Lesson 1

Professional CV for ESL/ELT Roles

Build a CV that helps schools, training centres and language companies understand your value quickly.

10–20 minute practical lesson

Takeaway: a stronger CV top-third + three evidence-based bullets.



What this lesson will change

By the end, your CV should feel clearer, more professional and easier to shortlist.

1 Position yourself

as a teacher, trainer or coach — not just “someone who completed a course”.

2 Show evidence

through outcomes, learner groups, tools, methods and practical experience.

3 Make scanning easy

so a recruiter can see your fit in less than one minute.

Today is not about making your CV longer. It is about making your value easier to trust.

A professional CV is not a biography

It is a short evidence document designed for a specific employer.

Weak CV mindset

- I must include everything I have ever done.
- The certificate name is enough.
- The employer will understand my experience.

Your CV should answer: “Why should this institution interview me for this role?”

Professional CV mindset

- I show the role I am ready for.
- I prove each skill with examples.
- I make the recruiter’s decision easier.

The 20-second CV test

The first screen decides whether the reader continues.

Top third of your CV

Name | Location | Email | LinkedIn

Professional profile
2–3 lines

Education • Professional (Relevant) experience

01 What role are you applying for?

02 What specialties can you teach?

03 What evidence proves you can do it?

If the top third does not answer these three questions, improve it first.

Recommended CV structure for ELT roles

Keep it simple, international and easy to edit for each vacancy.

Header	Name, city/country, email, phone/WhatsApp, LinkedIn
Profile	2–3 lines naming your target role and strongest evidence
Education	Teaching skills (TESOL / CVAT® / CVIM® and relevant modules) + assessment + technology
Experience	Teaching, training, demos, observations, internships, projects
CPD	Conferences, webinars, ongoing development

Rule: one or two pages. No decorative CV templates. No long paragraphs.

Write a profile that sounds employable

Use this formula instead of generic statements.

Target role + learner group + specialist skill + proof / credential

Example profile

Cambridge Veritas® TESOL-certified English teacher with 5+ years of experience planning communicative lessons for adult and young adult learners. Strong focus on pronunciation support, error correction and learner confidence, with practical training through PPP lesson planning and teaching practice.

Avoid: “hardworking, passionate, seeking a challenging opportunity”. Use role-specific proof instead.

Turn duties into evidence

Your bullets should show what you did, for whom and with what result.

Weak bullet

- Taught English to students.
- Helped with speaking.
- Made lesson plans.

Evidence bullet

- Planned and delivered B1 speaking lessons for adult learners using guided practice, pronunciation drilling and immediate error correction.
- Created short IELTS-style speaking tasks to build fluency and confidence.

Bullet formula: Action verb + learner group + method/tool + outcome/evidence

Translate your Cambridge Veritas® training

Employers do not only need the certificate name. They need to understand the skill behind it.

TESOL / CVTE®	Lesson planning, teaching methodology, classroom language, assessment basics
CVAT®	Pronunciation, voice and accent training, MTI support, drilling and feedback
CVIM®	IELTS band descriptors, speaking/writing assessment, exam strategy and feedback

CV language: “trained in…” is weaker than “able to plan, deliver, assess and give feedback on…”

Common mistakes in global ELT CVs

These small problems can make a good candidate look less ready.

Too generic

Same CV for IELTS, school teaching, V&A and online teaching roles.

No role keywords

The CV does not use the wording employers search for.

Messy formatting

Tables, icons and graphics make the CV hard to read or parse.

Too much personal information

Age, marital status, passport details or long home address unless requested.

No proof

Certificates are listed, but teaching skills are not demonstrated.

Unclear English level

No evidence of English proficiency, teaching medium or professional communication.

International rule: be clear, professional, evidence-based and easy to verify.

Before and after: make the skill visible

Do not hide strong work inside weak wording.

Before

“Worked with students on speaking and pronunciation.”

After

“Delivered pronunciation-focused speaking practice for B1 adult learners, using model–drill–feedback cycles to improve clarity, word stress and confidence.”

The after-version answers: learner level, teaching focus, method and professional outcome.

Use a clean, recruiter-friendly layout

Beautiful is not useful if it becomes difficult to read, edit or upload.

Use

- One column
- Clear headings
- Simple fonts
- Consistent spacing
- PDF for sending + Word when requested

Avoid

- Busy graphics
- Unnecessary icons
- Tiny text
- Long paragraphs
- Tables that break online forms

File name

Firstname_Lastname_ESL_Teacher_CV.pdf

Simple file names look organised and are easier for employers to find.

Think: easy to open, easy to scan, easy to shortlist.

Tailor the CV to the role

One strong master CV becomes several targeted CVs.

1. Read the job ad

Highlight repeated words: IELTS, adults, online, pronunciation, young learners, assessment.

2. Match evidence

Find where your training, teaching practice, internship or experience proves those skills.

3. Edit profile

Move the most relevant skills into your profile, skills and first bullets.

Tailoring is not lying. It is choosing the most relevant truth first.

Your 15-minute CV task

Do this immediately after the lesson.

Step 1 — Rewrite your profile using the formula.

Step 2 — Add 6–9 role-specific core skills.

Step 3 — Rewrite three weak bullets using the evidence formula.

Step 4 — Save your CV as PDF with a professional file name.

Submit/keep ready: one polished CV top-third + three strong experience bullets.

Final takeaway

A strong ELT CV does not list your past. It proves your next role.

Mission before Lesson 2

Edit your CV top-third and prepare it for job applications.



Next lesson: Applying for jobs on LinkedIn, Indeed and ELT platforms