Resume and Cover Letter Guide

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BTC … Smart Choice!   Interested in BTC, check our website at www.blackhawk.edu

Your Resume: Your Sales Brochure

Introduces you and your strengths to a potential employer or other individuals you would like in your "network".

There is standard information that should be included. Below are the sections that are highly recommended as part of your final product. Sections in your resume should be in order of importance. You want to customize your resume for the position for which you are applying. Therefore; the section that seems the most important for the job should be closer to the top of your resume.

Resume Sections

Contact Information

Your Name
Contact Information
> • Your name, address, city, state, zip, phone number with area code where you can be reached, email that your check regularly

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STUDENT A. NAME
sname@gmail.com

1234 Street Name
City, State Zip Code
Phone Number

Career Objective

Gives a sense of purpose to the resume
* State the type of position you want to attain
* Avoid sounding self-centered instead what you can do to meet the employer's need
  * *Example: increase sale of manufactured goods, sold to accounts nationally and internationally*
* Avoid generalities like " a challenging position with opportunity for growth"
* Tailor the objective to each position you seek
* This is the first section under your name

Special Skills, Campus Involvement and Awards

* Include any special skills such as computer skills and languages known.
* Quantify your language skills by using phrases such as : proficient in, knowledge of:
* Include your participation in organizations especially within leadership roles, offices held or presentations given that could relate to your career goal.

To best highlight these skills/experiences/attributes, you may want to divide into sections. Examples:
* Computer Skills
* Languages
* Communication Skills

Education

In general, new graduates should place education at the top of their resume (immediately after the objective, if one is used) as the primary qualifier for the position. List your highest degree first and work backward. It is not necessary to list your high school degree. List your major, name of school attended, city, state of institution, dates of graduation and GPA if at or above a 3.0.

Education	Blackhawk Technical College, Janesville, WI	April 09
	Business Management Associate Degree	
	GPA: 3.1	

Relevant Coursework

If you do not have career-related experience, it is a good idea to list some of your core courses on your resume. This gives the employer an idea of your training and shows that your have knowledge in your specific area. List course in order of relevant importance.

Certification/ License

Examples: Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), Licensed Practical Nursing (WI LPN), HVAC, WI Journeyman's Electrical License

Experience

This section is to highlight your employment history

* Be sure to include any accomplishments

* Include internships, externship, clinical rotations

* Include paid and unpaid experience

* Define abilities rather than duties, stress the accomplishments, use correct dates, brief and direct

    descriptions, strong action verbs, and avoid being overly complex.

* Include job title, dates of work (month and year only), employer name and location (city and state only)

* List your work history in **reverse chronological order**

    o Experience can be sorted into RELATED EXPERIENCE and OTHER EXPERIENCE to have your most

    relevant experience listed first on your resume, list them under RELATED EXPERIENCE

    o You will still want to maintain the list in reverse chronological order

Experience	XYZ Consulting	Spring 2006
	Assistant to Consulting Department (internship)	
	Assisted with writing policy and procedural manuals	
	Scheduled interview appointments	
	Assisted with screening applicants	

Resume Design

Something must catch the employer's eye! Remember this: A resume or cover letter should describe how you will meet the employer's need.

How to get NOTICED

Customizing your resume to a particular position, company or industry is a great way to bring positive attention to your resume.
* Include selling points that substantiate your objective
* Use key terms or phrases common to your target industry
* Highlight information that is most relevant to your target career
* Read job descriptions in newspapers, career books and pick out the key experiences and skills employers are seeking for jobs similar to the one you want. Incorporate relevant words and phrases into your resume presentation.

By using key industry terms and highlighting information most relevant to your target job or career, you accomplish two goals: you show the employer you are familiar with the industry and you help eliminate doubts about how your qualifications meet their needs.

Your overall resume presentation speaks volumes about you!
* Important-consider layout and design
* Initially your resume will be looked at for approximately **10-20 seconds**
* Make these seconds count in an easy to read format

Making your resume an "Easy Read"

Eye Appeal

* Use plenty of white space and utilize formatting tools to help distinguish important information (e.g. section headings, school and company names job titles, major, etc.).

* Do not exceed two tools ((bold, italic, underline, etc.) per item

* Limit the number of tabs you set so that all indentations and columns fall on no more than three vertical lines running down the page; too many tabs can make information appear scattered and thus more difficult to read

* Create your own personal letterhead, which includes your name and contact information. Letterhead is a professional standard in business correspondence and may help your resume and cover letter stand out in a positive way. Your letterhead design can also show some of your own personality. Be sure your letterhead is still easy to read and error-free.

* **Use résumé or business stationery quality paper; conservatively light colored cotton bond paper.**

- Print your resumes on a laser printer for the best quality, avoiding ink smears.

Attention to Detail

Be consistent with your use of tools, placement and spacing. For example, if your job titles are in bold, make certain all of them appear that way and make sure all of your dates appear in the same locations.

Margins

Your top and bottom margins should be at least 0.5, but no greater than 1.0 inch. Left and right margins should be at least 0.75 inch, but no greater than 1.0 inch.

Font

- Use a 10-12 point font in the body of the resume, and 12-16 point font for section headings
- Use a 12-20 point font for your letterhead (name and contact information at the top of the resume). Have your name stand out, but avoid using a font size that is more than 2 sizes larger than your letterhead font.
- Use easy to read fonts, such as Garamond, Book Antigua, Times New Roman, Arial and Helvetica. Avoid fonts with unusual spacing between letters, shadowing, etc.

Make sure your resume is error free

It is always a good idea to have someone else look over your resume. After you spend so much time working on something, you may not catch spelling errors or questionable grammar. Let faculty, staff or career center staff double check your work.

You may email it to **careercenter@blackhawk.edu** for review.

Continue to edit your resume and customize it for particular positions. Again, try to have someone else review it for you.
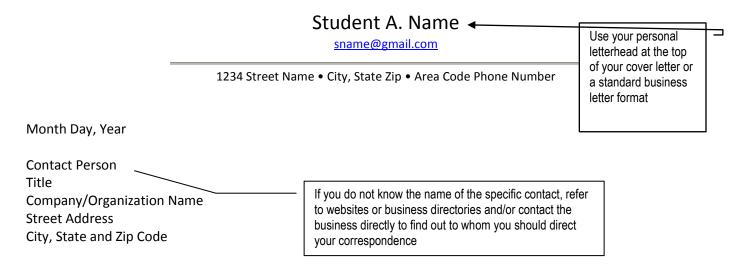
Editing your resume to make it fit

Fit to one page

- Reduce margins
- Reduce font sizes (not less than 10 point)
- Change font styles
- Change tabs so the line starts further to the left
- Put more information on one line (e.g. combine company name, location and dates on one line)
- Decrease the number of line space s between headings
- Change date or state format so they are shorter (e.g. WI vs. Wisconsin)
- Eliminate too detailed information
- Eliminate the least related detail in the job responsibilities
- Do not put your references on your resume or references upon request (unless you are trying to fill in space)
- The one page rule is not mandatory. If your resume needs two pages of text, try to use at least half of the next page. If you have less than that you should make modifications on the first page to make it fit to one page.

Tips for getting your Resume Selected

- Use many **key words** to define your skills, experiences, education
- Be specific (e.g. use software names such as Microsoft Word).
- Use action words to express your achievements

COVER LETTER CONTENT AND LAYOUT

<div align="center">

Student A. Name

sname@gmail.com

</div>

1234 Street Name • City, State Zip • Area Code Phone Number

> Use your personal letterhead at the top of your cover letter or a standard business letter format

Month Day, Year

Contact Person
Title
Company/Organization Name
Street Address
City, State and Zip Code

> If you do not know the name of the specific contact, refer to websites or business directories and/or contact the business directly to find out to whom you should direct your correspondence

Dear Mr. *or* Ms. (Contact's Last Name):

First paragraph: Why you are writing
In your initial paragraph, state the reason for your letter.
Letter of application: You are applying in response to a specific opening. State the position and indicate how you learned of it. If you found out from someone currently working there, be sure to mention their name (with their permission, of course).

Second paragraph: What you have to offer
Indicate why you are interested in the position or organization. Do your research! Above all, indicate what you can do for the employer. This is known as an employer-focused letter. If all of your paragraphs begin with "I…", then you have written a self-focused letter. Change your wording! If you are a recent graduate, explain how your academic background makes you a qualified candidate for the position. If you have practical work experience, point out your specific achievements or unique qualifications. You may refer to your enclosed resume, but try not to repeat the same information that the reader will find there. This is your chance to expand that information and really shine.

Third paragraph: What happens next?
In the closing paragraph, indicate your desire for a personal interview. Close with a statement that will encourage a response. Ask the employer to contact you if they desire additional information. Give the person your phone number (make sure this is somewhere you can be reached during the day, or that has voice mail) and thank them for their time. [If you use your personal letterhead at the top of the letter, you may simply refer the person to your phone number above rather than stating it here.]

Sincerely,

Signature here

Typed Name
Enclosure

Resume worksheet

Name	Telephone Number
Address	City State Zip Code
Email Address	

Objective

Skills- Example: keyboarding speed of 60 WPM, Ability to work with diverse population
• Computer skills
• Language skills
• Communication skills
• Interpersonal skills
• Job specific skills (e.g. if an Accounting major: bookkeeping, spreadsheets, etc,)

Education

Name of School	City State
Major	Date of Graduation and Degree Awarded
GPA	

Related Courses:

Work Experience ((jobs, volunteer work, internships)

Name of Company	City State
Job Title	Dates of Employment
Responsibilities	

Name of Company	City State
Job Title	Dates of Employment
Responsibilities	

Name of Company	City State
Job Title	Dates of Employment

INTERNET RESOURCES FOR RESUME AND COVER LETTER WRITING

Cover Letter Tutorial: http://www.quintcareers.com/cover_letter_tutorial.html

About.com: http://jobsearch.about.com/od/coverlettersamples/a/coverlettsample.htm

The Riley Guide: http://www.rileyguide.com/letters.html