



Resumes
Cover Letters &
Thank You Letters

Introduction

The resume and cover letter are essential tools to assist you with getting beyond the front door to win interviews with employers.

It is your personal advertisement, the marketing tool that will get you where you want to go in your career. A good resume reads like a persuasive brief. Underlying its

- make employers want to meet you.
- tell the employer what you can do for her.
- explain what you have done in the past and how it translates into what you will be able to do for them in the future.

A cover letter should...

- tell the employer why you are writing them.
- explain how your background and experience will benefit the employer.
- not be longer than 3 - 4 paragraphs.

WRITING A RESUME

Introduction:

The best jobs do not necessarily - or even usually - go to the best qualified people available. Rather, they go to the best qualified APPLICANTS...that is, **people with basic qualifications for the job who know how to get hired.**

Most employers of lawyers (and especially small law firms) are not well-skilled at the task of hiring new employees. Consequently, students and alumni must become extremely capable applicants so that you can be sure employers gain a good appreciation of the abilities you are offering them.

content is the premise that you are the right person for the job. The resume and cover letter workshop will teach you how to construct a good legal resume and write a winning cover letter.

A resume should...

The Student Resume:

The resume is an essential element of job hunting; it's not exactly the key to success, but it will often help you get beyond the front door. It's a personal advertisement, a well-written, concise document that persuasively shows what you have to "sell" to an employer.

Even though there are a number of very important Do's and Don'ts for writing a resume, there is no one "right" style or format. What works for one person may be totally unsuitable for another. The right format is the one that will achieve your objective of getting interviews by accentuating those skills, abilities and accomplishments that will attract the attention of potential employers. Many students need to write two or more different resumes in order to attract the interest of different types of employers.

Writing Your Resume:

There are several steps to resume writing. Each resume is very individualistic, as no two people have exactly the same background. You must arrange your resume in a way best suited to showing off your particular experiences and skills. However, everyone must go through the three steps listed below in preparing a resume.

- 1) **Brainstorm.** Sit down with a piece of paper and pen and write down a list of everything you have ever done (or use the resume-information assessment worksheet enclosed). If you can work from an old resume, you may be able to shorten this process a great deal.

- 2) **Organize.** After you have a comprehensive list of all your activities and achievements, decide how best to categorize them. Typically, you will have two main categories: Education, and Employment or Experience. You may also wish to include categories for Activities, Honors, Publications, Interest, etc. You may wish to include activities and honors under the institution to which they pertain. Either way is permissible.

- 3) **Produce.** Prepare (word process) your resume using a computer, saving it on disk to make future changes easily and quickly. The Career Services Office provides two (2) computers and one laser printer for students to work on their resumes.

- 4) **Choice of Materials & Format.**
A good appearance is important. To accomplish this, the resume should be printed from a laser printer onto good quality bond paper. Paper color should be conservative...ranging from white, ivory, beige, or grey. (Other colors such as pink, purple, green, etc. might look nice but are not appropriate.)

- 5) **Proofread.** It is very important that you and/or someone you trust proofread the final draft very carefully.

As a general rule, the resume should be short. One page is optimal, with two pages as an absolute maximum length. Anything longer almost certainly includes extraneous data that detracts from the essential information.

For the same reasons, an outline type of resume is preferable to the narrative type, since it is more succinct and therefore more easily read and “digested.” **The worst thing you can do is to bore the reader before he or she reaches the bottom of the page!**

The patterning of data on the page can determine whether or not the student’s accomplishments will ever be read. The resume is primarily a display tool, so each unit of information must be package attractively in a design that harmonizes with every other unit of information. Bold, underline, italics and tabs are all ways of attractively packaging your information. **Remember to be consistent throughout the entire resume.**

Mechanical suggestions:

- 1) Do not abbreviate.
- 2) Use an outline form, but do not include numbers, letters, or dashes as category divisions.
- 3) Leave enough white space on the page for easy readability.
- 4) Avoid cluttered appearance by leaving a substantial margin on all sides; be sure the margins are balanced.
- 5) Make absolutely sure that there are no typos or misspelled words!
- 6) If the resume exceeds one page in length, repeat your full name in the top left hand corner of the second page with the page number directly beneath or beside it.

Guidelines to Possible Content:

The following basic information should be included in your resume:

- 1) Complete name, complete address with zip code and telephone numbers with area code and email address.
- 2) Legal and Pre-legal education (law school and college in reverse chronological order), schools attended, degrees awarded, and dates received (month and year only), college major(s).

It is up to you whether or not you wish to provide information about your academic record in law school and college on the resume. **Most employers will assume that you are at the bottom of your class if there is no mention of grades or rank on the resume.** There are many ways in which academic performance can be displayed to your advantage - even if you are not in the top 20% of your class. Please read the guidelines for reporting grades section of this handout or come by the Career Services Office for suggestions. **It is extremely important that all grade/rank information provided is correct. Any misrepresentation could result in an honor code offense.**

- 3) Scholastic honors in law school and college. These items can (preferably) be listed under the institutions to which they pertain, or listed as a separate category.
- 4) Extracurricular activities, if appropriate, and memberships in student organizations. The student should always give full names of organizations, rather than listing only acronyms.
- 5) Employment, including all law related part-time or summer jobs, as well as any

significant non-legal work. This section is best displayed in reverse chronological order. Be sure to include locations and dates of employment. Volunteer experience counts, particularly if you held some sort of time-consuming position within an organization. Externships count; call the category "experience" instead of "employment." Non-legal experience definitely counts; if you received and accepted an externship or internship for the near future include it on your resume (with dates).

- 6) Miscellaneous/Skills/Interests. These headings can be used if you wish to provide some additional information (e.g. foreign language proficiency, service in the Peace Corps, extensive foreign travel, Lexis/Westlaw training, hobbies, community volunteer work, etc.) This section helps the employer to see you as an individual, and gives you something to discuss in the interview.

What to leave out:

A few items do not belong in anyone's resume. As a general rule, anything that does not contribute to getting you an interview should be eliminated. In particular:

- 1) Avoid the label "resume" at the top of the page.
- 2) DO NOT include such information as age, marital status, height, weight, and condition of health. These are illegal considerations in hiring.
- 3) On a legal resume, objectives, position desired and summaries of qualifications sections are rare. The only time one of these sections might be needed is in the

case of someone seeking employment in a *highly unusual* field. Otherwise such a section on a resume can greatly limit your range of job possibilities. Usually the best place to express interest in a particular job is the cover letter than accompanies the resume.

- 4) There is no need to use the word “I”. The first person singular is understood on a resume.
- 5) References. As a general rule names of references should not be included on your resume. The phrase “References upon request” is a space filler and not necessary. If an employer is interested in you they will ASK for references.

Selecting Words and Phrases that Advertise Your Skills:

A well written, well-organized resume almost demands to be read. Here are some basic guidelines:

- 1) Use **action verbs (see discussion below)** in short, clearly written phrases. For example, instead of saying “Responsibilities included initiation of...” Say instead, “Initiated...”. This makes the resume much more exciting to read.
- 2) Select words that will mean something to the person who will read the resume. Use “legal jargon” where appropriate. Avoid technical terms or specific jargon related to prior career(s); try to use “lay” language instead.

- 3) Avoid introductory phrases such as “my duties included...” OR “I was in charge of the section which...”
- 4) List accomplishments whenever possible rather than just describing duties.
- 5) Avoid extraneous information and don’t try to convey too many ideas at once. Keep in mind that the resume is only the first point of contact with a prospective employer. You can reveal additional information in your cover letter and interview.

Resume Effectiveness Test:

When you complete your resume, hand it out to some friends to read. **Allow them to look at your resume for only thirty seconds. Then ask them what they remember.** If they absorb the points you want to convey, great! You are ready to print and distribute your resume. If not, go back to the drawing board. You may need to re-arrange your spacing, underlining or bold-facing to your advantage.

Sample Resumes:

At the end of this booklet are some VERY BASIC sample formats for resumes. BE CAREFUL not to feel that these formats are the only ways to arrange a resume. You should arrange your resume to best display your own unique experiences.

Additionally, a few examples of resumes from other Georgia State students are included to demonstrate the variety of styles available to you.

The formats shown may be combined, altered, rearranged, whatever to achieve an effect with which you are comfortable. Use varying sizes of print

(available on the computer in the Career Services Office), underlining, bold, italics, etc. to highlight the points you want to emphasize. A sample of available fonts is available in CSO along with instructions on how to access them on the computer.

It is recommended that you stick to one font style throughout your resume, using italics for emphasis where appropriate. Font sizes may be varied for headings, emphasis, to fit everything on the page. 12 point font size is the recommended size, but nothing smaller than 10 point should be used.

The most important consideration in preparing a resume is to be certain that it presents the best, most concise outline of your experience.

WRITING COVER LETTERS

Any time you mail a resume to an employer, you will need to include a cover letter. The cover letter gives you an excellent opportunity to reveal additional information to the employer, or to point out information on your resume that you want to be certain the employer does not miss. Cover letters are extremely important pieces of writing since each potential employer must make a decision whether or not to grant an interview solely on the basis of what the letter conveys. To the person who receives it, **the resume/cover letter package IS the applicant, since the reader has no other data at this point.** Writing an effective cover letter can be a difficult and frustrating task. However, the following suggestions and guidelines will make writing cover letters simple, and will be excellent practice for the letters you will write in legal practice.

Making a Good First Impression:

The appearance of the cover letter is as important as the appearance of the resume. If possible, you should use the same paper for cover letters as you use for your resume.

Each letter must be typed or laser printed individually, under no circumstances should cover letters be photocopies.

Use the standard form for the business letter. Your name, address and date go in the top right corner of the page (or you may use the same format as on the top of your resume for name, address & phone number then place the date underneath). The employer's name and address goes under the date, but on the left side of the page. Using a word processor will enable creation of your own "stationery" to match your resume. As indicated above, center your name, address and phone number(s) at the top of the page, using same font as that of your resume. This basically created your own letterhead.

Unless you are answering a "blind" advertisement, the letter should always be addressed specifically to the person - by name and title - who will most likely be doing the interviewing for the job. In the case of a law firm, a logical addressee is the hiring partner. You may be able to locate the names of hiring partners and/or recruiting coordinators in a directory in the Career Services Office. **You may have to make some phone calls.** Receptionists will gladly give you names and titles, including correct spellings of hiring personnel. **Alternatively,** you can write to alumni of Georgia State or to one who shares your undergraduate school, interest area. Or place of birth, any connection with the

person who receives the correspondence increases the chances that it will be handled with some degree of personal attention.

Neatness, punctuation, and spelling are all very important! Employers assume that the quality of the letter you write is a sample of the quality of the work you will produce.

The Body of the Letter:

Cover letters should be brief - rarely more than two or three paragraphs, and NEVER longer than one page in length. The object of the letter is to pinpoint how your skills and experience relate to the particular needs of that potential employer. Consequently, each cover letter should have a some-what different slant, depending on what skills you want to emphasize for that particular employer.

Paragraph One:

The first paragraph is undoubtedly the most difficult one for most applicants to compose, but it is also the most important. The reader may be screening hundreds of letters, or he/she may be preoccupied with other duties. The opening must convince this person that the whole letter and the resume enclosed are worth reading. Specifically, there are two questions which should be clearly answered in the first paragraph:

- 1) what motivated you to write the letter to this specific source?
- 2) exactly what is it for which you are applying?

Often the answer to the first question is that you have something specific to offer the firm or company to which you are writing. In that case, you may wish to start out with your strongest selling points. This

is a particularly effective beginning if the student is writing in response to an advertised position. *“My experience in _____, my training in _____ make me qualified for the position of that you have advertised in the Career Services Office.”* This approach may also be used for an uninvited (prospecting) letter - particularly if you have specific skills that are of value to a particular employer (eg., engineering degree and law degree for a patent firm; accounting and law degree for an accounting firm,) or if you have significant professional work experience.

Another possible way to begin the letter is by making a statement about the firm or organization which forms the basis for your belief that there may be an opening there for someone with your qualifications. *“The reputation and growth of American Casualty, Incorporated leads me to inquire whether new positions may be developing in your claims department.”* OR *“It has been brought to my attention that there is a possible opening for an associate in your firm’s tax department.”* OR *“I have read with interest a number of news articles concerning the acquisition of ABC Foods by your company.”* It is also perfectly acceptable to mention something specific about the person to whom the letter is addressed. *“The presentation you gave at my law school’s labor law careers panel on March 23rd was of particular interest to me.”* It is important, of course, that any of the above opening sentences is followed by a sentence which answers the question: Exactly what is it for which I am applying?

A third possible opening for your letter - and probably the best one - is the use of a name of a third person, known to both the writer and the reader. *“Mr. John Smith, President of Acme Corporation, suggested I*

write to you about the possibility of obtaining a position as an associate with your firm.” Obviously, you would not use an opening of this type without the expressed consent of the third party.

Paragraph Two:

This paragraph should serve as a general summary of education, experience, and other areas of significance which should be shared with the prospective employer. The statements should amplify the resume rather than repeat it. *“As my resume indicates, I have worked in the litigation departments of both a small and large law firm, which gave me the opportunities to handle small cases in their entirety as well as the procedural aspects of larger cases.”*

You should always be objective, rather than subjective, in describing your qualifications. For example, instead of saying “I am a hard worker” or “I have excellent leadership ability”, you might point to specific accomplishments which back up those assertions. “The fact that I have been able to maintain a 82.54 grade point average in law school, while also working forty hours per week as a law clerk, demonstrates that I am a hard worker.” OR *“My leadership ability can be judged from my present responsibilities of supervising a staff of six paralegals at Jones, Smith & Thomas.”*

Paragraph Three:

The main purpose of the final paragraph should be to ask for an interview. There are many ways to do this, but you should always make it as easy as possible for the reader to grant the interview. If you are available at the interviewer’s convenience, say so. Or you might indicate that you will call them in a couple of weeks to see if an interview can be arranged.

Following the third paragraph is a most important statement which many writers omit....thanking the reader. A simple “thank you” or Thank you for your consideration” is sufficient. You should be careful to **AVOID** any type of statement that might alienate the person reading the letter - such as *“I hope to hear from you at your very earliest convenience”* OR *“I trust you give this application the favorable attention it deserves.”*

Tone of the Letter:

The main objective is to convince the person reading the letter that you should be granted an interview. Consequently, **the letter should focus on what you can do for the prospective employer, and not on what the job would do for you.** For example, the letter **SHOULD NOT** say, **“I would like to gain some practical legal experience by working in a firm such as yours.”**

Even if you don’t know much about a particular employer, you can be certain the interviewer will be looking for evidence of the following traits:

- 1) Intelligence and analytical abilities
- 2) Motivation and drive
- 3) Reliability
- 4) Efficiency and organization
- 5) Good writing and speaking skills
- 6) Profit-orientation

General Advice:

- 1) **(Almost) Never begin a paragraph with “I.”** You may have to slap in a prepositional phrase or two, but you should avoid starting with “I.” If the first word an employer reads is “I”, he/she may assume that the writer is somewhat egocentric.

- 2) **Be brief.** Remember that you are dealing with busy people who are trying to practice law. A lengthy cover letter will only bury the key points you are trying to convey, or will give the employer the impression that you are begging.
- 3) **Start with your strongest point.** If your best selling point to the employer is your academic experience, mention this in the first paragraph. If your work experience is your biggest plus, be sure and assert that in the first paragraph.

After writing your resume and cover letters, you might want to drop by the Career Services Office for a quick review of them.

Use of Action Verbs

Writing an effective achievement statement on your resume also requires the use of action verbs to describe skills, jobs and accomplishments. An action verb expresses achievements or something a person does in a concise, persuasive manner. Since concise writing is easier for readers to understand, it is more reader-centered. Because reader-centered writing is generally more persuasive, action verbs are more convincing than non-action verbs. Here is an some example:

- “Was the boss of a team of six service employees”.

Using action verbs:

- “Supervised a team of six service employees

The job description using a non-action verb is less concise. It contains ten words, and it focuses action on a form of the verb “to be” (was). The job description using an action

verb is more concise. It contains seven words, and it focuses action on an action verb (supervised). Because concise writing is easier for readers to understand, the job description using an action verb is more powerful and is more persuasive.

Using action verbs in resumes allows you to highlight the tasks you can do. Word choice is critical in order to describe what you have done and to persuade potential employers to give you an interview. In order to make a striking first impression, use action verbs as the “first” word of each bullet point to emphasize job descriptions in your resume.

Here are some examples:

- Accelerated introduction of a new technology, which increased productivity by 15%
- Organized consumer databases to efficiently track product orders
- Supervised a team of six service employees

Each of the previous examples started off with an action verb. For a list of action verbs and examples of concise and persuasive sentences, job descriptions and/or list of skills and accomplishments, please come by your Career Services Office.

Categorized List of Action Verbs

This categorized list contains a few action verbs you can use to compose concise, *persuasive, reader-centered* resumes, cover letters, or other types of workplace documents. The examples are illustrations that overview the uses of action verbs in professional writing.

Communication Skills

- *Negotiated* price reductions of up to 30% with key suppliers
- *Interpreted* financial information from the company's annual report
- *Translated* all relevant company information into three different languages

Other words: Advocated, Clarified, Corresponded, Encouraged, Interpreted, Negotiated, Persuaded, Presented, Publicized, Solicited, Spoke, Translated

Creative Skills

- *Created* an interior design layout for a 500 square foot retail venue
- *Introduced* a new method of navigating through the A Software Program
- *Presented* a new research project to the managers at the location

Other words: Acted, Applied, Composed, Created, Established, Founded, Improvised, Introduced, Navigated, Originated, Presented

Data / Financial Skills

- *Computed* and *recorded* inventory valuation on a monthly basis
- *Documented* inventory counts at the end of each working day
- *Verified* the amount owed to the creditor in the Accounts Payable account

Other words: Adjusted, Allocated, Budgeted, Compared, Computed, Counted, Documented, Estimated, Forecasted, Inventoried, Invested, Predicted, Projected, Quantified, Recorded, Retrieved, Verified

Helping Skills

- *Assisted* customers with choosing appropriate products
- *Trained* new employees in the plant through demonstration techniques
- *Volunteered* in the nursing home every weekend to serve the community

Other words: Aided, Assisted, Built, Demonstrated, Facilitated, Familiarized, Helped, Performed, Represented, Solved, Supported, Trained, Upheld, Volunteered, Worked

Management / Leadership Skills

- *Administered* a variety of surveys to collect data about the employees
- *Implemented* a safety communication program to promote safety awareness
- *Recommended* an alternative solution to one of the company's problems

Other words: Achieved, Administered, Assigned, Attained, Challenged, Coordinated, Decided, Delegated, Established, Executed, Handled, Headed, Implemented, Incorporated, Intervened, Launched, Led, Managed, Mediated, Motivated, Organized, Oversaw, Planned, Prioritized, Recommended, Scheduled, Supervised, United

Efficiency Skills

- *Eliminated* unnecessary cost of each unit of production
- *Maximized* profits by 15% during the month of July
- *Heightened* the level of employee moral through program incentives

Other words: Accelerated, Allocated, Boosted, Centralized, Downsized, Edited,

Eliminated, Enhanced, Expanded, Expedited, Heightened, Lessened, Leveraged, Maximized, Merged, Optimized, Outlined, Outsourced, Prevented, Prioritized, Reorganized, Reduced, Revised, Simplified, Standardized, Stream-lined, Synthesized, Systematized, Upgraded

- *Assembled* an entire computer programming simulation for my CPT course
- *Designed* a new form of Widget C for a manufacturing facility
- *Programmed* three new computer programs tailored for a network system

Research Skills

- *Examined* a new mechanism that may reduce sickness on the campus
- *Identified* a major defect in a microscopic organism last month
- *Surveyed* a group of Purdue students with regard to Product A

Other words: Analyzed, Collected, Compared, Controlled, Detected, Diagnosed, Evaluated, Examined, Gathered, Identified, Investigated, Located, Measured, Organized, Reported, Replicated, Researched, Reviewed, Searched, Surveyed, Wrote

Teaching Skills

- *Defined* a new product strategy and discussed how it would be implemented
- *Instructed* Department B on how to reduce inventory and raise net sales
- *Prepared* a tutorial manual for an English class last semester

Other words: Aided, Advised, Clarified, Communicated, Defined, Developed, Encouraged, Evaluated, Facilitated, Fostered, Guided, Helped, Incorporated, Informed, Initiated, Instructed, Lectured, Prepared, Supported, Supervised, Stimulated, Taught

Technical Skills

Other words: Analyzed, Assembled, Built, Calculated, Computed, Conducted, Designed, Devised, Engineered, Maintained, Operated, Programmed, Reengineered, Remodeled, Transmitted

OTHER RESUME ACTION VERBS

Below is a list of numerous action verbs to assist you in describing your experiences and accomplishments:

accelerated	constructed	measured
accomplished	contacted	explored
achieved	continued	facilitated
acquired	contracted	figured
activated	convened	financed
adapted	conveyed	focused
adjusted	coordinated	forecasted
administered	corresponded	formed
advised	counseled	formulated
allocated	created	fostered
analyzed	critiqued	founded
annotated	decided	functioned
anticipated	defined	generated
applied	delegated	governed
appraised	delivered	grouped
arranged	demonstrated	guided
articulated	derived	helped
assembled	designed	identified
assessed	detected	illustrated
assigned	determined	immunized
authored	developed	implemented
balanced	devised	improved
briefed	directed	increased
budgeted	distributed	informed
built	drafted	initiated

catalogued	edited	instituted	produced	studied
categorized	educated	instructed	protected	supervised
chaired	effected	interpreted	provided	supported
clarified	elicited	interviewed	publicized	synthesized
cleared	encouraged	introduced	questioned	targeted
coded	established	invented	raised	taught
collaborated	evaluated	investigated	recommended	tested
compared	examined	judged	recorded	trained
compiled	executed	led	recruited	translated
completed	exhibited	listened	reduced	tutored
composed	expanded	maintained	rendered	updated
computed	expedited	managed	repaired	utilized
conducted	experienced			

RESUME-INFORMATION ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

A. Personal Information

Name (first and last): _____

Address: _____

Phone (include area code): Home _____ Email _____

B. Education, Special Training, Certificates

Undergraduate Degree: Degree & Year _____

College _____

GPA/Class Rank/ or Average _____

Scholarships, Awards, Honors _____

Graduate Degree: Degree & Year _____

College _____

GPA/Class Rank/ or Average _____

Scholarships, Awards, Honors _____

Degree & Year _____

College _____

GPA/Class Rank/ or Average _____

Scholarships, Awards Honors _____

Undergraduate and Graduate Extracurricular (include responsible positions and anything initiated, improved, etc.) _____

Special Training (include special programs):

Name/Date _____

Name/Date _____

Name/Date _____

Certificates:

C. Employment History

*Organization Name/City & State _____

Position Title _____

Employment Date _____

Duties Performed (use PAR Statements - Projects & Problems, Actions and Results) _____

Accomplishments (improvements made, special projects, problems solved, etc.) _____

Job Related Skills Gained, Abilities Increased _____

*Organization Name/City & State _____

Position Title _____

Employment Date _____

Duties Performed (PAR Statements) _____

Accomplishments (improvements made, special projects, problems solved, etc.) _____

Job Related Skills Gained, Abilities Increased _____

*Organization Name/City & State _____

Position Title _____

Employment Date _____

Duties Performed (PAR Statements) _____

Accomplishments (improvements made, special projects, problems solved, etc.) _____

Job Related Skills Gained, Abilities Increased _____

*Organization Name/City & State _____

Position Title _____

Employment Date _____

Duties Performed (PAR Statements) _____

Accomplishments (improvements made, special projects, problems solved, etc.) _____

Job Related Skills Gained, Abilities Increased _____

D. Volunteer Experience

*Organization Name/City & State _____

What Achieved _____

*Organization Name/City & State _____

What Achieved _____

*Organization Name/City & State _____

What Achieved _____

NOTE: The position title is not as important in volunteer activities. The focus should be placed on particular achievements, if any. List duties if no achievements, because volunteer experience in itself conveys a lot to employers.

E. Activities, Skills, & Interest

Activities & Skills (include travel, foreign languages, special abilities or skills) _____

Personal Interest (include hobbies, special interests)

Resume Do's and Don'ts

- Check and double-check your spelling and grammar. Spell check will only point out obvious errors.
- Use the same font throughout your resume. Even if you bold or italicize, make sure the font style is the same.
- Anything less than a ten-inch font will be too difficult to read and will appear cramped.
- Use a professional font such as Times New Roman. Do not use a fancy script.
- Do not use graphics.
- Use either white or off-white colored paper. Colored paper is distracting and does not fax or copy well.
- Make sure your headings and other indented items are consistently indented - i.e. if your first heading is centered, then center all other headings.
- Use a cover letter to explain the position you are seeking; don't waste space on your resume with an "Objective" or "Summary of Qualifications."
- Potential employers assume you have references available upon request; don't waste space on your resume stating the obvious.
- Keep your resume to one page.
- Never go back further than ten years on your work history unless part of your history is at a job that spans the bridge between ten years and earlier, or if some pertinent work experience that would be critical to obtaining the position you seek occurred further back than the ten year cutoff.
- Be able to translate your skills and attributes into benefits for the employer.
- Use action verbs to describe your qualifications and past responsibilities.
- If you don't have much experience, highlight internships and volunteer work.
- Do not overstate your qualifications.
- Personalize your cover letter whenever possible.
- Have at least two individuals who are familiar with the legal profession to critique your resume.

Basic Legal Resume Construction

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Home Phone - Work Phone

Email Address

EDUCATION

Georgia State University College of Law, Atlanta, GA

Juris Doctor expected: Month/year

Class Rank: *(first year would list: expected June 20)*

Honors:

Activities:

Undergraduate College or University, City, State

Degree & Major: Date received (month, year)

GPA: (if good)

Honors:

Activities:

(List other degrees, institutions in reverse chronological order, including honors, activities with each institution.)

EXPERIENCE

X,Y,Z Company, City, State

Your Title, 2005-present

Use your **PAR** (Projects or Problems, Actions, and Results) statements in this section...remember to use “active” verbs to describe your experience.

Acme, Inc., City State

Your Title, 2000-2004

Use your **PAR** statements in this section...use “active, interesting” verbs to describe your experience.

(List employers in reverse chronological order, with brief employment descriptions.)

ACTIVITIES, INTERESTS, SKILLS, ETC.

(These are examples, obviously use your own.)

*Foreign Language: proficient in German & French. Knowledge of French & Italian.

*Volunteer soccer coach for neighborhood association.

*Civil Membership (especially if active and/or leadership position held.)

*Enjoy bungee jumping, sky diving and jazz.

*Awarded whatever award or honor you may have received. (not related to Education awards)

Jack T. Jones
202 Main Street
Atlanta, GA 30309
(404) 555-0000
jackjones@earthlink.com

EDUCATION

Georgia State University College of Law, Atlanta, GA

Juris Doctor expected: May 2008

Class Rank: Top 20% (34/202)

Activities/Honors: *12/215 overall rank in 1L RWA Moot Court Competition

*Board of Regents Academic Scholarship, renewable for three years.

*Whatever Law Student Association, Vice President;

directed production of first regional handbook for all members.

Howard University, Washington, D.C.

BA Political Science, cum laude, 2004

GPA 3.78/4.00

Activities/Honors: *President's Scholarship: four-time honoree for ranking in top 5% of class.

*Student of the Year, Political Science Department: selected by faculty.

LEGAL EXPERIENCE

McKenna, McDenna, Atlanta, GA

Law Clerk, Summer 2007

*Drafted briefs for all stages of trial and appellate practice. *Majority of summer spent researching, conducting interviews, and assisting attorneys prepare clients for testimony at depositions and arbitration hearings of one case.

Davis & Davis Co, LLP, Washington, DC

Law Clerk, Summer 2006

*Co-authored brief in opposition to consolidation of plaintiffs of class action suit. Drafted *amicus curiae* brief submitted to U. S. Court of Appeals, regarding urea-formaldehyde. Received exposure to product liability and medical malpractice issues, as well as estate planning and probate law.

NON-LEGAL EXPERIENCE

Pride of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA

Program Coordinator, 200; High School Tutor, 200**

*Conceived and coordinated comprehensive tutoring/mentoring program for local disadvantaged high school juniors and seniors. Trained 55 fellow undergraduates to work with over 150 students. Personally visited five area high school principals; received 100% participation. Received Governor's Recognition Award in only second academic year of operation. Maintained less than 1% dropout rate throughout 2 years of stewardship.

Corporate Connection Temporaries, Beachwood, CA

Data Processor, Inventory Control Clerk, 200-200**

*Eliminated need for school loans through variety of short-term positions. Developed ability to use a wide range of word and data processing, spreadsheet and database programs with little or no training. Was regularly asked to return to same firms to fill subsequent needs.

ACTIVITIES

Traveled extensively in Europe and enjoy skydiving.

Jane Marie Doe
Post Office Box 1234
Atlanta, GA 30303
(404) 555-4312
jmariedoe.aol.com

EDUCATION

Georgia State University College of Law, Atlanta, GA
JD expected, May 2009

Boston College, Boston, MA
BA and BS, 2003
Joint major, Macromolecular Chemistry and Economics

ACTIVITIES

Georgia State University Law Review, Editor-in-Chief
Manage 50-person staff and division budget. Authored law review article on admissibility of DNA evidence; U. S. Supreme Court requested prepublication copy, and will cite the article in the case of *United States vs. Block*.

Boston Crew participant
Led crew to NCAA championship. Took part in 2002 Olympic Games in Barcelona, winning a gold medal for the United States.

EXPERIENCE

Microsoft Corporation, Silicon Valley, CA
2003-2006
Co-developed software program as silent partner, which formed basis for multibillion dollar software company. Surrendered stock to partner in 200*, earning a profit of \$745 million.

King Laboratory for Advanced Medical Research, Boston, MA
Summer Intern, 2002
Researched molecular changes caused by aging. Discovered link between diet and aging. Patented research, which is expected to lead to increasing human life expectancy worldwide by 20 years.

SKILLS

Lexis Certified

Jonathan L. Student
25 Tucker Street
Atlanta, GA 30303
(404) 555-1212
JonathStudent@earthlink.com

EDUCATION

Georgia State University College of Law, Atlanta, GA

J. D. expected, May 2009

Class Rank: Top 10% (16/220)

Honors: Member, Law Review

Activities: Public Interest Law Association

Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, GA

B.A. in History, June 2006

Honors: *magna cum laude*

Activities: Atlanta Big Brothers/Big Sisters

Varsity Soccer Team

EXPERIENCE

Georgia General Assembly, Atlanta, GA

Legislative Assistant, Summer 2005

Compiled financial statistics regarding state defense industry output. Analyzed legislation to determine effects on area defense contractors. Drafted report used by legislators in debates and voting. Assigned to special task force investigating possibilities for urban industry.

Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, GA

Assistant Instructor, Spring 2005

Assisted teaching of introductory level "International Politics" course to 50 students. Lectured weekly, graded essays, and conducted small group sessions.

Southern Foods, Inc., Atlanta, GA

Manager, 2004-2005

Managed Tech Dining Hall, which served over 1,000 students daily. Coordinated work schedules. Delegated responsibilities to staff. Organized and accounted for all supplies.

ACTIVITIES & INTEREST

Enjoy hiking, Italian Renaissance art, and deep sea fishing. Traveled extensively throughout Canada, Mexico, and Europe.

Maria Lopez
150 Linnow Lane
Atlanta, GA 30303
(404) 000-5580
marialopez@student.gsu.edu

December 1, xxxx

Susan Rogers, Esq.
Hiring Attorney
Education Law Center
Columbia, South Carolina 29163

Dear Ms. Rogers:

Currently a first-year student at Georgia State University College of Law, I am interested in working for the Education Law Center this summer. My home is South Carolina, and I intend to return there after graduating from law school.

As the enclosed resume indicates, during my undergraduate education I was a resident advisor for one of the undergraduate dorms at the University of South Carolina. Through counseling students on both academic and non-academic problems, and planning and conducting educational programs for students, I gained extensive knowledge of many education issues, and experience in dealing with them. My participation in the disciplinary hearing was an advocate for the students, thus providing me with useful experience in a quasi-legal setting. Both my position at the University of South Carolina and my job at Waterfall Books enabled me to hone my research and interpersonal skills.

I will be in Columbia from December 26 - January 6, and would enjoy the opportunity to meet with you or others in your office to discuss a summer intern position. I will call you in two weeks to follow up on possibly arranging an interview meeting. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Maria Lopez

Enclosure

Haley D. Randall
112 W. 7th Street
Atlanta, GA 30315
(404) 555-5555
haley@gsu.edu

September 1, xxxx

Marion A. Duncan
Managing Partner
Glory, Duke & Chester, PC
33 Piedmont Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30309

Dear Ms. Duncan:

I am in my last year of studies at Georgia State University College of Law and am interested in working for Glory, Duke & Chester. Your firm's extensive environmental practice is very appealing to me. I have long been interested in environmental issues.

This past summer, I worked at a small law firm specializing in environmental law. In one case, I assisted attorneys in advising a small corporation of its compliance requirements under the Clean Water Act. Moreover, my experience analyzing several environmental impact studies provided me with useful technical knowledge in the environmental field. This experience, as well as my education and my work as an editor of *The Atlanta Daily World*, helped me to strengthen my writing and analytical skills.

My work as a peer counselor at the Women's Crisis Center afforded me valuable experience in advising clients, problem-solving on a variety of crisis intervention issues, and learning to train others, including writing a training manual. At Software, Inc., I developed my organizational skills, worked with financial records, and honed my interpersonal skills.

I believe that I have gained the skills that will be an asset to your firm. Enclosed are my resume and writing sample for your review. I would enjoy the opportunity to meet with you to discuss further my qualifications. I will call you next week to try to arrange a convenient time to visit your office. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Haley D. Randall

Haley D. Randall
112 W. 7th Street
Atlanta, GA 30315
(404) 555-5555
haley@gsu.edu

September 1, xxxx

Marion A. Duncan
Managing Partner
Glory, Duke & Chester, PC
33 Piedmont Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30309

Dear Ms. Duncan:

Thank you for taking the time to interview me on September 15, 2007, regarding an associate position with Glory, Duke & Chester, PC.

I was extremely impressed by the firm's family law practice and enjoyed our conversation concerning spouse abuse in conjunction with child custody. I believe my experience with the Divorce Resource and Mediation Center has given me the skills to be a successful litigator in family law.

I wish to express my continuing interest in an associate position with your firm and look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Marion A. Duncan