

Campus Academic Resource Program

Job Search Series: Resume and Cover Letter

Workshop Objectives:

- Discover how to plan and build a resume.
- Learn to structure *functional*, *chronological*, and *hybrid* resumes.
- Write and format a proper cover letter.
- Submit resumes and cover letters to prospective employers.

Resume Planning

The first component in planning your resume is analyzing the listing for the job which you are applying to. It is important to understand what an employer is looking for *specifically* before you apply for a job. Be sure to read the job description carefully and look for:

- Descriptive adjectives
- Necessary skills
- Job and application requirements

Be sure to visit the company or organization's website to get more information about their work and goals, and for any additional information about how the position you are applying for fits into those goals. Once you learn what a potential employer is looking for specifically, adjust your resume for those qualifications accordingly. The best resumes address the specific duties and expectations that are listed in the job post.

Remembering Your Job-Related Experience

Every resume needs proof that you are the best possible fit for the job. The best way to do this is to describe the responsibilities of and skills gained from past work experiences.

Many people are hesitant to list unpaid positions as “experiences,” but experience can come from work, internships, volunteering, school projects, and even relevant extra-curricular activities.

Tailoring Your Skills and Experience to Your Resume

As previously mentioned, your resume should be tailored to the job you are applying for. Using the same resume for multiple jobs—even if they require similar skill sets—is not as effective because it does not allow you to make the language of your resume specific to each job.

Before writing the resume, you should reflect on all of your relevant experiences and decide what that employer would be interested in. This means looking at your list of experiences and skills, and thinking about what the job's expectations are.

Return to the job listing you analyzed earlier in the workshop, or think about another job you have in mind. Go back over your brainstorm of skills and responsibilities you listed in the packet and circle which ones best fit the desired job.

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Sample Job Listing

Directions: Read this job listing and look for important key words that either state or suggest what the employer is looking for in an employee. Underline/highlight/circle these key words.

Sam's Body Building and Protein Shoppe is currently looking for an Administrative Assistant for its Valencia and 20th location.

A successful candidate would have strong organizational and communication skills, who possesses strong initiative and enjoys the position. This position is open and is accepting applications until December 20th. We are seeking someone who will be available 5 days a week. In this role you would be required to complete the following tasks:

- *Open and close the office*
- *Answer customer questions and greet clients upon arrival*
- *Support sales team with any questions and concerns*
- *Process sales orders*
- *Handle of small cash amounts*
- *General administrative functions*

To be considered for this role you will be a strong communicator, able to delegate tasks to multiple staff members and maintain professional communication with clients as well as other staff members. Also, a candidate should feel comfortable in the company's culture that celebrates health and vitality. We are also seeking a candidate who has a strong eye for detail and has a strong willingness to learn and facilitate a healthy office environment.

Requirements:

B.A. or working on a B.A. in Business Administration, Marketing, Business, or Hospitality and Tourism Management

Bring your great attitude to this ever growing environment

Must be highly organized and have strong analytical skills

Must also have strong customer service skills

Able to use Microsoft Word, Excel, and Power Point with ease and comfort

1 year of work experience in a similar environment

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Brainstorm Practice:

Directions: Take a few minutes to brainstorm your various experiences with work/school/volunteer groups etc. List your experience in the left column, and on the right write the corresponding skills/responsibilities that you demonstrated. After discussing our job listing, Go back over your list of skills/responsibilities and circle the ones that best fit the desired job.

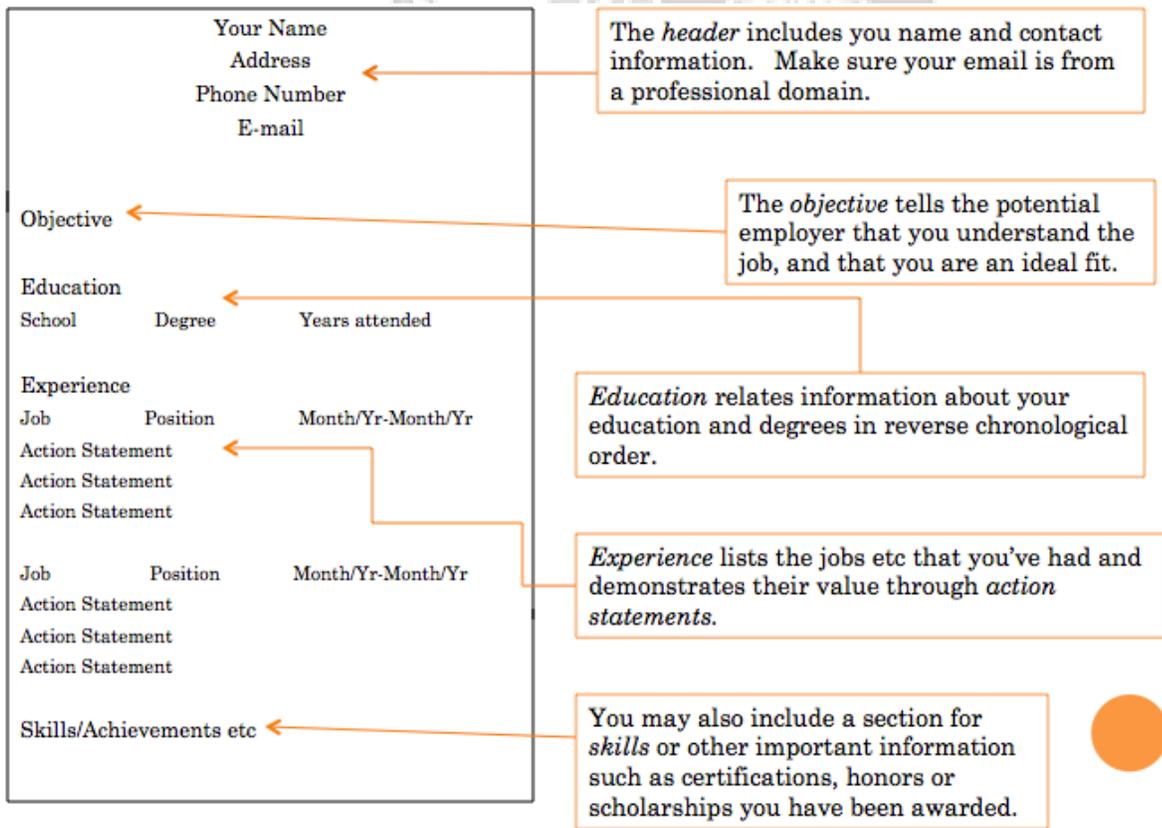
YOUR EXPERIENCE (School, Job, Internship, Volunteer Experience, Extracurricular Activities, etc.)	Skills, Tasks, Accomplishments, Awards/Honors, Etc.
1)	
2)	
3)	
4)	
5)	

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Building a Resume

Resume Components:



Step 1: Resume Objectives

An objective is one concise, clear statement about how you as a job candidate fit the position. If you think of your resume as an essay, your objective would be like your thesis statement. The objective also shows that you studied both the employer and the job. There are many ways to write an objective, but it must always relate to the job.

Below are some examples of resume objectives:

- *To obtain a part-time position that will allow me to utilize my technical skills in the field of microbiology.*
- *To obtain a full-time teacher's aid position that will allow me to utilize my experiences in family outreach and one-on-one attention.*
- *To utilize my marketing and business experience in a sales position at Target Corporation.*

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Many argue that an objective statement is beneficial because it clarifies any confusion about your purpose and shows focus. However, others advise against using an objective statement because they believe it could turn off a potential employer before they even read your resume. You should decide if including an objective suits your situation. But, even if you do not write an objective on your resume, make sure you still have one in mind for yourself in order to keep your resume tailored to your goals.

Step 2: Writing Action Statements

An action statement *shows* what you did, rather than tells what your skills or job duties were. When describing the work you did at your jobs, volunteer work, etc. you use action statements.

Instead of listing your responsibilities, a great action statement **shows what action you took**, *and the results obtained from that action*.

Approach 1: Skill Based

This approach begins by demonstrating a skill you have; it uses actions and action verbs to demonstrate this. Refer back to your skills and experience brainstorm, and pick a skill that you find relevant to the job posting.

Example:

- Skill: Organization
- Actions that demonstrate skill: Managing data, creating schedules
- Action Statement: **Managed a record room with 12,000 entries** *for frequent fast access*

Approach 2: Action Based

If you are struggling to describe your experiences and skills, refer to the list of action words provided on page 14 of this packet. Browse through these words and find one that relates to a skill relevant to the job you are applying for and try to create an action statement conveying that experience.

Example:

- Action Word: Analyze
- Action Statement: **Analyzed market trends using third party and original data** *to generate reports*

Approach 3: Problem Based

This approach is used to demonstrate your ability to solve problems. Think back on your past experiences and try to remember a problem you encountered. Write down how you addressed the problem and the results of your solution.

Example:

- Problem: Manual scheduling was too slow.
- **Action:** Set up an electronic scheduling system.
- *Result:* Managers and staff could communicate and work together more effectively. Also, client intake was more streamlined.
- Action statement: **Proposed and implemented an electronic scheduling system,** *resulting in increased coordination and streamlined client intake.*

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Approaches to Writing Action Statements

Approach 1: Skill Based

Directions: Consider the skills you have learned in your past job, school, volunteer or other job related experiences which you have already brainstormed. Using the skills listed here in the word-bank, or others, brainstorm things you have done at work, school, etc. which demonstrates the skill.

Communication	Research	Computer/technical literacy
Flexibility	Adaptability	Managing multiple priorities
Leadership	Management	Sensitivity
Organization	Planning	Problem Solving
Creativity	Teamwork	Honesty
Integrity	Dependability	Responsibility
Loyalty	Positive Attitude	Energy
Passion	Professionalism	Self Confidence
Self motivation	Willingness to learn	Tenacity

Example:

- Skill: Organization
- Actions that demonstrate skill: Managing data, creating schedules
- Action Statement: **Managed a record room with 12,000 entries** *for frequent fast access*

Now you try!

Skill:

Things that demonstrate skill:

Action Statement:

Skill:

Things that demonstrate skill:

Action Statement:

Skill:

Things that demonstrate skill:

Action Statement:

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Bank of Job-related Action Verbs:

This bank of action verbs should be a useful tool as you work towards refining your action statements.

Abstracted	Computed	Evaluated	Interviewed	Persuaded	Skilled
Achieved	Conceived	Examined	Introduced	Planned	Solicited
Acquired	Conducted	Exceeded	Invented	Practiced	Solved
Acted	Conserved	Excelled	Inventoried	Predicted	Specialized
Adapted	Consulted	Expanded	Investigated	Prepared	Spoke
Addressed	Contributed	Expedited	Judged	Presented	Stimulated
Advertised	Contracted	Experimented	Kept	Prioritized	Strategized
Advised	Converted	Explained	Launched	Produced	Streamlined
Advocated	Coordinated	Explored	Learned	Programmed	Strengthened
Aided	Copied	Expressed	Lectured	Projected	Stressed
Answered	Correlated	Extracted	Led	Promoted	Studied
Anticipated	Counseled	Facilitated	Lifted	Proposed	Substantiated
Applied	Created	Fashioned	Listened	Protected	Succeeded
Approved	Critiqued	Financed	Located	Proved	Summarized
Arranged	Cultivated	Fixed	Logged	Provided	Synthesized
Ascertained	Dealt	Followed	Made	Publicized	Supervised
Assembled	Debated	Formulated	Maintained	Published	Supported
Assessed	Defined	Fostered	Managed	Purchased	Surveyed
Assisted	Delivered	Founded	Manipulated	Queried	Sustained
Attained	Designed	Gained	Mapped	Questioned	Symbolized
Audited	Detected	Gathered	Mastered	Raised	Tabulated
Augmented	Determined	Gave	Maximized	Ran	Talked
Authored	Developed	Generated	Mediated	Ranked	Taught
Bolstered	Devised	Governed	Memorized	Rationalized	Theorized
Briefed	Diagnosed	Guided	Mentored	Read	Trained
Brought	Directed	Handled	Met	Reasoned	Translated
Budgeted	Discovered	Headed	Minimized	Recorded	Upgraded
Built	Discriminated	Helped	Modeled	Received	Utilized
Calculated	Dispatched	Identified	Modified	Reduced	Validated
Cared	Displayed	Illustrated	Monitored	Referred	Verified
Charged	Dissected	Imagined	Narrated	Related	Visualized
Chartered	Documented	Implemented	Observed	Relied	Won
Checked	Drafted	Improved	Obtained	Reported	
Clarified	Drove	Improvised	Offered	Researched	
Classified	Edited	Inaugurated	Operated	Responded	
Coached	Eliminated	Increased	Ordered	Restored	
Collaborated	Empathized	Indexed	Organized	Revamped	
Collected	Enable	Indicated	Originated	Reviewed	
Comforted	Enforced	Influenced	Overcame	Scanned	
Communicated	Enlightened	Initiated	Oversaw	Scheduled	
Compared	Enlisted	Inspected	Participated	Schemed	
Completed	Ensured	Instituted	Perceived	Screened	
Complied	Established	Integrated	Perfected	Set Goals	
Composed	Estimated	Interpreted	Performed	Shaped	

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Approach 2: Action Based

Directions: Browse through the list of action verbs above and choose ones that relate to your experience. Use these action verbs to convey your skills in action statements below. (Taken from SFSU's Student Involvement and Career Center webpage.)

Example:

- Action Word: Analyze
- Action Statement: **Analyzed market trends using third party and original data to *generate reports***

Now you try!

Action Word:

Action Statement:

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Approach 3: Problem Based

Directions: Think back on your experiences, and try to remember a problem you encountered. Write down how you addressed the problem and the results of your solution. Build your action statement with these two parts. Feel free to use the action verb list from earlier.

Example

- Problem: Paper scheduling was too slow
- Action: Set up an electronic scheduling system
- Result: Managers and staff could communicate and work together more effectively. Also, client intake was more efficient.
- Action Statement: **Proposed and implemented an electronic scheduling system, resulting in increased coordination and streamlined client intake.**

Now you try!

Problem:

Action:

Result:

Action Statement:

Problem:

Action:

Result:

Action Statement:

Problem:

Action:

Result:

Action Statement:

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Types of Resumes: Functional, Chronological, and Hybrid Resumes

You may be familiar with one type of traditional resume, but there are actually different types of resumes meant to best display your professional experiences.

Functional Resumes

Functional resumes are most effective for those who have little-to-no direct experience within their desired field.

Perhaps you are newly graduated or have decided to make a career shift. It's also beneficial for people who have had long gaps in their employment.

This type of resume highlights skills and experiences without necessarily connecting them to less relevant work experience by focusing on your skills rather than work history.

On the right is one way to format a functional resume:

YOUR NAME Address City, State Zip Phone E-mail Address		
Objective:		
Relevant Skills/Experiences:		
Skill 1		
• Action Statement that shows skill		
• Action Statement that shows skill		
• Action Statement that shows skill		
Skill 2		
• Action Statement that shows skill		
• Action Statement that shows skill		
• Action Statement that shows skill		
Skill 3		
• Action Statement that shows skill		
• Action Statement that shows skill		
• Action Statement that shows skill		
Work History		
Dates of employment	Job Title	Organization
Dates of employment	Job Title	Organization
Dates of employment	Job Title	Organization
Education		
Degree		
School Graduation Date		

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YOUR NAME Address City, State Zip Phone E-mail Address		
Objective		
Education		
Degree		
School Graduation Date		
GPA		
Work Experience		
Organization		
<i>Job Title City, State Dates of employment (month and year)</i>		
Action Statement that describes responsibilities, skills, developed, and results achieved.		
Remember that action statements need to apply to your desired job.		
Organization		
<i>Job Title City, State Dates of employment (month and year)</i>		
Action Statement that describes responsibilities, skills, developed, and results achieved.		
Remember that action statements need to apply to your desired job.		
Organization		
<i>Job Title City, State Dates of employment (month and year)</i>		
Action Statement that describes responsibilities, skills, developed, and results achieved.		
Remember that action statements need to apply to your desired job.		
Awards/Honors		
Award	Organization	<i>Date conferred</i>
Volunteer		
Position	Organization	<i>Dates of work</i>
Activities		
Activity	Organization	<i>Dates of work</i>

Chronological Resume

Chronological resumes are most effective for those who have work and other experiences that are relevant to the position being applied to. They work as a timeline, highlighting applicant growth and development in their field, and illustrate consistency in work history. This type of resume is the most popular and the most traditional, though it is not the best choice in every situation (see Functional and Hybrid Resumes).

An example of one way to format a chronological resume is on the left.

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Hybrid Resume

Hybrid resumes combine the Functional Resume's focus on skills with the Chronological Resume's focus on work history in relation to those skills. These resumes highlight applicant growth and development in specific fields, while organizing work history under consistent themes or experiences (e.g. leadership experience, marketing experience).

An example of a hybrid resume is on the right.

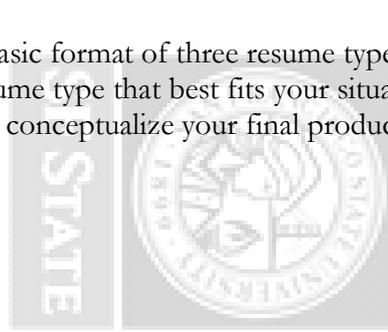
YOUR NAME Address City, State Zip Phone E-mail Address		
Objective		
Education Degree School Graduation Date GPA		
Experience		
Skill or Experience 1		
Organization Job Title City, State Dates of employment (month and year) • Action Statement that describes responsibilities, skills, developed, and results achieved. • Remember that action statements need to apply to your desired job.		
Organization Job Title City, State Dates of employment (month and year) • Action Statement that describes responsibilities, skills, developed, and results achieved. • Remember that action statements need to apply to your desired job.		
Skill or Experience 2		
Organization Job Title City, State Dates of employment (month and year) • Action Statement that describes responsibilities, skills, developed, and results achieved. • Remember that action statements need to apply to your desired job.		
Volunteer		
Position	Organization	Dates of work
Activities		
Activity	Organization	Dates of work

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Resume Practice:

Directions: Now that we have seen the basic format of three resume types, try to organize your information and experiences into the resume type that best fits your situation. This will help you practice organizing your information and conceptualize your final product.



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CCARP

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What is a Cover Letter?

A cover letter is a one-page introduction to who you are and why you are the best choice for the job, but in a more personal manner than space allows for in the body of your resume. Cover letters are always turned in with a resume, unless otherwise specified.

An effective cover letter will not only be a more personal way of introducing yourself to a potential employer, but it will also demonstrate that you possess both enthusiasm for and knowledge about the desired position. It is also an opportunity to illustrate your writing skills and to describe more fully how your experience has prepared you for the position.

Building a Cover Letter

Cover Letter Components

The diagram shows a cover letter template with several callout boxes explaining its components:

- Header:** Your Name, Your Address, Your phone number, Your professional email. Callout: "Header gives your contact information (reliable phone number, current address, and professional email)." An arrow points from this box to the header section.
- Date:** Month Date, Year. Callout: "Date sent". An arrow points from this box to the date section.
- Recipient Information:** Mr./Ms./Dr. First and Last Name of Person, Position or Title, Employer Organization's Name, Employer Street Address/P.O. Box, City, State Zip Code. Callout: "Contact information of whoever will be reading your cover letter". An arrow points from this box to the recipient information section.
- Salutation:** Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. Whoever is going to hire me:. Callout: "Salutation. Make sure it is addressed to the hiring manager whenever possible." An arrow points from this box to the salutation section.
- Opening Paragraph:** What position you are applying for. How you found out about it. Why you are applying for it.
- Body Paragraph(s):** Elaborates on the most impressive and relevant aspects of your experience. This elaboration should further prove that you are the best choice for the job.
- Conclusion Paragraph:** Briefly restates what position you are applying for and why. Thanks him/her for considering your application, and states that you will be following up in a certain amount of time.
- Closing:** Sincerely, (Signature) Your Name (Printed). Callout: "If no contact is given, use 'Dear Hiring Manager.' As a last resort, write 'To whom it may concern.'" An arrow points from this box to the closing section.

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Step 1: Opening Paragraph

The opening paragraph of your cover letter should inform the reader of what position you are applying for, and may also include how you heard about the position. However, the most important thing this paragraph will do is illustrate why you want the **particular position** you are applying for at the **particular company or organization**. Just like your resume, your cover letter should be tailored to the specific job you are applying for.

For example, it is inadequate to say, “I want to work with a marketing company because I want experience.” Instead, use a statement such as “I am applying for the Entry Level Management Trainee position at the Shore Thing Marketing, Inc. because I appreciate the extensive work put into sales and marketing, and I believe that my work ethic could further this company’s goals.”

Step 2: Body Paragraph(s)

Body paragraphs outline what makes you the best candidate for the position. In this area of your cover letter, make sure to emphasize what you have to offer the employer based on your skills and experiences from other jobs. It may be helpful to return to your experience brainstorm and think of what action statements would be the most impressive or applicable to a particular employer. To do so, you can briefly describe and relate how this experience fits the needs of the job position. While brief, your description should move beyond what is written on your resume regarding this same experience.

An alternative to writing body paragraphs is to list your skills and experience in the form of bullet points. Employers read a lot of cover letters and resumes, especially if hiring for a specific position. Bullet points are a good way to display your main skills and achievements quickly and in a way that catches a hiring manager’s eye. An effective way to do this is to use the action statements from your resume to display your qualifications.

Step 3: Closing Paragraph

The closing paragraph should reassert your interest in the position you are applying for and why. In this paragraph, be sure to thank the hiring person for their time and consideration in reviewing your resume. If you have an interview scheduled, be sure to confirm the date and time of the interview, and that you look forward to meeting with the employer. If you have yet to have an interview time scheduled when you submit your resume, indicate your enthusiasm for an interview.

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A Basic Example of a Cover Letter

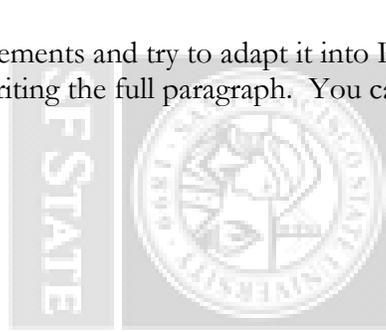
<p>Your Name Your Address Your Phone Number Your PROFESSIONAL Email</p>	<p>Header should be your contact information (reliable phone number, current address, and professional email)</p>
<p>Month Date, Year</p>	<p>Date sent</p>
<p>Mr./Ms./Dr. First and Last Name of Hiring Person Position or Title Employer Organization's Name Employer Street Address/P.O. Box City, State Zip Code</p>	<p>PLEASE try to find the hiring person's name, in both the employer's header AND your salutation.</p> <p>Don't forget to use a colon instead of a comma in the salutation.</p>
<p>Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. First and Last Name of Hiring Person:</p> <p>(Opening Paragraph): What position are you applying for? How did you find out about it? Why are you applying for it?</p> <p>(Body Paragraph(s)): Elaborate on the most impressive and relevant aspects of your experience. This elaboration should further prove that you are the best choice for the job.</p>	<p>For your second paragraph, you can expand one of the action statements in your resume that best fits the job description!</p>
<p>(Conclusion Paragraph): Briefly restates what position you are applying for and why. Thank him/her for considering your application, and state that you will be following up in a certain amount of time.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>(your signature)</p> <p>Your Name (in print)</p>	<p>Include a phone number in the closing.</p> <p>The closing reasserts your interests and qualifications for the job. The closing is also the place to request or confirm an interview appointment.</p>

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Cover Letter Practice

Directions: Take one of your Action Statements and try to adapt it into Paragraph Two of your Cover Letter. Don't be worried about writing the full paragraph. You can outline, make quick notes, etc!



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CARP

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Turning in Your Resume and Cover Letter

Before you submit your resume and cover letter, be sure that they follow these guidelines:

- Resumes and cover letters should be no more than one page each.
- Resumes should be submitted on white paper and printed in black ink.
- Document margins should be at least ½ inch on all sides.
- Font size should be no smaller than 10 point.
- Font style should be readable and professional: No Comic Sans or “Script” fonts.
- Resumes should have distinct headers (Education, Work Experience, Skills, etc.)
- Be sure to always check spelling and grammar before submitting resumes and cover letters.

Submitting Your Resume Electronically

Not all employers will ask that you submit your resume and cover letter electronically, but when they do be sure to follow all instructions given in the listing on attaching files or including them in the body of an email. Be sure to always include a subject in an email to a potential employer so they know who you are and why you are emailing them. It is also important that you use a professional email address when writing to a potential employer (one that includes your name is best).

In the body of the email, write at least two sentences greeting the person you addressed your cover letter to and thank them for their consideration. When asked to submit your cover letter in an attachment, save it as a **pdf document** unless otherwise specified. This will keep your intended formatting and ensure that your employer will be able to open the document.

Submitting Your Resume in Person

When submitting your resume in person, it is important to be professional in appearance and manner. Even if you are not guaranteed an interview, dressing with an interview in mind is always helpful. Business or business casual attire is best, regardless of the attire practically required of the job.

Additionally, be courteous to everyone you speak to and meet—not only because it is polite in general—but because you never know who might have a say in the hiring process.

Again, be sure to follow any instructions you are provided with, such as arriving at a certain time or providing additional materials.

Other Decorum to Keep in Mind

Some employers will request that you provide them with a list of references for them to contact about your eligibility for the job, but not all do. It is smart to keep a page of 3-5 references handy just in case. Be sure you ask each of your references for their consent before listing them as a contact. If you apply to another job after a significant period of time, be sure to contact your reference again to ask/inform them that you have listed them as a reference.

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Here is an **example** of a reference list format:

Reference First and Last Name
Position or Title
Employer Organization's Name
Employer Street Address/P.O. Box
City, State Zip Code
Phone Number
Email

After your interview, be sure to write and send a thank you note to your interview and/or potential employer, whether or not you receive a job offer. It may seem old-fashioned, but it shows courteousness and most employers appreciate the gesture.

Format for your References

Your Name
Your Address
Your Phone Number
Your Professional Email

References

Reference First and Last Name
Position or Title
Employer Organization's Name
Employer Street Address/P.O. Box
City, State Zip Code
Phone Number
Email

Reference First and Last Name
Position or Title
Employer Organization's Name
Employer Street Address/P.O. Box
City, State Zip Code
Phone Number
Email

Reference First and Last Name
Position or Title
Employer Organization's Name
Employer Street Address/P.O. Box
City, State Zip Code
Phone Number
Email

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