

Resume & Cover Letter Writing

Before Writing Your Resume and Cover Letter

KNOW THE JOB

- ◇ Analyze the job description and highlight the keywords which indicate preferred skills, abilities, attributes and qualifications.
- ◇ Research the employer's organization.

KNOW YOURSELF

- ◇ Create an inventory of your accomplishments.
- ◇ Be aware of your assets and transferrable skills.
- ◇ Identify relevant skills and achievements that are desirable for that particular position.

Resume Sections

CONTACT INFORMATION

- ◇ Name, street address*, email address, phone number

OBJECTIVE (optional)

- ◇ Brief description of the position you are seeking

EDUCATION

- ◇ School, degree, major, graduation date,
- ◇ Optional: GPA, relevant coursework

EXPERIENCE

- ◇ Includes paid and unpaid work.
- ◇ Provide job title, employing organization and dates of employment.
- ◇ Emphasize tasks, skills, abilities and accomplishments.

SKILLS SUMMARY/QUALIFICATIONS

- ◇ Foreign languages spoken
- ◇ Computer and office skills
- ◇ Transferrable skills

HONORS AND ACTIVITIES (optional)

- ◇ Student activities and organizations.
- ◇ Professional associations
- ◇ Academic honors and scholarships
- ◇ Extracurricular and volunteer activities

**If you are uploading your resume to an online profile, do not include your street address.*

All information included in your resume should be relevant to the job you are applying for.

Your resume is
a snapshot of
who you are
and what you
have to offer!

Do's and Don'ts of Resumes

- ◆ Do use action verbs.
- ◆ Do target your skills and accomplishments to the employer's needs.
- ◆ Do focus on specific results of your work; quantify if possible.
- ◆ Do tailor your resume to each specific position.
- ◆ Do use readable and common fonts.
- ◆ Do proofread thoroughly and receive feedback from another.

- ◆ Don't use phrases such as "Responsibilities included"
- ◆ Don't use long sentences or paragraphs.
- ◆ Don't include routine job duties such as "making copies."

Developing Descriptions

While writing your descriptions, ask yourself the following questions to help you create a more detailed description of your work experience.

Key questions to ask yourself:

- ◇ With whom did I work?
- ◇ What goals was I trying to accomplish?
- ◇ What duties did I perform?
- ◇ What timelines was I working under?
- ◇ Where did my job fit into the organization?
- ◇ What procedures did I follow?

EXAMPLE

Original description: *Planned activities.*

Ask yourself: What kinds? How? When? For whom?

Revised description: *Planned arts, crafts, activities, and exercises weekly for physically-challenged children.*

Understated descriptions

Answered phone.

Wiped tables.

Professional descriptions

Acted as liaison between clients and legal staff.

Created healthy environment for customers and maintained positive public image.

Use professional language to highlight your experiences.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Try revising your own job descriptions. Remember to ask yourself the key questions and use action verbs.

Cover Letter Format

1. HEADER

- ◇ Date
- ◇ Employer information
- ◇ Greeting

2. INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH

- ◇ State the position you are applying for.
- ◇ Ask for consideration based on skills and experiences.
- ◇ If referred by someone, state here.
- ◇ General statement of qualifications.

3. MIDDLE PARAGRAPH(S)

- ◇ Build a connection between the company's needs and your background and skills.
- ◇ Stress what you have to offer them.
- ◇ Expand on relevant experiences and accomplishments.

4. CONCLUSION

- ◇ Restate interest in position and unique qualifications.
- ◇ Request an interview or tell reader that you will contact them.
- ◇ Thank the readers for their time and consideration.

Do's and Don'ts of Cover Letters

- ◆ Do tailor your cover letter to the position and company.
- ◆ Do include specific information about why you want to work for the employer.
- ◆ Do exemplify clear and concise writing skills.
- ◆ Do demonstrate your knowledge of the position.
- ◆ Do align your experience with the desired qualifications of the employer.

- ◆ Don't make your introduction too long.
- ◆ Don't ramble on about your experiences without explaining why they are relevant.
- ◆ Don't write more than one page.
- ◆ Don't send the same generic cover letter to all employers.
- ◆ Don't simply restate your resume.

Additional Tips

- * Follow up with the employer. Inquire if any further information is needed and reiterate your interest.
- * Create a professional email address for correspondence with employers and universities.
- * Use the same presentation style for both your cover letter and resume.
- * Create a master resume and pull relevant information for specific positions.
- * Refer to sample resumes and cover letters. You can find many examples online, including the Transfer and Career Center's Self-Guided Career Planner which is available here: <http://www.hartnell.edu/internships-career-services>
- * Refer to lists of action verbs to use when describing your experiences. You can find lists of verbs in the Self-Guided Career planner, mentioned above, or in other online resources.
- * Visit the Transfer and Career Center to receive individual assistance in proofreading and editing your resume and cover letter.
- * Utilize the checklists on the following page to make sure you've hit all the key points in creating a strong resume and cover letter.

Resume and Cover Letter

Resume Checklist

- Are your name, address, city, state, zip code, phone number and email address at the top of the page?
- Is the resume pleasing to the eye with an easy-to-read font and good layout?
- Did you tailor your resume for the position by including key skills and experiences that the employer wants?
- Is information listed in order of importance and relevance to the requirements listed in the job description?
- Does the resume avoid generalities and instead provide specific information about context, actions taken, and results?
- Do phrases begin with action verbs (e.g. developed, initiated)?
- Did you check for correct spelling and grammar?

Cover Letter Checklist

- Did you write an original targeted cover letter for each employer and position?
- Did you state in the first sentence your purpose for writing?
- Did you show that your career goals are aligned with both the position and organization?
- Did you make your points succinctly?
- Did you proofread for correct spelling and grammar?
- Did you have someone else review and provide feedback?



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Friday: 8 am - 5 pm

<http://www.hartnell.edu/career>