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ADMINISTRATION AND SPORTS' MANAGEMENT PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT'S PEDAGOGY

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Writing Effective Paragraphs

I. What is a paragraph?

A paragraph is much more than a collection of connected sentences. It is a building block of essay development, and paragraphs provide the structure needed to develop the thesis of a paper. In fact, a useful way to think about a paragraph is as a "mini-essay," or an essay within an essay, with its own mini-thesis (the topic sentence), middle or body (the supporting details) and end or conclusion (the concluding sentence).

To understand how paragraphs help to develop a thesis, think of them as landmarks on a map. With each paragraph, you describe where you are standing and point the direction for your readers to make sure they complete the journey to your conclusion. A vague signpost or a detour down a side trail could well have your readers lost and wondering where you are taking them. Clear signals, on the other hand, in the form of clearly worded topic sentences, relevant support, reasonable interpretations of material, and logical conclusions will help your readers follow the development of your ideas.

II. Types of paragraphs in a basic essay

In an essay, there are four types of paragraphs—introductory, body, transitional and concluding—and each serves a slightly different function in the paper. In the simplest terms, introductory paragraphs introduce your thesis, body paragraphs develop it, transitional paragraphs move your readers from one aspect of it to another, and concluding paragraphs sum up the development of the thesis and restate it. Thus, while all four types support the thesis, they support it in different ways.

1. Introductory paragraphs

An introductory paragraph supports the thesis in three ways. First, it engages readers' interest with a strong opening sentence. Some writing texts advise using a quotation or an anecdote to capture readers' attention, and this can work well. Whatever kind of opening you use, however, it should be relevant to your subject and move your readers quickly and smoothly toward your thesis. An introductory paragraph also supports the thesis by giving relevant background information and context, such as important facts or theory. For example, if you were writing an introduction to a paper about Napoleon's loss at Waterloo, before presenting your thesis statement, you might offer a sentence or two about the ongoing hostilities that led up to the final battle. This sketch of important background should be accomplished quickly with just enough information to help your readers understand why your subject and thesis are important.

The third, and perhaps most important function of an introductory paragraph, is to introduce the thesis statement and thereby focus your readers on the central idea of your paper. Definitions of a thesis statement vary somewhat, but almost all instructors take a thesis to mean the central idea, opinion, assertion, claim or attitude of the paper. At the core of a thesis statement is the writer's controlling idea on the topic, e.g. "Unchecked northern development raises serious concerns." Some instructors understand a complete thesis statement also to include specific reasons in support of the controlling idea, e.g. "Unchecked northern development raises serious concerns because it jeopardizes and contaminates the biospheres, depletes energy resources before alternatives are available, and magnifies social problems." Some instructors also think of the thesis as the answer to a question implied by the assignment. Although some methods of topic development place the thesis near the end of the paper or even in the conclusion, in most academic writing, it appears near the end of the introductory paragraph. Placed there, the thesis provides a preview of the main idea you will develop in your essay and prepares your readers for that development.

2. Body paragraphs

Once you have engaged your readers and presented your thesis in your introduction, use your body paragraphs to fully develop your ideas. You can do this by first introducing a sub-topic of the thesis in a topic sentence. For example, if you were expanding a theme about Napoleon's loss at Waterloo, you might have a topic sentence that reads like this: "Napoleon brought on one of the first financial crises of the French government by emptying government coffers for his war with Britain." Notice that the topic sentence doesn't provide details, just the general topic of the paragraph. Notice also that the topic sentence tells readers how the paragraph's topic/main idea relates to the essay's core thesis. In other words, a topic sentence not only gives a fact but makes a point or gives an interpretation about that fact, showing how it is relevant or significant to the essay's core purpose. It is important to remember, too, that the topic sentence is your idea, based on the interpretation of your sources.

With your topic sentence in place, you can now develop your idea with sentences that provide supporting details. In the above example, these details might be facts about the repercussions of Napoleon's financial crisis or about opposition that he faced as a result. In a history paper, these details would most likely take the form of quotations or paraphrases from sources, but depending on your writing purpose, audience, and discipline, supporting details might also be facts, personal anecdotes, or logical reasoning. Whatever form of evidence you use, make sure it is convincing to your audience within the context of your writing purpose and that it supports the statement you make in your topic sentence.

In well-developed body paragraphs, you not only have to provide evidence to support the topic sentence, you also have to interpret it for your readers. (Remember, you are providing signposts for them.) For example, if you were developing the paragraph about Napoleon's financial mismanagement, it would not be enough to provide quotes or paraphrases with the facts. You would have to show readers how those details supported the idea that Napoleon's financial mismanagement was connected to his final defeat at Waterloo. In other words, as a

writer, you are obliged to interpret sources, facts or reasoning and connect the interpretation to the thesis statement with transition signals.

Remember the idea of a paragraph as a mini-essay? Just as all essays have conclusions that review and sum up the ideas in a paper, a paragraph has a concluding sentence that sums up the point of the paragraph and ties it clearly to the thesis. Thus, a concluding sentence for our hypothetical paragraph about Napoleon's financial woes might read: "In this way, the hostility that Napoleon engendered in the French banking community began a series of events that would end in his defeat at Waterloo." A good concluding sentence sums up the main point of the paragraph and provides readers with the "so what?"— the reason that the point is important to the conclusion of the paper.

3. Concluding Paragraphs

Some students think that the purpose of a conclusion is to restate the thesis and this is partly true. The conclusion should reassert the core idea of your paper, but it should also clearly flow from the material you have carefully developed in your body paragraphs and thus, it should be more than a mechanical restatement of your thesis. Rather, an effective concluding paragraph should reinforce the central idea of your paper and leave your readers satisfied that you have made your case.

One way to ensure that you have written an effective conclusion is to ask, "Does it strengthen the main message of my paper?" If it draws conclusions from the points you have made in your paper or suggests the implications of them, chances are your conclusion is fully developed. For example, in our essay on Napoleon, a writer might summarize the financial and military reasons for his defeat at Waterloo, restate the thesis that Napoleon's defeat was the result of errors in financial and military judgment, and then suggest that his defeat decided the fate of modern Europe. This sums up the material from the body and suggests the larger importance of the thesis to the reader.

How to Write a Perfect Paragraph

I. Topic Sentence

What is the topic sentence? The topic sentence is the first sentence in a paragraph.
What does it do? It introduces the main idea of the paragraph.
How do I write one? Summarize the main idea of your paragraph. Make clear what your paragraph will be about.
Example: Canada is one of the best countries in the world to live in. First, Canada has an excellent health care system. All Canadians have access to medical services at a reasonable price. Second, Canada has a high standard of education. Students are taught by well-trained teachers and are encouraged to continue studying at university. Finally, Canada's cities are cle an
and efficiently managed. Canadian cities have many parks and lots of space for people to live. As a result, Canada is a desirable place to live.

II. Supporting Details

What are supporting sentences? They come after the topic sentence, making up the body of a paragraph.

What do they do? They give details to develop and support the main idea of the paragraph.

How do I write them? You should give supporting facts, details, and examples.

Example: Canada is one of the best countries in the world to live in. First, Canada has an excellent health care system. All Canadians have access to medical services at a reasonable price. Second, Canada has a high standard of education. Students are taught by well-trained teachers and are encouraged to continue studying at university. Finally, Canada's cities are cle an

and efficiently managed. Canadian cities have many parks and lots of space for people to live**.** As a result, Canada is a desirable place to live.

III. Closing Sentence

What is the closing sentence? The closing sentence is the last sentence in a paragraph.

What does it do? It restates the main idea of your paragraph.

How do I write one? Restate the main idea of the paragraph using different words.

Example: Canada is one of the best countries in the world to live in. First, Canada has an excellent health care system. All Canadians have access to medical services at a reasonable price. Second, Canada has a high standard of education. Students are taught by well-trained teachers and are encouraged to continue studying at university. Finally, Canada's cities are cle an and efficiently managed. Canadian cities have many parks and lots of space for people to li ve. As a result, Canada is a desirable place to live.

Writing effective paragraphs

In general, in order for a paragraph to be effective, it must have three characteristics: unity, development and coherence.

Unity : The first characteristic of an effective paragraph is unity, which means that all sentences in the paragraph explain, develop, and support a central idea in some way. In other words, every paragraph must have a purpose within your paper, and all the sentences must somehow advance that purpose. This means that ALL sentences—topic sentence, supporting ones, and concluding sentence—must be more than loosely related to the subtopic. They must all advance the paragraph's purpose as well as the thesis. Why should you aim for a unified paragraph? Because in a dis-unified one, a writer's purpose and the connections between the sentences can be unclear, as in this one:

(1)Firstly, the Olympic Games provide an outlet for competition. (2)

Friendly competition among many countries occurs around the world. (3)

Regardless of each country's financial situation, the competition is in the

field of sports and not in politics. (4)It provides to people who have

trained very hard a form or basis of comparison to others around the

world, giving these competitors the opportunity to find out if they are the very best. (5)Also, along with providing an outlet for competition the Olympic Games creates a sense of nationalism. (6) Nationalist pride is always a component of the Olympics, each country having its representatives. (6) The Olympics unifies a country, giving its citizens something in common-- a victory-- that brings them together. (7) For example, the acquisition of a gold medal or a number of gold medals can be a source of national pride. (Adapted from a student paper, used with permission.)

Here, the topic sentence is about how the Olympic Games provide an outlet for competition, and in sentences (2), (3) and (4) the writer sticks to that idea. However, in sentence (5), she shifts focus to how the Olympic Games create a sense of nationalism. It's possible that this second idea is connected to the key concept in the topic sentence, but the writer doesn't make that connection, and as a result, the paragraph ends weakly with an example supporting the shift in topic. The writer never makes her point about how the Games provide a competitive outlet.

To achieve unity, begin with a clear topic sentence. This doesn't mean that it has to appear at the beginning of the paragraph, although a topic sentence usually does in academic writing. What is important however, is that the main idea or purpose, stated in the topic sentence, sets the agenda for the rest of the paragraph. Because the topic sentence provides the unifying idea, this sentence must be clear, concise and make a point about your thesis. You can think of it this way: a good topic sentence provides the bones of a paragraph that support the skin and muscle of all the sentences that follow. Once you know what point you want to introduce in your topic sentence, you can create a unified paragraph by making sure that all the rest of the sentences are clearly related to the first

one. For example, a paragraph might begin like this: "In the second chapter of the "Mountain People," Turnbull (1972) uses an informal, colloquial writing style to involve his readers in the lives of the Ik people of Africa." In this paragraph, to maintain unity, the remaining sentences should all relate to the central concepts in the topic sentence: Turnbull's informal writing style and/or how that style involves his readers. A sentence that mentions the informal writing style of another author would be a digression and would destroy the unity of the paragraph. Thus, unity is created when the topic sentence makes a promise to readers, and all the other sentences fulfill that promise.

One way to ensure that your paragraphs have unity is to underline the subject of each supporting sentence to see if it points back to the key concepts in the topic sentence. In the topic sentence about the "Mountain People," for example, you might have sentences that

begin, “Turnbull’s word choice is more informal…..” or “The author’s level of language…” In each case, the subject noun group relates to one of the main concepts in the topic sentence. If all of your sentence subjects develop one of the key concepts, chances are that you have a unified paragraph. If they don’t, you have probably digressed from your original purpose and must recast some sentences to get back on track.

Development : Effective paragraphs are not only unified, they are fully developed, which means that they don’t leave any significant questions in readers’ minds. If you were drawing a map to show a fellow traveler how to get from a mountain pass to a source of water, you would be careful to draw a line that followed the trail down the mountain, along the valley to a spot where there was a lake. You wouldn’t stop the line halfway down the mountain, hoping that those who used your map would be able to figure out the rest of the way for themselves. Similarly, when you are writing a paragraph, you must be sure to trace the full development of your ideas for readers so they will understand the assumptions, evidence and reasoning you used. There are three ways to ensure that your paragraphs are fully developed: by providing the right level of supporting detail, choosing the right kind of evidence and choosing the right pattern of development for your purpose.

Coherence : You’ve achieved coherence in a paragraph when a reader (usually an instructor) congratulates you on good “flow.” A paragraph that is coherent flows because it is arranged according to a definite plan, and as a result, all the sentences are not just about the same main topic, but they also “stick together” and lead readers smoothly from the topic sentence to the concluding one. This “stickiness” results from sentences that follow, one from the other, in a way that makes sense. Each sentence takes a logical step forward. There are a number of ways to achieve coherence: through use of ordering principles, pronouns, transitional words, and repetition.

HOW TO WRITE AN ESSAY

Everybody knows how to write an essay – don’t they? Yet, many third-level students find themselves staring at a blank screen and a blinking cursor for the longest time, as they struggle to write even the most basic introductory sentence to their topic.

Sound familiar? Well, you’re not alone. Help is at hand and by following just a few easy steps, you will also become much more comfortable with the essay writing process in a very short time.

Where do I start?

A very natural inclination, when you are first handed an assignment title, is to begin writing immediately. However, what if we were to tell you that this is, in fact, the fifth step you should be taking, and not the first? Have a look at the step-by-step guide below, which should be followed as soon as you receive your assignment, and see if you can see why we recommend them:

1. Choose Your Topic

This may seem like an obvious choice, but you really do need to choose your topic carefully. Think about how much you already know about each of the options given to you, and just as importantly, which of those topics interests you most? If you choose a topic simply because it appears to be the easiest or the most straightforward option, this will show in your writing: a writer who is just going through the motions is immediately obvious to the reader. The opposite is also true, and a writer who is genuinely interested in their topic will immediately convey that to their reader. Also, researching your chosen topic is not as much hard work if you choose wisely!

2. Think About It

Time spent thinking about an assignment topic is NOT time wasted. Nor, for that matter, is any time spent talking about, or debating, these topics. Discussing different matters with classmates and friends helps to clarify our own thinking. This, in turn, helps us to form a particular line of argument and to create a framework upon which we can base our research. Brainstorming is also a very effective means of getting whatever is in your head down on paper. This will free up some headspace when you feel you're overwhelmed with information and cannot decide where to go with a topic.

TOP TIP : Freewriting will help you get it out of your head and down on paper. It can be edited, proofread and organised at a later stage. Every student should free-write for thirty minutes a day.

4. Research

Use all resources available to you. Your lecturers will have given you a reading list, and make sure you actually use it! These texts are specifically chosen to help you with your coursework and you'll gain some valuable insights into the topic that are sure to make writing your assignment easier. Familiarise yourself with the course content as listed on Canvas and, also, make full use of the various resources available through the Boole library here in UCC.

TOP TIP : Read widely and be mindful of the guidelines you are given by lecturers and tutors on various texts. E.g. 'essential' reading is just that, and it is not optional! Try to incorporate texts that are not on the recommended reading lists as well.

5. Plan/ Structure Planning

your essay is vital and will help you to feel more in control of your assignment as it begins to take shape. Again, this is not time wasted, so do not skip this step! Use a mind map, bullet points, spider diagram or any other form of planning tool you wish. Doing this will:

- Help organise and prepare a coherent argument.

- Enables you to design a logical structure for your work, and it provides you with an end point before you start writing. - Make the process of essay writing far easier; if you are trying

to structure and write your essay at the same time it can be quite difficult and confusing. - Will help you to stay on track and stick to the point.

TOP TIP Write out your essay plan and keep it near you as you write.

Your plan should include an outline of each of the paragraphs in your essay and key ideas/ topics/ themes you wish to address. You will always have the basic structure of an essay in any written assignment: an introduction, a conclusion and a number of body paragraphs.

Once you have settled on your central claim (argument) and you have written down which main points you need to discuss in order to justify your position, you will find it much easier to maintain a clear focus throughout the essay.

TOP TIP : A 2000-word essay may be broken down as follows:

250-word introduction 250-word conclusion 4x 300-400-word paragraphs

6. Write

Now you are finally ready to write! Each one of your main body paragraphs should focus on one point relevant to the one central claim/argument which you will have identified as you planned your assignment. Each of these main body paragraphs should introduce its central idea, and this should then be developed fully, using plenty of literature references as well as details, definitions, illustrations, comparisons and contrasts where appropriate.

7. Revising, Editing and Proofreading

The first draft of an essay should never be the one that is submitted for marking. Yes, this means that you need to begin your assignments well in advance of the deadlines.

TOP TIP : Ideally, you should leave a day or two between finishing a draft and revising it, just so you are looking at it with fresh eyes and a clear perspective.

So, what do we do when we are revising our assignment drafts? We look at:

1. Main argument - is it clearly stated in the introduction?

2. Structure of the assignment – is it logical and balanced?

3. Content – is what you have discussed in the essay keeping with the title of the paper? Is the content covering all the points that you mentioned in your introduction?

4. Is all the information discussed in the paper relevant?

5. Clarity – are all the main points clearly linked to the overall argument?

6. Consistency – in tenses, referencing, etc.

7. Economy of word use – are there overly-complex sentences that could be cut out? Are there too many descriptive words?

TOP TI : Where possible, you might also get a friend to read over your paper before you submit it, to check for spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors.

You might find it helpful to read the text aloud to yourself.

Your ear will most likely pick up what tired eyes often miss, and you will be more alert to the clarity and flow of your assignment as it will sound to another, less familiar reader.

You can also enable text to speech in your Microsoft Word Document (see the useful links.

Six Effective Tips to Write a Summary

A summary presents the major ideas from a text while reducing its length.

When you write a summary, you may find it tempting to combine various parts of the text. However, this isn't the best strategy. To write an effective summary, you can rearrange the order of the points and remove minor details.

Summary checklist:

❑ Write in full sentences ❑ Shorten the original text ❑ Use your own words and sentence structure ❑ Maintain the author's intent

Use these six steps to write a summary.

1. Identify the sections of the text Find the text's thesis and main ideas. Breaking down the text into sections helps you to understand the author's flow and organization.

2. Distinguish between major and minor details How do the details connect back to the thesis and main ideas? Remember, a summary is a shortened version of the original text. You'll need to focus on the need-to-know information.

3. Remove minor details and examples Condense the text, but beware of misrepresenting the author's ideas. Sometimes omitting details can change the spirit of the text.

4. Pay attention to transition words Transition words can signal emphasis and guide you through the logic of the text's argument. Look out for words like "however", "therefore", and "thus".

5. Re-order the ideas as needed You don't have to maintain the exact same order as the author. Re-organize your points so that your summary is logical.

6. Reserve your opinions Your analysis of the text is important, but it does not belong in a summary. Remember, a summary is a condensed form of the author's ideas and intent. Save your opinions of the text for a discussion.

How to paraphrase

- Read the original text until you grasp its meaning; then set it aside.
- Using your memory, write down the main points or concepts. Do not copy the text verbatim.
- When reading a passage, try first to understand it as a whole, rather than pausing to write down specific ideas or phrases.
- Be selective. Unless your assignment is to do a formal or "literal" paraphrase, you usually don't need to paraphrase an entire passage; instead, choose and summarize the material that helps you make a point in your paper.
- Think of what "your own words" would be if you were telling someone who's unfamiliar with your subject (your mother, your brother, a friend) what the original source said.
- Remember that you can use direct quotations of phrases from the original within your paraphrase, and that you don't need to change or put quotation marks around shared language or common vocabulary shared by a community of scholars.
- Check your notes against the original to ensure you have not accidentally plagiarized.

Original Quote	Poor Paraphrase
"New tracks aside, the challenge is at the bare minimum to bring light and air into this underground purgatory and, beyond that, to create for millions of people a new space worthy of New York, a civic hub in the spirit of the great demolished one, more attuned to the city's aspirations and democratic ideals." - Michael Kimmelman, The New York Times	*Besides replacing the railroad tracks, the toughest part is to at least bring air and light to Penn Station. Millions of people in New York are deserving of a new civic hub, constructed in the same essence of the one that was leveled so many years ago. Moving forward with such a development ties in with the city's enthusiasm for beauty and architecture.*

How to write a CV

Two types of CV

There are two main types of CV.

1. Skills-focused CV – useful for career changers, school leavers or people with gaps in work history.
2. Work-focused CV – useful for showcasing work experience and for people progressing to the next stage in their career.

- Use our skills-focused or work-focused CV templates

Make your CV easy to read

Recruiters take 15-20 seconds to scan your CV the first time. If you make a good impression, they'll read your CV more closely.

To make your CV look good:

- use a black, easy-to-read font in one size
- use short sentences and break up blocks of text
- use bullet points to list information
- keep the tone formal
- avoid abbreviations, slang or jargon
- avoid photos or images
- have strong headings and lots of white space
- keep your CV to two pages.

Save your CV as a Word document and a PDF

Save your CV as both a Word document and a PDF. An employer may need either one of these file formats.

Label your CV files with your name, the application date, and the job you're applying for.

If you update your Word document, remember to also create a new PDF .

What to put in your CV

A CV must include:

- your name and contact details
- technical and personal skills
- work, and community and volunteer experience
- qualifications and education
- referees (you can include referees or note that referees are available on request).

A CV could also include:

- an objective and personal statement
- achievements
- interests
- job-specific information (for example, a teacher would put their teaching philosophy in their CV).

What not to put in your CV

Don't put:

- a photo or images
- coloured or fancy fonts or design
- your date of birth or age
- your marital status, religion or bank account details
- too much text and bad spelling
- a funny or rude email address
- work experience or interests that are not relevant to the job
- lies about your experience and skills.

Name and contact details

Include:

- first and last name (this should be in large and bold text)
- postal address, including area code
- phone number
- email address.

Optional:

- job hunting profile link, such as LinkedIn or Behance
- your professional website or Youtube channel link.

Make sure that:

- your email address is work-appropriate, for example, kowhaijoneswork@email.com

- your phone voicemail message only gives your name and a request to leave a message.

Objective and personal statement

An objective gives brief details about the type of work and role you would like and the industry you want to work in.

A personal statement gives the employer an idea of who you are in three or four sentences.

You can include:

- what you're currently doing for employment or education
- what attracted you to the job you're applying for
- your reason you're applying for this job
- your career goals.

Both an objective and a personal statement are optional and sit under your contact details.

- Reed website - examples of personal statements

Skills

The skills you put in your CV should be the same skills listed in the job advertisement.

Technical skills

Include a technical skill section in your CV to list skills such as:

- driver's licences
- languages
- computer programmes.

Examples of writing about personal skills in your CV

In a skills-focused CV, list the skills from the job advertisement with examples of how you've used those skills. This should be at the top of your CV.

Strong communication skills

- member of Southwest High School debating team
- chaired the Mount Gibson Neighbourhood Support committee for two years.

In a work-focused CV, describe your skills in your work history.

2015-2017 Customer Services Representative, Beluga Rental Cars

- Demonstrated strong communication skills when advising customers on car insurance.

Find out more about putting skills in your CV.

- How to describe skills in your CV

Work history and work or volunteer experience

List your most recent jobs or work and volunteer experience first. Your work history needs to include:

- the name of the employer
- the job title/role
- where the job was located
- start date and end date.

Beneath this, list the tasks you performed. Also list any achievements.

If you change jobs in the same organisation, include both job titles/roles.

You don't need to list all your work history – keep your CV short.

Examples of work history

If you choose a skills-focused CV:

July 2017-August 2018 Counter assistant Sione's Bakery, Auckland

- customer service
- increased sales of large coffees by 10%.

If you choose a work-focused CV, describe your skills more:

July 2017-August 2018 Counter assistant Sione's Bakery, Auckland

Responsible for food and drink and customer service in bakery.

- demonstrated excellent customer service skills when taking customer's orders
- lead sales of large coffees, increasing sales to 10%.

Use action verbs to describe your work history

Use action verbs to describe your work history and skills. These are words like demonstrated, managed, lead, developed, organised.

- Live career website - find action verbs for your CV

Gaps in your work history?

If you have gaps where you haven't been in paid work:

- use a skills-focused CV

- showcase skills you've learned on your break such as planning, budgeting, caring for family members
- include work experience and volunteer work in your work history
- explain the reason for big gaps in your cover letter.

Qualifications

List your qualifications or education in the qualifications section of your CV. You can include:

- NCEA levels or other school qualifications
- school subjects with grades
- certificates, diplomas or degrees
- micro-credentials and short work-related courses
- work-based training
- professional development courses, conferences and workshops
- online courses.

Format of qualifications section

List the newest or most relevant qualification first. Include:

- name of the course or qualification you completed
- name of the course provider
- where you studied
- start and finish date of your training or study, or the year you graduated.

Achievements

Include an achievements section in your CV if you have important achievements that aren't covered in the skills or work history sections.

You can include such things as:

- awards and commendations
- successfully completed projects
- examples of how you helped a former employer meet their targets
- important contributions to the community.

For each example, note what the achievement was, and when and where you achieved it.

Interests

Including your interests on your CV is optional. If you do, make sure you:

- include interests that show skills that employers are looking for such as leadership skills
- avoid common interests such as watching TV or going out with friends.

TH END