

# Week 11

Comm 1234

Technical Writing Fundamentals

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# Plan for today

- Description of job application package
- Analyzing job postings
- Writing a cover letter
- Writing a resume

# Job application package

- Three components, in hard copy:
  - Job posting (not graded, but **must be included**)
  - Cover letter (10%)
  - Resume (15%)
- Each component graded out of 3 marks: 3 (interview), 2 (maybe), 1 (no).
- Assignment can be submitted up to three times (allow one week for grading)
- Final due date April 20<sup>th</sup>
- To get feedback on early submissions, come to class next week for a workshop period

# Analyzing job postings

- Look for keywords.
  - Looking for a highly **motivated**, **customer-oriented** individual with excellent **communication skills** and **multi-tasking** ability to write **public relations material**.
- Dig through your personal history
- Examine your transferrable skills
- What if you're missing one of the qualifications?

# Cover letters: purpose?

- **Gets you an interview**
- Introduces you and your resume to an employer
- Explains why you are writing
- Explains why you are a good match for the position
- Highlights your qualifications/experience
- Provides a sample of your writing skills

# Cover letters: Content

- Heading
  - Your contact information
  - Date
  - Company's address
- Introduction
  - Specific reason you are corresponding
  - Position you are applying for, and where you heard about it
  - Name-drop, if you have a good connection
- Argument/Body
  - Convince the reader that you are a good fit for the job
  - Give specific examples
  - Refer to your resume, don't repeat it
- Conclusion
  - Close with strong reminder of why you are a good match
  - Request an interview in some way
  - Thank the person for reading your letter
  - Sign your name and print it underneath

# Cover letters: formatting

- Length:
  - One page total
  - One short paragraph for intro (2-4 sentences max)
  - 1-3 paragraphs for body
  - 1 short paragraph for conclusion (2-4 sentences max)
- Spacing
  - Single space
  - Leave space between addresses and date
  - Leave a space between each paragraph
  - Leave at least three lines between the complimentary close (“Sincerely,”) and your printed name.

# Cover letters: formatting

- Margins & alignment
  - One-inch margins is standard
  - Can use smaller margins, as long as they're consistent on all sides
  - Align all paragraphs to left side of page
  - Most cover letters don't indent each paragraph



# Cover letters: addressed to whom?

- Look in the job ad for the contact person
- Call the company
- Read the company website—might find someone in HR (human resources) department
- Last resort:
  - Dear Hiring Professionals:
  - Dear Selection Committee:

# Resumes: purpose?

- **Gets you an interview**
- Summarizes your relevant employment history, education, skills, and qualifications

# Resumes: what should they look like?

- As concise as possible
- Ideally 1 page, occasionally 2, and in rare cases 3 is acceptable
- Use bullet lists rather than paragraphs
- Designed to be skimmed quickly
- Should include specific examples, especially quantifiable achievements

# Resumes: what should they include?

- Almost every resume will have the following sections:
  - Objective / summary of qualifications
  - Work experience
  - Education
  - Contact information
- You might also include these:
  - Skills
  - Activities (volunteering, etc)
  - Awards
  - Certifications
  - Languages
  - Etc

# Resume: formatting expectations

- Name at the top, usually largest item
- Use headers to categorize each section
  - Objective / summary of qualifications goes first
  - For students/recent graduates, education is often the next section
  - Later in career, work experience would come next instead
- Each item in employment history should include the following:
  - Job title
  - Company name & location
  - Time period you worked there

# Resumes: types

- Chronological resume
  - Presents entire professional history in reverse chronological order (beginning with most recent position)
  - Most common resume format
- Functional resume
  - Emphasizes your skills and abilities
  - Focuses specifically on most relevant information
  - Might make some employers suspicious
- Combination
  - Combines the above—usually best

# Resumes: tips

- Use active statements, ideally with quantifiable results:
  - ~~Responsible for developing a new filing system~~
  - **Developed** a new filing statement that reduced paperwork by 50 percent
  - ~~I was in charge of customer complaints and all ordering problems~~
  - **Handled** all customer complaints and resolved product order discrepancies

# Resumes: tips

- List bullets in *parallel form*
  - I have negotiated with major suppliers
  - Have audited financial transactions
  - Skilled in the use of Excel and HTML
  
- Negotiated with major suppliers
- Audited financial transactions
- Used Excel and HTML for...



# For the rest of class today...

- Read the examples!
- Make a list of your employment history and all your accomplishments in each job
  - Far easier to tailor your resume to a specific job when you have *lots* of information to draw from
- Start browsing job boards:
  - [www.indeed.com](http://www.indeed.com)
  - [www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com)
  - [www.workopolis.com](http://www.workopolis.com)
  - [www.eluta.ca](http://www.eluta.ca)
- Reminder: next week is a **workshop period—come if you want feedback on your job application package**