WRITE YOUR RESUME
(LIKE A FANFIC)

Hi. I'm Jess Unrein. I'm going to tell you a ridiculous story about how bad fanfiction can make your resume stand out. It might seem like we're taking some digressions at times, but stick with me and you'll learn skills that you can use to help promote yourself in resumes, cover letters, and bios that's authentic to who you are and doesn't come off as braggy.

Today we'll just be focusing on resumes. Feel free to stop me anytime with questions. If you aren't a fan of speaking in larger groups, just tweet at me using my twitter handle at the bottom of the slides. I'll check my mentions at regular intervals through the talk to see if there are any questions or comments I haven't addressed.

WHAT WILL I GET OUT OF THIS?

Outcomes of the workshop:

Your own fanfiction about yourself. Who doesn't love a good ego boost?

A fanfictionalized resume where we learn how to leverage narrative to highlight our strenghts.

A resume that has interesting highlights and will pass the 6 second threshold.

This should be the 5 minute point in the workshop

FANFICTION BASICS

This section is for basic definition of terms

What is fanfiction? Fanfiction is a broad term for fan created works that reference an existing body of work. For example, Harry Potter fanfiction references the Harry Potter books. Within the fandom, it's referenat body of work is called "The Canon."

Contrary to popular belief, fanfiction isn't all about sexy times, and it isn't all wildly made up, rewriting the canon.

"CANON COMPLIANT"

Canon compliant is a term used in fanfiction to indicate that the events that happen inside the fanfic do not conflict with the events or the reality as established in the canon. When you see a fanfic tagged with "canon compliant" it usually means that the events taking place within the fiction are "deleted scenes" that grant more context or clarity to the characters. They can be fun, serious, introspective, lighthearted, or some combination of all of these.

If you've ever wondered what's going on inside John Watson's head while he watches Sherlock Holmes make deductions, and imagined what that inner monologue looks like, you've done your own bit of canon compliant Sherlock writing yourself :)

Refer to booklet: Canon Compliant John Watson monologue snippet

More info: https://fanlore.org/wiki/Canon_Compliant

approx 10 minutes in

MARY SUE 🙋‍♀️

Another imporant fanfiction term for today is Mary Sue. Mary Sue is a term used for characters in fanfiction – and it's a term that has since bled over into mainstream fiction analysis – that refers to a character that is too good to be true. Mary Sue is too attactive, too competent, and admired by everyone around her.

Many people view Bella Swan from the Twilight series as the quintessential example of a Mary Sue. She has mind blocking superpowers like no one has ever seen, she's fantastically beautiful, and her biggest character flaw is that she's "clumsy." This doesn't necessarily make for good fiction, but it makes for a great strategy for viewing yourself when you're looking to pump up your ego.

More info: https://fanlore.org/wiki/Mary_Sue

MY IMMORTAL

BY XXXbloodyrists666XXX

(YES. THIS WAS REALLY THEIR USERNAME. 2006 WAS A DIFFERENT TIME.)

Refer to booklet & give some context. Hopefully not too terrible example from "My Immortal"

This is nowhere near canon-compliant, but I wanted to give you a taste of this. This is "My Immortal", which is widely considered to be the worst fanfic ever written. But for our purposes today I kind of love it. It's very very loosely based on the Harry Potter universe, about a young vampire witch girl named Eboy Dark'ness Dementia Raven Way. It's been described in reviews as having "awkward rhythm, strange digressions, and stultifyingly purple prose." But it's clear that she wrote this as a way to invision an idealized version of herself, and that's what I want you to do here today. It's okay if your writing isn't good, if it's full of digressions and notes to yourself, and it's completely impenetrable to anyone who isn't you.

Side note: I don't actually recommend you read this fic when you get home. It doesn't get much better than this.

More info: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/My*Immortal*(fan_fiction)

http://www.vulture.com/2015/03/bizarre-unsolved-mystery-of-my-immortal.html

YOUR TURN!
PLOTBUNNIES

There's one last fanfiction term I'd like to introduce you to. It's called a plotbunny. In fanfiction it's described as story idea that hits you like a horde of wild bunnies and is equally difficult to get rid of.

Supposedly originate from John Steinbeck quote: "Ideas are like rabbits. You get a couple and learn how to handle them, and pretty soon you have a dozen."

We're going to have a couple breakouts here. You'll have an opportunity to write your own pieces of fanfiction about yourselves based on plot bunnies.

After you finish your writing samples, I'd like to ask you to sumbit your samples to an anonymous google form to go over with the group. You will not be identified, and this is completely voluntary. But it would be nice to get examples from the group we can talk about and figure out how to highlight potential resume bullet points from.

Approx 17 miuntes in

ROUND 1: CHOOSE 1 TO WRITE ABOUT

> WHAT WAS A PROJECT YOU WORKED AT YOUR LAST JOB?

> WHAT'S THE MOST MEMORABLE GROUP PROJECT YOU DID IN SCHOOL?

> HOW DID YOUR LAST BOSS DESCRIBE YOUR GREATEST STRENGTH?

Should take 10 minutes and pick one prompt to write about.

A few angles you can approach these from: struggles, significant contributions to a project, areas of excellence.

You should choose something you think you can write more than a couple sentences about.

After 10 minutes are done ask to submit to anonymous google form

Approx 30 minutes in

STOP FLAMMING DA STORY PREPZ

🔥🔥🔥

Words to live by. This girl can't spell, can use grammar, but she has confidence that I can only ever dream of having.

STOP FLAMMING DA STORY is pretty much how you should approach negative criticism when you're looking at building yourself up and touting your accomplishments. Resume writing can be stressful for a lot of people, especially if you were raised not to brag about yourself. But haters are just prepz who are flamming your narrative. If the author of this story can put her work out there without fear of repucussion, so can you.

FANGS 2 DA GOFFIK PPL 4 DA GOOD REVEIWS!
💖

Start thinking of da goffik ppl when you think about what you've accomplished in the past. You want to figure out what you've been doing right, take positive feedback into account, try to do more of it, and highlight it as much as you can in any bullet points on your resume.

Approx 32 minutes in

BETA READING!
ROUND 1

Beta reading is a practice where authors release their fiction to a small group of test readers for feedback and refinement. It's actually a term that originates in software and has been repurposed for fandom!

Now that we've all had a chance to write about one of the questions, and hopefully some people have submitted, let's spend 10 minutes chatting in small groups about some anonymized samples. Pick out 2-3 bullet points from each narrative sample that you think could make a good trait on a resume.

~ 42 miuntes in

PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS

So it's all well and good to talk about other people's personal writing and how it might help create narratives and build strengths, but it's only valuable if I'm willing to share my weird, stream of consciousness fanfic of my own life.

This is where we tie things in together. Everything you're about to read is canon compliant. Someone who's telling you the canonical story of my life probably wouldn't include these details, but they're the deleted scenes from my own timeline. They helped me put to words how I think about myself. I'm the hero in my own story. I'm my own Mary Sue.

Reference material: Jess's fanfiction samples

Let's go over project at last job, nicest thing a good friend said, and math in elementary school.

~52 miuntes in

ROUND 2: CHOOSE 1 TO WRITE ABOUT

> WHAT WAS THE NICEST THING A GOOD FRIEND EVER SAID TO YOU?

> WHAT'S A SOFT SKILL YOU EXCEL IN? DESCRIBE AN INSTANCE OF IT.

> WHAT CLUB WERE YOU MOST INVOLVED IN AT SCHOOL?

After 10 mintues are done ask to submit to anonymous google form

BETA READING!
ROUND 2

Spend 10 minutes in small groups again identifiying a couple bullet points from each writing sample assigned to the group

~72 minutes in

WHAT ABOUT MY RESUME?

Show Jess's resume here. Talk about bits that were taken out of the fanfiction samples made their way into bullet points.

Just because it's a tech resume doesn't mean that all of the skills listed have to be technical. Solid soft skills can help you get past the 6 second test.

Reference material: Jess's resume

~80 minutes in

FINAL ROUND: CHOOSE 1 TO WRITE ABOUT

> WHAT'S THE DUMBEST THING YOU'VE EVER SAID IN AN INTERVIEW?

> DID YOU THINK YOU WERE GOOD AT MATH IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL? WHY OR WHY NOT?

> WHAT'S AN ACTIVITY OR SKILL YOU STOPPED DOING AND WISH YOU'D KEPT UP WITH?

After 10 minutes are done ask to sumbit to anonymous google form
~90 minutes

BETA READING!
FINAL ROUND

~100 minutes

6 SECOND TEST? ⌚

Probably apocryphal but it's the notion that your resume has about 6 second to make a good impression on a hiring manager or recruiter before they decide whether or not to go further with it.

Your resume really should fit all onto one page. I know that I have a hard time letting go and want to list everything I've ever done to show my range. But this isn't useful. It bogs the person looking at it with unnecesary information that doesn't tell them why I'm good for the job. And worst of all, my experience as a budget security guard or a burrito roller (both jobs I've actually had) will be boring to a tech hiring manager.

If there are skills that I acquired at those jobs that inform how I do my work, then I can find bullet points to add to relevant job experience and don't need to include those.

~103 miuntes

LARGE GROUP BETA ROUND!

At this point we've seen a bunch of writing samples and you saw how I was able to work things from my narratives into my resume. Let's spend a bit of time looking at your favorite examples from the previous beta reading sessions and talk about the bullet points you were able to extract.

20-30 minutes for chatting?

~125 miuntes

RETROFITTING

So now we know some of the things that we want to highlight and things we might want to avoid in our resumes based on what we came up with from our writing samples.

Break into smaller groups and figure out three quantifiable bullet points that you can attach to your resume.

Ask people to submit newly inserted bullet points into existing resume sample.

10 - 15 minutes

140 miuntes

CLEANUP

Let's look at some participant examples of resume submissions as a big group. Discuss as a group how well the participant did, if there are places that aren't clear enough, could use more concrete examples, or could be tightened up a bit.

Talk about bullet points that come up that might need to be removed.

Idea: at this point maybe Jess can show an older version of her resume with a lot of flab that was cut down to the existing version?

160 minutes

ANY QUESTIONS? COMMENTS? SUGGESTIONS?

Reserve time at the end for informal q&a/ chat. 10 -15 min?

~175 minutes

THANK YOU!
FIND THIS PRESENTATION ON GITHUB AT
TINY.CC/RESUME_AS_FANFIC

Reminder that if any questions come up after workshop, participants can always tweet at me. I'm pretty active and responsive on Twitter.

~ 180 minutes