

Providing references

References provide further evidence to potential future employers that you are who you say you are, and that you have done what you claim to have done for previous employers. It is highly likely that your referees will be contacted if you are shortlisted, so it is essential to select them carefully.

9 a In pairs, discuss the following questions.

- 1 Why are references important?
- 2 How many referees do you need, and who should you choose?
- 3 When is a referee no longer useful?
- 4 What happens if you don't get on with the most obvious choices for your referees?
- 5 Is it OK to use someone you know well who works for the organisation where you are applying for a job?
- 6 Do you have to give your current employer?
- 7 How can you find out what a reference says about you?

b Match the questions (1–7) in Exercise 9a to the following expert advice (a–g). Do you agree with the advice?

- a Usually two – an academic one and either an employer or a personal/character referee. They should be of professional standing so that they can comment on your suitability for the job. Do not use a relative; a family friend is OK. Always ask permission before using someone as a reference. Provide them with a copy of your CV and an indication of the jobs you are applying for. Let them know how you got on, and thank them afterwards. 2
- b Yes, but they may feel uncomfortable, so be sensitive. They are putting their reputation on the line. ____
- c You can't easily – that's the point of a confidential reference. If you suspect a poor reference is causing you problems, try changing your referee. ____
- d It is normal to ask for your current employer not to be contacted yet. Offer another referee. Ask to be alerted before your employer is contacted. ____
- e When they don't remember who you are or become uncontactable. ____
- f Choose another who will represent you in the best light. ____
- g References provide confidential information about your character, skills and experience. A positive recommendation will greatly support your application. ____

c In pairs, discuss the following statements. Do you agree with them?

- 1 It is better to choose professional or academic referees than personal friends.
- 2 As long as your references back up the facts on your CV, then you don't need to worry.
- 3 You don't need to provide the names and contact details of your referees in your CV.



- d** ▶ 25 The opinions in Exercise 9c are expressed by the recruitment consultants, Grace and Oliver, in a discussion about providing references. Listen to the conversation and answer the following questions.
- 1 Who expressed which opinion (1–3)? Write O (Oliver), G (Grace) or B (Both).
 - 2 What reasons did they give in support of their opinions?
 - 3 What phrase does Oliver use to say you can provide references if they are needed?
- e** Think of a specific job you would like to apply for and, using the models presented in this unit, write your CV. Remember to highlight only your skills and experience that are relevant for a job.
- f** In pairs, evaluate each other's CVs. Think about the following questions.
- Is the English natural and accurate?
 - Does everything make sense? Do you get a good idea of your partner's life by reading their CV?
 - Is the language impressive and persuasive? If not, how can you improve it?
 - Is the layout attractive and logical? If not, how can you improve it?
 - Does your partner's CV demonstrate a wide range of transferable skills? If not, where could you add more proof?
 - Does your partner's CV demonstrate that your partner is suitable for the job they want? If not, why not?
 - Is the CV too long? If so, which words/sentences/sections would you delete or edit?

When you are happy with the feedback you have received, rewrite your CV. Repeat the process until your CV is perfect.