

Your CV – What do your hobbies and interests say about you?

The inclusion of hobbies and interests within your CV is a bit of a contentious issue, with some employers not being interested in your achievements or pastimes outside of work or academia, whilst others consider additional interests to be an essential element in determining whether you are a well rounded individual and therefore appropriate for their company. It is also not always appropriate for you as a job seeker to include them, especially if it removes space where you could discuss your job specific achievements or experiences.

However, for those who do include this element within their CV, there are a number of conclusions that a potential employer could draw depending on the type of hobbies or interests that you detail.

Reading

This is a common topic that appears within the 'Hobbies and Interests' section – but you should always support the statement by detailing exactly what you are reading, which will preferably be something particularly relevant to the job, controversial or challenging. Be careful to be honest about the literature you read, as if you do state that you are an avid reader of a particular journal, or similar, you may get caught out at interview if they go on to ask you to discuss a recent article that you have absolutely no knowledge of.

Being a reader could demonstrate a strong thirst for knowledge, a particular passion for a subject matter, or a thoughtful or creative mind. However it could also demonstrate an insular personality if you spend all of your free time with your head buried within a book. Be careful to highlight the positive qualities of being a reader, rather than the negatives.

Sport

Being a sportsperson is admirable at whatever level, but if you have achieved specific successes then mention them. Any participation in sport, whether attending a gym or representing your country, demonstrates a certain level of commitment, which is a quality sought after in the workplace, likewise, some sports obviously illustrate an ability to work within a team, or a determination to better yourself or to achieve goals, all key skills an employer would want within their organisation.

Charity work

Whether it is organising or taking part in fun runs, volunteering at the local hospital, or abseiling down the side of a building; including charity work within the 'Hobbies and Interests' paragraph demonstrates a certain level of compassion and thoughtfulness, maybe even an appreciation of diversity. There is also the likelihood that you have strong interpersonal skills and a certain amount of tenacity, and these should be highlighted. In addition, charity work such as standing in the high street trying to convince passersby to sign a petition requires confidence and good communication and negotiation skills – all desirable skills in any job.

Travel

This is a difficult topic to include unless you expand on the experiences or knowledge that you have gained through your travel. Simply providing a long list of countries that you have visited actually doesn't say much about you as a person. However, if expanded upon appropriately then you could

demonstrate an increased knowledge and appreciation of other cultures and a willingness to embrace new challenges and opportunities.

Something else

Including something other than the normal topics discussed above could really make you stand out from the crowd. Employers will expect to see, reading, music, socialising, travel, sport etc but something unusual may just help your CV reach out to the reader, and help them to remember you; as the one who spends their spare time making sculptures from recycled waste!