
UNIT 16 WRITING A CV OR A RÉSUMÉ

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16.1 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- identify different types of CV,
- understand the importance of writing good CVs and covering letters, and
- be able to produce an effective CV and covering letter for a range of different requirements.

16.2 INTRODUCTION: BIO DATA, CV OR RÉSUMÉ?

A CV or résumé is a piece of paper that tells a prospective employer who you are, what you've done, and why they should hire you. If you want to get a job, you'll probably need a résumé. It is a chance to demonstrate your strengths and focus the reader's attention on the aspects you want to highlight.

A curriculum vita or 'CV' is an organized summary of a person's educational and professional history and qualifications, usually used when applying for a job. The term is Latin and means 'the course of life'. 'Bio-data' is a term used in South Asia for a more succinct CV that gives basic information, although it tends to be used synonymously with CV. The Americans use the term résumé.

In most cases, curriculum vitae are structurally very similar to résumé, though a curriculum vita tends to be longer, and more descriptive. A curriculum vita is often

used when applying for academic or research positions. A résumé is usually one or two pages long, used in business, non-profit, government and other types of job searches. It is not all-embracing and is targeted at a particular job in a particular field.

A CV or résumé goes to the prospective employer before the applicant goes, therefore it should convey as much as possible about the person as it can.

16.3 WHO NEEDS A CV?

Imagine that you wish to buy a house. You go to a number of real estate agents and pick up flyers or brochures from them. The purpose of these brochures is to arouse your interest by giving information about the particulars of the house and presenting them in an attractive way. Even if all houses meet the necessary requirements – location, price, space, balcony and garden – the estate agent’s job is to present these details in an appealing manner so that it motivates people to visit the property and consider buying it.

What a brochure does for houses, a CV does for a job. The objective of a CV is to get an interview. It is not merely important to give information about ourselves, but we have to present ourselves in the best and appropriate manner. Who needs a CV?

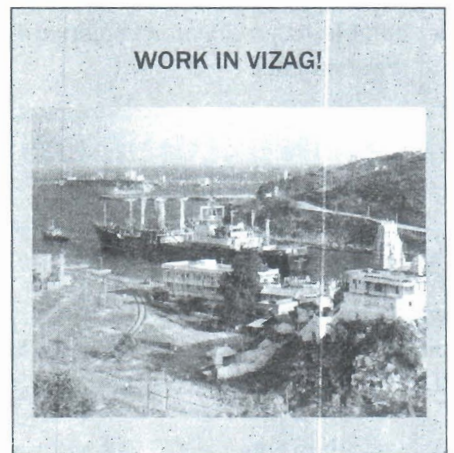
- School/college leavers,
- Graduates,
- Those who wish to change jobs,
- Writers (publishers usually ask for a copy of the CV), and
- Speakers/chief guests (organizers would like to introduce them to the audience)

16.4 WHAT ARE A CV AND A COVERING LETTER USED FOR?

Look at this advertisement. Answer the questions given below:

Alibaba Seaports is a well-known and respected trading company. We handle imports directly from manufacturers in 17 different countries, and currently export to 42 different countries.

We are looking for enthusiastic people to work in our office in Visakhapatnam on 1 year and 2 year contracts. Applicants must be able to speak and write English and at least one foreign language fluently.



Experience in import/export will be an advantage. As special training will be given, no formal qualification is required. The main requirements are the ability to communicate in English and a foreign language over the telephone and willingness to be prepared to work long hours when necessary.

There are several posts available and long term prospects are good, though initially applicants will be contracted for a maximum of 1 year. The salary we offer is excellent and we pay for air fare to the home town twice a year and provide accommodation at a reasonable rent.

Please apply enclosing your résumé to Nalini Dayal, Visakhapatnam Sales Office, Alibaba Seaports Ltd., 31/206/8B, Beside Vasavi Business, Daba Gardens, Vishakhapatnam - 530020

Answer these questions:

What should you be able to do?.

.....
.....
.....

What would be the job's attractions?

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.....
.....

What might be its drawbacks?

.....
.....
.....

Now look at the résumé given on the next page. If you were interviewing Raman Kumar for the job in Vizag, what questions would you ask him about his career history?

	Raman Kumar
Address	A.I.U. House, 16 Kotla Marg, New Delhi-110002
Phone:	98110786453
Email:	ramankk@rediffmail.com
Date of Birth	21 February 1976
Professional experience	August 1999-present Tito Arabian: Export clerk January 1997-July1999 Silsol Trading International: Export assistant
Education and Training	1993-1997 BA Marketing, New Delhi 1990-1992 High School, New Delhi

Interests	Reading, mountain biking, dancing
Languages	Fluent Spanish (as a child I grew up in Mexico), English, good conversational French (Advanced Diploma)
References	Mr. Shailesh Shah D/103, Veena Sargam Mahavir Nagar Kandivli West Mumbai 400 067 Maharashtra Mr. J C Mohan 203, Sai Sankar Residency Behind Greens Enclave HB Colony Visakhapatnam 530022 Andhra Pradesh

Questions:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Now read the covering letter that follows. In what ways does Satish Kale seem suitable (or unsuitable) for the job? Also, read Raman Kumar's résumé sent for the same job.

Dear Ms. Dayal,

I wish to apply for one of the positions described in your advertisement 'Work in Vizag' in this week's Deccan Chronicle.

I have three years' experience in marketing. My responsibilities have included all types of administrative work, product development, arranging and attending presentations, and working with clients.

My German is fluent, I speak and write reasonably good English, and I can also handle business correspondence in German. I feel that my prospects with my present employers are limited and that there would be more scope for my talents with a larger and more dynamic company like Alibaba Seaports.

If you consider that my qualifications and experience are suitable, I should be available for interview at any time.

Yours sincerely,
Satish Kale

Suitable/Unsuitable

Reason

Will not/Will called for interview.....

In what ways is Raman Kumar better suited for the job?

The purpose of the CV and the covering letter is to give potential employers a concise, clear picture of the applicant's skills and experience. This information helps them decide whether a candidate can be called for an interview, for further discussions.

16.5 WRITING CVs FOR DIFFERENT JOBS

Look at these samples of CVs from different fields.

CV-1

MANJULA KASYHAP
18/3/H, Kodambakam, Christian College,
Chennai 27
manokkp@gmail.com
Mob. 9844453892

Education

M.Sc. (May 2006) Economics;
Christian College, Chennai

Cumulative GPA: 3.6

- Financial Accounting
- Econometrics
- Free Market Economics
- International Trade and Commerical Policy
- Internation Finance

B.Sc. (June 2004) Economics;
Christian College,
Chennai

Cumulative GPA: 3.2

- Microeconomics
- Macroeconomics
- Rural Economics

EXPERIENCE

Standard Chartered Bank, Chennai

Internship May – August 2005

- Monitored and reported global financial measurements to corporate controller
- Supported corporate cost center analysts

COMPUTER SKILLS

Microsoft Word, Excel, Power Point, Project,
Outlook; SAP; Hyperion Enterprise

REFEREES

Dr. Jayanti Patnaik
Head, Department of Econometrics
Christian College
Chennai
jaypatnaik@hotmail.com

Mr. Raghavendra Urs
Manager, Standard Chartered Bank
Anna Salai
Chennia
raghavur@stanchart.co.in

CV-2

PRANJAL KAR

Address 23/E South Office Para
Doranda
Ranchi 834002
Jharkhand
Internation Finance

Phone 91-9935786453

Email: pranjalkar@cbs.org

Education

PhD, Psychology, Pondicherry University, 2002

Dissertation: A study of learnign disabled children in
a low income community

MA, Psychology, University of Hydrerbad, 1996

Thesis : Communication Skills of Disabled Children

BA, Psychology, University of Hyderabd, 1993

Instructor, 2002 to present

Centre for Behavioural Sciences, Allahabad

Presentations

*The behaviour of leaning disabled adolescents in
the classrooms.* Paper presented at the
Psychology Conference at the University of
Hyderabad, 2003.

Understanding learning difficulties, Paper
presented at the National seminar on Learning
Difficulties at Delhi Univesity.

Skills

- Microsoft Office
- Knowledge of SPSS and SAS statistical packages

Reference

Available on request

KRANT KUMAR
 Mob. 21-88888888
 E-mail: kranti123@yahoo.cim

OBEJECTIVE
 Seeking a position to utilize my skills and abilities in the Information Technology Industry.

TECHNICAL EXPERIENCE:

- Languages: C, C ++, CORE JAVA, VB 6.0, UNIX Shell scripts, HTML
- Platforms: Windows xp/98/95,2000, NT, Red Hal Linux (9.0, ES, WS)
- Concepts: (networking)

CERTIFICATIONS:

- Red Hat Certified Engineer (RHCE)- Enterprise Linux 4# 1114066719821418
- Expertise in: Installing Red Hat Linux configuring servers (DNS, FTP, NFS, NIS, SAMBA, APACHE, DHCP, MAIL), Trouble shooting, user permissions (LVM)
- Brain-bench certified Linux Assessment #T20110714001A

EDUCATION
 Maharaja Engineering College – May, 2006
 B. TECH, (Information Technology)
 Percentage scored: 67:

Shri Ganga Higher Secondary School – Mar, 2002
 Percentage scored: 88%

Govt Boys Higher Secondary School – Mar, 2000
 Percentage scored: 72%

ELECTIVES TAKEN:

- Linux Servers, Distributed systems

PROJECT EXPERIENCE:
 Final B. TECH. project: "Integrated Java Based Web server"
 Description: The powerful web server that enhances java based applications and provides authentication.

OTHER ACTIVITIES & HOBBIES:

- Organizing various cultural programmes & WON Prizes.
- Reading E-books
- Net surfing

PERSONAL DETAILS:
 Name: Kranti Kumar
 Age & DOB: 21 years, 21-06-1985
 Sex: Male
 Marital Status: Single
 Nationality: Indian
 Address: #5588, Konappa Nagar, Electronic City Bangalore- 560100

Languages Known: English, Tamil

✓ Check Your Progress 1

Complete the table: Say what information is included in each CV under each heading.

CV	Name & Contact details	Education	Experience	Skills	Presentations	Hobbies & Interests	Reference
CV 1							
CV 2							
CV 3							

What is the difference in the presentation of information in each?

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16.5.1 Ordering of Information in a CV

Which should appear first – work experience or education? This will depend on what you are applying for. If your education is more impressive, begin with that, if work experience is substantial and stands you a better chance of getting the job, begin with work experience.

The way the information is presented in each of these résumés is different; however, they largely contain the same type of information. A CV usually includes:

- personal details (name, address, telephone number, e-mail address)
- education and training received
- work history (the name of the company/organization and how long you have worked there)
- skills you possess
- awards and achievements
- names of referees

There are no set rules about the length of your CV. The length of your CV will be decided on by your career history, education and achievements. Ideally it should be kept to one page or two, but if this looks too cramped then you can spread it out over two or more sheets. Let us now look at each section of a CV individually to find out the dos and don'ts.

16.5.1.1 Name and Address

The first thing an employer needs to know is who you are and where you can be reached – your name, address and phone number. If you have an address and phone number at work and another at home, you may include both and indicate which is which. Many résumé headings are nothing more than the name centered at the top of the page. You really have little need to include the word RÉSUMÉ or CV. Therefore, in CV heading you need to include

- Name
- Local address
- E-mail address
- Phone number

(If applying for an overseas job, please remember to include your international dialing code.) Include your mobile/cell phone number if you are going to relocate soon.

As you see, it is not necessary to use the word *Résumé* or *Curriculum Vitae* as the heading – it is obvious that it is that and nothing else. Also, usually marital status is not considered relevant to selection decisions.

16.5.1.2 Career Objective

There are two schools of thought about stating a career objective on your *résumé*. Some say that your objective will be obvious from your qualifications, and such a statement will be counterproductive if you wish to be considered for more than one post. Others say that an employer might categorize you on the basis of the stated career objective, so it is good to be as specific as possible. If you need to state it, keep it as short and crisp as possible:

Human resource development, requiring international experience

Advertising assistant, with print media emphasis

A marketing position with an opportunity for handling accounts

16.5.1.4 Education

If you are still in school or college, education is probably your strongest selling point, so you should give the educational background in depth, choosing facts that support your case. Starting with the school/college you last attended, list the

- name and location of the schools/colleges
- the term of enrollment and the year
- your major and minor fields of study
- the degree(s) or certificate(s) you have earned and grade/class received
- scholarships, awards or academic honours you have received
- any off-campus training
- relevant seminars or workshops attended

In India, fresh graduates are expected to present educational qualifications in an application form in the following format:

Degree/ Diploma/ Certificate	University/Education	Subjects	Class GPA/percentage of marks	Year of Passing

This format also gets used in CVs as well. In this structure, a chronological presentation of qualifications is used: pre-university, university.

In the present times, however, educational qualifications are given usually in the reverse chronological order, the most recent degree or qualification is presented first. For example:

1. Postgraduate study
2. University education
3. Pre-university education
4. High school

Also, in many fields, the table format given above is going out of favour, and a more contemporary format is being used, for example:

2004-2008. B. Tech. – CSE, JNT University, Hyderabad

- introduction to database management systems
- introduction to web design
- networks and telecommunications
- programming and data structures
- programming solutions

Final Year Project Description

Title: Online test for backend database

Description: I developed a stand-alone online test system using Visual Basic 6 and Microsoft Access as the backend database. The role of the database is to store login details for candidates, display questions and choice of answers and also keep details of the result.

✓ **Check Your Progress 2**

Jot down details of your education in the proforma given below:

Education (YEAR, DEGREE, INSTITUTION,
PLACE)
..... (SUBJECTS/COURSES)

..... (YEAR, DEGREE, INSTITUTION,
PLACE)
..... (SUBJECTS/COURSES)

.....
..... (YEAR, DEGREE, INSTITUTION,
PLACE)
..... (SUBJECTS/COURSES)

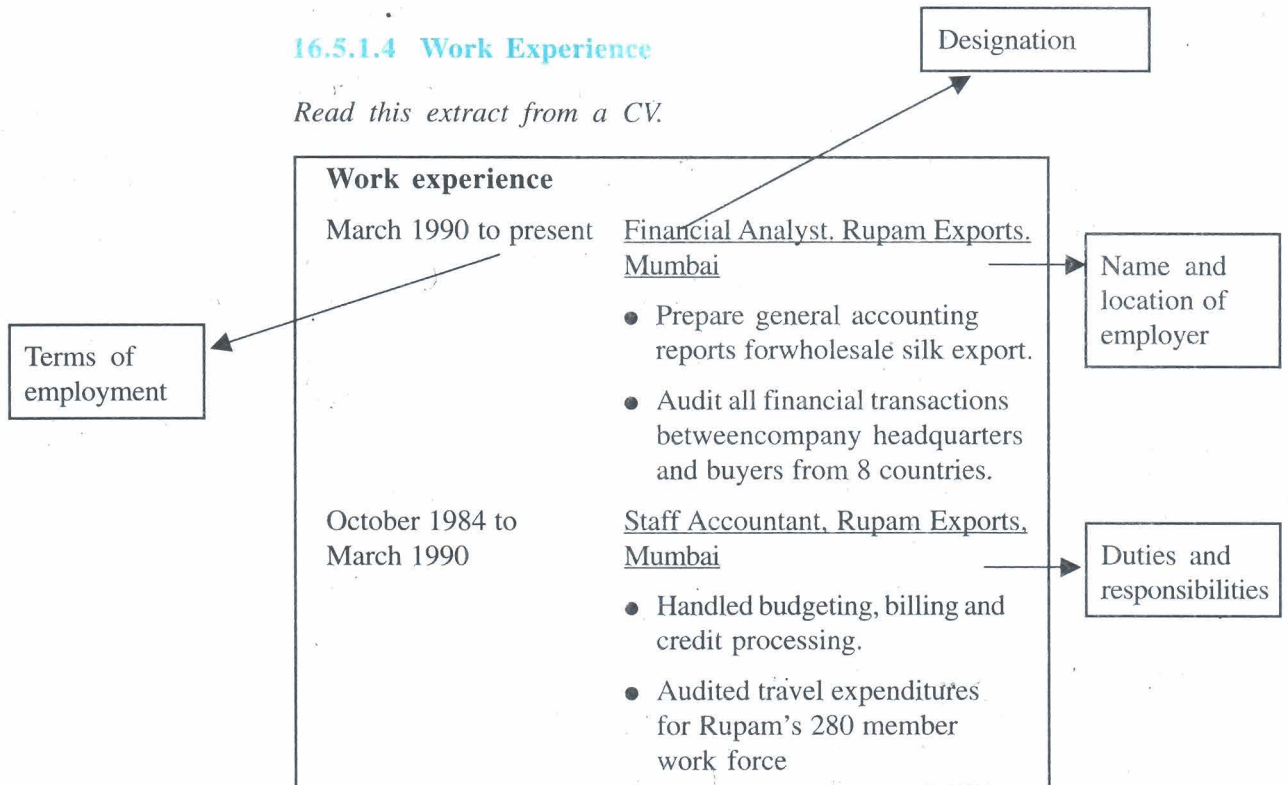
.....
..... (YEAR, DEGREE, INSTITUTION,
PLACE)
..... (SUBJECTS/COURSES)

.....

Education is usually given less emphasis in a CV after you have worked in your chosen field for two years or more. In that case, your work experience becomes your strongest qualification, and the education section only lists the degrees and the place/s where you received them from and the year. It cuts out the other details given in the list above. If you go back to Raman Kumar's CV, you will find that his CV says that he has done BA marketing from Delhi University in 1993-1997, and High school in 1992 from New Delhi.

16.5.1.4 Work Experience

Read this extract from a CV.



When describing your work experience, you'll usually list your jobs in reverse chronological order, with the current or last one first. Each listing should include

- name and location of the employer.
- if the reader is unlikely to recognize the organization, we need to briefly describe what it does.
- if an organization's name or location has been recently changed, we need to state the old name in parenthesis (formerly...).

Before each job listing, you need to state

- your functional title, such as 'Export Clerk', 'Marketing Executive', etc.
- how long you worked on each job, from month/year to month/year.
- use the phrase 'to present' to denote current employment.
- If a job part is part time, you need to state this.

If you were personally responsible for something significant, be sure to mention it. For example:

‘Designed a new child tracking system for the child labour project’.

‘Devised a new collection system to accelerate payment of overdue credit’.

Read the following extract, and say what is wrong with the text.

Work experience

Field Sales Executive, 1992 to present, Ranjan Scientific Instruments, Baroda

I was responsible for calling on customer and explaining the features of Ranjans line of laboratory instruments. I was also responsible for writing sales letters and preparing weekly sales reports. I also have to attend trade shows.

Many people for whom English is a second language have trouble simplifying their writing because they feel it needs to be complicated to be good. This isn't true, and the best writing says a lot in few words. The job responsibilities in the extract above could be stated in short, crisp phrases starting with action verbs:

- **Explained** the features of laboratory instruments to customers.
- **Prepared** weekly sales reports and wrote sales letters.
- **Attended** trade shows.

Also, the sentences are repetitive and use too many personal pronouns: *...I was...I I was...; I had...* In writing job descriptions, it is better to use short noun phrases and action verbs, not whole sentences, and to avoid excessive use of personal pronouns like I.

✓ **Check Your Progress 3**

Read the following documents. Revise these documents.

1. Tour Guide, 1994-1997, Kakatiya Sheraton, Hyderabad As a tour guide, I led tours of Hyderabad for tourists visiting the city. My duties included greeting tourists at hotels, explaining the history and features of the city during an all-day sight-seeing tour, and answering questions about Hyderabad and its attractions. I also conducted a training programme for new tour guides, and prepared a handbook that provided interesting facts about the various tourist attractions, and commonly asked tourist questions. The management was so impressed with the handbook that they have promised to print it and give it as gifts to visitors.
2. I am an experienced physician now specializing in welfare programmes, care and counseling. I have an extensive knowledge related to addiction, personality disorders, psychosis and stress in groups of all ages. I have also prepared a course to help health and educational professionals to deal with drug addiction. I also conducted new employee, orientation and refresher courses.

16.5.1.5 Relevant Skills

You may also want to include a section that describes facts that will be useful in the job applied for. For example, if you are applying for a position with a multinational organization, you would like to mention your command of another language or travel experience. If you are applying for an Editor's post, you might mention the ability to operate a computer or a word processor. In fact, you could entitle these

sections, 'Computer Skills' or 'Language Skills' and place them after the work experience section.

Languages: Conversational Spanish
Computer Skills: Microsoft Word,
Photoshop, Dreamweaver, Internet

16.5.1.6 Activities and Achievements

You can also mention voluntary activities that you participated in that demonstrate your abilities for the post applied for. If your activities are extensive, you may want to group them into divisions, 'Seminars and Workshops', 'Community Service', 'Achievements, Awards and Honours'.

This section could include:

- Positions of responsibility
- Travel
- Membership of clubs, societies and professional organizations
- Music/sport/hobbies and other leisure activities

16.5.1.7 Referees

Most employers prefer to contact the referees rather than see the actual references. We need to list two or three referees, preferably one academic and one or two employment-related. Names of relatives should not be included in the list. It is necessary to seek permission from the persons whose names you intend to include as referees before you enter their names in your CV.

This section should include

- The names of two referees (one professional and one academic)
- Designation
- Address
- Telephone number and fax number
- Email address

Language Used

Read the following extract, and find out what are the problems with it.

Work experience

Field Sales Executive, 1992 to present, Ranjan Scientific Instruments, Baroda.

I was responsible to call on customer and explaining the features of Ranjans line of laboratory instruments. I was also responsible to write sales letters and preparing weekly sales reports. I also have to attend trade shows.

(a) **Spelling errors:** *reponsible* (responsible), *laboratry* (laboratory),

(b) **Grammar errors:** *responsible to call on* (responsible for calling on); customer (customers), *Ranjans* (Ranjan's) *responsible to write* (responsible for writing)

A misspelt word or a grammar error on your résumé shows that you have not paid attention to detail. Employers would not want to hire people who do not pay attention to little things. If you don't proofread your own personal documents, they can't expect that you will proofread the business writing required by the job such as letters, memos, emails, proposals, etc. It is always good to use the spell check on a computer or ask a friend to proofread the résumé before you send it to a company.

16.5.1.8 Appearance of a Résumé

The overall appearance of your résumé is also important. A sloppy looking résumé will greatly lessen your chance of getting a job interview. The first thing that a prospective employer, or personnel manager, evaluating your résumé will notice is its appearance. There are several different things that can be easily done to increase the overall appearance of your résumé. The following things need to keep in mind.

Paper: It is important to use good quality, thick and crisp white coloured paper of A4 size. Coloured paper should not be used.

Font: For a professional looking CV, it is better to type it on the computer and take a print out. Hand written résumé are usually difficult to read and also lack a professional touch. The font in the résumé should not be too small or too big or difficult to read; you should choose *one* plain font (Arial, Times New Roman, or Verdana) and the size should be equivalent to Times New Roman 12 pt. The text in the body of the résumé should be 11-12 point, with your name between 14 and 16 point.

You can use **bold** print to highlight each section or heading. However, you should avoid excessive use of underline, *italics*, and **bold**. This adds unneeded emphasis and may make the information difficult to read. A résumé is a professional document and therefore it is better not to use fancy fonts, colours and graphics.

Page layout: To make our CV look neat and impressive, we need to carefully attend to the line spacing, the way we arrange paragraphs and the headings and subheadings. Some résumé simply look better because of the way they have been designed. Since we want a professional look, ornate borders and decorative icons are not used: these give our CVs an amateurish look.

Some CVs look overcrowded, with no white spaces in them. We should present the text in such a way that important points stand out from the main text, and are noticed instantly by the reader. We can use a different typeface or size to highlight important points, but overuse of these makes the CV look cluttered.

A computer can help you write and format your résumé. If you have access to a personal computer you can quickly and easily develop a polished résumé by using a résumé software package. You have simply to type in employment, education, and personal data in response to questions or spaces that appear on your screen, the computer automatically formats your résumé so that it looks impressive when printed.

16.6 WRITING A GOOD COVERING LETTER

A CV is usually sent with a covering letter: without it, the job application is considered incomplete. Read the covering letter written by Satish Kale in section 16.4. The main function of the covering letter is to draw the attention of your prospective employer to your job specific qualifications and skills. The covering letter should make the employer feel that you are genuinely interested in the job, and are eager to join the organization. This is the first document that your employer is likely to see; therefore it is important that you create a good impression.

In the first paragraph of the letter you usually begin by telling the reader how you got to know about the vacancy: through an advertisement, through a friend, or whether you were approached by the organization. Here are some phrases that are often used:

- This refers to your advertisement in The Times of India dated
- With reference to your advertisement.....
- I came to know through a friend, Mr. ... that there is a vacancy in the Personnel Department in your company

In case you are posting a résumé to the organization, though there is no news of a vacancy, you may begin your letter in the following way:

- I have recently graduated from Maharshi Institute of Technology and would like to be considered for a system analyst's job when there is a vacancy in your company.

Here, you need to introduce yourself, tell the employer who you are and why you are writing the letter.

In the next paragraph you quickly state the educational qualifications, experience and skills that make you suitable for the post. The covering letter should not exactly repeat the information given in the CV. It should complement and develop the information. Here, you can write your reasons for applying for the job and emphasise your suitability. Your writing should indirectly show that you are aware of the main functions of the company and the expected duties of the job you are applying for.

The last paragraph should show your keenness to join the job, and your availability for an interview. You also need to specify what documents you have enclosed with the letter. Finally, don't forget to sign the letter!

✓ Check Your Progress 4

Imagine that you are Raman Kumar and want to apply for the job at Alibaba Seaports. Draft a covering letter, using information from the CV and following the guidelines given above.

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Check Your Progress 2

(Please answer with your individual particulars)

Check Your Progress 3

1. **Tour Guide, 1994-1997, Kakatiya Sheraton, Hyderabad** As a tour guide,
 - greeted and received tourists at hotels
 - led tours of Hyderabad and explained the history of the city
 - conducted a training programme for new tour guides
 - prepared a handbook on tourist attraction in the city (which is being distributed to all tourists).
2. **Physician in MGM Hospital, Hubli, 1998-2008.**
 - worked on welfare programmes, care and counseling
 - handled cases in drug addiction, personality disorders, psychosis and stress in groups of all ages
 - have prepared a course on dealing with drug addiction
 - have conducted new employee orientation and refresher courses

Check Your Progress 4

Raman Kumar
A.I.U. House,
16. Kotla Marg,
New Delhi-110002
98110786453
ramankk@rediffmail.com

13 May 2007

Ms Nalini Dayal
Visakhapatnam Sales Office
Alibaba Seapaort Ltd., 31/206/8B
Daba Gardens
Vishakhapatnam - 530020

Dear Ms Dayal,

I wish to apply for one of the positions you advertised in today's Deccan Chronicle.

I am ____ years old and am at present working in Tito Arabian as an export clerk. My recent work has involved working in a team in the export department of my firm and I have developed skill in dealing with foreign buyers on the telephone and in writing, mainly using English.

I speak fluent Spanish, as I was in Mexico for seven years when I was a child. I speak and write reasonably good English and can manage with conversational French.

As you will see from my enclosed CV, my qualifications are good, and I think I will be able to make a valuable contribution to your firm.

I am available for interview at any time except for June 12th to 16th. My phone number is 98110786453. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Raman Kumar

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