

Unit 2

Resume

&

Cover Letter Writing



Job Search & Application

WHICH JOB? WHY?

1.1 Your Dream Job

Imagine you have completed your course and now hold a diploma. You have also landed your dream job, in the company you have always wanted to work in. The job requires a diploma, and is an entry-level job. What would your business card look like? Fill in your name, job title and company name.



Company Name:
Your name:
Position:

Why did you pick this job and company? How do you know whether this job is a good fit for you?

Many tools are available that could help you think through and ascertain for yourself:

- what really interests you,
- what you are naturally good at, and
- what working environments you will thrive in.

Some may help you bridge the gap between your current skills and abilities by suggesting the additional skills you need to master.

You could:

- go online to the GRADSingapore website or
- sit down with pen and paper and complete the exercises in section 1.3 of this unit.
Your tutor will tell you which will be more useful for you.

1.2 Know Yourself – through an Online Questionnaire

Some portals offer online assessments at the end of which a report is churned out. They require that you sign up for an account and some of these are free!

One of the most comprehensive is GRADSingapore. The URL is:

<http://gradsingapore.com/careers-report>

gradsingapore careers report

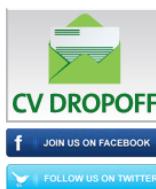
Create your personal Careers Report in three steps

- Step 1: Complete the **Self-Assessment** section. Complete this section as accurately and honestly as you can.
- Step 2: (optional) Take the **Personal Potential** tests: these tests are optional and don't feed into the job suggestions in your Careers Report, but are an excellent way to practise ability and aptitude tests similar to those used by employers. You can complete the tests as many times as you wish: your most recent result will always be shown.
- Step 3: Find out your **Next Steps**. Completing the **Self-Assessment** in Step 1 automatically unlocks Step 3 where you will find out the graduate jobs to which you are well suited and you can make an action plan to build on your skills and strengths.

STEP 1	Self-Assessment	Status	STEP 2	Personal Potential	Results
	Biographical Data			Numerical Reasoning (allow 15 minutes)	
	Interests & Preferences			Verbal Reasoning (allow 15 minutes)	
STEP 3	Next Steps	Status		Inductive Logical Thinking (allow 8 minutes)	
	Best-Matched Careers			Deductive Logical Thinking (allow 8 minutes)	
	Action Plan				
	Download your Personalised Careers Report				

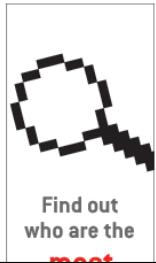
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Find out
who are the
me

While the website lists three steps that lead to the generation of your personalized report, you really need to complete just Step 1. Step 2 is optional and may be very challenging.

Step 1 is in three parts:

- The first comprises 12 statements for you to rate in order to gauge your interests, attitudes and preferences in your working life.
- The second requires you to rate your level of interest in 36 areas of work.
- The third requires you to rate 30 statements that describe your behavior in everyday situations.



Once you complete Step 1, the website generates a report that allows you to:

- Pick from a list of 20 careers that match your profile
- Explore jobs and organizations that provide this match
- Compare your capabilities against those required for the list of job matches
- Understand yourself: what motivates you, your career interests and personality type
- Draw up an action plan for your personal growth and employability

Your profile

The report provides you with three sub-profiles:

Profile 1: Your career personal preferences

Profile 2: Your key motivators and values

Profile 3: Your work personality type

Profile 1: Your career personal preferences

There are six areas, each with its own type of work environment.

- **Practical – Technical**

This is for people who enjoy hands-on work and being physically active.

- **Investigative – Problem Solver**

This is for people who value a scientific or intellectual approach, and problem-solving.

- **Artistic – Creative**

These people value creativity, the emotions, communication of ideas and aesthetics.

- **Social – Caring**

These people value helping people, teamwork and a supportive culture.

- **Enterprising – Business**

People here value managing and persuading others, taking risks, extroversion and status.

- **Conventional – Systems**

These people value structures, rules, a practical and methodical approach, and routine.



Profile 2: Your key motivators and values

This section tells you what gives you a sense of meaning and worth.

- **Challenge**

You thrive on challenges, high standards, and where success is important

- **Financial Gain**

You are driven by financial reward

- **Personal Recognition**

You thrive on positive personal feedback and recognition

- **Fun**

You function best in an environment that is fun, relaxed and where you can socialise

- **Security**

You need an organisation that is stable, secure and predictable

- **Cooperation**

You thrive where there is cooperation and harmony between colleagues

- **Structure**

You need clear structures, methods, processes and policies

- **Advancement**

You work best when there are opportunities for rapid career advancement

- **Personal Growth**

You are motivated by training and career development opportunities

- **Social Good**

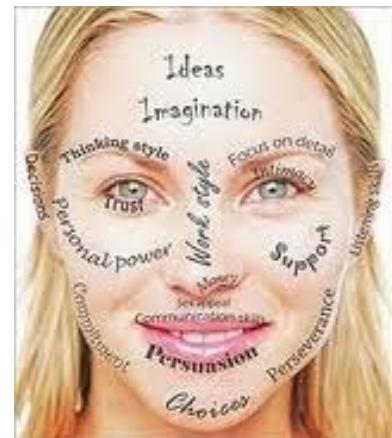
You are motivated by organisations that are socially responsible



Profile 3: Your work personality type

This reveals how you typically behave, think and feel. It is an indicator of how some career areas suit you better. It sheds light on:

- Your decision-making style
- How you relate to others
- How you handle change
- What the likely sources of stress can be



Understand your capabilities

This section of the report summarizes your capabilities in nine competency areas (skills and characteristics):



Communication

Do you communicate clearly and confidently?

Teamwork

How readily do you cooperate, collaborate and share information?

Leadership

Can you direct and motivate a team?

Initiative

Are you proactive and do you see it as your responsibility to initiate action?

Results Orientation

Do you plan and implement your plan to achieve specific targets?

Analysis and Problem Solving

Can you process complex information in order to make sound decisions?

Resilience

Can you stay strong and reliable in difficult situations?

Self-Awareness and Positive Ambition

Do you know your own strengths and weaknesses and actively seek to grow?

Commercial Orientation

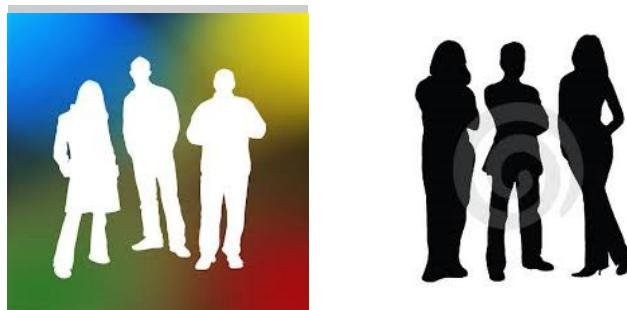
How well can you focus on business growth and / or financial success for the organisation?

Your action plan

Research suggests that the best way to achieve goals is to:

- state your goal clearly,
- detail sub-tasks,
- set target dates,
- tell people who will help keep you on track,
- reward yourself for completing tasks, and
- detail the positive benefits of completing your goals as well as your level of commitment to them.

The report gets you to think all these through.



My goal is
My commitment to my goal on a scale of 1-10, where 1 is minimal and 10 is total:
My sub-tasks:
I will tell:
My target date is:
My reward for success will be:
How I will benefit from achieving my goal, e.g. I will be in a job that I enjoy; I will be recognised as an expert; I will be in a job that uses my degree knowledge etc. Others [please specify]:

Other online sources you could draw upon include:



- http://www.prospects.ac.uk/myprospects_planner_login.htm

This helps you to identify your skills and motivations, as well as provides a wealth of information on the jobs suitable for your profile. On the down side, you only have UK universities to choose from their drop-down menu when you register your account.

1.3 Know Yourself – through a Pen-and-Paper Exercise

It is good to clarify your interests, abilities, values and preferences for different aspects of work. Then you will be able to make informed and well thought-through choices for your career. The following activities will help you.

Your Interests

Below is a list of 10 interest areas. Read each interest area and its description. Tick the box beside each area that summarises what you would like to do. Pick a maximum of five areas.

I would like to ...



Description	Interest Area	Tick
Take part in sports or athletics, go cycling, hiking or camping, do gardening, visit a farm, work outdoors.	Outdoor	
Work with machines or tools, repair bicycles, furniture, locks, build something with my hands, visit an exhibition on machines, study how a motor engine works.	Mechanical	
Plan how to use my money, add up bills in a restaurant, find out the number of people in a class/group, be a treasurer, work with numbers or play number games.	Computational	
Work in a laboratory, visit a science museum, read about famous scientists, do scientific research, discover new facts, take a science course.	Scientific	
Raise funds, promote projects, sell a product to people, talk/take part in debates, organise functions.	Persuasive	
Take a course in fashion design, visit an art museum, design furniture, homes, decorate for a party, listen to a talk on art, draw, paint, or dance.	Artistic	
Visit a bookshop or a library, watch a play, contribute to newspapers/magazines, read or discuss books, write poems or short stories, learn new words.	Literary	
Listen to a concert, play a musical instrument, compose music/song, join a choir, take a course in music, read about famous musicians.	Musical	
Help others with problems, take care of sick/needy people, make people happy, or make the world a better place for others.	Social Service	

Do filing and office work, type, label library books, keep records, handle reports, or work with documents.	Clerical	
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Look again at the five areas you have ticked and select three of your strongest interest areas. Write them down below.

My greatest interest : _____

My second strongest interest : _____

My third strongest interest : _____

Your Abilities

Below are six ability areas. Your abilities may differ from your interests. Your abilities are what you are good at doing. Tick those that describe what you are able to do.

Ability Area	Description	Tick
Physical	I can work outdoors or work with objects, machines, tools, plants, animals. I have athletic or mechanical ability.	
Intellectual	I can do well in my school work, have good problem solving skills, can observe and learn, can investigate, analyse and evaluate.	
Artistic	I can paint, draw, sing, write, play a musical instrument, design things. I have creative abilities and am imaginative.	
Social	I can work with people, look after, help or teach people. I can understand their needs and am able to care for people.	
Persuasive	I can influence or persuade people, lead or manage a team, talk well. I am a good salesperson.	
Organisational	I can work with data and records; plan and organise things. I am careful about details or instructions. I have clerical ability – typing, filing.	
Computational	I am good at crunching numbers and working with complex formulae.	

Select two of your strongest ability areas and write them below.

My strongest ability area : _____

My next strongest ability area : _____

How well do your interests and abilities match?

If they don't, all is not lost. You may want to develop other interests or matching abilities.

Your Values

Values are the things that you consider most important in life. All your major decisions in life are based on them. List 1 consists of values that describe how you want to behave in life. List 2 consists of values that describe what you want to achieve in life. Write down the five most important values in each list.

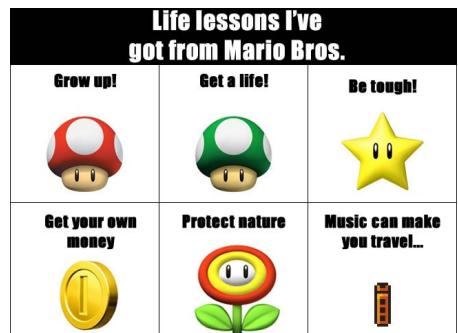


List 1 – How I Want to Behave

Ambitious	Broadminded	Capable	Carefree	Cheerful
Clean	Confident	Creative	Courageous	Conservative
Honest	Forgiving	Gentle	Helpful	Hardworking
Obedient	Independent	Logical	Loving	Intellectual
Self-controlled	Patient	Polite	Careful	Responsible
Fair	Trustworthy			

List 2 – What I Want to Achieve

A comfortable life	Happiness
A good family life	Mature love
A life of beauty	Peace
A meaningful religious life	Pleasure
A sense of accomplishment/success	Security
An exciting/adventurous life	Self-respect
Be admired/respected	Wealth
Be well-educated	Wisdom
Freedom	Friendship



Put your choices from the two lists side by side and compare them.

From List 1, some of my values are		From List 2, some of my values are	
Most Important		Most Important	
Second Most Important		Second Most Important	
Third Most Important		Third Most Important	

Are there any clashes? Do the jobs you have in mind allow you to exercise these values? If the match is not good, you may want to do some soul-searching.

Your Preferences for Different Aspects of Work

Different people are attracted to different aspects of work. The following scale lists some of the aspects of work that people consider important. You have to consider which of these aspects of work you prefer. There are no right or wrong answers.

Key in the extent of your preference, according to the scale below:

- 1 means totally unimportant
- 2 means of little importance
- 3 means moderately important
- 4 means quite important
- 5 means extremely important

Remember to rank all 52 items.



Work in which you...

1.	Can work as fast or as slowly as you like	[]
2.	Have pleasant people to work with	[]
3.	Improve the skills you have	[]
4.	Are paid a high salary	[]
5.	Design new things	[]
6.	Know that other people think your work is important	[]
7.	Are free to live wherever you like	[]
8.	Are certain of keeping your job	[]
9.	Help build a better society	[]
10.	Are not required to work in your spare time	[]
11.	Plan and arrange the work of others	[]
12.	Do your work in a safe workplace	[]
13.	Work hard physically	[]
14.	Get to know your fellow workers quite well	[]
15.	Add to the abilities you already have	[]
16.	Can do your work in your own way	[]
17.	Originate new ideas and/or products	[]
18.	Receive more than your normal pay for good work	[]
19.	Do not have to change the way you live	[]
20.	Get a good reputation for your good work	[]
21.	Give aid to those in need	[]

22.	Can be sure you always have a job	[]
23.	Set goals for workers to reach	[]
24.	Can forget the work while you are not doing it	[]
25.	Do not have to spend all your time behind a desk	[]
26.	Do your job in a physically attractive environment	[]
27.	Are always increasing your knowledge	[]
28.	Can start and finish your work when you like	[]
29.	Are really liked by your fellow workers	[]
30.	Become quite wealthy	[]
31.	Experiment with different ways of doing things	[]
32.	Are looked up to by other people in society	[]
33.	Are not expected to move wherever the organisation wants to put you	[]
34.	Are certain your job will last	[]
35.	Help others live a fuller life	[]
36.	Do not have to think about work once you leave the workplace	[]
37.	Have authority over others	[]
38.	Can work in a pleasant area of the town	[]
39.	Are not just sitting down all day	[]
40.	Determine the way your own work is done	[]
41.	Enjoy the company of the people you work with	[]
42.	Can acquire specialized skills	[]
43.	Use ideas and materials to develop new ideas and materials	[]
44.	Receive enough pay to live well	[]
45.	Do not have to change where you live to gain promotion	[]
46.	Can obtain a high status in the eyes of others	[]
47.	Make an important contribution to the community	[]
48.	Have a secure future	[]
49.	Set out the best way for others to do a job	[]
50.	Are not expected to take work home	[]
51.	Are physically active	[]
52.	Have a workplace that is clean and tidy	[]

“Ranked” Profile

1. There are altogether 13 work preferences, each having four items assigned to it. Each work preference has its own score, given by the sum of the scores of the four items assigned to it.
2. Calculate the scores for all 13 work preferences and put them under the column “raw scores.”
3. Assign numbers to these scores in order of rank, under the column “rank order.” The number 1 is assigned to the highest score. The number 2 is assigned to the next highest and so on. In the event of a tie in the raw score, assign the same number to the raw score that are tied. Continue to assign the next rank number to the higher score.

WORK PREFERENCE	ITEMS TO BE ADDED	RAW SCORE	RANK ORDER
Independence (you want to be free from being told what to do)	1 16 28 40	[]	[]
Co-workers (you want to work with people who are friendly and understanding)	2 14 29 41	[]	[]
Self-development (you want to develop and use your skills and abilities at work)	3 15 27 42	[]	[]
Creativity (you want to make or do something original through your work)	5 17 31 43	[]	[]
Money (you want large amounts of money as the reward for your work)	4 18 30 44	[]	[]
Lifestyle (you want to live life your own way and not have it determined by your work)	7 19 33 45	[]	[]
Prestige (you want people to think that your work is important)	6 20 32 46	[]	[]
Altruism (you want to help others through your work)	9 21 35 47	[]	[]
Security (you want to feel sure that you will not lose your job)	8 22 34 48	[]	[]
Management (you want to be in charge of other workers)	11 23 37 49	[]	[]
Detachment (you want to be free from having to work in your spare time)	10 24 36 50	[]	[]
Physical Activity (you want to be physically active in your work)	13 25 39 51	[]	[]
Surroundings (you want to work in pleasant surroundings)	12 26 38 52	[]	[]

4. Transfer the five work preferences in order of score to the spaces below.

From the table, list the five work preferences you deem most important:

1st. _____

2nd. _____

3rd. _____

4th. _____

5th. _____

Do the jobs you have picked allow you to exercise these preferences?

Now that you have analysed yourself in terms of your interests, abilities, values and work preferences, how well do the careers of your choice agree with your analysis? If there are apparent mismatches, how do you reconcile these differences?

Job title		Corrective action or skills to acquire, if necessary
Interests		
Abilities		
Values		
Work preferences		



If the job is not a very good match, think of another one that will provide a closer fit between your profile and the job profile. Even if the first job you picked is a good fit, provide yourself with an alternative. There should be several jobs that are very good fits.

Alternative Job		Corrective action or skills to acquire, if necessary
Interests		
Abilities		
Values		
Work preferences		

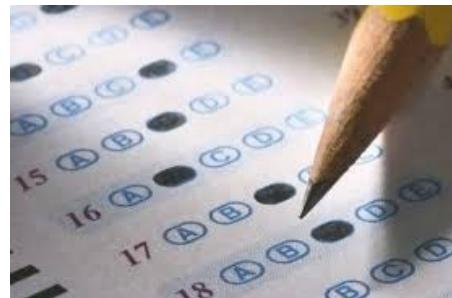
1.4 Know More about Yourself – through Psychometric Tests

By no means are the two methods detailed above the only means for assessing yourself and your job suitability. Psychometric tests are of two types:

- Personality and interest tests
- Aptitude and ability tests



They are often used by large organisations as part of the recruitment process, and as part of the selection process for awarding scholarships. One of the earliest personality tests is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator or MBTI. You need to pay to use the MBTI. Other psychometric tests abound, and some websites provide free practice tests.



For free personality tests, try these:

The Big Five Personality Test	http://www.outofservice.com/bigfive/
Peoplemaps' personality report	http://www.peoplemaps.com/psychometric-test/



For free aptitude tests, try these:

Kenexa's numerical, verbal and logical reasoning tests	http://www.kenexa.com/Solutions/Assessments
Mark Parkinsons' practice tests	http://www.markparkinson.co.uk/psychometric_links.htm

ICA: GRADSingapore Career Report [Individual work]

1. Log into <http://gradsingapore.com/careers-report> as described in Section 1.2 of your course notes.
2. Complete all the exercises in Step 1. You need not complete Step 2 for this assignment but you can do on separately on your own.

You are here : gradsgoing careers report

gradsingapore careers report

Create your personal Careers Report in three steps

Step 1: Complete the Self-Assessment section. Complete this section as accurately and honestly as you can.

Step 2: (optional) Take the Personal Potential tests: these tests are optional and don't feed into the job suggestions in your Careers Report, but are an excellent way to practise ability and aptitude tests similar to those used by employers. You can complete the tests as many times as you wish: your most recent result will always be shown.

Step 3: Find out your Next Steps. Completing the Self-Assessment in Step 1 automatically unlocks Step 3 where you will find out the graduate jobs to which you are well suited and you can make an action plan to build on your skills and strengths.

STEP 1	Self-Assessment	Status	STEP 2	Personal Potential	Results
	Biographical Data			Numerical Reasoning (allow 15 minutes)	
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	Action Plan				
	Download your Personalised Careers Report				

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Find out who are the **best**

3. The system will automatically take you to Step 3, where it churns out a list of 20 possible careers based on what you keyed in, and a blank template for your action plan.
4. From the list of 20 careers, pick the 'best' one, balancing what you are passionate about with what can realistically be achieved. Based on this choice, draw up your action plan. Think: what will it take for you to get there? For example, are there skills you need to develop, or working experience to chalk up in order to bridge gaps? Break this down to specific tasks. Promise yourself rewards that motivate you.
5. Print your report, together with a clear action plan, and hand it to your tutor.

Action Plan

My priority goal is	<input type="text"/>
Commitment to my goal on a scale of 1-10 where 1 is minimal and 10 is total	<input type="text"/> --- Please choose ---
My sub-tasks 1	
My Task	<input type="text"/>
I will tell...	<input type="text"/>
My target date is...	<input type="text"/>
My reward for success will be...	<input type="text"/>

2 Job Application – Resume & Cover Letter

Your job application is your passport to your dream job. Unless a company provides an application form for you to complete, you are usually required to write a cover letter accompanied by a resume. These two documents go hand-in-hand to form your job application. In this case, you are required to present yourself impressively in writing.

While the cover letter is written in a persuasive manner, the resume serves as a factual data sheet listing the necessary qualifications and skills you have that are right for the job. A good cover letter should encourage the potential employer to move on to reading your attached resume while your resume should convince him that you are a suitable candidate for the job.

The resume is sometimes known as the curriculum vitae or CV for short. The origin of the term CV is in Latin and it means ‘course of life’. However, do not be tempted to tell your prospective employer your life story. Provide information that is pertinent or relevant to the job you are applying for, that suggests you are the perfect match for it.



Think Through This ...

Why is a resume so important?



2.1 Before You Start Writing...

- You must know what your strengths are so these can be highlighted. You must also be aware of your weaknesses so that you can then try to improve in those areas.

Think Through This ...

What are the two questions you ask yourself before you start writing your resume?



If you can say ‘Yes’ to both, put them in.

If you answer ‘No’ to (a) but are unsure about (b), then think about it. If you are not convinced, leave it out.

If it is ‘No’ to both, leave them out.

2.2 Kick Start Your Resume Writing

It can be challenging coming up with two A4 pages that market you as the best fit for the job. Additionally, you are likely to apply to many companies for a variety of positions. The best way to go about this is to start with a Resume Fact Sheet. It should hold all the following information about you:

- Name, Address and Contact Details
- Education
- Experience
- Skills
- Awards/Interests
- References



Then, as you tailor each resume for a specific job, decide:

- which items to keep,
- which items to remove, and
- if the items you retained need to be reshuffled to highlight points that are more relevant to your future employer.

Name

Address: Block number, street name, unit number

Postal code

Home phone:

Mobile phone:

E-mail address:

Career Objective [Optional]

Qualifications

Year Name of Polytechnic

Name of Diploma (Area of Specialization)

- GPA: (If 3.5 and above)
- Modules which you excelled in (if any)

Year Name of Secondary School

Name of qualification

- Subjects which you excelled in (if any)

(Do not include Primary School)

Other Certifications

If you attended courses in addition to your diploma, whether in NYP or otherwise, list them here.

Year Name of Certificate

Name of Organisation

Skills Summary

List all your special skills and provide a brief description as evidence. Start with technical skills and then list your non-technical or soft skills. Use action verbs and quantify the results where possible.

- Engineering Skills [Categorize them. Examples: Instrumentation, Operations/Unit operations, Process Control, Quality Control, Laboratory Skills]
- Computer and Software Skills
- Technical Skills
- Mathematical Skills
- Leadership Skills
- People Skills
- Communication and Presentation Skills
- Languages

Work Experience

Include your Industrial Attachment Programme or IAP. List your last position first. Include all of your responsibilities & achievements.

Dates Company Name

Company's business [especially if it's small and not well-known]:

Title of your position 1 [& state if it's IAP or part-time employment]:

Description of your responsibilities:

Accomplishments (increase in departmental efficiency, cost savings, increased sales, new systems and procedures, if any):

Dates Company Name

Company's business [especially if it's small and not well-known]:

Title of your position 2 [& state if it's IAP or part-time employment]:

Description of your responsibilities:

Accomplishments (increase in departmental efficiency, cost savings, increased sales, new systems and procedures, if any):

Awards

List these by category:

One way to categorise them: academic and music/sports/etc.

Another way: by institution

Award	Year of Award
<p>Co-curricular Activities</p> <p>List the CCAs you participated in during your polytechnic and secondary school days, as well as private clubs you play for, if any. If you joined a toastmaster's club, include it here.</p> <p>List these by category:</p> <p>One way to categorise them: academic and music/sports/etc.</p> <p>Another way: by institution</p>	
<p>Position Duration:</p> <p>Name of CCA:</p> <p>What you accomplished:</p>	
<p>Hobbies & Interests</p> <p>Your interests provide some insight into your personality and should show you are well-balanced. Try to reflect a mix of team sports or activities and wide-ranging interests, if true.</p>	
<p>Personal Information</p> <p>Date of birth:</p> <p>Nationality:</p> <p>National Service Status: [For men only]</p>	
<p>References</p> <p>Have two references, preferably one who knows your academic ability and another who supervised you at work.</p>	
<p>Name of Referee 1, with title Mr/Ms/Dr:</p> <p>Job Designation:</p> <p>Name of Company:</p> <p>Address:</p> <p>Mobile phone:</p> <p>E-mail address:</p>	
<p>Name of Referee 2, with title Mr/Ms/Dr:</p> <p>Job Designation:</p> <p>Name of Company:</p> <p>Address:</p> <p>Mobile phone:</p> <p>E-mail address:</p>	
<p>Note: Your master resume fact sheet is likely to be more than 2 A4 pages. Please select the info for your actual resume for specific jobs so that it is no more than 2 A4 pages.</p>	

2.3 Tips for Fleshying Out Your Resume Fact Sheet

Your Resume Fact Sheet will, in all likelihood, run into more than two A4 pages. This is not a problem. You want to have all the relevant information handy before you pick and choose what is relevant for specific jobs.

Format and Fonts

- Use Times New Roman 12 points or Arial 11 points for your body text. Add one point size for each higher level of heading. Do not use different fonts to highlight items. Use only one font type throughout. Use bullets for further sub-points.
- Leave approximately 2.5 cm margins all round.
- Standardize your layout: having two consistent columns works well most of the time. You could also have lines run the full width of the page if you need to pack in more information, but set them as bulleted points to keep them readable.
- To ensure the format of your resume stays and doesn't go awry when you e-mail it, convert it to PDF format.



Job Objective

Recruitment professionals are divided on whether it is good to include this. If you decide to use it, remember this has to be tailored specifically for each job although you may re-use some key words. It has to be written to show how your employer will benefit by hiring you, not what you seek to gain from the job.

Name and Contact

- Highlight your name (use font size between 14 and 16).
- Your name, address and contact numbers should form your resume heading.
- If you have a quirky e-mail address, it's time to create a professional-sounding one. You want to come across as a serious candidate, and having a separate e-mail for all your job applications makes tracking easy.

Education/Qualifications

- The list should be in reverse chronological order: begin with the highest qualification obtained.
- Mention specialisations, distinctions, prizes, awards and scholarships won under the relevant institutions or schools.
- Do not list all your grades. If it is required, enclose the list as attachment.
- Do not mention primary education.
- You may list courses that are not relevant to the post to show that you have varied interests and capabilities. It will also show that you are willing to learn and upgrade your skills. However, do not overdo it – list only the formal courses that you have attended and those which have impact e.g. courses on management skills, business communications, and computer or technical skills. Courses related to hobbies and sports should come under the hobbies and interests section of your resume.



Experience

- Begin the list with the most recent job experience – usually your IAP.
- Present the information to show how it is relevant to the job or that can enhance your image e.g. communication skills, teamwork, supervisory skills.
- If your part-time job title does not sound impressive e.g. ‘kitchen help’, leave it out.
- Do not describe your work experience in trivial terms such as ‘serve food and drinks’, ‘sell books’, ‘type and file documents’. Use terms such as customer service, customer relations, food and beverage service, sales promotion, clerical or administrative duties.



Skills

- Always mention the most relevant skills first, e.g. if you intend to go into the sales line, highlight all aspects of your marketing, interpersonal and communications abilities as the first skill.
- Provide support for these claims if they are not supported by formal training such as the diploma.



Awards

- Include awards that you received during attachments or part-time jobs e.g. ‘Most Courteous Salesperson’. They reflect well on your work attitude.

Co-curricular Activities

- Some CCAs such as uniformed groups would have provided you with leadership skills, responsibilities and organisation skills. It is always worth mentioning.
- If you had competed in sports, it will reflect motivation, discipline and teamwork.

Interests

- Mention hobbies that will reflect well on you such as sports, reading, music and travelling. Leave out items such as shopping and going to the beach.
- Leave out items that may create unwanted conflict with your reader’s preferences and view. Do not state that you are a good poker player. Do not mention involvement in controversial issues such as being a strong anti-abortion supporter
- You may list them briefly in one line.
- If you do volunteer work, it would be useful to mention them briefly. You may be credited with work experience.



Personal Information

- Sub-headings such as date of birth and nationality have different lengths. Use the tab key and align the colons (:) neatly.
- State only the relevant personal data. In most situations, religion and dialect are not relevant – leave them out.

References

- Ensure that you have their permission to list them as your referees. Ensure that they are available to provide references if required.

Think Through This ... 3

ACTION! When describing your experiences, use action verbs at the start of each statement. Here are some examples to pick from:

- _____ sales quota / distinctions
- _____ data
- _____ manager / supervisors / trainers
- _____ meetings
- _____ training sessions / programmes
- _____ web designs
- _____ web pages / products /systems / packages
- _____ software packages / programmes / systems
- _____ group work
- _____ machines
- _____ events / concerts / study programmes / training sessions
- _____ reports / proposals
- _____ products
- _____ customers / clients
- _____ co-workers / sales crew / technical assistants
- _____ my services at (state name of charity association / organization)

Here are more action verbs to start each statement with:

added	coordinated
eliminated	established
evaluated	expanded
generated	identified
increased	initiated
maintained	managed
performed	planned
reduced	streamlined
saved	supervised
trained	utilized
verified	





Think Through This ...

QUANTIFY! When you write about your accomplishments, provide numbers or percentages that help clarify the magnitude of the task.

Examples:

- Led a committee of six students to plan events for a 200-member club.
- Managed a budget of \$3,000 as chairperson of Publicity Sub-committee.



SHOW RESULTS!

Make it clear how well your actions worked.

Examples:

- Updated website bi-weekly, resulting in current and consistent information.
- Contributed to 30% increase in membership through three new initiatives in recruitment drive
- Wrote letters to solicit sponsorship, resulting in \$6,000 worth of funds from two organisations.

2.4 The Chronological Resume

This is one of two formats for organizing your content. The chronological resume gives a historical summary of your education and work experience. It has the following features:

- Lists education and experience chronologically in **reverse** time sequence
- Has the advantage of highlighting work experience and career growth
- Is especially appropriate for individuals with a **strong** employment history and **steady** career growth
- Should not be used when your history shows major employment gaps, repeated job changes, and little or no career progress



Think Through This ...

What are the guidelines for constructing an effective chronological resume?

Here is a sample chronological resume. Also, notice how Stanley has used action words. Notice how he has quantified some of the information to strengthen his resume.

Stanley Ong

123 Orchard Avenue
Singapore 123456

H: 61234567
M: 91234567
E-mail: ong.stanley@hotmail.com



Career Objective

An accomplished sales and marketing team leader who seeks to make full use of his eight years of experience in a marketing manager role. Willing to travel and be stationed abroad.

Career Summary

- Eight years of sales and marketing experience ranging from a counter sales assistant position to marketing manager
- Achieved personal sales targets for five years consistently
- Initiated several in-house programmes to boost customer service standards among staff
- Comfortable with leading and motivating teams of up to 40 people, across regional offices

Work Experience/Job achievements

Marketing Manager, Hahn Holdings

Jan 2008 – Dec 2012

- Responsible for 25 stores in Singapore and Johor Bahru and a \$3 million account
- Improved staffing, increased business by 30% during Chinese New Year 2010 and 60% during Christmas 2011
- Exceeded personal sales goals in 2010; named Top Achiever in company's annual awards
- Reason for leaving: Retrenched as company was down-sizing

Marketing Executive, DFS Department Store

Apr 2006 – Dec 2007

- Liaised between department store and advertising executives; communicated and executed corporate plans
- Implemented seasonal promotional events to generate additional business
- Reason for leaving: Wanted a more strategic marketing role with regional exposure

Retail Supervisor, Om Department Store

Jan 2004 – Mar 2006

- Maximized sales in six outlets of Om Department Store and consistently achieved monthly sales plan
- Launched annual in-house campaign to improve customer service which received Tourism Board commendation
- Reason for leaving: Wanted a more strategic role in marketing and sales

Educational Qualifications

- **Business University of Singapore, 2004**

Bachelor of Science in Management (Hons)

Was part of the 2nd runner-up team in the 1999 Singapore Marketing Plan competition among local tertiary institutions

- **Raffles Polytechnic, 2000**

Diploma in Marketing

Awarded a school scholarship for a six-month exchange programme to London Design School in the United Kingdom

Co-curricular Activities

Weekly volunteer with Sunshine Old Folks' Home

At the home, in charge of organizing games and finding sponsorship for activities during festivals such as Christmas and Chinese New Year

Personal Details

Date of birth: 12 Feb 1981

Languages known: English, Mandarin, Bahasa Melayu

Nationality: Singaporean

Photograph – to Include or Otherwise

If you decide to include a photograph, ensure it is professionally taken and you are groomed for work. Do not use photographs cropped from social settings. Not all applications require photographs, but those for front-line jobs usually do. If in doubt, check the requirement against the job advertisement.

2.5 The Functional Resume

This type of resume focuses attention on your areas of competence. It has the following features:

- Highlights accomplishments, abilities and skills rather than work history
- Allows you to focus on your strengths in ways that support your job objective
- Is excellent for recent graduates with little or no work experience
- Is also useful for those with employment gaps, job hoppers, people who have made little career progress, people changing career direction

Think Through This ...

Here are some guidelines for constructing an effective functional resume.

Choose three to five functional headings to highlight not only your accomplishments and responsibilities but also your job goal



Here is a sample functional resume. How can you help her use more action words, as well as quantify and show results?

Lola Low

502 Ang Mo Kio Avenue 9 #02-513
Singapore 650502
Home: 6452-0109
Mobile: 9647-8543
E-mail: lolalow@hotmail.com

Career Objective

Seeking a challenging position as a Web Developer where I will be able to use my creativity, web development skills and experience within a growth-oriented organization to develop new abilities.

Education

2010 Nanyang Polytechnic

- Diploma in Multimedia & Info-Communications Technology (Infocomm Solutions)
- GPA: 3.90

2007 Nanyang Secondary

- GCE 'O' Levels with 5 distinctions

Skills Summary

- **Programming Skills:** Proficient in Java, Visual Basic.NET, C++
- **Scripting Skills:** Well-versed in HTML, PHP, CSS, RSS, XML, JavaScript, ActionScript v2
- **Databases:** Conversant with use of SQL, MySQL, Oracle 10g (Express and Enterprise)
- **Operating Systems:** Proficient in use of Windows Operating System (95, 98, 2000, XP, Server 2003), Linux Operating System (Red Hat, Fedora, Ubuntu)
- **Software Skills:** Conversant with Microsoft Office Suite (2003, 2007), Adobe Web Premium CS3, IBM Rational Functional Tester & ClearQuest, Visual Studio (2005, 2008), Visual Paradigm, NetBeans, Virtual PC 2007
- **Language Skills:** Fluent in spoken and written English and Chinese. Edited monthly newsletter.
- **Administration:** Planned activities and maintained funds for CCA

Working Experience

2010 Oct – 2010 Dec IBM

- Intern – Software Testing

Developed a full-featured change management system for keeping track of their use cases during development and enhancement phases, liaised with clients for requirements gathering and conducted alpha testing of the developed system.

Jan 2009 – Apr 2009

DHL Company

- Part-time Admin Staff
Sorted and prepared mails for shipment.

Awards

Nanyang Polytechnic

- Director's List – 2008/09 Semesters 1 & 2
- Certificate of Participation, WorldSkills Singapore – 2008
- Letter of Commendation – 2007/08 Semesters 1 & 2

Nanyang Secondary

- Top Student Award – 2006

Co-curricular Activities

Nanyang Polytechnic

- Student Support Network (Publication) 2008 - 2009

Nanyang Secondary

- Student Counselor (Secretary) 2006 - 2006
- Student Counselor (Member) 2005 - 2005

Hobbies & Interests

- Cycling, Swimming, Rollerblading, Ice Skating, Soccer, Basketball

Personal Information

Date of Birth: 1 August 1988

Nationality: Singaporean

Reference

Mr Tan Wee Kiat

Lecturer

School of Engineering

Nanyang Polytechnic

180 Ang Mo Kio Ave 8

Singapore 5698300

Tel: 6865-3876

E-mail: tanwk@nyp.edu.sg

2.6 Transcripts, Portfolios and Web Resumes

You do not normally need to send your transcripts when you apply for the job; they are usually required later for verification, perhaps on the day of the interview. However, it is good to be prepared ahead. Scan and save soft copies of your transcripts and certificates, so that you have a handy set always, should they request a set to be e-mailed.



Compile samples of your work ahead (projects, reports, etc.), picking the best to showcase your skills set. A web portfolio should contain your resume and samples of your work. Make sure your website is viewable for employers. This is more commonly used in the creative and IT industries.

Increasingly, employers require you to e-mail or post your resume on a website. A more recent development is the ‘websumo’, or resume website. Again, this is more prevalent in the creative and IT industries.

This opens up fresh possibilities for you to market yourself.

You could:

- Include photographs or jpg files
- Use clipart or graphics to reinforce a theme, an idea or an experience
- Conduct your own interview and paste it on your homepage
- Film and interview one of your references
- Include background music to set the tone.

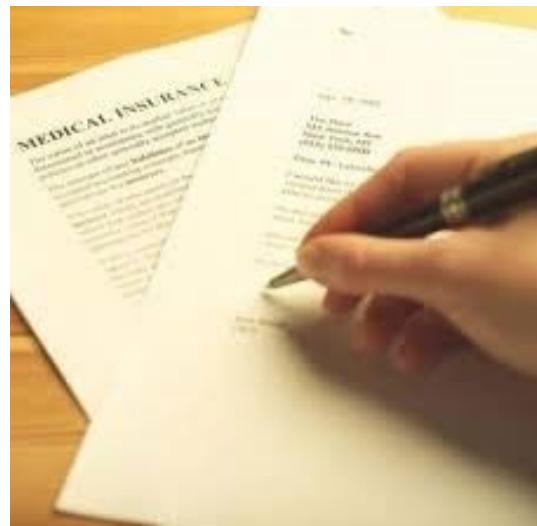


3. COVER LETTERS

When writing in for a job, you can send a solicited or an unsolicited application.

- A **solicited** application is in response to an advertisement, or a vacancy known through your friends.
- An **unsolicited** application is sent randomly searching for positions or expressing an interest in working for the organizations.

Whether the application is solicited or unsolicited, a cover letter/application letter should **always** be sent along with your resume as it serves to arouse the interest of the employer.



If you are writing a hard-copy cover letter, the **standard** font to use is **Times New Roman** in **12 points**. Make sure your margins are on the **default** setting and the paper size is **A4**.



Although most companies give candidates their address, fax numbers and e-mail in the advertisement, the trend now is to e-mail your resume and cover letter to the potential employer. This is usually the most effective and efficient method of reaching the company. Always remember to **attach your resume.pdf** at the end of your email.



This means that:

For a **hard copy** application sent by post, the cover letter comes first, followed by the resume.

For a **soft copy** application sent via e-mail, the cover letter is the body of the e-mail, and the resume is sent as an attachment.



3.1 Formatting and Content of Your Cover Letter

As with most letters, the letter of application has three main sections: the introduction (opening), body (middle) and conclusion (closing). However, do not feel constrained to limit the middle to one paragraph – two paragraphs work very well. Each of these sections has different functions to perform.

Think Through This ...

Here are some items that you can put in each of the following sections in a good cover letter.



a) Introduction

- say where/how you learned of the position
- introduce yourself to the potential employer (if unsolicited)
- say why you are a good fit for the position
- make sure your enthusiasm comes across in your writing

b) Body

First paragraph

- match the technical requirements: highlight your specific aptitudes, qualifications and experiences
- provide brief evidence for the claims you make, using action words and citing accomplishments rather than mere duties
- use key words from the advertisement, but do not copy entire blocks

Second paragraph

- match the non-technical requirements: highlight your qualities and experiences
- mention the enclosed resume just before the conclusion of your letter
- use key words from the advertisement or paraphrase, but do not copy entire blocks

c) Conclusion

- invite the reader to contact you to attend an interview
- state again clearly but subtly that you are interested in the position
- state that you are available for an interview
- ensure that you maintain the same positive vibes and enthusiasm

d) Length

- It should take up no more than one A4 page. Do not send a sparsely-written half-pager; it suggest lack of substance or interest.

You do not attach copies of your certificates at this stage unless you are asked to. If you are asked to do so, send copies and not the originals.

3.2 Sample Cover Letters

Whenever you write a cover letter, take the trouble to find out whom to address it to. The contact details may be in the advertisement or you may have to go online to find the phone number. As far as you can, DO NOT address it to: ‘To whom it may concern’ or ‘Dear Sir / Madam’.

An e-mail cover letter is shown on the next page.

From: Lolalow@hotmail.com
Sent: Monday, 1 October, 2012 9:30 AM
To: Eddinachan@hp.com.sg
Subject: Application for Post of Web Application Developer (Ref: A92017)
Attached: Resume.Lolalow.pdf

Dear Ms Chan

It was with great interest that I read the posting for the position of Web Application Developer in your job portal on 28 September 2012. Engineering web projects requires a unique blend of creative and analytical thinking skills, along with in-depth technical knowledge. I believe my qualifications are an ideal match for this position, and I am confident I will make a valuable and immediate contribution to your operations.

I graduated from Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP) with a Diploma with Merit in Multimedia & Info-Communication Technology. I specialized in Info-Communication Solutions, and have experience in real-world web application development, gained mostly through a year of freelance work and a 6-month industrial attachment programme at XYZ. I contributed in both individual and team projects concerning the development of web applications utilizing ASP .NET and other various open source technologies. During my stint at XYZ Company, I also mastered additional web technologies such as PHP and MySQL.

During my attachment, I frequently made presentations and participated in discussions with clients to understand their requirements for the projects. As President of the Student Support Network, I held and oversaw club meetings and discussions. I am thus equipped with strong interpersonal and communication skills and am equally comfortable as team leader and player. I believe that these qualities, combined with my proactive work ethic, should enable me to make a positive impact at your organisation. Enclosed is a copy of my resume for your review.

I welcome a personal interview at your earliest convenience to discuss your needs and objectives and the possibility of working together to meet them. I am readily contactable at 9876-5432 or at lolalow@hotmail.com.

Yours sincerely

Lola Low

Think Through This ...



Note that you do not sign an e-mail letter. It is often tempting to type the letter into your e-mail and dash it off right away, but do not do this. Draft your letter as a word document first and proof read thoroughly before pasting it into your e-mail. Using Spell Check is not enough.

Here is a hard copy cover letter.

Matthew Teo
Blk 321 Ang Mo Kio Ave 3
#04-123
Singapore 654321
Mobile: 9876-5432
E-mail: matteo@hotmail.com

27 May 2012

Mr Clarence Lee
Human Resource Manager
iENABLER
7 Maxwell Rd
#04-04
Annexe B
MND Complex
Singapore 069111

Dear Mr Lee

Post of IT Trainer [Ref: JS9876/25/5]

With reference to your advertisement dated 25 May 2012 in JobStreet, I venture to submit my application for the position of IT trainer for your kind consideration.

I graduated from Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP) with a Diploma in Multimedia and Infocomm Technology. During my second year in NYP, I was selected as a student leader to represent the school for an overseas community service project in Cambodia. My responsibility was to lead a team of sixteen students and to provide IT training, including English, to the local students there.

Besides this, I have also taken on leadership positions both in school and for my CCAs. I have the necessary knowledge, and the courses I studied at NYP are relevant to the requirements mentioned in your advertisement. The details of my qualifications and skills are outlined in my enclosed resume.

I look forward to being shortlisted for an interview with you, during which I would be able to enlighten you further on my experience and abilities.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely



Matthew Teo

Encl: Resume

Think Through This ...



Here are some additional tips for hard copy cover letters.

Name and Address

- Use the full-block format.
- Your name must always be stated together with address.
- Use your name as stated in the identity card.
- Make sure your address is complete.

Date

- Use date format that spells out the months instead of dd.mm.yyyy, as this gives it a more professional and business-like feel.
- It is not necessary to state day as 1st, 22nd, 10th.

Salutations

- Use the information as given in the advertisement.
- When writing unsolicited letters, obtain the name of the person you would be addressing your letter to e.g., Mrs Jenny Tan, Manager.
- Always state the person's position after the name e.g., Director, Manager, Human Resource Officer.
- It would be preferred if you could obtain and address the recipient of the letter by name e.g. Mr Kenny Toh, Recruitment Officer. You may call the company to obtain the name or search the company's website.

Subject Heading

- State the full title of the job that you are applying for, including reference numbers, if any. Use information given in the advertisement.
- Highlight this section as a heading using boldface or capitals.

Closing

If your salutation states the person's name e.g. 'Dear Mr' or 'Dear Mrs ...', use 'Yours sincerely'.

Signature

- Remember to sign your letter.
- State your name again under your signature.



Enclosure / Attachment

- This is important as it will indicate that you have enclosed your resume.

4. YOUR BACKGROUND SEARCH

Do your research well. You need to find out about the company that is doing the hiring, the industry in general, the nature of the job and the salary range. Many job search websites provide write-ups on the industries they serve. They can be a source of information on job descriptions, providing you with an idea of what you are required to do if hired for these jobs.

The Ministry of Manpower has also set up Career Compass:

<http://www.careercompass.gov.sg/Pages/Home.aspx>.

Here, you can get:

- general information on various industries
- job listings and their responsibilities, and
- expected salaries for each position.

