

The Résumé

The first time a potential employer evaluates you, he or she is probably looking at a piece of paper (i.e., your resume). This **first impression** is critical—more job opportunities are lost because of a poor resume than any other single factor.

A resume is a summary of your education, accomplishments, experiences, and skills designed to capture a prospective employer's interest and contact. To be sure, the purpose of a resume is to secure a job interview. It is the primary tool of your job search and will take **several drafts** to prepare well. Resume formats, what to include, what to leave out, where to put a key paragraph, how the document should look, even the paper it is printed on count; the result should be a tightly written, perfectly clear portrait of you and your related work accomplishments, education, and skills—no more, and certainly, no less.

As you organize your resume, keep in mind the needs of the employer who will be reading it. Consider what he or she is looking for in a candidate and make it **easy for the reader** to identify those skills by using appropriate categories, using underlining, boldfacing or capitalizing and presenting relevant experience and skill areas effectively.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Before you can write an effective resume, you must first identify your skills, abilities, and even your weaknesses. **You also need to be able to speak to your preferences for a work environment, salary, geographic location, etc.** Make no mistake, your argument must be targeted to a specific audience, and you will need to demonstrate that the position is a good fit for both you and the employer.

CAREER EXPLORATION

Collecting information regarding the required skills and qualifications of occupations that interest you is an important step. This information will help you decide if and how these requirements relate to your own skills and needs.

DIRECTIONS

1. Find a job announcement from your employer or a potential employer, or find a job announcement on Aztec Services or on one of the online job banks like Monster.com, Indeed, LinkedIn, or the employer directly (check their website). Get a screenshot or save-to-pdf and attach it to your resume (**not a link**).
2. Create a standard print resume (versus an electronic one) that could be used if you were applying in response to the job announcement you found. Use the formatting conventions for a chronological or functional (skills-based) resume.
3. Write a cover letter (application letter, letter of introduction) that highlights the information in your resume. I have provided examples to illustrate these structural designs, and you're welcome to use them as templates. Whatever you do, do not download an unconventional resume template and mindlessly make a resume that breaks the rules of resume construction outlined in this module..

If you are going to graduate at the end of the academic year, write both your resume and cover letter as if you were seeking a full-time job. If you will not graduate for a few semesters, you should **target an internship**. If you already have a job within the career field in which you intend to work professionally, write as if you were seeking to change jobs for a higher position, higher salary, or even a different line of work. In all cases, write for a **specific position**.

The Cover Letter

PURPOSE

The purpose of a cover letter is to further your argument by summarizing and elaborating on skills and experiences you could only list in the resume. The letter will be your first opportunity to show a manager, vice president or team leader that you are a competent communicator. You'll write many employment cover letters over the course of your career; you'll start out with a relatively conservative version.

AUDIENCE

Like the resume, your audience is the person who can hire you. Remember, it is assumed that your reader has **limited time**, so you must present your **evidence** as **efficiently** as possible. You must make every word count.

CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION

The letter must be well-structured. Any claim about your skills and experience must be supported with specific descriptions, proving that you have those skills. The evidence must be descriptive; the letter must not rely on vague generalizations. You may repeat information from your resume, provided you elaborate on it in the letter.

RESOURCES

Rely on the guidance of this module, and aim for a traditional, conservative cover letter like the Riggs/Purdy sample. The value in writing a conservative cover letter like this one lies in its time-tested effectiveness and its alignment with professional standards. Imitate the structure of this letter and use it as your guide.

FORMAT AND DESIGN

Mirror the Purdy letter format and design.

SUBMITTING THE LETTER

Submit the cover letter to this module using the appropriate submission link.

EVALUATION

I have created a rubric for this assignment and saved it to the assignment submission Tab.