



Resumé and Cover Letter Tips

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Writing a Successful Resumé

Resumés and cover letters help sell your credentials to prospective employers so that they will want to interview you. Ensure that your resumé stands out from others and conveys your best image. Store electronically, customize for the job you want, and be certain that the document is easy to read. Always write a customized cover letter to accompany your resumé and job application.

Contact Information

Prominently display your full name (put the name you preferred to be called, if you have a nickname, in parentheses) at the top of your resumé followed by contact information:

- Address
- Phone number(s)
- Email address
- LinkedIn URL

Education

Highlight relevant academic and technical training and include:

- Degree(s) or certificate(s) earned
- Schools attended including universities, community colleges, and professional or technical schools (with location)
- Date of graduation, actual or anticipated. If you have only partially completed a degree, list the anticipated date of graduation or if no degree is to be earned, provide the number of credit hours earned.

Objective (optional)

If you choose to include an objective, make this statement concise, 1-2 sentences, and relate it directly to the position you seek.

Employment (or Experience)

Emphasize your past and present employment experience. Consider customizing headings for this section. For example, if the job advertises the need for someone with writing experience, you may want to create a section with the heading "Writing Experience." This will get your resumé noticed.

Content for the employment section includes:

- Company or organization, location
- Position title
- Dates of employment
- Descriptions of job duties, focusing on any accomplishments in each job (i.e. saved the State \$50k with an employee suggestion.)

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Awards or Activities

Highlight relevant activities in which you have participated and any honors you received. Be sure to only include items that you could discuss with your prospective employer or that have given you valuable skills or experience.

An awards and activities section might include dates and the following:

- Teamwork, community, and academic awards and scholarships
- Membership in professional organizations
- Leadership positions held in organizations
- Community service positions

Language

- Make sure that grammar, spelling, and punctuation rules are followed.
- When writing bullets, ensure parallel structure (verb tense agreement, sentences versus sentence fragments, etc.).

Do NOT:

- Include references in your resumé. Instead, bring them with you to the interview.
- Make any reference to your age, gender, or religion. This includes omitting graduation years when appropriate.
- Include months along with years of employment. Instead just put the years (i.e. 2008-2010).
- List jobs that are not relevant to the position. For example, if you were employed as a teenager at a fast food restaurant, and you are applying for a management position, this has no relevance.
- Include any reference to salary. This topic should be avoided until an offer is made.

Writing a Successful Cover Letter

To get your resumé noticed and secure the job interview, always write a personal cover letter addressed to the individual hiring for the position. Check spelling and title beforehand, and:

1. Focus on the needs of the employer and the specific job. Identify how you would be a valuable asset to the organization.
2. Show knowledge of the organization and how your skills, experience, and education would benefit their needs.
3. Concisely summarize your relevant qualifications and achievements. Don't restate everything in your resumé, but focus on the highlights.
4. Express your strong interest in the job and your enthusiasm for the prospect of being considered for the vacant position.
5. Be succinct. Keep your cover letter to less than one page with the paragraphs concise and well organized.
6. Thank the individual for his or her consideration and time.