificate for work experience (Tindent), in recognition of my high standard of work.
- Short story published in 'Write Now! Expressions of Youth'.

Interests

Socialising.
Sports.
Videogames.

Handout 2: Model CV

Alex Brown

Mobile: 077283522

Email: alex.brown@yahoo.co.uk

Personal profile

I am a very ambitious and enthusiastic person who works well on my own and as part of a team. As the captain of my school football team, I have strong leadership skills and I have worked with young people and as a customer service assistant, which has strengthened my communication skills. I am confident and motivated to do my best and I have a strong desire to develop a career in customer service.

Education and qualifications

2009-2012	Tower Hamlets College	Business Management BTEC National Certificate	Merit
2004-2009	Northvale Park Secondary	GCSEs	
		Maths	C
		English	B
		Science	C
		Design & Technology	B
		IT	C
		Geography	D

Employment and work experience

2010-2012	Customer Assistant, Tesco Express	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Collected, replenished and managed stock, handled cash and credit transactions and dealt with a range of customers of different ages and backgrounds.Worked under pressure and learned to adapt in a diverse environment.Strengthened my communication, numeracy and customer service skills.
2008-2011	Mentor, Poplar Youth Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Worked with young people aged 9-13 to promote an interest in learning.Helped attendees improve their self-confidence and academic achievement.Assessed attendees' work to help them set targets.Assisted with literacy, numeracy, key skills and ICT tasks.

Other skills and achievements

- Leadership: a successful captain for the school football team, with a proven track record.
- Employee of the month on three occasions during 2011.
- Class President during 2008/09.
- Level 3 certificate in 'Introduction to Mentoring Skills' (2010).
- IT: competent with Microsoft Office: Word and PowerPoint
- Received certificate for work experience (Trident), in recognition of my high standard of work (2008).
- Short story published in 'Write Now! Expressions of Youth' (YOUNG WRITERS 2006).

Interests

- I enjoy team and individual sports including football, cricket and badminton.
- At present I play league football for Newark FC, which is currently competing in the Bangla Sunday League at Victoria Park. This involves me training once a week.
- Keen on technology, in my spare time I like to research this industry to keep myself up to date.

References

Available on request.

Handout 3: My storyboard

Looking back at events that have happened in your life and the activities you have been involved in can help you to identify the skills and characteristics which define you as a person. You can then use these to bring your CV to life and ensure that it reflects your attributes and personality.

For each of the age brackets listed in the table below, think of an event that took place in your life or an activity that you were involved in. This can be something that you remember personally or something that your family or friends have told you about. Once you have done this, complete the table with the skills, competencies and personal attributes that these events/activities show you to possess.

You can use the example below to help give you ideas:

Ben's storyboard:

	The event or activity that I remember is...	What skills, competencies and personality traits does this demonstrate?
0-5 years	I rode my toy car to the high street without my mum knowing.	Confident Adventurous Independent
5-7 years	I joined my local Beaver Scout group, made lots of friends and camped away from home for the first time.	Team work skills Adventurous Sociable
7-11 years	My dad got a job in Germany, so I lived there for a year and learnt the local language.	Communication skills Adaptable Language skills
12-16 years	I was the captain of my school football team and convinced a local business to pay for our kit.	Leadership Problem solving Influencing skills
16-18 years	I caught glandular fever and missed three months of college. However, I worked hard and still passed my course.	Hardworking Determined Self- motivated

Handout 3: My storyboard

	The event or activity that I remember is...	What skills, competencies and personality traits does this demonstrate?
0-5 years		
5-7 years		
7-11 years		
12-16 years		
16-18 years		

Handout 4: My characteristics

Using the grid below, rate how good you feel you are at the following by ticking the relevant box:

	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Organising				
Being on time				
Writing				
Working with numbers				
Being creative				
Being enthusiastic				
Working with other people				
Using computers				
Putting forward your ideas				
Working on your own				
Solving problems				
Learning new things				
Decision-making				
Persevering – keeping going until you get the result that you want				
Standing up for your beliefs and views				

Select three competencies/personality traits for which you rated yourself highly and provide an example that shows a time when you were good at it e.g. If you rated yourself highly at working on your own, an example of when you did this well might be when you completed a piece of individual coursework, which you scored highly on.

I am good at:

An example of this is:

.....

I am good at:

An example of this is:

.....

I am good at:

An example of this is:

.....

Handout 5: Writing a personal profile

Personal profiles usually include a short summary covering your:

- Qualities and characteristics
- Skills based on your experiences
- Career aspirations

Below are some examples which you might find useful.

Personal profile 1

I am eager to learn and enjoy overcoming challenges. I have gained strong leadership skills by being captain of my football team and my experience as a part time receptionist in a busy doctor's surgery has strengthened my problem solving skills. I have a genuine interest in a career in Business.

Personal profile 2

A talented and caring person who loves making a difference to the lives of young children. I mentor younger students in my role as a college representative, which has helped me to develop strong interpersonal and creative skills when it comes to helping students with their assignments. My goal is to become a primary school teacher.

Personal profile 3

A highly motivated and hardworking individual, who has recently completed their A-Levels, achieving excellent grades in both Maths and Science. I am seeking an apprenticeship in the engineering industry to build upon a keen scientific interest and start a career as a maintenance engineer.

Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.