



P.O. Box 531203
Los Angeles, CA
lebanese collegiate network
.ORG

RESUME WORKSHOP

First and foremost, a resume is a personal document, and as such, it will reflect a lot of your personal preferences, especially when it comes to format and composition. As far as content goes, a resume should always serve as a brief advertisement for your skills and what you can offer to a prospective employer, it should not be a history of your life and/or work. It should offer a glimpse of yourself prior to an interview with prospective employers. The information within should detail only those aspects of yourself and your experience that are pertinent to the position you are applying for. Resist the urge to include every job you have had since you were in high school, list only those that will help you land the job you seek.

Remember that you are not going to land a job from your resume alone, your goal is to get called in for an interview. It is your interview that will get you that job. There are many ways to format a resume, and several variations to each format, so choose the one that will best showcase your strengths. There are no hard-set rules when it comes to resume format, what seems energetic and innovative to one reviewer may seem unprofessional and childish to another. Conversely, a professional and elegant resume to one reviewer may seem boring and introverted to another. Whenever your resume is reviewed, take any advice given into consideration and make an informed decision on whether or not the suggestions fall in line with your style and with the type of job you seek. Also, whatever style you choose to use, make sure you use it consistently throughout the entire document.

OK, that being said, there are a few rules of thumb that generally prove useful in creating a strong resume:

- Do not use "I" (I performed dynamic analyses of...). It is your resume after all, the reviewer will already know who you are talking about.
- Avoid passive and auxiliary verbs (Helped design new highway profiles...; Was in charge of designing). Use action words (designed, created, analyzed, performed).
- Try to use 12 point font... it is easier to read and scan.
- Describe **all** duties in the past, even if it is your current job. You can only call it experience if you have already done it.
- Limit yourself to one page in your resume. Especially if you are just finishing college. Two pages become acceptable when you have accumulated more than five years of experience and are seeking a position that calls for extensive experience in the area.

The Student Activities Committee has compiled some information from useful web resources like **OPResume** (<http://www.sampleresumes4free.com/introduction-toresume.html>) and **Resume Doctor** (<http://resumedoctor.com/ResourceCenter.htm>).



INTRODUCTION TO RESUMES

A resume is an advertisement of who you are in terms of your competencies, accomplishments, and future capabilities. It is your chief marketing tool or calling card for opening the doors of prospective employers.

From the applicant's perspective, resumes are supposed to help get interviews which, in turn, lead to job offers. From the employer's perspective, resumes are supposed to communicate value, i.e., what applicants will do for them. In addition, resumes are mechanisms for screening candidates.

Remember, employers are not seeking to hire your history - they want to know your capabilities and competencies.

When writing a resume, always remember that you are advertising yourself for an interview and not for a job. Job offers only come after interviews. An effective resume should make a prospective employer want to meet you in person to discuss your qualifications and possible contributions to solving his or her problems. It should clearly and factually communicate to the employer what it is you can do for them. Above all, it should be honest, positive, concise, easy to read and truly reflect you.

You should write your own resume; you should not imitate or plagiarize someone else's resume and letters. You must begin from your own ground of experience in developing a resume and letters which clearly communicate who you are, what you want to do, and what you are most likely to do in the future for an employer. This takes time, effort, care, and professionalism on your part. No one should do this for you. However, after doing a resume draft, you should get feedback from at least four others.

Benefits of building a resume:

- Resumes are integral to the job-search process.
- A specially tailored resume can get your reader's attention, generate interest, and position you above your competition, including those who may be more qualified than you.
- Preparing your resume is a self-assessment process that will sharpen your ability to articulate your value while networking, interviewing, and negotiating offers.
- You'll get a confidence boost when you see in print all that you've accomplished. Confidence and your sense of worth are important factors in job-search success.
- A good resume can help structure the interview and keep a meandering interviewer focused on your strengths.

Types of resumes:

- **Chronological:** This type of resume is used most frequently. With this format, you present information in reverse chronological order (most recent first) and give a detailed account of education, work experiences and other relevant skills.
- **Functional:** This type of resume includes functional skill categories that highlight work experiences and transferable skills. A functional resume may be used if your experience and/or education do not support your professional objective. Many employers are suspicious when reviewing these resumes, as they may be used to hide evident gaps in, or a lack of, work experience.
- **Combination:** This type of resume includes functional skill categories that highlight work experiences and transferable skills within the reverse chronological listing of work history.

COMPONENTS OF PROFESSIONAL RESUME

Suggested Contents of Resume:

- **Contact information:** Place your name, address, telephone number, and email address at the top of the resume. Your name should be the most obvious component of your resume. List both school and permanent addresses if you plan to move within a year.
- **Job Objective:** The objective appears near the top of your resume and tells the reader about your career goals and/or expresses interest in a specific job or vacancy. The objective gives direction and focus to your resume.
- **Experience, Employment Summary:** List employment, (may include internships here or in a separate category) in reverse chronological order. Include your title, name and location of employer and dates of employment, usually by year not by month. If using chronological format, describe your accomplishments in each job using action verbs. If using a combined format, may want to include a single statement describing each company or summarizing each position.
- **Education:** If you are a recent college graduate, your educational credentials should be prominent on your resume. Mention not only degrees, but also any honors or special awards that you've achieved. Include courses or projects that might be relevant for employers. Be sure to write out your degree (Bachelor of Science, not B.S.), and include graduation date. Also include your GPA if it is 3.0 or higher.
If you transferred from another college, you may wish to include that information as well. If so, list the college, city, and state. Leave out high school information once you are halfway through college.
- **Skills, Accomplishments:** A combined format will require this section. Describe accomplishments/skills you have acquired through work experience, academic background, extracurricular/community/volunteer activities. These skills should relate to the occupation and setting you want to enter. May be organized under separate skills subheadings.
- **Activities:** This is an optional section where you can list campus activities, as well as job-related professional, humanitarian, or other groups. These activities may be worth mentioning, particularly if you were an officer or were active in some other way.
- **Recognition and Awards:** If you have received any formal recognition or awards that support your job objective, consider mentioning them. You might create a separate section, or they can be put in the work experience, education, or activities sections.
- **Certifications and Licenses:** You can include professional credentials at the top of the resume with your education. If you have more than one, you might consider creating a separate section.
- **References:** Three references is a good number of references to include on a resume. The format for attaching references is to include the person's name, title, organization, email address, and telephone number. You can list references as part of your resume or include them on a separate reference page to allow more room on the resume itself. If you attach a separate sheet, include three to five references, and divide them into "personal references" and "professional references." Personal references should be professors, advisors, or resident directors (i.e. a mentor or professional friendship); they are not relatives or friends.

ACTION VERBS AND PHRASES

Action verbs

- Action verbs make the resume come alive.
- Try to use a variety of action verbs rather than repeating the same few.
- Choose the words that most appropriately describe your responsibilities:

Accelerated	Edited	Renegotiated	Represented
Accomplished	Educated	Reorganized	Researched
Achieved	Effected	Managed	Reshaped
Acquired	Eliminated	Manufactured	Resolved
Activated	Employed	Marketed	Responded to
Addressed	Enabled	Mastered	Restored
Administered	Encouraged	Mobilized	Revamped
Advanced	Energized	Modified	Reviewed
Advised	Enforced	Monitored	Revised
Advocated	Engineered	Motivated	Revitalized
Allocated	Enhanced	Negotiated	Revived
Analyzed	Envisioned	Nominated	Satisfied
Anticipated	Established	Normalized	Saved
Applied	Estimated	Obtained	Scheduled
Appointed	Evaluated	Officiated	Secured
Appraised	Examined	Operated	Selected
Appreciated	Exceeded	Ordered	Served
Approved	Executed	Organized	Serviced
Aspired	Exercised	Oriented	Set up
Arranged	Exhibited	Originated	Settled
Assessed	Expanded	Overcame	Shaped
Assigned	Experienced	Overhauled	Showed
Attained	Extended	Oversaw	Simplified
Audited	Extracted	Officiated	Solved
Avoided	Facilitated	Operated	Sparked
Broadened	Finalized	Ordered	Specified
Budgeted	Financed	Organized	Sponsored
Built	Forecasted	Oriented	Stabilized
Calculated	Formulated	Originated	Staffed

Captured	Formalized	Overcame	Standardized
Centralized	Founded	Overhauled	Started
Clarified	Framed	Oversaw	Stimulated
Collaborated	Fulfilled	Participated	Streamlined
Combined	Generated	Perceived	Strengthened
Commanded	Governed	Perfected	Stretched
Completed	Guided	Performed	Structured
Composed	Handled	Piloted	Studied
Conceived	Headed	Pinpointed	Substantiated
Concluded	Helped	Pioneered	Succeeded
Conducted	Hired	Placed	Suggested
Connected	Identified	Planned	Summarized
Consolidated	Implemented	Pleased	Supervised
Constructed	Improved	Popularized	Supported
Consulted	Improvised	Prepared	Surpassed
Contributed	Increased	Presented	Surveyed
Controlled	Induced	Presided	Sustained
Converted	Influenced	Prevented	Tailored
Cooperated	Initiated	Processed	Taught
Coordinated	Innovated	Procured	Terminated
Corrected	Inspected	Produced	Tested
Created	Inspired	Programmed	Tightened
Cultivated	Installed	Projected	Traded
Decentralized	Instituted	Promoted	Trained
Decided	Instructed	Prompted	Transacted
Decreased	Insured	Propelled	Transferred
Defined	Integrated	Proposed	Transformed
Delegated	Intensified	Proved	Translated
Delivered	Interpreted	Provided	Trebled
Demonstrated	Interviewed	Published	Trimmed
Designated	Introduced	Purchased	Tripled
Designed	Invented	Re-established	Uncovered
Detailed	Invested	Realized	Undertook
Determined	Investigated	Reconciled	Unified
Devised	Judged	Recognized	Used
Directed	Justified	Recommended	Utilized

Discovered	Keyed	Recruited	Verified
Displayed	Keynoted	Redesigned	Widened
Distinguished	Launched	Regulated	Withdrew
Distributed	Led	Reinforced	Won
Documented	Lightened	Rejected	Worked
Doubled	Liquidated	Related	Wrote
Earned	Located	Reported	

Useful Phrases: The following phrases may help you organize your accomplishment statements for both resumes and employment correspondence. When choosing the phrase that best describes the situation, read it over once or twice in the context of the sentence to be certain that the selection is correct, and that the phrase reads well.

- Acted/Functioned as...
- Consistently...
- Company engaged in...
- Contracted/Subcontracted by... to...
- Covered assigned territory consisting of...
- Demonstrated expertise in...
- Extensively trained in...
- Extensively involved in...
- Ensured maximum/optimum/minimum...
- Exceeded by...
- Honored as...
- Initially employed to/Joined organization to...
- Interacted heavily with...
- More than . . . years' extensive/Diverse experience in...
- Newly established company/Entity engaged in...
- Proven track record of/in...
- Provided technical assistance to...
- Promoted to...
- Promoted from... to...
- Reported to/Reported directly to...
- Specialized in...
- Selected as/Elected to...

Action Verbs for Resumes

<i>Administer</i>	Manage or direct the execution of affairs.
<i>Adopt</i>	Take up and practice as one's own.
<i>Advise</i>	Recommend a course of action; offer an informed opinion based on specialized knowledge.
<i>Analyze</i>	Separate into elements and critically examine.
<i>Anticipate</i>	Foresee and deal with in advance.
<i>Appraise</i>	Give an expert judgment of worth or merit.
<i>Approve</i>	Accept as satisfactory; exercise final authority with regard to commitment of resources.
<i>Arrange</i>	Make preparation for an event; put in proper order.
<i>Assemble</i>	Collect or gather together in a predetermined order from various sources.
<i>Assign</i>	Specify or designate tasks or duties to be performed by others.
<i>Assume</i>	Undertake; take for granted.
<i>Assure</i>	Give confidence, make certain of.
<i>Authorize</i>	Approve; empower through vested authority.
<i>Clear</i>	Gain approval of others.
<i>Collaborate</i>	Work jointly with, cooperate with others.
<i>Collect</i>	Gather.
<i>Compile</i>	Put together information; collect from other documents.
<i>Concur</i>	Agree with a position, statement, action, or opinion.
<i>Conduct</i>	Carry on; direct the execution of.
<i>Confer</i>	Consult with others to compare views.
<i>Consolidate</i>	Bring together.
<i>Consult</i>	Seek the advice of others.
<i>Control</i>	Measure, interpret, and evaluate actions for conformance with plans or desired results.
<i>Coordinate</i>	Regulate, adjust, or combine the actions of others to attain harmony.
<i>Correlate</i>	Establish a reciprocal relationship.
<i>Correspond</i>	Communicate with.
<i>Delegate</i>	Commission another to perform tasks or duties that may carry specific degrees of accountability.
<i>Design</i>	Conceive, create, and execute according to plan.
<i>Determine</i>	Resolve; fix conclusively or authoritatively.
<i>Develop</i>	Disclose, discover, perfect, or unfold a plan or idea.
<i>Devise</i>	Come up with something new - perhaps by combining or applying known ideas or principles.
<i>Direct</i>	Guide work operations through the establishment of objectives, policies, rules, practices, methods and standards.
<i>Discuss</i>	Exchange views for the purpose of arriving at a conclusion.
<i>Dispose</i>	Get rid of.
<i>Disseminate</i>	Spread or disperse information.
<i>Distribute</i>	Deliver to proper destinations.
<i>Draft</i>	Prepare papers or documents in preliminary form.
<i>Endorse</i>	Support or recommend.
<i>Establish</i>	Bring into existence.
<i>Estimate</i>	Forecast future requirements.
<i>Evaluate</i>	Determine or fix the value of.
<i>Execute</i>	Put into effect or carry out.
<i>Exercise</i>	Exert.
<i>Expedite</i>	Accelerate the process or progress of.
<i>Formulate</i>	Develop or devise.
<i>Furnish</i>	Provide with what is needed; supply.
<i>Implement</i>	Carry out; execute a plan or program.
<i>Improve</i>	Make something better.
<i>Initiate</i>	Start or introduce.

<i>Inspect</i>	Critically examine for suitability.
<i>Interpret</i>	Explain something to others.
<i>Investigate</i>	Study through close examination and systematic inquiry.
<i>Issue</i>	Put forth or distribute officially.
<i>Maintain</i>	Keep in an existing state.
<i>Monitor</i>	Watch, observe, or check for a specific purpose.
<i>Negotiate</i>	Confer with others with an eye to reaching agreement.
<i>Notify</i>	Make known to.
<i>Operate</i>	Perform an activity or series of activities.
<i>Participate</i>	Take part in.
<i>Perform</i>	Fulfill or carry out some action.
<i>Place</i>	Locate and choose positions for.
<i>Plan</i>	Devise or project the realization of a course of action.
<i>Practice</i>	Perform work repeatedly in order to gain proficiency.
<i>Prepare</i>	Make ready for a particular purpose.
<i>Proceed</i>	Begin to carry out an action.
<i>Process</i>	Subject something to special treatment; handle in accordance with prescribed procedure.
<i>Promote</i>	Advance to a higher level or position.
<i>Propose</i>	Declare a plan or intention.
<i>Provide</i>	Supply what is needed; furnish.
<i>Recommend</i>	Advise or counsel a course of action; offer or suggest for adoption.
<i>Represent</i>	Act in the place of or for.
<i>Report</i>	Give an account of; furnish information or data.
<i>Research</i>	Inquire into a specific matter from several sources.
<i>Review</i>	Examine or re-examine.
<i>Revise</i>	Re-work in order to correct or improve.
<i>Schedule</i>	Plan a timetable.
<i>Secure</i>	Gain possession of; make safe.
<i>Select</i>	Choose the best suited.
<i>Sign</i>	Formally approve a document by affixing a signature.
<i>Specify</i>	State precisely in detail or name explicitly.
<i>Stimulate</i>	Excite to activity urge.
<i>Submit</i>	Yield or present for the discretion or judgment of others.
<i>Supervise</i>	Personally oversee, direct, inspect, or guide the work of others with responsibility for meeting standards of performance.
<i>Train</i>	Teach or guide others in order to bring up to a predetermined standard.
<i>Transcribe</i>	Transfer data from one form of record to another or from one method of preparation to another-without changing the nature of the data.
<i>Verify</i>	Confirm or establish authenticity; substantiate.

Top 20 Resume Pet Peeves

Recently ResumeDoctor.com surveyed 2500 recruiters across the US and Canada to find out the "Top 20 Resume Pet Peeves" recruiters have that result in a resume being tossed in the excluded pile. These recruiters stemmed from varied specialties and industries, (Engineering, Information Technology, Sales and Marketing, Executive, Biotech, Healthcare, Administrative, Finance, etc.).

When recruiters receive hundreds of resumes a day, the best strategy to narrow down the "keepers" is through the process of elimination. According to executive search recruiter Terry Cantrell of Panama City, Florida, "People often try to write a resume so generic that a reader has no idea what industry the candidate comes from. Did they manufacture fertilizer, package cow chips, cook and distribute potato chips or assemble computer chips? ... I am usually looking for a reason to exclude resumes, not a reason to include them."

More often than not, your resume will be the only tool to let your reader know why you would be the right person for the job. According to Mike Worthington of ResumeDoctor.com, "Just because you have 20 years of experience, does not necessary mean you have a good resume. It simply means you have 20 years of experience... You may have all the necessary skills and experience, but the way you present yourself through your resume can tell your reader all they need to know."

Listed below are the Top 20 Resume "Pet Peeves", starting with the biggest problems. More detailed insight to each problem can be found at www.resumedoctor.com

- Spelling errors, typos and poor grammar
- Too duty oriented - reads like a job description and fails to explain what the job seeker's accomplishments were and how they did so
- Missing dates or inaccurate dates
- Missing contact info, inaccurate, or unprofessional email addresses
- Poor formatting - boxes, templates, tables, use of header and footers, etc
- Functional resumes as opposed to chronological resumes
- Long resumes - over 2 pages
- Long, dense paragraphs - no bullet-points
- Unqualified candidates - candidates who apply to positions they are not qualified for
- Personal info not relevant to the job
- Missing employer info and/or not telling what industry or product candidate worked in
- Lying, misleading, especially in terms of education, dates and inflated titles
- Objectives or meaningless introductions
- Poor font choice or style
- Resumes sent in .pdf, .zip files, faxed, web page resumes, mailed resumes; not sent as a "word" attachment
- Pictures, graphics or URL links that no recruiter will call up
- No easy-to-follow summary
- Resumes written in 1st or 3rd Person
- Gaps in employment
- Burying important info in the resume

Be sure your resume does not fall under your reader's "pet peeve" list. Know how to market your skills and present yourself in a way that will make your reader want to consider you for a position. Typically, if your resume contains a few, or even one or two, of these "Pet Peeves," your resume will be automatically excluded and your chance of that job will be lost.

MOST FREQUENT RESUME MISTAKES

- **Including typos and other spelling or grammatical errors:** Before you send out your resume, make sure you have proofread it several times. Many hiring managers will automatically throw away a resume that has typos or other errors.
- **Lengthy resume:** Surveyed managers reported that resumes only get a 15 second review. "More is not better," noted Martha, an HR Director. "Long careers often travel into numerous pages and important accomplishments get lost. We won't read anything beyond a page especially with so many people applying."
- **No Dates Listed:** From a recruiter's perspective, candidates eliminate dates on their resumes for only one reason: to hide information, such as a history of job-hopping or a long period of unemployment. As an alternative, Mr. Hughes suggests focusing only on the last 10 to 15 years of your professional experience.
- **Sending a resume without a cover letter:** One of the worst things you can do is send a great resume without an official introduction. Resumes and cover letters should be inseparable. Make sure you don't give up your chance to really sell yourself with a cover letter.
- **Poorly organized:** Information on a resume should be listed in order of importance to the reader. Don't ask employers to wade through your hobbies first. Dates of employment are not as important as job titles. Education should be emphasized if you are freshly out of school and have little work experience; otherwise, put it at the end. If your resume is difficult to read or key information is buried, it's more likely to be cast aside.
- **Lying:** Employers reported they are on the lookout for the significant increase in lies or serious exaggerated claims made in people's resumes. Common deceptions include accomplishments, salary, or size of the team managed. Helen, an HR Executive Recruiter inside a prominent company, wrote on her survey form: "Never, ever, lie. One person I hired lied about having a college degree when she did not have one. We fired her when the lie was uncovered."
- **Using really small fonts:** Really small fonts are hard to read and don't photocopy as well. (That applies to your address block as well.) What's too small? Generally don't go smaller than a 10 point
- **Really wide margins with content squeezed in the middle:** Your margins should be at least one half inch. You really don't need more than one inch.
- **Too personal:** If your Web site includes photos of your cat or your personal blog about what you did over the weekend, don't steer prospective employers there by including it on your resume. Keep your personal and your professional life separate in order to be taken seriously.
- **Writing in the first person:** Your resume is not a personal correspondence, and should not include words such as "I," "my," and "me." Save the first person pronouns for your cover letter.
- **Resumes Work Best Unfolded:** Use 9x12 envelope if you need to mail it out. The best use of the resume is passed hand-to-hand.

Resumes: How to Plan for a Scan

In today's high-tech world, computers are changing the way people work. The human resources industry is no exception and a crop of products has been developed that help HR managers sift through the stacks of résumés they receive. What this means for job seekers is that the first person who reads your résumé may not be a person at all, but rather a computer.

Computer programs that are used by companies to find the right candidates are generally called applicant tracking systems. There are many types of systems, all with varying degrees of sophistication. What these systems have in common is the ability to quickly scan résumés and pick out the candidates that should be considered further. These systems work by searching résumés and applications for pre-set keywords that are requirements for the job. They work on paper and electronic résumés and applications. If you mail your paper résumé, it will be fed through a scanner and turned into an electronic file that can then be viewed by the system.

There are a number of things you can do to enhance your ability to make it past the first round of electronic screening. Gerry Crispin and Mark Mehler, human resource consultants and co-authors of "CareerXroads" (www.careerxroads.com), a series of directories that list and review career Web sites, offer these tips:

1. Start with e-mail, follow up with paper.

Mehler says that the best way to deliver your résumé is via e-mail. "You're better off with e-mail, because at least you know it will get there," he says. He says that a paper résumé can still make a good impression, and that you should follow up your e-mail with a paper copy, at least for the jobs you really want. However, try to think like a recruiter – or a computer system – when you send the paper. This means sending a flat copy of your résumé and leaving out the staples. This makes it easier for a recruiter to run the résumé through a scanner. Use the fax as a last resort, as faxes do not come out clear and are difficult to scan.

2. Keep it simple.

Because your résumé will be scanned, it is important to keep your formatting simple. Mehler says to avoid italics, underlining, fancy or large fonts, and anything else that could be misread. If you are sending an electronic copy of your résumé, create a plain copy of your résumé that leaves out any bold terms or bullets and uses a standard typeface, such as Arial or Times New Roman. Plain résumés also work better on company or job search Web sites that require you to cut and paste your information.

3. It's all about key phrases.

The most important thing to remember is the importance of keywords and phrases, which are the tools by which software applications sift through résumés and determine whether to keep or discard them. The trick is tailoring your résumé to answer the company's job description or help wanted ad. "You have to understand how recruiters work," says Crispin. "They look for critical skills in the job description as must haves." Therefore, make sure your résumé includes those same keywords. Carefully read the description and write your résumé specifically for that position. "Every résumé has to be customized," says Mehler. "Plain vanilla is no good anymore."

4. Conduct a dry run.

After you have created your résumé, e-mail yourself and a friend a copy to see how it appears in the e-mail. This will give you the chance to fix the formatting and edit the document once more before you really hit the "send" button.

5. Re-apply.

Crispin says that most systems allow recruiters to sort résumés by date received, and that many recruiters will limit their searches to the most recent résumés. Therefore, it pays to send an updated résumé or edit your profile once a month. "If your résumé has been in a company database for more than 30 days, you can be absolutely sure it will not be seen," he says. If you've posted your résumé to internet or industry specific job search sites, you should also consider updating it periodically.

6. Remember the importance of employee referrals.

Crispin also points out that, even in a high-tech system, an employee referral is vital. "At least one quarter of all positions are now filled through employee referrals," he says. Many systems can pick out résumés or applications that indicate they have been referred by an employee. If you are filling out an online application and have to answer "no" to whether or not you have been referred, hold off on applying. "You can increase the likelihood of being called or interviewed by as much as 50 times by having an employee refer you."

GENERAL RESUME GUIDELINES

- **Abbreviations and Pronouns:** Avoid using abbreviations and personal pronouns (I, me, etc.).
- **Enhancements:** Use indentation, bolding, underlining and bullets to enhance important information. Avoid using italics because some resume scanners have difficulty interpreting this information.
- **Envelopes:** Purchase large manila or white envelopes that allow you to mail your resume and cover letter without folding them.
- **Font Type, Font Size and Font Color:** Try to use one type, avoid using more than two font types. Suggested fonts are the Times New Roman, Arial or Verdana. Font size should be no larger than 12 point and no smaller than 10 point. Font color must be black always. Do not use colored font.
- **Honesty:** Make sure that your resume is an honest and accurate account of your qualifications.
- **Layout :** You should avoid centering subheadings. Try different formats to determine which one best highlights your skills and qualifications.
- **Length:** One page only, unless you have significant previous experience.
- **Margins:** Your margins should be at least one half inch. You really don't need more than one inch.
- **Paper:** Print your resume on quality bond paper. 8x11 inches. White or off-white paper is preferable. Avoid parchment-style, flecked or dark papers because they do not photocopy or scan well.
- **Information to avoid:** Do not include personal information such as age, height, weight, health status, marital status, number of children, military classification, photographs, etc. unless it is required for the specific position.
- **White Space:** Use white (blank) space effectively to make your resume look professional and easier to read. Avoid filling every blank space with information.
- **Summary on the top:** List three or four major skills. GPA listed if over 3.0.
- **Job objective:** Descriptive job titles. Do not put actual job titles.
- **Grammar:** Spell check and grammar check your resume. Let other people review your resume for your mistakes.

J. MICHAEL SORVINO

Local Address

901 Ardvark Dr., Apt. 8
Blacksburg, VA 24060
(540) 951-3456
jmsorv@vt.edu

Permanent Address

98765 Late Settlers Rd.
Richmond, VA 23235
(804) 320-0000

OBJECTIVE Chemical Engineer; interest in research and product/process development and/or manufacturing

EDUCATION **B.S., Chemical Engineering**, Cum Laude, December 2001
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), Blacksburg, VA
Overall GPA: 3.45/4.0

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE **Co-op**, E. I. du Pont de Nemours and Company, Richmond, VA
January - December 1999 and May - August 2000

- Worked on two major new product developments for the Tyvek® business
- Planned and executed several scouting trials to establish final product definitions
- Collaborated with outside vendors to establish product supply chains
- Developed the manufacturing process for each new product
- Helped to plan and oversee product performance testing
- Participated in the writing of two product patents
- Prepared and presented numerous technical reviews using PowerPoint
- Received Excellence in Action Award for Tyvek® FlexWrap™ development

SKILLS **Research/Technical/Communication Skills**

- Networking with both manufacturing and research personnel
- Working in conjunction with outside companies to develop a product
- Visually presenting and verbally communicating research findings
- Collecting, organizing, and analyzing data

Computer Skills

- ASPEN Plus
- MATLAB
- AutoCAD
- FORTRAN
- Control Station
- Mathematica
- Microsoft Windows Operating
- Microsoft Office 9x/2000 Pro

OTHER EXPERIENCE **Laboratory Assistant**, Computer-Based Instruction Laboratory of the
Medical College of Virginia, Richmond, VA, Summers 1997 & 1998

- Aided medical students with their general computing needs
- Helped to manage the front information desk
- Prepared classroom instructional materials

Landscape Technician, Landmark Landscape Management
Ashland, VA, May - June 1997

HONORS & ACTIVITIES Tau Beta Pi National Engineering Honor Society
Dean's List With Distinction: Fall 1996, Fall 1998, Fall 2000
Dean's List: Spring 1998, Spring 2000, Spring 2001, Fall 2001
Marshall T. Hahn Engineering Merit Scholarship, 1996
Eagle Scout Award, Boy Scouts of America, 1996
Second Place, Virginia Junior Academy of Science, 1994 & 1995
Boy Scouts of America, Summer 1989 - Summer 1996

Features of this resume:

- "Relevant" and "other" experience separated (no detail needed on last position listed; use page space to tell about more related experience).
- Skills don't have to be limited to computer skills.
- Margins: .6 top and bottom; .7 sides
- Font is Times New Roman 10 (smaller than Arial 10).

Be aware: Some employers scan resumes – using optical character recognition (OCR) – to be retrieved later from a database. Scanners can misread underlined and *italicized* text, so don't underline or italicize critical information!

Danielle W. Silva

Current Address:

115 Slusher Hall, Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, VA 24061
(540) 232-3456
dwsilva@vt.edu

Permanent Address:

1234 Forest Lane
Frederick, MD 20872
(301) 555-6677

OBJECTIVE Cooperative Education position related to manufacturing

EDUCATION **B.S. Mechanical Engineering**, Expected graduation as a co-op: May 2004
Minor: Statistics
Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University (Virginia Tech), Blacksburg, VA
GPA: 2.8/4.0
Earning and financing 50% of college education and expenses

COMPUTER SKILLS **Software:** AutoCAD MiniTab TK solver Mathematica **Languages:** Fortran Visual Basic PowerC C++

EXPERIENCE **Waiter**, Boudreaux's, Blacksburg, VA Fall 2002 – present

- Work 20 hours per week to help fund college education.

Self-employed, Lawn care business, Frederick, MD Summer 2002

- Solicited business through cold calls and visits.
- Increased customer base through referrals for quality work.
- Performed all necessary equipment maintenance and repairs.
- Covered all expenses and yielded net profit of \$4000.

Server, Family Restaurant, Frederick, MD, 1999 – 2001, High school & summers

- Trained on and used excellent customer service practices in fast-paced, work environment.
- Participated in corporate program to increase sales; achieved all sales goals.
- Worked 40 or more hours per week in summers; worked 15 hours per week during school year.

ACTIVITIES Student Engineers Council (SEC), Membership Committee Chair, 2001-02
Symphonic Band, Virginia Tech, 2000-present
Big Brother, Big Sister Program, 1999-2000
High School Varsity Volleyball Team, 1998-2000
High School Symphonic Band, 1997-99

HONORS Maryland Distinguished Scholar, Honorable Mention, 2000
Scholar Athlete Award, 1999-2000
Merit Award, Honorable Mention, 1999 Media Festival, Photography Division

AVAILABILITY January 2003 preferred; also available August 2002

Employers skim resumes fast: skills listed in columns are easier to read than strings of words with commas.

Features of this resume:

- Includes high school activities, because this student is a sophomore; by junior year, generally remove high school activities unless they are rare or show a long track record of interest or involvement in your chosen field.
- Availability is included, because this is for a co-op position – employers won't automatically know when you can or could start work – so tell them.
- When you don't have career-related experience – yet – your other jobs show employers things like your work ethic and customer service experience – qualities important in all work settings.

MORGAN ELIZABETH NEILSON

Current address:
5634 University City Blvd., Apt. 56B
Blacksburg, VA 24060
(540) 961-6666
meneilson@vt.edu

Address after August 15, 2003:
2107 Calvin Street
Manassas, VA 22221
(703) 555-8304
morgan.neilson@juno.com

OBJECTIVE Industrial engineer; interests in manufacturing, cost analysis, and occupational safety

EDUCATION **B.S., Industrial and Systems Engineering**, August 2003
Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University, Blacksburg, Virginia
GPA: In-major: 3.1/4.0 Overall: 2.68/4.0
Earned and financed 70% of college and living expenses

SKILLS Knowledge gained through ISE project work includes:

Cost Analysis	Human Factors	Inventory Control
Materials Handling	Plant Layout	Statistics

Computer Skills:

IBM PC / Mainframe	FORTRAN	MS Excel	SAS
Macintosh / Apple	Visual BASIC	MS Word	FactoryFLOW
AutoCAD/ CADKEY	WordPerfect	BlocPlan	FactoryCAD

COURSE PROJECT **Project Manager for Senior Design Team**, Omega Window Co., Inc., Salem, VA
Fall 2002 – Spring 2003

- Analysis and evaluation of current layout of the window fabrication facility
- Collection and interpretation of materials handling and flow data
- Developing alternative facility layouts to reduce materials handling

EXPERIENCE **Summer Engineering Intern**, Perkins Company, Inc., Cleveland, OH, Summer 2002

- Application of CAD skills to both office layout and curtain wall analysis
- Compiled ANSI structural leading programs using computer knowledge
- Assisted applications engineers in preparing stamped structural calculations

Maintenance Administration, Cuyahoga Foods, Inc., Bridgewater, VA, Summer 2001

- Maintained and updated computer cataloging of machine parts room
- Ordered, received, and distributed valuable machine parts and supplies
- Prepared purchase orders for cost accounting

Engineering Technician, Naval Air Systems Command, Arlington, VA, Summer 2000

- Developed Close Air Support Effectiveness math model using FORTRAN

AWARDS & ACTIVITIES Perdue Farms Inc., National Scholarship Marching Virginians & Metro Pep Band
Society of Manufacturing Engineers Dean's List: Fall 2001, Spring 2002

Features of this resume:

- Skills not limited to computer skills.
- Course project experience detailed just like other work or internship experience.
- Table is used to format only – **borders are set to be invisible on the print document.**
- Font = Univers 11; margins at least 1/2 inch all sides.

Features of this resume:

- **Table** used to format; SET BORDERS TO BE INVISIBLE ON ACTUAL RESUME!
- **Skills format:** skills from work, fraternity, course projects, semester at sea – summarized to support objective.
- **Margins = .7 Font = Arial 10** (Okay to fit in essential information, but don't go smaller.)

Jacob A. Kelly

600 Jackson St., Apt. C • Blacksburg, VA 24060 • (540) 555-2121 • Email: jakelly@vt.edu
 4156 Hawthorne Circle, Reston, VA 12345 (703) 654-3210

OBJECTIVE	Sales management trainee position; goal to lead and train a sales staff
EDUCATION	B.A., Communication Studies, Public Relations Option, Marketing Minor , December 2002 Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), Blacksburg, VA Semester at Sea , Spring 2001 GPA: In-major: 3.3/4.0 Overall: 2.6/4.0 Earned 50% of educational expenses
SKILLS	<p>Marketing / Sales / Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grossed \$15,000 in three months with summer painting business ▪ Raised \$600.00 in advertising space for fraternity folder project ▪ Raised \$400.00 for fraternity sponsored car show ▪ Cold canvassed community for potential clients ▪ Created informational brochure for apartment leasing company ▪ Developed advertising campaign for class project <p>Management / Training / Organizational Ability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managed daily activities of own painting business including renting/purchasing equipment and supplies, hiring assistants, budgeting, payroll ▪ Arranged client contracts for painting business ▪ Assisted in organizing talent show and benefit auction for Semester at Sea ▪ Coordinated sales presentation strategy for fraternity car show and trained others in sales techniques ▪ Trained new restaurant employees ▪ Aided in refurbishing and renovating a restaurant ▪ Performed restaurant duties ranging from busboy to night manager <p>Communications / Language / Creative Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Created multimedia presentation using slides, music, and narration to brief incoming Virginia Tech students during orientation ▪ Developed sales presentations and assisted with advertising campaigns including radio spots, newspaper ads, billboards, posters, brochures ▪ Designed and distributed flyers for painting business ▪ Traveled around the world with Semester at Sea and used conversational Spanish skills
WORK EXPERIENCE	Self-Employed , (Partnership) Sunrise Painters, Reston, VA, Summer 2001 Waiter , Leonard's of Washington, Washington, DC, Summers 1999, 2000, 2001
ACTIVITIES	Pi Sigma Epsilon - National professional fraternity in marketing, sales management and selling Theater Arts , Virginia Tech Several roles in: "The Bride," "The Monster and Steven," "If Men Played Cards as Women."

Covering the Basics in Cover Letters

It's the age-old question from job seekers: Must every resume be accompanied by a cover letter? The answer, according to professional career counselors, is a resounding yes. And not just any cover letter. It must be tailored to the specific job you are applying for.

Experts say that it takes just seven seconds to make a first impression. Make the most of your seven seconds with a winning cover letter. It gives the reader a clear idea of who you are and encourages them to stay tuned for more information. Here are some tips to ensure you make a good first impression.

What makes a good cover letter? For starters, there must be no spelling errors or typos. It should be addressed to a live person. Avoid using "Dear Hiring Manager" by finding the name of the company's human resources contact or recruiter. You can find this information by logging on to the company's website or calling the main phone number and asking a receptionist for the name and title of their corporate recruiter. Once you have a contact name, experts recommend using the person's formal title such as "Mr.," "Ms." or "Mrs."

Recruiters also recommend that job seekers state which job they are applying for in the very first paragraph and that they include other specific details such as a job ID number if one was provided and where they heard about the opening. The reason for this much detail is simple: many recruiters are responsible for multiple openings within their companies and must be able to determine which job your application is targeting. Including this vital information will take out the guesswork and will improve your chances of both landing in the right hands. If you were referred to the company by an employee, be sure to mention this in your letter as many companies have employee referral programs.

The body of your cover should reflect your personality. One of the objectives of a good cover letter is to make a personal connection with the reader. Gone are the days when you could simply change the name of the company in your salutation, attach it to your resume and fire it off to the post office. Corporate recruiters see right through these types of letters and recognize them for what they are - a lazy person's attempt to find a job!

A winning cover letter will require some research into the company's history and recent accomplishments. It should show the reader that you have some knowledge of their company and that you made an informed decision when you decided to apply for a job at their company.

When writing your letter, keep the requirements of the job in mind and address them specifically. Remember, it's not what the company can do for you; it's what you can do for the company that counts. Your letter should be brief, easy to read, and always include your full name, address and phone number in case your cover letter becomes separated from your resume.

Experts also suggest that you ask for an interview in your cover letter. Tell your prospective employer when you will call him or her to arrange an interview and follow through. You'll greatly increase your chances of winning a face-to-face interview if you follow up by phone after applying for a position for which you are qualified. If you are still unsure about where to begin when writing a winning cover letter, your local library and bookstore has numerous guides that are filled with samples of dynamic cover letters that you can use as a guide. You can also search a variety of career and job sites on the Internet for samples of cover letters.

Seven Tips for Cover Letters

Aside from a resume, your cover letter is the most important job searching tool you must develop. A cover letter introduces you to potential employers and gives you the opportunity to draw the reader's attention to particular skills and experiences. Done right, a cover letter can move your resume to the top of the pile. If you are not sure how to make your cover letter stand out, here are seven secrets that will get you started in the right direction.

1. Make it personal. Do not address a cover letter to a generic being, such as "hiring manager." While finding the correct addressee might take a little work, finding that person is well worth the effort. Call the company and ask to whom to send your resume. If the company will not give you a name, try to find out through other means, such as current employees or corporate Web site. Putting a real name on your letter will make it look more like an important piece of correspondence and less like junk mail.

2. Get to the point. Your cover letter should never be more than one page, and once you include your return address and the company address, you do not have much space. That is why you need to let the reader know why you are writing immediately. If you are responding to an ad for an open position, mention that ad and position in the first line or two. If you have been referred by another individual, let the reader know that right up front.

3. Show off your company knowledge. One way to get a hiring manager's attention is by demonstrating that you have done your homework. Before you start writing your letter, research the company to learn about recent news and events, its financial status or any mergers or acquisitions. You can then incorporate this knowledge into your letter, particularly in the first paragraph. For example, you might start by mentioning a recent story you read about the company's success expanding into an international market, and express your interest in utilizing your past experience in international business relations to help further the company's position overseas.

4. Answer their prayers. You can and should use your letter to give the company exactly what it is looking for. This means paying attention to job postings and descriptions and advising that you have the desired skills and qualifications. If the company has indicated it is seeking candidates with budget management experience, make sure you talk specifically about your experience, such as "I have experience in managing budgets of approximately \$5 million and consistently achieving departmental financial goals." Use your cover letter to point out exactly why you are a good fit. The best way to do this is by making it easy for the reader to come to the same conclusion.

5. Show, don't just tell. One mistake many people make on cover letters is saying they have certain qualifications without including any evidence to back up their claims. Are you positioning yourself as an individual with strong customer service skills? Include specific examples that speak to those skills. This may mean pulling out one or two accomplishments throughout your career and writing about them in detail in the second or third paragraph.

6. Promise to take action. A cover letter is like any other aspect of job hunting – the squeaky wheel always gets the oil. Wrap up your cover letter with a promise to contact the company, and then back up your statement with action. Your cover letter is too important to end by just saying "I look forward to hearing from you." Take the initiative by telling the reader, "I will follow up with you in the next week to schedule a convenient time for us to meet."

7. Read and read again. Are you tired of working on your cover letter? Do you feel like you have read it 100 times already? It's always a good idea to read it just a couple more times to ensure that you do not have any typos, spelling or grammatical errors. Once you have exhausted yourself in the editing process, give the letter to a friend or family member to read. Sometimes, a fresh set of eyes can pick up on things that have been missed for ages.

COVER LETTER CHECKLIST

Check this list before you send out your cover letter:

- One page only and limited to 3 focused paragraphs. Keep every paragraph under five lines.
- Make sure your sentences begin with or contain, wherever possible, powerful action verbs.
- Include pertinent personal data; name, address, zip code, e-mail, and personal telephone number.
- Make sure you have spelled the person's name correctly, and that you have the individual's exact job title and company name.
- Show the employer what you can offer the company, and support and amplify your resume.
- Mention your contributions and achievements, as well as problems you have personally solved during your career.
- Show energy and enthusiasm for the position, company.
- Show your skills, interests, and experience to the needs of the employer.
- Use a word processor and print as a standard business style format and 8-1/2" x 11" paper.
- Do not include any negative information.
- Clearly ask for the next step in the process.
- Read it from the employer's perspective.
- Type or neatly print address on envelope and seal the envelop.
- Cover letter should always go with resume.

COVER LETTER FORMAT

John Smith

1234 Main Avenue Tucson, AZ 85012
602/743-4866, johnsmith@maryville.edu

Date

Mr. or Ms. First Name Employer
Title of Employer
Organization/Company Name
Street Address
City, State Zip

Dear Mr. or Ms. Employer:

1st Paragraph: Tell why you are writing, usually to apply for a position. Name the position, field, or general area about which you are asking. Explain how you heard of the opening or organization. If a current employee suggested that you look into this opening, include his or her name here. If you heard of the opening through the newspaper, include the name of the publication and the date.

2nd Paragraph: Mention one or two qualifications you think would be of greatest interest to the employer, addressing your remarks to his/her point of view. Explain why you think you are particularly interested in the organization or type of work. If you have had related experience or specialized training, point it out. Expand on or highlight the information stated in your resume.

3rd Paragraph: If appropriate, address the requirements specified in the advertisement. If you need a second paragraph to elaborate on your talents and accomplishments, use this paragraph for that purpose.

4th Paragraph: Close by making a specific request for an interview. If you plan to be in the geographic area of the company, suggest a specific date and time that you will telephone to establish an appointment. Make sure that your closing statement is positive and makes a request for specific action from the reader. Thank your reader for his/her time and consideration.

Sincerely,

(Your handwritten signature)

Your typewritten name or signature

GENERAL REFERENCE GUIDELINE

- Instead of cluttering your resume with this information, prepare a separate sheet listing your references. This sheet should be printed on the same paper as your resume and should indicate that it is your reference list. This can be done by putting your name, address and telephone number at the top of the page just as it appears on your resume.
-
- When providing references to a prospective employer make sure that you provide information that would be included on the person's business card. This includes the reference's name, title, organization, complete address and telephone number of the individual serving as a reference. Fax numbers and e-mail addresses are optional.
-
- It is imperative that you obtain an individual's permission before using them as a reference. It is helpful to your references to give them your resume so they can see what you are emphasizing. Generally three to five references will be adequate. At least one or two should be people who have supervised you in a work setting. If you are a new graduate, at least one or two should be faculty from your major academic area. If you are returning to the work force after some time, you may use references who have worked with you in a volunteer capacity. Try to avoid personal character references.

Sample Reference Page

John Smith

1234 Main Avenue Tucson, AZ 85012
602/743-4866, johnsmith@maryville.edu

Edward Swanson
Manager
Eddie's Restaurant
5687 Manchester Road
St. Louis, Missouri 63555
(314) 654-6326

Drew Berry
Executive Director
Bango and Cash Investments
2211 Webster Street
Green Bay, WI 32654
(920) 469-5457

Dr. Susan Barber, Professor of Art
Park University Chicago
563 South Michigan Avenue
Evergreen Park, IL 60372
(312) 456-3453

Wesley Jones
Professor of Broadcasting
Smith University
1234 Pacific Coast Hwy
Stevens, CA 91205
(213) 897-7890

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

Preparation:

- Confirm where and when the interview will take place.
- Learn as much as you can about the company and the position you are applying for.
- Improve your appearance – haircut, well-pressed clothes, shined shoes, etc.
- Re-read your resume and/or application form
- Work out a strategy for dealing with stress. relax
- Practice answering questions.
- Develop insightful questions to ask.
- Get plenty of rest.

Good First Impressions:

- Arrive in good time
- Smile
- Make a good entrance
- Body language - handshake, posture, eye contact
- Read company materials while you wait.
- Have a firm handshake.

The Interview:

- Listen.
- Be yourself.
- Be prepared to talk - but not too much.
- Smile, nod, give nonverbal feedback to the interviewer.
- Be interesting.
- Focus on your abilities.
- Be specific. Illustrate your answers with examples.
- Be honest.
- Don't be afraid to ask for clarification.
- Do not talk about personal problems.
- Speak positively about your co-workers and former employers.
- Emphasize your interest.
- Ask about the next step in the process.
- Thank the interviewer.
- Write a thank-you letter to anyone you have spoken to.
- Review your performance and make notes for future interviews.

QUESTIONS YOU MAY WISH TO ASK YOUR EMPLOYER DURING THE INTERVIEW

The Organization:

- Major current projects
- Future developments

Work:

- Variety of work
- Typical projects
- What you would be doing
- Who would you work with?

Location:

- Where would you be based?
- How much travel/mobility

Training:

- Training offered/possible
- Help with professional qualifications

Prospects:

- Likely progression
- Where are previous graduates

Top Interview Questions

per ResumeDoctor.com

The top 15 interview questions, in descending order, are:

1. Describe your ideal job and/or boss.
2. Why are you looking for a job? Why are leaving your current position?
3. What unique experience or qualifications separate you from other candidates?
4. Tell me about yourself.
5. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
6. Describe some of your most important career accomplishments.
7. What are your short-term/long-term goals?
8. Describe a time when you were faced with a challenging situation and how you handled it.
9. What are your salary requirements?
10. Why are you interested in this position? Our company?
11. What would your former boss/colleagues say about you?
12. What are the best and worst aspects of your previous job?
13. What do you know about our company?
14. What motivates you? How do you motivate others?
15. Are you willing to relocate?

BEST ANSWERS TOUGH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Q. Tell me about yourself.

A. Tell about your skills and experience and shows why you are qualified for the job: I attended ABC University, where I earned my Bachelor's degree in Information Science three years ago. I started working as a junior IT technician right after I graduated, and after a year I was promoted to IT technician....

Q. What do you consider to be your biggest weakness?

A. Find a weakness that your prospective employer would see as a strength or a weakness you had in the past and show how you overcame it. Another option is to pick a weakness that is somewhat innocuous.

Q. How do you handle your success?

A. I give myself a quick pat on the back and move on to the next project. Of course, I take the time to figure out what helped me succeed and use the experience to help me the next time.

Q. How do you handle your failure?

A. I give myself a short time to feel sad, but I don't dwell on it. Without spending too much energy on it, I try to figure out where things went wrong to succeed next time.

Q. What are your greatest strengths?

A. My greatest strength is my ability to see a project through from its inception to its completion. Each project I am assigned is important to me and I always make sure it gets the appropriate amount of attention.

Q. Why should I hire you?

A. As I understand your needs, you are first and foremost looking for someone who can manage the sales and marketing of your book publishing division. As you've said you need someone with a strong background in trade book sales. This is where I've spent almost all of my career, so I've chalked up 18 years of experience exactly in this area. I believe that I know the right contacts, methods, principles, and successful management techniques as well as any person can in our industry.

Q. Where do you see yourself five years from now?

A. I am definitely interested in making a long-term commitment to my next position. Judging by what you've told me about this position, it's exactly what I'm looking for and what I am very well qualified to do. In terms of my future career path, I'm confident that if I do my work with excellence, opportunities will inevitably open up for me. It's always been that way in my career, and I'm confident I'll have similar opportunities here.

Q. Why do you want to work at our company?

A. This question is your opportunity to hit the ball out of the park, thanks to the in-depth research you should do before any interview. Best sources for researching your target company: annual reports, the corporate newsletter, contacts you know at the company or its suppliers, advertisements, articles about the company in the trade press.

Q. Can you work under pressure?

A. Demonstrate how you dealt with one difficult situation using some valuable skills, including the abilities to delegate and work as part of a team.

Q. What pet peeves do you have about coworker?

A. Too much negativity always bothers me. I think if you're going to complain you should be able to offer some solutions to fix things you think are wrong.

Q. How do you manage your time?

A. Show how you prioritize your projects and spend proper amount of time to each of them: I prioritize my work. I figure out what needs to get done first, next, and so on. Then I calculate how much time I will need to spend on each activity or project. I set a schedule for myself and get going.

SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER

Thank you letter checklist

- In your thank you letters, always thank people you spoke with for their time. Tell them how much you appreciated the opportunity to meet them and gain a greater understanding of the workings of the company.
-
- Remind the interviewer of who you are and what you talked about. Perhaps you can add some further ideas that have occurred to you about an area touched upon during your interview.
-
- Restate your qualifications and your belief that you are well-suited for the position in question by stressing the matches between your abilities and the job description.

THANK YOU LETTER FORMAT

John Smith

1234 Main Avenue Tucson, AZ 85012
602/743-4866, johnsmith@maryville.edu

Date

Mr. or Ms. First Name Employer
Title of Employer
Organization/Company Name
Street Address
City, State Zip

Dear Mr. or Ms. Interviewer:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me on July 23 to discuss the position of Administrative Assistant in the marketing department. The project you described for the coming year-particularly the move to globalize operations-sound very exciting. This is exactly the kind of work I helped to facilitate at my former position at XYZ Corporation.

Let me restate briefly my strength as an Administrative Assistant for your international program:

- Top-notch secretarial skills including competency in Word, Powerpoint, Quark, Excel, Publisher, and Access.
- Recognized ability to prioritize projects, run a well-organized desk stay cool under pressure, and keep up with the demands of several executives.
- Fluency in Spanish from a year living in Madrid.

I appreciate hearing about your company, and look forward to speaking with you again about this opening. You can reach me at (123)456-7890.

Sincerely,

(Your handwritten signature)
Your typewritten name

Nine Things You Should Never Say in an Interview

1. "What does your company do?"

Ask questions that show you're well informed and eager to work at the company, not those to which you should already know the answers, or that can be easily gleaned from the company's website or annual report.

2. "My salary requirements are very flexible."

Compensation is often the touchiest subject in an interview. Certainly you want to know what a company will pay, and interviewers want to know what you're willing to take. It's a negotiation, not a game. When push comes to shove, you should be willing at least to give a range, even if you have to be broad and say, for example, "I'm looking for something between \$30,000 and \$60,000."

But don't pretend to be flexible when you aren't. If you're worried that your salary requirements are too high for the job, you may need to do some serious thinking about how low you're willing to go. Don't sell yourself short, but ask yourself how much you honestly think you're worth. Do research about what similar jobs pay and what salaries are like in the region. If a company comes back with too low an offer, you can always try and negotiate up.

3. "It would be hella cool to get jiggy with this job."

Maybe that is how all of your friends talk (and it's become a habit with you), but it's not the way you should speak during a job interview. Using slang is a serious turnoff for interviewers. You may be articulate, intelligent, and confident, but like, you sure won't sound that way.

4. "Bill Gates himself offered me a \$100,000 bonus."

Don't lie! You'll be found out, and you'll regret it. Someday when you least expect it, someone somewhere will discover that you didn't really increase sales by 999 percent in six months. Interviewers know you'll probably exaggerate a little to sell yourself; but don't cross the line between exaggeration and out-and-out lying.

5. "In five years, I see myself on a boat in the Caribbean."

When interviewers ask you about long-term goals, they want an answer that relates to the company. Telling them that you really want to be living on a farm (unless you're applying for an agricultural job) isn't going to convince them that you're an ambitious professional in your chosen field.

Even if you don't plan to stick around long, say something that reflects a commitment to the position and the company. This may seem to contradict the previous exhortation about lying, but try to think of it as a rhetorical question. You might still be at the same company in five years, right?

6. "Sorry, I don't know how to do that."

Rather than admitting that you don't have a specific skill, stress that you're a fast learner and are excited about the possibility of acquiring new skills. Most companies would rather hire an enthusiastic, smart person who needs to be trained than someone who already has the required skills but isn't as eager to learn.

7. "You see, I just went through a painful divorce. . . ."

Even if an interviewer starts getting personal, don't follow suit. You may think you're being open and honest, but you're really just coming across as unprofessional, unfocused, and disrespectful. Keep it businesslike and polite.

8. "What can your company do for me?"

Interviewers hate arrogance and selfishness. They want to know why they should hire you. Stress the contributions you can make. Tell them about how your efforts helped previous employers. Don't start asking about raises, bonuses, and promotions right away.

Remember, you're the one being interviewed, and while you should use the opportunity to get your questions answered, you shouldn't make it seem as if you'll be doing them a favor if they hire you.

9. "I left my last job because my boss was a real jerk."

Bad-mouthing your previous employer is possibly the dumbest thing you can do during an interview. Even if your last company was a chaotic hellhole, your boss was a monster, your coworkers were Martians, and you got paid in tin cans, say that you left to look for more responsibility, you wanted greater opportunity for advancement, or you were just ready for a change.

Casual Talk Is Not So Casual

You've done it. You've just completed the formal interview for a job, and by all indications, things look like they went well.

Of course, you did all your homework and worked on your body language. You sat up straight, looked the interviewer in the eye, gave professional answers and remembered not to say "you know," or "uh" too much. All in all, you're feeling like this job is in the bag.

Then the interviewer asks you, ever so casually, about whether you saw the big game last night. Hold on. While this may seem like a perfectly harmless way to pass a few minutes before you leave, just another friendly indication that they like you, it may be much more than that. It may be the toughest part of the interview yet.

"Do you like to travel?" or "Do you have pets?" all sound harmless, but what these kinds of questions do is to lull you into a kind of complacency. And that is where you can get into trouble.

"Sure, I saw the game last night," you say. "But the refs were obviously on the take. They were terrible. The crowd should have jumped them in the parking lot."

OK. Now you've just shown yourself to be a) a bad sport, b) overly critical and c) possibly violent. You may scoff and say you were only shooting the breeze, and meant no harm, but to an interviewer who has only known you for less than an hour, the impression left by your remark may not be seen as favorable.

A better answer? "Yes, I saw the game. It was very exciting. Lots of good teamwork out there." Ah-hah! Now the interviewer is left with an impression of someone who appreciates hard work and the ability to work with others.

It's not that interviewers are deliberately trying to trip you up, but it is their job to try and see the job candidate from all angles. That means they try to get a feel for how you would fit into the company culture, how you would work with other employees, or the impression you might make on clients. That's when they usually offer to take you out for a meal.

And this is where some job candidates truly bomb. Ordering a hamburger, french fries and a chocolate milkshake may portray you as having the sensibilities of a 9-year-old. Ordering pasta that you drip on your shirt, or making the waiter jump through hoops to bring you a special order only attracts negative attention. And, of course, the lack of table manners has been a deal-breaker for many candidates since employers feel the lack of etiquette may reflect badly on them with a client.

Conversations turning casual can often be full of pitfalls. Gushing about the "freedom" of going to nude beaches in Europe may not be appropriate, but you can (briefly) talk about the beautiful architecture in Rome or the friendly people you met when traveling to different states. Remember to rehearse your answers about your hobbies and your interests, as well as your job skills. You want to be seen as having a well-rounded life, but one that does not indicate that your interest in "Star Trek" memorabilia borders on the obsessive.

And, you can always use this casual conversation gambit to learn more about the employer. The interviewer who admits that she has no time for hobbies because she is required to work so many hours and hasn't taken a vacation in five years may be telling you that the company plans to work you to death.

Or, the interviewer who drinks too much wine with lunch and then proceeds to bad-mouth her boss may be giving you the clearest indication yet that you might be better off interviewing elsewhere.

Why Are Manhole Covers Round?

Handling Brainteasers and Logic Questions in an Interview

Tell me about yourself. Why does this job interest you? How many quarters would you have to stack to reach the top of the Empire State Building?

Those were the questions Liz Kostak was asked during a phone screen with a major investment bank. Caught off guard, Liz didn't make the cut. But today, her interview preparation includes not only examining a company's 10-K and checking for the latest news, but sitting down with a book of brainteasers to sharpen her puzzle-solving skills.

Ever since Microsoft made headlines in the mid-1990s for using brainteasers to identify the best and brightest, other companies have adopted this practice.

Designed to measure candidates' intelligence, creativity and analytical skills, brainteasers and logic questions often involve obscure subjects. For example:

- How many piano tuners are there in the world?
- How many golf balls can you stuff into a Boeing 777?
- What's the size of the market for disposable diapers in China?

For these types of the questions, the trick is to start big and take it one step at a time. For example, to determine China's market-size for disposable diapers, you might:

1. Estimate the population of China.
2. Pick a percentage of that number to represent Chinese people of childbearing age.
3. Divide that number in half to get the number of Chinese women.
4. Estimate what percentage of those women has children.
5. Then, knowing that Chinese families tend to have just one child, assume what percentage of those children are younger than three years old.

Use round numbers you can calculate on the spot. Your answer may not be exact, but the idea is to show your problem-solving skills as well as your ability to think on your feet. And don't get hung up on not knowing the population of China or how many cubic inches are in a Boeing 777.

"We know you can easily look those numbers up later," says a recruiter for a major consulting firm who asked not to be named. "We're not that concerned with whether a candidate comes up with the precise answer. We're looking for insight into their thought process and whether they work thorough problems in a logical manner."

In fact there may be no single correct answer for some questions. Questions like: "How many ways can you think of to find a needle in a haystack?" "How would you design a bathroom for the CEO of the company?" and "If you could remove any one of the 50 U.S. states, which would it be?" serve as platforms for candidates to demonstrate their creativity and mental agility.

Companies use the approach to cut through the pat, rehearsed answers many candidates give. "We want to know what you're like. Not what you think we want you to be like," says a partner at a major international consulting firm.

"The only sure-fire way to fail at these questions is to be stumped," she adds, advising candidates to "offer up your ideas even if they seem bizarre."

Successful candidates also recommend talking your interviewer through your thought process as you tackle the questions, to display your analytical ability. This also keeps you and the interviewer engaged in dialogue, which may give you some cues that could help you down the right track.

The best advice according to Kostak, however, is to be prepared. Even though these types of questions are meant to make you "think on your feet," there are resources you can use to make sure you put your best foot forward.

I Just Had a Great Interview. Now What Do I Do?

By Don Straits, CEO and Dragon Slayer, CorporateWarriors.com

Thank-you letters are so boring. But you feel compelled to write one because the career books, career counselors and HR managers tell you that is what you are supposed to do. If you don't do it, then you failed to show professional courtesy. If you do send one, the recipient will appreciate it, but it is rarely the defining factor that gets you the job. Furthermore, they all sound alike. Yawn.

I collaborate with the Professional Resume Writing and Research Association (www.prwra.com). It is a great organization for resume writers and career coaches. We recently had an interesting debate on thank-you letters and appropriate follow-up strategies, so I thought I would put together an article on the topic for the benefit of all job seekers.

Instead of the traditional, boring thank-you letter, let's hit a grand-slam home run with follow-up strategies that tip the scale in your favor.

1. Within 48 hours, follow-up with a value-added response. Do not write a letter or e-mail that just restates your qualifications; instead provide something unique that dramatically sets you apart from others. Here's how: focus on a topic discussed in your interview, and then provide your prospective boss with additional information on that topic. Here are a few examples that illustrate what I mean:

- One of my clients had a great interview for a senior sales leadership position. During the interview, his potential boss discussed how the salespeople were not successfully selling to C-level executives. I had my client follow-up by sending his potential boss a book on C-level selling strategies. His thank-you note looked like this (abbreviated): "Dear Joe, I enjoyed our discussions yesterday on the sales position and on the challenges of selling to C-level executives. Here is a book I recommend to help overcome the selling problem. You might want to pass it among your sales execs. As the vice president of sales, I will provide the leadership to achieve C-level selling success" He got the job.

- After an interview that focused on the discussion of building strategic alliances, a client sent his prospective boss an e-mail link to a contemporary article on strategic alliances. Another client sent a follow-up e-mail on new products that were going to be launched by a competitor. An administrative assistant sent a list of office organization techniques. TIP: Go to any search engine or news site (like MSNBC.com) and register for "News Alerts." It's free and can be a great source for follow-up articles, breaking industry news and relevant information on your targeted companies.

Guaranteed, your innovative and unique follow-up response can be the edge that gets you the job. But here are two more steps to make your follow-up successful.

2. Call, write or personally visit your potential boss once a week with a value-added benefit. Do this until you land the job or they tell you the position has been filled. Some career strategists think this is overkill, but my client track record of success teaches that persistence pays off. At the very least, you will usually learn where you stand.

3. If you are turned down, write a very cordial thank-you note to HR and, more importantly, to the person who interviewed you, thanking them for their time and consideration. Indicate you would appreciate being looked at for other jobs. If you are really interested in the position or company, follow-up in a month with an inquiry about other opportunities that may have recently opened up. Do NOT rely on the company to get back to you. Even though you were turned down, you may have been "number two" and they will be eager to have you interview for another position.

Whatever happens, don't get discouraged. Your continued follow-up does nothing but breed good will. Professionalism and persistence produce positive results. Hang in there.

Test Your Resume Grammar IQ

How do you stack up in presenting yourself to prospective employers in writing? We examine resumes on a daily basis, and 90 percent of them have typos or grammatical errors. Here are some examples:

"I am an extremely fast leaner."

"As indicted, I have over five years of analyzing investments."

"Instrumental in ruining entire operation for a Midwest chain store."

While the errors above seem humorous, you would be surprised at how frequently these types of mistakes appear in resumes. Since the errors involve usage rather than spelling, "spell-check" won't catch these blunders.

If you're like most of us, time in English class was more likely spent daydreaming than wrangling with the intricacies of our native language. How many of us thought it would really matter in our later lives whether a period or comma should be placed inside or outside quotation marks? Or when it was appropriate to use an apostrophe to show possession? How about when to use "there," "their," or "they're"?

Despite our lack of interest in grammar skills during our school years, written presentation is crucial in marketing to a prospective employer. Your resume represents YOU, and it is the key to whether an employer will put you on his or her "short list." Just as it is when you meet someone in person, initial impressions are made from your resume and can be difficult to reverse. You want to make sure your resume presents you in the best way possible.

You always want to proofread your resume several times-ideally, at several different times when your mind and eyes are fresh. If your word processing program has spelling and grammar checkers, by all means use them-but, as noted above, recognize they are only tools and cannot catch all errors or will sometimes "catch" things that are not errors. Use a good reference manual as your ultimate guide. Do your best to ensure your resume presents you well; you will be glad you did.

Reference for this quiz was *The Gregg Reference Manual, Eighth Edition*, by William A. Sabin, published by McGraw-Hill, New York, 1996. This is generally considered to be "the" reference manual for grammar, usage and punctuation and you can find the answer to virtually every question you might ever have with regard to the written word. I would highly recommend its purchase as one of your main reference books, along with an up-to-date dictionary and thesaurus. Most importantly, use these books; don't let them collect dust on your bookshelf.

The answers are at the bottom of the quiz. Good luck!!

In each instance below, select the answer that illustrates the correct way to write the sentence.

1.

- a. Served as the company's "labor specialist".
- b. Served as the company's "labor specialist."

2.

- a. Increased sales revenue by five percent.
- b. Increased sales revenue by five %.
- c. Increased sales revenue by 5 percent.
- d. Increased sales revenue by 5%.

3.

- a. Served as liaison/mediator between management and staff.
- b. Served as liaison / mediator between management and staff.

4.

- a. Brought the company a 'fresh' viewpoint.
- b. Brought the company a "fresh" viewpoint.

5.

- a. Served as sales manager, president, and as a member of the board of directors for ABC Company.
- b. Served as Sales Manager, President, and as a member of the Board of Directors for ABC Company.

6.

- a. Provided leadership for the Advertising Department, Manufacturing Division, and the Finance Committee.
- b. Provided leadership for the advertising department, manufacturing division, and the finance committee.

7.

- a. Extraordinary success in the functional areas of Finance, Strategic Planning, New Product/Services Development, Business Process Reengineering (BPR), and Total Quality Management (TQM).
- b. Extraordinary success in the functional areas of finance, strategic planning, new product/services development, Business Process Reengineering (BPR), and Total Quality Management (TQM).
- c. Extraordinary success in the functional areas of finance, strategic planning, new product/services development, business process reengineering (BPR), and total quality management (TQM).

8.

- a. March 6th, 2004
- b. March 6, 2004
- c. Mar. 6, 2004
- d. the sixth of March
- e. the 6th of March

9.

- a. one, two or three-page report
- b. one-page, two-page or three-page report
- c. one-, two-, or three-page report

10.

- a. Before my hire, the company had not reached its full potential.
- b. Before my hire, the company had not reached it's full potential.

11.

- a. Developed a state-of-the-art installation.
- b. Developed an installation that reflected the current state-of-the-art.
- c. Developed a state of the art installation.

12.

- a. Their was a need for more efficient organization in there sales department.
- b. There was a need for more efficient organization in they're sales department.
- c. There was a need for more efficient organization in their sales department.

13.

- a. Sales increased dramatically for September 1988.
- b. Sales increased dramatically for September, 1988.

14.

- a. Sales catapulted to \$4 million, higher then ever in the company's history.
- b. Sales catapulted to \$4 million, higher than ever in the company's history.

Answers to Written Presentation Quiz

1. **B.** We all know that most rules have exceptions. But this rule does not. Periods (and commas) always go inside the closing quotation mark(s), no matter what the context of the sentence and no matter if there is a quote within a quote. (Colons and semicolons always go outside the closing quotation mark.) This is in contrast with question marks and exclamation points, which are dependent on how the quotes are used in the sentence as to whether they go inside or outside the quotation marks. Even sentences with several quotes in a row follow the "always inside the quotation marks" rule. For example: Developed a plan that was called "brilliant," "innovative," and "successful."
2. **C.** Percentages should always be expressed in figures- and the word "percent" should be spelled out. It is all right to use the % symbol in tables, on business forms, or in statistical or technical reports, but in any other written work, such as a resume or supporting document, express a percentage as "5 percent."
- This is an exception to the rule of spelling out numbers smaller than ten and using a cardinal number (12, 56) for numbers 11 or higher.
3. **A.** No space should appear before or after the diagonal mark.
4. **B.** Single quotation marks are only used when there is a quotation within a quotation. Single quotation marks should only be used inside regular quotation marks, never in place of them.
5. **A.** Except in heading situations, as in a resume heading, job titles should not be capitalized when they stand alone or when they follow or replace a personal name. Official titles should be capitalized when they precede personal names (President Sidney Falk, Vice President Smith); however, when the personal name is in apposition (set off by commas), the title should not be capitalized (the president, Sidney Falk, revealed plans . . . Occupational titles (author, surgeon) should not be capitalized when they precede a personal name (author William Shakespeare).
6. **B.** Common organizational terms such as advertising department, manufacturing division and finance committee are ordinarily capitalized when they are the actual names of units within the writer's own organization. They are not capitalized when they refer to some other organization (except in ultraformal documents, such as meeting minutes). For example, a company refers to its "Board of Directors," but "the board of directors" of another company or in a document such as a news release (or resume) intended for a general audience. In listing these organizational terms in a past employment situation, capitalization should be avoided.
7. **C.** The names of programs or concepts should not be capitalized; of course, you should always capitalize any proper noun within the name of the program or concept (Socratic method). When using acronyms such as BPR or TQM, use capitals for the acronyms, but not within the program or concept title itself (unless the acronym stands for a company name or legal title, such as Students Against Drunk Driving).
8. **B.** Dates should be expressed in month-day-year sequence, using cardinal numbers (6), not ordinal numbers (6th, sixth). Days of the week and names of months should be abbreviated only on business forms, in tables or in columns of text where space is tight.
9. **C.** When using a series of hyphenated adjectives with a common basic element (in this example, the word "page"), that element should only be shown with the last term and a suspending hyphen should be used with the first and second (or however many there are in your sentence) terms to indicate that relationship to the common element. Use one space after the suspending hyphen unless a comma is required at that point.
10. **A.** "It's" is a contraction of the words "it is," and therefore requires an apostrophe between the "t" and the "s." However, "its" is a possessive pronoun (like his or hers), and is of itself possessive; therefore no apostrophe is used. As a test, try saying the sentence using "it is" in place of "its." If it makes sense, use an apostrophe; if not, leave it out.
11. **A.** Phrases used as compound adjectives (a compound adjective consists of two or more words that function as a unit and express a single thought) before a noun should be hyphenated, but not when they appear normally elsewhere in the sentence. To show the difference, "a state-of-the-art installation reflects the current state of the art."

12. **C.** Here's another one that trips up a lot of folks: there, their, they're. "There" can indicate a location ("over there") or a state of being ("there is" or "there are"). "Their" is a possessive pronoun, as in "their company"- belonging to "them." If you can substitute "his," "her," "our," or "its," you can use "their." "They're" is a contraction for "they are." Using the same logic as in number 10 above, if you can substitute "they are" in the sentence, the contraction is the form you want.

13. **A.** Although the year should be set off by two commas in a sentence containing month, date, and year ("On September 3, 1999, we reorganized the company."), omit commas around the year when it follows the month alone.

14. **B.** "Than" is a conjunction to show comparison (older than I am), while "then" refers to a time period (now and then) or your "next" step (if you want to exceed your sales goals, then you need to think "out of the box").

Scoring

13 or more correct:

Excellent! Your written skills are very good, and you present yourself well in written form. Congratulations!

10-12 correct:

Keep those reference books handy and use them to check up on yourself! You can't always depend on having someone who is skilled at written presentation around to proof your work before you send it out to that all-important prospective employer.

6-9 correct:

Perhaps some classes or some personal study in a good reference book like *The Gregg Reference Manual* and its accompanying workbook would benefit you. Your resume/credentials package is the first impression a potential employer or client will have of you; make it a great one!