



Tailoring your CV and using networks

Age range: 16-19

 **BARCLAYS** | LifeSkills



Session overview

Time	Key learning outcomes	Resources
45-60 mins	By the end of the activity students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand how awareness of their skills, interests and personality traits can support future decision making Recognise how building networks can help them take the next step from education to employment Draft a detailed personal statement that can be adapted to a CV or university, work experience, internship or job application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tailoring your CV and using networks Student worksheet Tailoring your CV and using networks Presentation Slides

Remember that you can refer to the guiding principles for establishing a safe learning environment in the Appendix section of the LifeSkills content guide. This includes suggestions for signposting students to further support. The content guide can be downloaded [here](#).

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To complete activities two and three, students must have already completed 'CV skills lesson one: Writing a successful CV' and have their draft CV with them to review. Students may also find it helpful to complete the 'Recognising skills for success in the workplace' lesson before these activities to help them identify their skills and areas for development.



LifeSkills is pleased to have worked with The National Autistic Society to ensure the following lesson plan can be adapted to suit the needs of autistic students.

If teaching a lesson including autistic students, here are some key considerations when undertaking the following activities:

- An autistic person may struggle to use active listening skills and open questions. Provide them with prompt questions, related to the conversation topic to use when working with a partner. Consider breaking questions down into smaller chunks, for example 'tell me about the job you want to do' could become 'what job do you want to do?' and then 'why do you want to do it?'.
- Understand that eye contact is not always natural for an autistic person. That doesn't mean that they aren't listening, they just find it easier to process information if they are not concentrating on making eye contact.
- Use concrete language and consider how what you say may be interpreted literally, also avoid the use of metaphor to avoid confusion.
- Give solid examples wherever possible, for example explain a scenario where someone might have done something wrong in an interview. This is because abstract/hypothetical ('what if') scenarios can be challenging for autistic students.
- Some activities may take autistic students longer than others and they may also need additional one-on-one guidance.
- Key skills, interests and personality traits – self-awareness: The positive personality traits of an autistic person may be non-normative i.e. they might be very honest and very logical, but may not appear to be a "friendly team player". Make sure to give diverse examples when discussing personality.
- **Aspirations:** Some autistic students may also struggle to consider their aspirations and they may feel awkward and embarrassed in writing about themselves. Some may appear to not have any aspirations but might just need time to process what it means. To some autistic people it may seem like a hypothetical/'what if' question and it may be difficult to look to future options. Some support may be needed for this where you can discuss their preferences and strengths.
- **Recruitment:** Autistic people, in particular, often feel that they need to have everything asked for by recruiters. Therefore, if they are missing anything from their qualifications, skills or knowledge, they will completely write themselves off from applying for a post – meaning they can run the risk of missing many good opportunities that they could actually be very well suited for.

Activity one

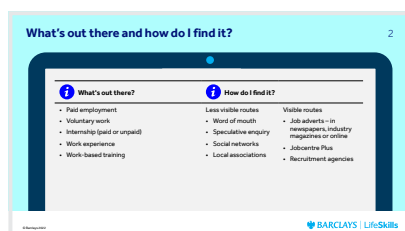
How can you find opportunities?

1. Get to know yourself

Do they have any career aspirations or a profession they are keen to pursue?

- Students can share their answers with the rest of the group
- If students have recently completed the 'Recognising skills for success in the workplace' lesson they may be able to simply refer to what they learnt about themselves in that session here
- **National Autistic Society guidance:** Self-awareness for key skills, interests and personality traits – Many autistic people may find it challenging to become self-aware and to be able to identify their key skills, interests and personality traits. Some support may be needed with these – especially understanding what personality traits may be about and what they need to consider – but if a student isn't sure, avoid making them feel embarrassed or awkward around their peers and explain (if needed) diplomatically. Some autistic students may also feel awkward and embarrassed in talking about themselves, but conversely some autistic people can take over everything if asked about their interests! Some can be so passionate about a hobby or interest and can be so excited at having an audience they may out stay their welcome! So if this happens just say something like – 'thank you that is really interesting – let's move on to our next topic now which is....'
- If students aren't sure of their aspirations and haven't already used the [Wheel of strengths](#) tool, trying it here will help students identify what sort of jobs or career might suit their skills, traits and interests. It only takes a few minutes
- Remind students that the tool is not conclusive and if the results don't indicate a good match with their current aspirations, this isn't a problem. However, they might still like to investigate further, so they can focus on anything they might need to change or improve in order to succeed on their chosen path

2. Discuss different ways of finding employment opportunities

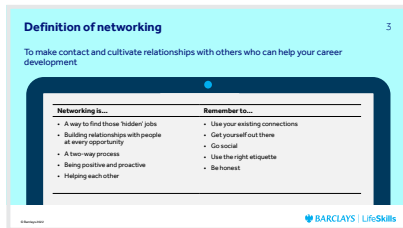


- Establish how many students in the group currently have a job of some kind or have had a job, done work experience or volunteered in the past
- Invite students to share information about how they found a job or work experience, capturing the information on the whiteboard. You could share experiences about how you have found roles in the past, e.g. recruitment agencies, job adverts, word of mouth via friends and other contacts, and through social media, especially LinkedIn
- Ask students to think about what the 'hidden job market' is, and explain that not all jobs are advertised
- Show **slide 2**, which reveals different types of work-related opportunities and ways students might come across them. Compare and discuss their answers as a group; were there any they didn't think of, are there any that surprise them? Ask students if any of them have ever found a job or work experience through word of mouth, via social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter or professional networking sites like LinkedIn

Activity one

How can you find opportunities? (cont'd)

3. Introduce the idea of finding opportunities through networking



- Divide students into small groups and ask them to discuss for a few minutes the term 'networking'. Get them to agree on a short definition that they can share with the whole group
- **National Autistic Society guidance:** Some autistic students can find group work challenging and can cause high anxiety. Having smaller groups or working in pairs may work better or working with the Teacher/Support instead. Avoid leaving them out, being isolated or assume one way or another – that they can or can't join in – everyone is different and a lot may depend on the environment they are in and how comfortable they feel – so ask them what would be best to do and help them get the best out of the learning
- Ask each group to give their definition and compare them all as a class to agree a consensus
- Show **slide 3** to show an example definition and compare it with the ones the students have come up with
- Explore with students how networking could help them find employment. Either on the whiteboard or on paper in small groups, write the headings 'Who' and 'How', and ask students to think of potential connections (e.g. family, friends, past colleagues, mentors, school or college staff, volunteers) and the ways they can develop a professional relationship which could benefit them (e.g. make a good impression, be yourself, listen, look for ways to help the other person) anything they might need to change or improve in order to succeed on their chosen path

Extension

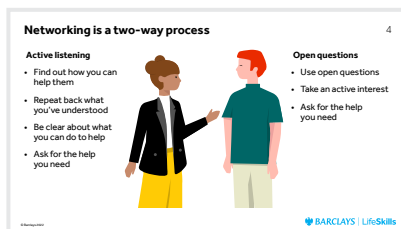
Watch the short film [Top 5 tips for effective networking](#)

- Afterwards, use the article that supports the film to explore the tips as a group:
 - Use your existing connections
 - Get yourself out there
 - Go social
 - Use the right etiquette
 - Be honest
- Work through the [Tactics for approaching contacts](#) interactive tool to help students understand that the way they approach their contacts depends on who they are and what their relationship is

Activity one

How can you find opportunities? (cont'd)

4. A focused conversation



- Show **slide 4.** and remind students that in any networking conversation they need to make good use of open questions to establish the facts and employ active listening to make sure they understand everything
- Group the students in pairs and explain that they're going to have a conversation with their partner for 3 minutes. The aim is to find out as much as they can about the partner's previous work experience (paid, voluntary or as part of education). Show **slide 5.** Students can use **A focused conversation worksheet** to record their partner's answers to the questions and to see tips and reminders about questioning and listening techniques

5. Using social and professional networks

- Ask students how they use social networks like Facebook and Twitter, or any others they use. Get them to discuss how they can use these networks to make contacts that might help their career development. Include in the discussion the importance of the online profile and how prospective employers may review these in establishing someone's suitability for employment
- Launch the [Social job hunting](#) interactive and explore the infographic as a group. If students have access to tablets/ PCs, they could discuss this in pairs
- Ask students to discuss in small groups what the difference is between social networking sites like Facebook and LinkedIn. Get them to note the key differences and identify the kind of information someone might include in a LinkedIn profile in particular and how they might update their page with information about their skills and experience
- Watch the video below the social job hunting infographic and ask students to consider the suggestions from the young people featured
- Highlight to students that one way that they can create a positive online impression with a prospective employer is through pinning an industry/work-relevant tweet. If you have time, watch a selection of the [Is your social media profile employer ready](#) films to illustrate this point
- Using their findings from the networking task earlier, ask groups to suggest ways that they could showcase their work experience on their social media channels

Activity summary

- Show **slide 6** to summarise the dos and don'ts of networking
- To summarise, explain that good networking may help them open a door but it won't help them unless they have the skills and achievements to back up their application. A foot in the door is only the first step. They will still need a strong CV and have the interview stages to get through
- Signpost them to the [CV builder](#) and [LinkedIn tool](#) on the LifeSkills website and suggest they explore these in their own time

Activity two

The CV as an advertisement

To complete all stages of this activity, students **MUST** have completed a draft CV and have a copy with them to review.

1. Icebreaker

- Start with this short quiz to get the group thinking about CVs as an advertisement

How long do employers spend looking at a CV before deciding to interview that individual?

A. 7 seconds

What is the recommended length of a LinkedIn profile summary?

A. 3-5 paragraphs

What percentage of recruiters use social media to find candidates?

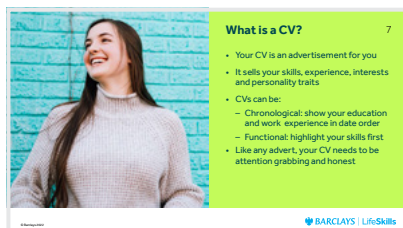
A. 92%

Which two social media platforms are the most widely used by recruiters?

A. LinkedIn (87%) and Facebook (55%)

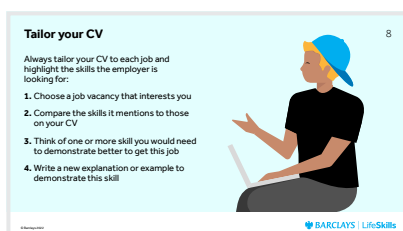
- [Glassdoor](#)
- [The Balance Careers](#)
- [Time Doctor](#)
- [Talent Works](#)

2. Understand how CVs act as advertisements



- Discuss with the students why they think it's important to have a good CV. Suggest that every job opportunity will have many applicants, so they need to think of ways to stand out from the competition
- Show **slide 7**. Explain that this activity will first help students spot how they might improve their draft CV so it does the best possible job of selling their skills. (If appropriate, explain that in the next activity, 'CV surgery', someone will help them with this one-to-one)

3. Discuss why we need to tailor a CV

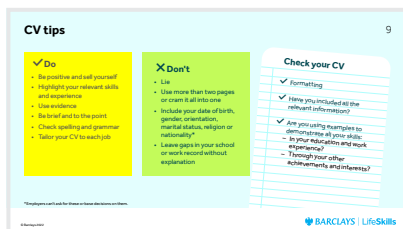


- Show **slide 8**. Discuss with students the concepts of identifying their key skills in relation to each job application
- Get them to think about the occupations they are interested in and list some of the skills that might be needed. Then ask them to identify if their CV would need adaptation for a specific application. Remind them that the content is likely to be the same but prioritised differently depending on the focus of the job
- Refer back to their results from the 'Wheel of strengths'. Students can explore how different skills relate more to certain job roles using the shuffle skill feature on the results screen
- Stress the importance of doing this appropriately so that the CV is an honest reflection of who they are and what they can do but demonstrates they've thought about how they can show the core transferable skills that make them a suitable applicant for the role

Activity two

The CV as an advertisement (cont'd)

4. Students review their own CVs



- Show **slide 9** and briefly review some CV dos and don'ts
- Ask students to work in pairs and swap CVs. They then review their partner's CV to see if they can suggest ways to improve it, using the tips on the slide
- Give students a few minutes to check their CVs for these issues then ask if anyone would like to share how they will improve their CV
- Ask students to focus on the personal statement section of the CV in particular (if there is one). Does this do an effective job in selling the applicant's personality and attributes?

5. Writing a personal profile

- Display the example personal profile, also known as a personal statement, within the [Tips for a good CV](#) interactive tool and ask students to review and discuss
- Ask students to identify their skills, interests, personality traits and aspirations to include on a draft personal statement that they could use for an application for a university course, work experience, internship or job. They can use the ideas they recorded on their student sheet from activity one as a starting point
- **National Autistic Society guidance:** Many autistic people may find it challenging to be able to identify their key skills, interests, personality traits and aspirations. Some support may be needed with these – especially understanding what personality traits may be about and what they need to consider. Some autistic students may also struggle to consider their aspirations and they may feel awkward and embarrassed in writing about themselves

6. Cover letters

- Explain that some job applications will require a cover letter to accompany a CV. Load the [How to write a cracking cover letter](#) interactive tool and ask students to discuss the differences between a personal statement and cover letter
- A personal statement and CV highlight your interests, experience and skills, while a cover letter is an opportunity to briefly introduce yourself to a specific employer, emphasising your enthusiasm for the role and the organisation, and why you are suitable

Extension

- Encourage students to explore the [CV tips](#) interactive in their own time which uses an example CV to demonstrate ways of making their CV ready to be seen by potential employers and is help them stand out from the crowd
- You could also download the [CV tips PDF](#) for students as a takeaway LinkedIn is a powerful resource to build a professional online profile to impress employers. You could encourage students to make a winning LinkedIn profile with this interactive tool (barclayslifeskills.com/linkedin_tips)

Activity two

The CV as an advertisement (cont'd)

Activity summary

- Ask students to recall the ways they can improve their CV and tailor it to specific jobs. Now they have looked through their own CV and other examples, ask them what core transferable skills did they put forward and ways they can demonstrate these to employers on a CV
- If appropriate, remind students to have their CVs ready for the 'CV surgery' activity, where they can review it one-to-one with a teacher



Activity three

CV surgery

Students **MUST** have their annotated draft CVs for this activity.

1. Introduce the CV surgery

- This activity will require a number of 'reviewers' to lead the surgeries. These could be nominated members of staff, or you may want to invite volunteers to support with the delivery of these surgeries – sources could include local employers, existing school business connections or an organisation that offers volunteer support in your area. Alternatively, CVs could be collected in and reviewed by educators or volunteers to provide feedback
 - Explain to the students that they are each going to have a one-to-one CV review. These will help students to identify where their CV works well and where they could improve it to better sell their skills and experience
 - While they are waiting for their CV review, they will continue to draft their personal statement
 - Ask students to spend a few minutes reading through their CVs so they are ready to talk about them. Students should be ready to explain any specific career ambitions they may have
-

2. Get the one-to-one reviews started

- Each student's CV review should last about 10 minutes in total
- Reviewers can use the questions and prompts below to guide them

CV review questions and prompts

- Thank each student for bringing their CV and explain that you're here to help them improve it
- Ask if they have a specific career or career area in mind and if they have done any research to find out the sort of skills and experience needed in that area of work
- Read through the CV with the student. Point out what they have done well and provide some constructive ideas on what they could improve and how they might do this
- Ideas might include:
 - Sorting out spelling, punctuation or grammar
 - Formatting (e.g. bullet points, incorrect use of italics or fancy fonts)
 - Adding missing information (e.g. dates, grades, address)
 - Amending unsuitable information (e.g. a silly email address)
 - Thinking about any 'missing' skills and helping them recall activities and experiences that demonstrate these
 - Suggesting activities or experiences for the student to pursue
 - If there's time, review the personal statement and help identify an important paragraph that could head the CV

Activity three

CV surgery (cont'd)

3. Help students work on personal statements

- Circulate and help students who aren't currently having their CV reviewed to draft their personal statement
- Students can review the examples on **Example extracts from personal statements worksheet** to get them started
- Get students to reflect on the ideas they wrote down in **Get to know yourself worksheet** as part of activity one, and ask them to identify what they want to move onto upon leaving school or college
- If students aren't sure what they want to do next, and are yet to try the interactive [Wheel of strengths](#) tool it will help them find jobs that might suit their skills, interests and personality traits. They can then tailor their personal statement to one of the suggested job roles

4. Share thoughts on the CVs

- When all students have had their reviews, ask each reviewer to briefly share some thoughts about what they saw
- Stick to general observations unless there are one or two stand-out examples you'd like to mention, but be sensitive as not all students will have a strong CV to show

5. Look at personal statements

- Briefly review personal statements and ask if anyone would like to share an example of what they have written
- Remind students that even more than their CV, the personal statement needs to reflect who they are, what type of personality they have and what their career aspirations are
- Explain to students that once they have a good, detailed personal statement they can draw from that if they need to write a covering letter for a job application
- Share your own experiences of reviewing CVs and personal statements if you have acted as a recruiter, and give students a few minutes to ask questions

Activity summary

- Sum up with some basic tips on making a good impression through a strong personal statement and CV
- Remind students that recruiters, either to jobs or further courses, don't expect them to be a perfect match for the role but they do expect them to be interested and show that they have the most important skills or qualities needed to succeed
- **National Autistic Society guidance:** Autistic people, in particular, often feel that they need to have everything asked for by recruiters. Therefore if they are missing anything from their qualifications, skills or knowledge, they will completely write themselves off from applying for a post – meaning they can run the risk of missing many good opportunities that they could actually be very well suited for

Try next

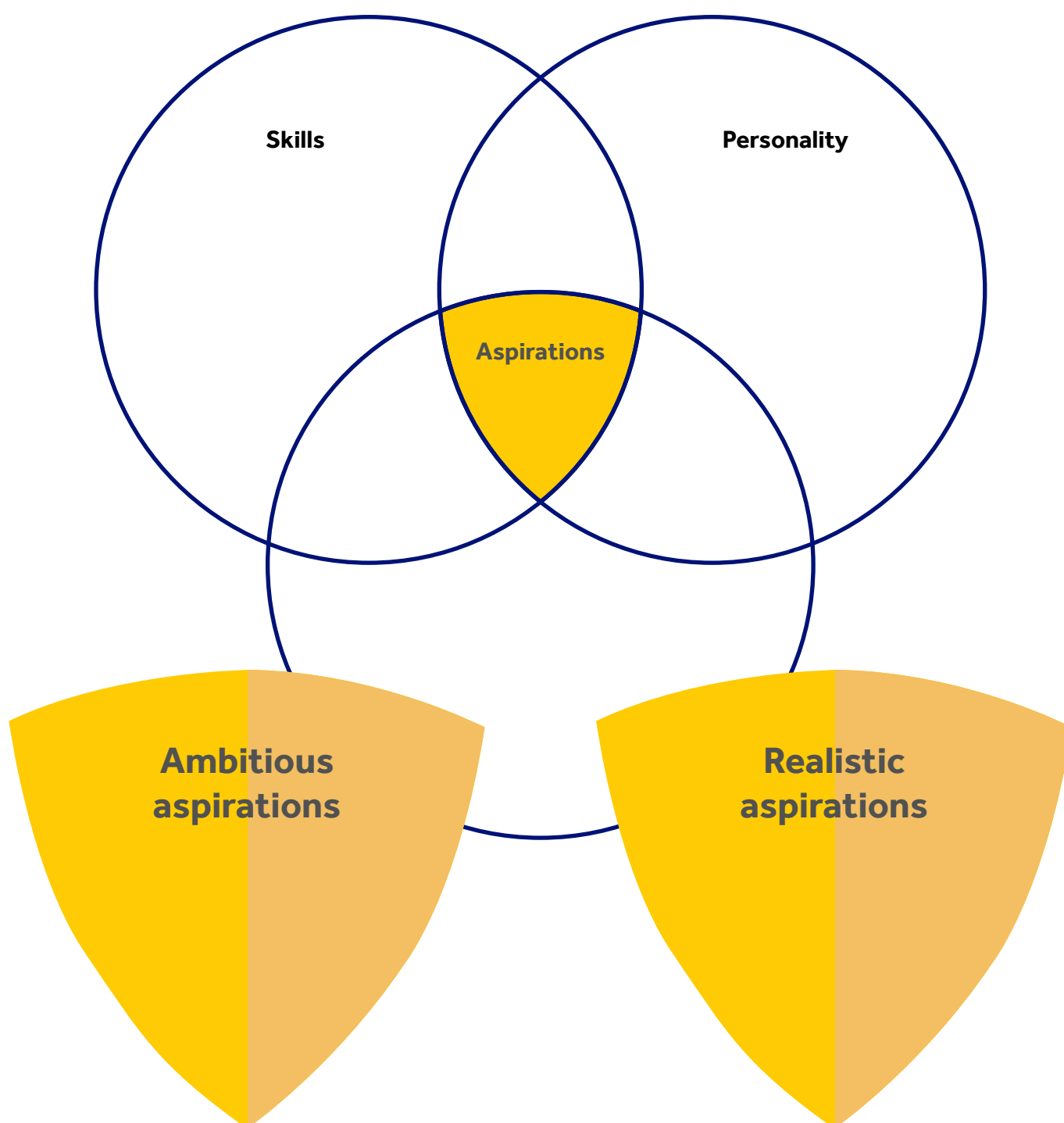
- Explore [tools from LinkedIn](#) as a way for your learners to share their experience with potential employers

Get to know yourself

You may have already given some thought to get you to where you are now, but what comes next?

The best progression routes will be the ones that combine traits from all three areas. So, the section of overlap in the diagram is where you can note down the possible routes to pursue, whether that's further study, employment or training.

Separate your aspirations into realistic (aims that you can achieve if you have the right skills and attitude) and more ambitious (those you can work towards but might need to break into smaller goals or have an alternative plan for).



A focused conversation

With your partner take it in turns to talk about your previous work experience. This can be work experience organised through school, voluntary work or paid employment. Discuss how any of this previous experience might help you towards your chosen career path.

Description of work activity

How does this fit with the aspirations you wrote on Get to know yourself worksheet, or help you progress in finding employment?

Top tip: Active Listening

- Listen carefully for main facts
- Summarise what you've heard to check understanding
- Take notes if needed
- Use positive body language (show you're interested)
- Give signals that you're listening (eye contact, nodding)
- Give the other person time to speak (don't jump in with a response)

Top tip: Asking Questions

- Prepare questions in advance where you can
- Use open questions, e.g. 'What qualification would you like to study for?' rather than 'Would you like to study for a qualification?'
- Be concise and clear about what you're asking

Model CV

Here is a 'model' CV that shows Alex's skills. Reviewing the content, how would you suggest Alex could expand his personal profile into a separate, more detailed personal statement that he could use for a University application or a covering letter for a job?

Alex Brown
72 Red Lane, Limehouse, London E14 XXX
Telephone: 0207 536 253
Mobile: 077-283522
Email: alex.brown@address.co.uk

Personal profile

I am a very positive, proactive and enthusiastic person who works well both on my own and as part of a team. I am confident and motivated to aim high, I have a strong desire to develop a career in customer service.

Education and qualifications

2019–Present	Tower Hamlets College	Business Management BTEC National Certificate	Merit
2014–2019	Langdon Park Secondary	GCSEs:	
		Maths	4
		English	5
		Science	4
		Design & Technology	5
		Geography	3

Employment and work experience

2019–Present	Customer Assistant, Tesco Express <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collected, replenished, organised and managed stock, and dealt with a range of customers• Worked under pressure and learned to stay positive and adapt in a diverse environment• Strengthened my communication, numeracy, listening and customer service skills
2019–2021	Mentor, Poplar Youth Club <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Led a group of young people aged 9–13, working to promote an interest in learning• Helped them improve their self-confidence and academic achievement, and assessed their work to help them set targets

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 2018
- Class President during 2018–19
- Level 3 certificate in 'Introduction to Mentoring Skills' (2017)
- Team working: reliable, honest and capable, helping teams complete learning tasks and projects properly and on time
- Short story published in 'Write Now! Expressions of Youth' (YOUNG WRITERS 2016)

Interests

- I enjoy team and individual sports including football, cricket and badminton
- At present I play league football for Newark FC. This involves me training once a week (Thursday)
- Keen on technology, in my spare time I like to research this industry to keep myself up to date

Referees

Available on request.

*Note that depending on where you live, you will only need to give the grade equivalents that are relevant to your nation



Example extracts from personal statements

Outside the classroom, I participate heavily in sports. I really enjoy being part of a team and have played football for 8 years and occasionally compete in badminton matches. I also enjoy being creative, particularly drawing cartoons, although I only see it as a hobby and have never wished to pursue it further. Assisting others where I can is something I draw a lot of gratification from. I have been a member of the student council throughout my time at school and college, never being afraid to present my opinion or listen to others. During my free time at weekends, I voluntarily tutor maths to students aged 11-14, helping them to revise and prepare for their exams. Tutoring has shown me the difference between learning maths and being able to teach it, and taught me a lot about communicating, as well as being patient and thorough. I have also volunteered at a local young people's centre, which requires being proactive, organised and enthusiastic.

I have chosen to continue in education so that I can improve skills in my chosen subjects, to push myself and take them a step further. Secondly, I feel it is important to pursue subjects I enjoy and feel I can excel in. I'm confident I will choose to apply for university later on in my education and although I'm still undecided about the career path I will take I think my skills and interests may lead me to a profession within the areas of teaching or law. I also have a keen interest in travelling and current affairs; a personal ambition of mine is to take part in voluntary work in developing countries to boost my cultural awareness before pursuing my chosen profession.

Another memorable event in year ten was my work experience. I spent two weeks working at my Junior School. My role included a whole range of activities from guided reading to swimming. I enjoyed my time there both on a personal and professional level. Personally, returning to my junior school made me look back at my time there and realise how much I've matured as a person. On a professional level I received an insight into a possible profession that I believe I have the skills and personality to pursue; working closely with the dance and English coordinators I gained a lot of confidence.