

# Workbook Five

# 5

## Essential Skills to Market Yourself with a Resume and Cover Letter





This workbook was created by Literacy Link South Central. We are a regional network in Ontario that provides support to literacy programs. We are a partner in the Employment Ontario system. This series of workbooks is the result of a project called, “Connecting Literacy and Employment through Essential Skills.” These resources have been developed for people who want to look for employment while strengthening their Essential Skills.

**Thank you to our project partners for their help in creating these resources. Our partners for this project include:**

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**Canada** 

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These workbooks can be downloaded free of charge at [www.llsc.on.ca](http://www.llsc.on.ca). Organizations are encouraged to copy these materials; however, reproducing these materials for a profit is prohibited. All website links were accurate at the time of printing – May 2011.

# Read this Part First

## **This workbook is for you if:**

- You're looking for work.
- You have access to a computer with Internet.
- You feel comfortable using a computer and the Internet and you would like to practise and improve these skills.
- You want to build your Essential Skills.

## **This workbook is one in a series of seven titles:**

1. Essential Skills to Identify the Job Searcher
2. Essential Skills to Identify the Job
3. Essential Skills to Research Your Occupation
4. Essential Skills to Search for Jobs
- 5. Essential Skills to Market Yourself with a Resume and Cover Letter**
6. Essential Skills to Market Yourself at the Interview
7. Essential Skills to Maintain Employability

## **What are Essential Skills? Why are they important to you, the job seeker?**






Essential Skills are the skills you need for work, learning and life. Knowing your Essential Skills helps you to tell employers what you can do for them. It shows people that you have the skills to learn, that you adapt to change and that you can work well with others. A good employee has strong Essential Skills. When you practise and improve your Essential Skills, you increase your chances of finding a job.





## **Why are these workbooks unique?**

- These workbooks combine job search activities and Essential Skills resources. You can look for a job and improve your Essential Skills – at the same time.
- You can photocopy or download the copies you need – they're free!
- The workbooks are self-paced. You can take as much time as you need and complete as many workbooks as you need.

## How you will use Essential Skills for job search

You will find that you use your Essential Skills for all of the job search activities in these workbooks. When you begin to read the content, you will notice that activities requiring Essential Skills are identified with icons and tips. The icons tell you which Essential Skills you will be using. The tips tell you how you will use the Essential Skill for a specific activity.

Essential Skills Icon	What It Means
	<p><b>Reading:</b> Understanding materials written in sentences or paragraphs</p> <p>Example: Read a case study about job search.</p>
	<p><b>Document use:</b> Using and understanding labels, graphs, signs and other similar materials</p> <p>Example: Fill in a chart of job search contact information.</p>
	<p><b>Numeracy:</b> Using and understanding numbers</p> <p>Example: Budget your monthly expenses.</p>
	<p><b>Writing:</b> Writing text or typing on a computer</p> <p>Example: Write a thank you note after an interview.</p>
	<p><b>Oral communication:</b> Using speech to share thoughts and information</p> <p>Example: Practise answering interview questions with others.</p>

Essential Skills Icon	What It Means
	<p><b>Working with others:</b> Interacting with others to complete tasks</p> <p>Example: Help to improve one another's interview skills.</p>
	<p><b>Thinking:</b> Reviewing information to make decisions</p> <p>Example: Analyze how you spend your time during your job search.</p>
	<p><b>Computer use:</b> Using computers and other technical tools</p> <p>Example: Use the Internet for research.</p>
	<p><b>Continuous learning:</b> Participating in an ongoing process of gaining skills and knowledge</p> <p>Example: Learn to maintain a positive attitude during job search.</p>

## Computer Skills

As you work through the workbooks you will be practising your computer skills. You must have some basic computer skills in order to complete many of the workbook activities.

Can you do the following?

- **Use a mouse.** Can you open links by clicking on them? Can you double click on files?
- **Use a keyboard.** Can you type? Can you type in a web address? Do you know how to use command keys like Shift and Control?
- **Search the Internet.** Can you use a search engine like Google or Internet Explorer? Can you use key words to find a specific topic?
- **Search a website.** Can you use the menus, links and tabs to find your way on a website?
- **Watch an online video.** Can you open, play and pause a video? Can you adjust the sound?

If you are unable to perform these computer functions, you may wish to take some basic computer training before you use the workbooks.



## Tips for making the workbooks work for you

These workbooks have been designed for job seekers who want to look for work and improve their Essential Skills.

Here are some tips to help you get the most out of each workbook.

- ✓ Use the Essential Skills Checklist before and after you complete each workbook to see how your Essential Skills improve.
- ✓ Read the Job Search Terms so that you are familiar with the terms used in each workbook.
- ✓ For best results, work through all the workbooks. They follow the steps you'll take when looking for a job. But if you don't need the information in every workbook, you can just choose the ones with the content that is right for you.
- ✓ Try to work through the whole workbook and not just sections. This will increase your understanding of the content and help you practise your Essential Skills.
- ✓ These workbooks have been designed for clients in both employment and literacy agencies. If you get stuck, ask for help.
- ✓ As much as possible, work with your colleagues (other jobs searchers in your program). You will practise your Essential Skills when you share information and ideas.
- ✓ Remember that these are your workbooks. This means that you can write in them, underline, highlight, make notes - anything that helps you to learn and get ready for work.

**Improving your Essential Skills increases your chances of finding work. Good luck with your job search!**

*Marketing Yourself!*



# Workbook Five

*There is no second chance to make a good first impression.* (Anonymous)

Your resume and cover letter are very important job search tools. They are often an employer's first introduction to you. The resume and cover letter can get you the job interview or they can cause the employer to decide that they will hire someone else. Ensuring that your resume and cover letter are as professional as possible will increase your chances of getting interviewed and getting a job.

If you have been out of work for any length of time, you will know that there are hundreds of books and websites about resume and cover letter writing. One of the problems with so many books and websites

is that job searchers begin to think that there is something very complex and difficult about writing a resume and cover letter. As well, not all resources are good, and who has time to do the research to find the ones that they need?

This workbook will help you to sort out the many available resources by including the links and titles of some of the best. These quality materials will help to increase your confidence in your ability to write your own resume and cover letter.



## In this workbook you will:

- Learn about the importance of knowing your audience
- Develop your marketing message
- Access quality resources for writing your resume
- Discover what employers see when they look at a resume
- Follow the six C's of resume writing for creating a quality product
- Work with keywords
- Create an e-resume
- Find your "other" e-resume
- Understand the purpose of your cover letter
- Access resources for your cover letter
- Learn about the essential ingredients of a cover letter

This workbook will help you to improve your ability to write your resume and cover letter. It provides resources and links to resources that offer instructions, tips and guidelines, for resume and cover letter writing.



Part One is about your resume and cover letter as marketing tools. It helps you to know your audience, which is marketing language for knowing the employer. It helps you to present your resume and cover letter as a message to the employer. Part Two provides tips on creating your resumes and cover letters.

## Using Your Essential Skills for a Job Search

One of the benefits of using this workbook series is that as you prepare for employment, you also practise your Essential Skills. Essential Skills are the skills that enable you to carry out life and work tasks, including your job search. Practising and improving your Essential Skills will improve your job search techniques and materials and increase your chances of finding work that you want.

### In Workbook Five you will use the following Essential Skills:

- Reading
- Writing
- Working with Others
- Thinking
- Computer Use



You can evaluate your confidence and progress in using these skills by assessing yourself before and after you complete this workbook. Your self-assessment can show you the skills you feel confident in using and the skills you need to practise more. This is important information for your job search and your success as an employee.

1. Take a few moments to complete the self-assessment on **page 11** before you begin the workbook activities. Assess your Essential Skills in the **Before** column.
2. As you work through the activities, notice the icons and tips that help you to focus on particular Essential Skills.
3. When you have completed the workbook, return to the Essential Skills Checklist. You will be able to measure your improved job search abilities using Essential Skills by check marking the **After** column.

## Job Search Terms

Term	Definition
<b>Employer benefits</b>	These are how you want the employer to understand your unique skills, training and experience.
<b>Chronological resume</b>	This is a resume that organizes your work experience according to date.
<b>Concise</b>	This means clear and to the point; not wordy.
<b>Functional resume</b>	This is a resume that organizes your work experience according to what you have done rather than when.
<b>Candidate</b>	This is a person selected by the employer as a possible employee.
<b>Keywords</b>	These are specific words or phrases that employers use to search online job applications to find the right candidates.

## Essential Skills Checklist



Use this Essential Skills Checklist to rate your increased confidence in using Essential Skills. Before you start the activities in this workbook, fill in the **Before** column. When you have finished the workbook, fill in the **After** column. Have your Essential Skills improved? Knowing what you do well can be important information to share when applying for jobs. Knowing what you still need to work on will help you to prepare for future job search success.

Using Essential Skills for Job Search	I'm not sure if I can do this.		I can't do this yet.		I can do this with help.		I can do this.	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Using Reading Skills I am able to:								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read information about resumes and cover letters as marketing tools</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read a sample job ad to find employer needs and wants (Activity 1)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read job ads that interest me to find employment needs and wants (Activity 2)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read to learn about the marketing terms, features and benefits, for job search</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read a colleague's resume (Activity 4)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read to learn how an e-resume is different from a paper copy</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read about the importance of knowing my online profile</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read information and tips about cover letters</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Using Essential Skills for Job Search	I'm not sure if I can do this.		I can't do this yet.		I can do this with help.		I can do this.	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Using Reading Skills I am able to:								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make a list of my skills, experience or interests and write a brief phrase describing their benefits to the employer (Activity 3)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Record work experience on an information sheet (Activity 5)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write a description of an ideal employee to give myself a clear picture (Activity 6)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write a cover letter (Activity 9)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working with Others I am able to:								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with others to improve my resume (Activity 4)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with others to search one another's profiles online (Activity 8)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using Thinking Skills I am able to:								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use critical thinking to decide what employers need and want (Activity 1)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decide what information to include on an information sheet (Activity 5)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decide if I have an online image problem and, if I do, fix it (Activity 8)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using Computer Skills I am able to:								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use an Internet job board</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create an e-resume (Activity 7)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the computer to search online personal profiles (Activity 8)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Part One: Your Resume and Cover Letter as Marketing Tools



### Essential Skills Tip: Reading

- Read information about resumes and cover letters as marketing tools

A resume and cover letter are marketing tools. As you prepare these documents, think: Does this piece of information help to market me to the employer? Each piece of information that goes into your resume needs to pass this test.

It helps to know some marketing basics before you can create your resume as a marketing tool. Here are two marketing tips that can improve the quality of your resume and cover letter:

1. Know Your Audience.
2. Develop Your Message.

### Know Your Audience

In marketing, your audience is made up of customers. All of us have been customers. As customers we buy what we need and we buy what we want. Look at these examples to see how marketers sell to our needs and wants.

- I need a new pair of running shoes.
- I want a pair of Nikes.
- I need to eat lunch.
- I want a Harvey's hamburger.
- I need glasses.
- I want designer frames.

Successful marketing knows our needs and our wants.

In a job search, the customer is the employer. He or she is shopping for a new employee. When you market yourself, you get the employer's attention.

Marketers do lots of research to try and figure out what it is that customers need and want. As a job searcher, you can do your research too. You can figure out what it is that the employer needs and wants. One of the ways you can do this is to carefully read job ads when applying for work. Job ads give you lots of information about employer needs and wants.

## **Know your audience (the employer) by carefully reading the job ad.**

An employer often has a clear idea of what they need. For example:

- "I **need** a driver who can make deliveries out of town."
- "I **need** someone who can manage the store. I need to be able to trust that person with the keys and cash."
- "I **need** a qualified personal support worker."

Needs are the necessities for the job.

Wants are also important for the job. They may not be strictly necessary to get the job done, but they are often as important as needs to the employer.

- "I need a driver who can make deliveries out of town. I **want** a driver who won't worry about a few extra hours if I need them."
- "I need someone who can manage the store. I need to be able to trust that person with the keys and cash. I really **want** someone who will share my desire to increase sales and expand the business."
- "I need a qualified personal support worker. I **want** someone who doesn't complain or turn down extra shifts."



You can discover an employer's needs and wants in a well constructed job ad. Most employer needs can be found under requirements. As an example, look at the requirements for a shipper/receiver:

### **Requirements**

**Specific Skills:** Determine method of shipment, prepare bills of lading, invoices and other shipping documents, inspect and verify incoming goods against invoices or other documents, maintain internal record-keeping system, pack goods to be shipped, unpack goods received, affix identifying information and shipping instructions on shipments, oversee loading and unloading of goods.

**Work Conditions and Physical Capabilities:** Fast-paced environment, work under pressure, attention to detail, handling heavy loads, physically demanding, bending, crouching, kneeling.

**Transportation/Travel Information:** Valid driver's licence

**Essential Skills:** Reading Text, Numeracy, Oral Communication, Working with Others, Problem Solving, Finding Information, Continuous Learning

As you can see, this ad gives you a lot of information about what the employer needs in an employee.

For example, under **Specific Skills** the employer is looking for an employee who can:

- Determine the shipment method
- Prepare bills of lading, invoices and other shipping documents
- Inspect and verify incoming goods
- Maintain records
- Pack and unpack goods
- Affix information to (label) shipments

It can be harder to find an employer's wants unless they are stated as "preferred" or "an asset". Sometimes you can guess what they are, based on what you read. For example, the job ad talks about a "fast-paced environment". At the same time, it lists Continuous Learning as an Essential Skill. Reading between the lines you could guess that this employer would value an employee who could learn quickly and apply their new knowledge quickly as well. Therefore, you could add "quick learner" to the list of employer wants.

## Activity One: Read an Employment Ad to Discover Employer Needs and Wants



### Essential Skills Tip: Reading, Thinking (Critical Thinking)

- Read a sample job ad to find employer needs and wants
- Use critical thinking to decide what employers need and want

Look at the employment ad on page 17.

1. List or highlight the needs of the employer. (Look under Skill Requirements Specific Skills and Essential Skills.)

Employer Needs	

2. Try and discover what it is that the employer wants.
  - Look under Experience, Specific Skills, Work Conditions, Essential Skills and Other Information to help you. Read Work Conditions and Other Information carefully. These sections often give valuable information relating to employer wants.

List two or three wants of the employer.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Compare your list of needs and wants with the one on the page that follows the employment ad.

**Needs** are the indispensable skills and experience an employer is looking for. They are the basics the employee needs for doing the job.

**Wants** are what the employer hopes for in the employee. Wants may not be as critical as needs, but having them makes you a more desirable employee.



**Title:** Tool room attendant (NOC: 1472)

**Terms of Employment:** Temporary, Full Time, Shift, Weekend

**Salary:** To be negotiated

**Anticipated Start Date:** As soon as possible

**Location:** Fallsburg, Ontario (1 vacancy)

**Education:** Completion of high school

**Credentials** (certificates, licences, memberships, courses, etc.): Not required

**Experience:** Experience an asset

**Languages:** Speak English, Read English, Write English

**Material Handling Equipment:** Industrial lift trucks and fork-lifts, Pallet lifters

**Weight Handling:** Up to 23 kg (50 lbs)

**Work Setting:** Manufacturing company

**Specific Skills:** Process incoming requisitions, Issue and distribute parts and supplies for internal use, Prepare requisition orders to replenish parts and supplies, Maintain records on inventory control system

**Own Tools/Equipment:** Steel-toed safety boots

**Work Conditions and Physical Capabilities:** Fast-paced environment, Attention to detail, Standing for extended periods

**Essential Skills:** Reading text, Document use, Numeracy, Writing, Oral communication, Working with others, Problem solving, Job task planning and organizing, Finding information, Continuous learning

**Other Information:** Apply by fax only. No phone calls. One year contract, full-time hours. Work in a manufacturing environment distributing tools and supplies as needed, cycle counting and housekeeping.

(From: [www.jobbank.gc.ca](http://www.jobbank.gc.ca) )

The employer **needs** an employee who has

- Flexible hours (under Terms of Employment)
- Specific Skills: Process incoming requisitions, Issue and distribute parts and supplies for internal use, Prepare requisition orders to replenish parts and supplies, Maintain records on inventory control system
- High school
- Good communication skills
- Ability to lift 23 kg
- Essential Skills: Reading text, Document use, Numeracy, Writing, Oral communication, Working with others, Problem solving, Job task planning and organizing, Finding information, Continuous learning

The employer **wants** an employee who has

- Familiarity with lift trucks, forklifts and pallet lifters
- Familiarity with tools and parts
- Experience ordering supplies
- The ability to learn quickly
- Quick and careful work habits
- Tidy work habits

Listing the wants and needs of an employer is a critical step in creating an effective resume and cover letter. It will help you to identify which of your skills and experience they are looking for.

Do you want to learn more about finding an employer's wants and needs? You can also search the NOC database to discover employment requirements for specific occupations.

Search the NOC at:

[www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/NOC/English/NOC/2006/SearchIndex.aspx](http://www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/NOC/English/NOC/2006/SearchIndex.aspx).

OR

Type **National Occupational Classification** into your search engine. Click on **Search the NOC**.



Read the NOC description to learn about the **Main Duties and Employment Requirements** for a specific occupation. These can give you information about wants and needs that may or may not be included in a job ad. Learn more about the NOC in **Workbook Two** of this series.

## Activity Two: Practise Reading Job Ads to Find Employer Needs and Wants



### Essential Skills Tip: Reading, Computer Use

- Read job ads to find employer needs and wants
- Use an Internet job board

Use an Internet job board like [www.jobbank.gc.ca](http://www.jobbank.gc.ca) or [www.localwork.ca](http://www.localwork.ca) to find a job that you would like to apply for. If you prefer, you can also use a local listing from an employment agency.

Make a list of employer needs and wants. If you aren't clear whether a skill is a want or a need, include it as a need.

Employer Needs	Employer Wants



Understanding needs and wants is an excellent way of marketing yourself to the employer. To know your audience (the employer), you will also want to research their business. You can learn more about researching a business and informational interviews in **Workbook Four**.

## Develop the Message



### Essential Skills Tip: Reading

- Read to learn about developing your message for job searching

Marketers recognize that they are really sending messages to their customers. Marketers send messages telling customers what they want to hear. The next time you see a big billboard ad, ask yourself, “What is the message?” Marketers spend a lot of time and money connecting customers to products with a message. They do a lot of market research to learn about what kinds of messages to send.

Remember that the employer is the customer who you are marketing to. Your message to the employer is in your resume and cover letter. This message needs to be the one that the employer wants to hear.

Career coaches are now estimating that employers will scan a resume in six to thirty seconds.

One way to do this is to make sure that you talk about how your skills, experience and education will benefit the employer.

Many resumes are made up of lists of skills, experiences and education. Some employers may take the time to figure out how this list will benefit them, but most will not. Career coaches are now estimating that employers will scan a resume in six to thirty seconds. If you want your resume to have an impact, then you need to focus on the benefits that your experience, education and training will bring to the employer.

Try not to list skills and experience on your resume or in your cover letter without asking yourself if they can be translated into benefits to the employer. If you cannot state clearly what a skill or experience means to an employer, it may be better to leave it off of your resume. Your skills and experience ought to speak clearly of their benefits to the employer.

## Activity Three: Record the Benefits of Your Skills and Experience



### Essential Skills Tip: Writing

- Make a list of your skills and experience. Write a brief phrase describing their benefits to the employer

1. Make a list of at least five skills and experiences that you have included in your resume.
2. Beside each one write out their benefits to the employer

Skill or experience	Benefit to the Employer
<b>Example:</b> Used a cash register	I have experience with cash, debit and credit sales.
<b>Example:</b> Customer service	Good people skills, experience solving problems, ability to work with others
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Remember that your resume and cover letter are marketing tools to help you get to the next step in your job search: the interview. Keep these simple marketing principles in mind when you are creating your resume and cover letter in order to target your potential employer as effectively as possible.

## Part Two: Your Resume



### Accessing Great Resources for Your Resume

There are so many resources out there that you should never use just one to create your resume. Instead, look at several web and print resources. Look at examples of good and bad resumes. Explore the different formats and the different templates. You will begin to get a good sense of what will work for your material and what won't.

The following is a list of popular resume and job search guides from a group of career counsellors. You can also visit your public library and local employment agency to see more book titles.

#### Online Resources

[www.monster.ca](http://www.monster.ca) has good resume resources under their Career and Advice tab. Click on resumes and letters.

[www.quintcareers.com](http://www.quintcareers.com) is an excellent website for many career planning subjects. This website has lots of useful information about resume writing.

[www.susanireland.com](http://www.susanireland.com) provides an online tutorial on resume writing, including YouTube videos.



## Print Resources

**Resumes for Dummies** by Joyce Lain Kennedy

**The Damn Good Resume Guide** by Yana Parker

**Can I Wear My Nose Ring to the Interview?** by Ellen Gordon Reeves

### Success Tip

Commit yourself to exploring one new resume site or print resource daily. Based on the new knowledge you gain, change your resume so that it is an improved marketing tool.

## How Do Employers Read Resumes?

Job searchers are encouraged to spend as much time as possible revising their resumes for success. Therefore, it can be discouraging to hear the statistics on how little time an employer actually spends with a resume. Keep these facts in mind when you are writing your resume.

1. Employers do not read every word on a resume. They scan resumes, looking for information that jumps out at them, usually in the form of keywords.
2. Employers are as interested in finding reasons to reject a resume as they are for keeping it. If an employer has a stack of resumes to get through, any reason – from too much text to a typo – is good enough for sending that resume to the shredder.
3. For the employer, a job opening is a problem that needs to be solved. Your resume should provide clear evidence that you are good employee material and that their problem will disappear when you are hired.
4. The employer will scan your list of skills and experience, looking for benefits to their business.

Always look at your resume from the perspective of the employer. It is the only perspective that the employer is interested in, and the only one that will get you an interview.

## Activity Four: Resume Scanning



### Essential Skills Tip: Reading, Working with Others

- Read a colleague's resume
- Work with others to improve your resume



Exchange resumes with your job search colleagues. Have your colleagues scan your resume for no more than 30 seconds. Ask your colleagues which points of your resume stood out for them. Are these the points that you hope the employer will see?

Read through the next section, "The Six C's of Resume Writing". Make changes to your resume based on the Six C's. The really important material will become clearer for the employer, even if they only take 30 seconds to scan your resume.

## The Six C's of Resume Writing



### Essential Skills Tip: Reading

- Read text to learn the value of the Six C's for your resume

- I Collect: Have I **collected** the raw materials to construct my resume?
- II Clear: Is my resume **clear**?
- III Concise: Is my resume **concise**?
- IV Concrete: Is my resume **concrete**?
- V Convincing: Is my resume **convincing**?
- VI Correct: Is my resume **correct**?



There are countless guides to creating the perfect resume. Every Internet article you find, every book you read will give you a slightly different angle on the ideal resume. You need to decide what to include and what to exclude, and present this information in a way that is helpful to the employer. The Six C's of Resume Writing will provide a checklist to ensure that your resume has all of the essential information.

### 1. **Collect: Have I Collected the Raw Materials to Construct My Resume?**

Before you begin writing a resume, you need to collect your material. In its simplest form a resume is made up of:

- Skills
- Experience
- Education and training
- Other interests

Begin your resume planning by writing a list of skills, experience, education and training, and other interests. This list becomes the raw materials to use when building your resume.



## Activity Five: Collecting Information for Your Resume



### Essential Skills Tip: Writing, Thinking

- Record work experience on an information sheet
- Decide what information to include on an information sheet

The first step in writing a resume, therefore, is gathering information. If you completed Workbook One, much of the needed information is already available to you in the four documents you created. Review the information you have assembled in Workbook One to complete this activity.

If you have not completed Workbook One, you will need to create a list of things that you have done.

1. Review every job you have had if you have had five or fewer jobs. Or review all of the jobs you have had in the past 10-12 years. Write them down on the Information Sheet that follows this activity on page 28. If you completed Workbook One, you will find this information in your Work History Record.
2. For each job, think about your responsibilities and achievements. Write them down. If you completed Workbook One, you will find this information in your Workplace Tasks, Responsibilities and Situations Chart.
3. If you have spent considerable time unemployed, employed in the home or volunteering, review your non-earning activities. Write them down. Think about your responsibilities and achievements and write them down. If you completed Workbook One, you will find this information in your Home, School and Community Tasks, Responsibilities and Situations Chart.

4. Add dates to your jobs and your responsibilities and achievements. Look at the entries below as examples of what your list might look like.

Job/Job Title and Date	Responsibilities and Achievements
<b>Coles Bookstore – Sales Clerk</b> <b>2005-2007</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full time employee</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sold books</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Top customer service award twice</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keyholder</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worked on cash</li> </ul>
<b>Library Volunteer</b> <b>2002-2004</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shelved books</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helped clients find books</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helped clients use computers</li> </ul>

5. Make a note of all of the education and training you have had. Your list may include:
- High school or GED
  - College courses
  - Workshops
  - Personal interest workshops
  - Upgrading
  - On the job training

If you are a recent high school graduate, include your high school.

Include certificates and degrees.

Record the details and dates of your training.

**Here is an example of what your list might look like:**

**Education and Training**

- WHMIS training 2010
- Food Safe food handler course 2009
- 2007 Microsoft Office, 2008
- Ikebana courses 2004, 2006
- Level One Coaching Certificate, NCCP (National Coaching Certificate Program) 2008
- Currently training for level two soccer coaching certification

You should now have lists of your experience, and education and training. These lists are the raw materials that will help you build your resume.

## Information Sheet

Job/Job Title and Date	Responsibilities and Achievements

## II. Clear: Is My Resume Clear?

If you know that your resume may only be in the employer's hands for a few moments, how does this change how you present your materials? You must make its content clear so that there are no misunderstandings on the employer's part, and they get the message that you want them to hear.

Be clear on what it is that the employer is looking for. Because you will have already collected materials from your experience, education and training, you will be able to focus on what you have that the employer needs and wants.

### Activity Six: Write a Description of an Ideal Employee



#### Essential Skills Tip: Writing

- Write a description of an ideal employee to give yourself a clear picture

1. Try this. Work with a job ad from [www.jobbank.gc.ca](http://www.jobbank.gc.ca), [www.localwork.ca](http://www.localwork.ca) or a local job board. Circle or highlight the skills and experience that the employer needs and wants. When you have finished reading the ad, write a description of the ideal employee that the employer is looking for.
2. On a separate piece of paper write a description of yourself as the ideal employee. Use examples from your responsibilities and achievements.

Be **clear** in your presentation. Employers will not hunt for information in your resume, so you need to present it clearly. One way to do this is to choose the best resume format for your material.

There are three standard resume formats: **chronological**, **functional** and **combination**. Your work history and employment goals can help you select which type of resume is best for you.

## Chronological Resume

Chronological is the traditional resume format. You list your work experience beginning with the most recent in chronological order. The chronological resume emphasizes your employment experience and job duties. Employers look for sequences that demonstrate jobs of increasing responsibility. This type of resume is the most popular, but there are some situations where it is not the best choice of format. If most of your experience has been in one field, you have no large employment gaps, and you plan to apply for a job in the same field, then a chronological resume is a good choice. Chronological resumes are also the standard for many Internet job boards.

You may choose to use a chronological resume if:

- ✓ You have no large employment gaps
- ✓ Your employment history shows a clear progression in position and responsibility

## Functional Resume

The functional resume format emphasizes the importance of achievements and skills rather than sequential work history. If you have recently left school and have little employment experience, a functional resume can better demonstrate your potential worth to an employer. The down side of this format is that many employers mistrust it because it does not give them sufficient data on your actual employment history. If

you like the idea of a functional resume because you are changing careers or returning to the workforce after an absence, then you might consider the combination resume instead.

You may choose to use a functional resume if:

- ✓ You have employment gaps
- ✓ You have little work experience
- ✓ You are changing careers and wish to emphasize your transferable skills



# Combination Resume

As you can guess, this format combines elements from both a **chronological** and a **functional** resume. A combination format begins by emphasizing your achievements and skills, followed by a short employment history section. The first section is functional. It focuses on your transferable skills and experiences most relevant to the job for which you are applying. This makes it a good format for older workers or those seeking a career change.

The employment history section includes former job titles, names and locations of employers, and dates of employment. It doesn't list what you did in each job because that information is included in your functional section.

You may choose to use a combination resume if:

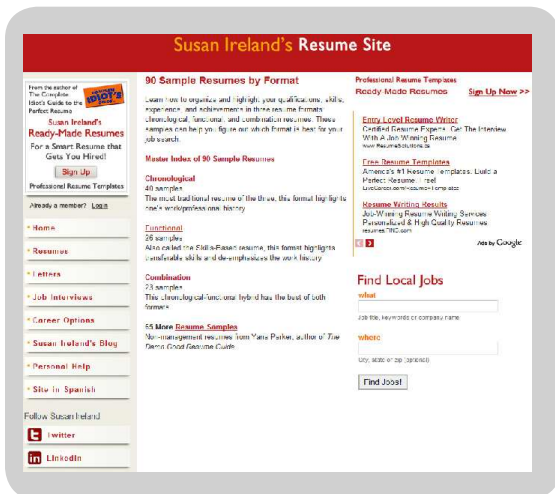
- ✓ You have a long and varied employment history
- ✓ You have specific skills and achievements to highlight
- ✓ You have a good chronological work history

Read more about resume formats and see examples at:

<http://susanireland.com/resume/examples/format/>

OR

Enter [susanireland.com](http://susanireland.com) into your search engine and click on **resume samples**.



**Success Tip**  
If you do not think that your resume has been working hard enough for you, try using one of the other formats. In particular, try the combination resume if you have not yet done so.

### III. Concise: Is My Resume Concise?

Resume experts are divided in opinion as to whether your resume should be limited to one page or two. What they do agree upon is that your resume should be as concise as possible. If you can say what you need to say to get an interview on one page, then one page will be more effective than two.

Be concise by avoiding sentences. Your resume is one of the few places where you should not write in complete sentences! Instead of saying, "I worked as a busboy before being promoted to wait staff," say "Busboy" and give the date and then "Promoted to wait staff" and give the date.

Be concise by avoiding the pronoun "I". Another way of writing the information in the example above is to remove the "I" and say "bussed tables" and "waited on tables".

Be concise by selecting the right information from your skills, experience, education and training, and interests. Your prospective employer does not need to know every job or experience you have had. You can alert him or her to the fact that you are choosing those jobs that are most relevant by saying something like, "Selected Experience" or "Employment Highlights".

#### **The Objective Statement**

An objective statement is a short statement at the top of your resume that tells the employer how you will be of value to their organization.

Few topics seem to divide career counsellors and experts more than the objective statement. Should you include one or not? You will find that there are advantages and disadvantages no matter what you decide.

Remember that space on your single or two page resume is at a premium, and unless you have a really good reason to include an objective statement, the space might be better used highlighting your achievements.

Search "objective statements" online or read these objective statement pros and cons from professional-resumes.com to help you make your decision.

[www.professional-resumes.com/using-a-resume-objective-the-pros-and-cons](http://www.professional-resumes.com/using-a-resume-objective-the-pros-and-cons)



## IV. Concrete: Is My Resume Concrete?



### Essential Skills Tip: Computer Use

- Do a computer keyword search

As much as possible, you want to give the employer a picture of your achievements. Avoid vague language that does not give a clear representation of what you are telling the employer. Use strong verbs and descriptive adjectives. If you can't think of that many, find a website to help you. Type **job seeker action verbs** in your search engine. As an example, check out the Quintessential Careers job seeker action verbs at [www.quintcareers.com/action\\_skills.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/action_skills.html).

Again, think in terms of benefits to the employer. To say that you "Opened and closed the bookstore" does not tell the employer much, although this may have been a feature of your former employment. Instead, you could say, "Key holder, secured doors and safe. Senior staff member, responsible for bank deposits and scheduling of staff breaks." The second description tells the employer that you are responsible, mature and trustworthy. It puts a picture in the employer's mind of you performing important duties that could just as easily take place in their business.

## V. Convincing: Is My Resume Convincing?

Remember that your resume is a marketing tool and that you are trying to sell yourself to the employer. This means providing a selection of details that convinces them that you are a very good candidate for the job. Ask yourself, "Will this detail help convince the employer that I am a good candidate? If not, does it need to be re-written or discarded?"

## VI. Correct: Is My Resume Correct?

Proofread your resume. Then do it again. Then give it to a colleague with a good eye for detail and let them proofread it. Re-check for:

- Spelling
- Grammar
- Missing words
- Incorrect numerals

What's so bad about one tiny mistake? It's really not so tiny. A typo is actually a huge red flag that says, "I cannot be trusted to proofread my own work. I am likely to send out error-ridden letters with your name on them – you'll have to check everything I write."

From: *Can I Wear My Nose Ring to the Interview?* by Ellen Gordon Reeves

One of the most common places for mistakes to go unnoticed is in the personal information right at the top. You will find that when you are looking over your resume that your eye skims over this section, and you don't really read it. In fact, it is all too easy to mistype your email address and phone number.

Cutting and pasting from other versions of your resume can also create errors that weren't in the original. It can also lead to formatting mishaps that you don't notice until it's too late.

Spell-check can give you a false sense of security. Many typos pass under the spell-check radar because you have typed one word when you mean another. For example, you might find that your resume is **attacked** rather than **attached**.

There is so much information available to you when you are developing your resume. It can be easy to lose sight of the ultimate purpose of your resume: to impress the employer so that you are granted an interview. The Six C's of Resume Writing can help you to remain focussed on the essentials by providing a checklist to review, before you send out your resume.

Here are two more useful resources that can help you to develop a professional resume.

- About.com has a useful guide to proofreading your resume.

<http://jobsearch.about.com/od/resumes/a/resumproof.htm>

OR

(Type **about.com** into your search engine. Click on **job searching** in their list of topics. Click on the **resumes & letters** tab.)

- The Government of Alberta has an excellent resume checklist.

<http://alis.alberta.ca/ep/eps/tips/tips.html?EK=120>

OR

(Type ALIS Alberta into your search engine. On the ALIS (Alberta Learning Information Service) home page click on **Tip sheets** under Popular ALIS Links.



### Essential Skills Tip: Reading

- Read to learn how an e-resume is different from a paper copy

So far, the principles we have discussed work equally well for a print or an online resume. However, e-resumes have an extra set of rules that you need to know. An e-resume is an electronic resume that you can

- Send by email
- Post on an Internet job board
- Load onto your own webpage

**Keywords** are the specific words or phrases employers use to find potential employees online.

According to Susan Ireland, author of *The Complete Idiot's Guide to the Perfect Resume*, most employers now prefer to receive a resume electronically, either by email or online. If you are emailing the employer, you can attach a copy of your resume as a Word document. However, if you are posting your resume online, then you need to prepare an e-resume.

E-resumes are similar to paper resumes in many respects, but there are differences, and it is important to know what they are. An e-resume needs to work well in a database system. Online resume databases first store and then search large numbers of resumes quickly and accurately – usually by looking for keywords.

If your resume is going to be entered into an electronic database, you will want to use as many keywords as possible. The database will count the number of keywords (and often similar words) per resume, and the resumes will be ranked based on the number of keywords. If you think about the employer who rapidly scans your resume for keywords for his or her business, you will notice that this electronic method is more accurate, but not so very different.

As much as possible, incorporate your keywords into the statements in your resume text and look for opportunities to list your keywords.

## Keywords

Everyone agrees that keywords are essential to an e-resume. Unfortunately, there is no standardized list that you can use to pick your keywords. Here are two tips to get you started on your own keyword list:

1. Keywords are usually nouns or noun phrases. Earlier, we discussed the importance of strong verbs in your resume. Now you are going to need some equally strong nouns.
2. To find keywords for the job you are seeking, read as many job ads as you can. If you read eight job ads for your job and each mentions organizational skills, then this is a keyword for you.

Here are three websites on keywords:

Quintessential Careers offers a list of resources to help you find keywords for your resume.

[www.quintcareers.com/identifying\\_resume\\_keywords.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/identifying_resume_keywords.html)

OR

(Type **quintcareers keywords** into your search engine.)

E-how tells you how to find and then include keywords.

[www.ehow.com/how\\_2108479\\_use-keywords-resume.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_2108479_use-keywords-resume.html)

[www.ehow.com/how\\_5041584\\_use-keywords-resume.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_5041584_use-keywords-resume.html)

For these E-how articles, type **E-how resume keywords** into your search engine.



## Activity Seven: Create an e-Resume Using Keywords



### Essential Skills Tip: Computer Use

- Create an e-resume

Use [www.jobbank.gc.ca](http://www.jobbank.gc.ca) , [www.localwork.ca](http://www.localwork.ca) and a job board to find at least six job ads that you might apply for. For the purposes of this exercise, these jobs do not have to be local but they should be similar jobs. You can use these websites or choose your own.

1. Create a list of keywords from these job ads. Remember to look for nouns that describe the job as well as the skills, experience and qualities the employer is looking for.
2. Change your resume so that it includes at least some of these keywords.



## Posting your e-resume

In order to post your e-resume online without any problems you need to change the format from Microsoft Word to plain text.

1. Open your resume in Microsoft Word
2. Click the **Office button** in the upper left corner of your screen
3. Select **Save As**
4. Select **Other Formats**
5. Select **Plain Text** from the drop down menu

Once your resume is in plain text, it will look very different. You will want to make the content as clear as possible before you post it on an Internet job board. About.com has these pointers for a plain text resume:

- Line length should not exceed 80 characters.
  - Use hard returns (by pressing Enter at the end of each line).
  - You cannot use bullets in plain text format -- instead use asterisks (\*) or dashes (-).
  - Use a fixed width (or monospaced) font, e.g. 10 point Courier or Consolas. (For more information search **monospaced fonts** online.)
  - Use the space bar to line up your text.
  - Align your text to the left, and use spaces to centre text if you need to.
- (from: [careerplanning.about.com/cs/resumewriting/a/ascii\\_resume.htm](http://careerplanning.about.com/cs/resumewriting/a/ascii_resume.htm))



The fact is that most e-resumes aren't intended to be visually attractive because their main function is not to be seen but to be searched in keyword-searchable databases.

[www.quintcareers.com/e-resumes](http://www.quintcareers.com/e-resumes)

Job bank has some great tips for creating an e-resume at

[www.jobsetc.gc.ca/pieces.jsp?category\\_id=523&root\\_id=201&crumb=1&crumb=34&crumb=106](http://www.jobsetc.gc.ca/pieces.jsp?category_id=523&root_id=201&crumb=1&crumb=34&crumb=106)

OR

1. Go to the Job Bank homepage. In the sidebar, click on **Training and Careers**.
2. Click on **Jobs**
3. Click on **More help with your job search**
4. Click on **How do I market myself**
5. Click on **Resumes**

Or, you may find it easier to search from the Job Bank homepage.

1. Go to the Job Bank and click **English**
2. Under Job Seekers/Workers click **More help with your job search**
3. Click **How Do I Market Myself**
4. Click **Resumes**
5. Click **Electronic Resumes**

### **Success Tip**

You can convert your resume to an e-resume, suitable for posting to an Internet job board. Don't forget –

- ✓ Use as many keywords as you can.
- ✓ Convert your Word document to plain text.
- ✓ Make the necessary formatting changes.
- ✓ Leave out your phone number, street address and postal code (for your privacy and online security), but do include the city or town in which you live.

## Your “Other” e-Resume



### Essential Skills Tip: Reading

- Read about the importance of knowing your online profile

In his book, *The Job Hunter's Survival Guide*, Richard Bolles makes the claim that you already have an online resume.

There is a new resume in town, and if you've been at all active on the Internet – if you've been on Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, or if you have your own website or webcasts or photo album or blog or tweets – then there's hardly any limit to what employers can learn about you. They have only to 'Google' your name and see what turns up.

From *The Job Hunter's Survival Guide*, Richard N. Bolles

This isn't only Richard Bolles' point of view. Newsweek ran an online article titled **“You Are What You Post: Bosses are using Google to peer into places job interviews can't take them,”** and this was in 2006. The fact is, checking up on current and potential employees has only increased in popularity as a screening tool for employers.

The message? You can't afford to ignore your e-image.

A recent Microsoft survey of employers

- 85% of those responding say that a positive online reputation influences their hiring decisions
- 70% say they have rejected candidates based on information they found online.
- Just 7% of U.S. consumers surveyed believe online data affected their job search.

(Source: [www.naceweb.org/Publications/Spotlight Online/2010/0317/Most Employers Call for HR to Research Candidates Online.aspx](http://www.naceweb.org/Publications/Spotlight%20Online/2010/0317/Most_Employers_Call_for_HR_to_Research_Candidates_Online.aspx))



## Activity Eight: Search Yourself on the Internet



### **Essential Skills Tip: Working with Others, Thinking** (Decide, Identify and Solve Problems), **Computer Use**

- Work with others to do online personal profile searches
- Decide whether or not your online image is suitable for an employer's eyes. If it isn't, fix it.
- Use the computer to search personal profiles

The best way to assess your online image is to search yourself on the Internet.

Work in groups of three and four and search one another on the Internet. Don't forget to search yourself! Then, discuss with one another what you have found and the impact this information may have on your job search.

Type your name or colleague's name in Google.ca and search.

Repeat this search for nicknames or shortened names. For example, you might find nothing under Kristine Smith, but a wealth of information under Kris or Kiki.

Depending on what you and your colleagues find, you may wish to clean up your image. There are many websites and tip sheets devoted to this topic. Many of them suggest these five basic steps.

1. Make sure your social network sites such as Facebook and Twitter are private. Keep security as tight as possible.
2. Even if they are private, make sure that your network sites have a PG rating. Delete offensive language and photos.
3. Add information that improves your image and employability. For example, round out your profile on Facebook or LinkedIn. Include areas of interest that will appeal to potential employers.

4. Use a formal email address on your resume. The email address that you use for your online profiles should be different from the one you will have on your resume.
5. When you have finished your clean up, double-check your profile to see how it looks. It is a good idea to regularly check your online profile.

For more instructions, you can Google **How to clean up my online image**, or check the website below.

[www.ehow.com/how\\_2285792\\_clean-up-online-image-job](http://www.ehow.com/how_2285792_clean-up-online-image-job)

OR

Go to [ehow.com](http://ehow.com) and type in **How to clean up your online image**.

The screenshot shows an eHow article page. On the left, there is a sidebar with 'Top 5 To Try' and several related article links. The main content area features the article title 'How to Clean Up Your Online Image for Job Interviews' by an eHow Contributor. Below the title are social media sharing buttons for 'Like' and 'Tweet'. The article text explains the importance of online image during job searches and provides instructions. A 'Things you'll need' box lists 'Internet access' and 'Computer'. The instructions are numbered 1 through 3.

**Top 5 To Try**

- How to Handle Rude Job Interviewers
- How to Increase Your Chances of Getting a Job Interview
- How to Stay Calm in a Job Interview
- How to Believe Well on your job interview
- How to Standout in an Job Interview

**How to Clean Up Your Online Image for Job Interviews**  
By an eHow Contributor

Like Tweet 0

During the job search, your online image is now just as important as your resume, your interview and your skill set. Think your online journal won't matter? Your pictures and notes online have a big impact on a hiring decision, and employers are looking! Improve your odds of employment and clean up your online image fast.

**Instructions** Difficulty: Moderately Challenging

**1** First, you have to decide whether you want to delete your personal information online, or disguise your sites under a pseudonym. If you decide on a pseudonym, you will need to set up a free email account (such as Hotmail, Gmail or Yahoo!) that does not list any of your personal information.

**2** Next, take any personal sites you may have under your name and switch these sites to log in under your anonymous email address.

**3** Also, delete any addresses and personal contact information you may have. It is never a good idea to have this information online, but it's also especially easy to find your sites online when you have this information up for employers to search for.

**Things you'll need:**

- Internet access
- Computer

**Clean-up and Clean-out**  
Senior downsizing estate clean out and property clean up  
[www.cleanupcleanoutservice.com](http://www.cleanupcleanoutservice.com)

**Clear Criminal Record**  
Start Working Sooner Than You Think-Get an Express Pardon Now  
[www.ExpressPardons.com/](http://www.ExpressPardons.com/)

**13 Weeks of Externships**  
Advanced Med Assistant

# Cover Letters



## Essential Skills Tip: Reading

- Read information about cover letters

Many job seekers feel more confident in creating a resume than they do in creating a cover letter. Whereas your resume should be presented in short point form, your cover letter needs to be written in well-constructed sentences, free of grammatical (and spelling) errors. Like the resume, the cover letter is a marketing tool, and it needs to tell the employer how you will uniquely benefit their company. The cover letter does this without repeating your resume content.

### Purpose of a cover letter

You have probably found one of those glossy ads in your mailbox for pizza and wings. It is a single page that tries to hook you into calling for takeout. It doesn't list a full menu but highlights a few items proven to be the most popular.

A good cover letter should function in the same way. It highlights a few things that the employer wants to see in such a way that they want to call that number. If the employer calls and you get the interview, then the purpose of the cover letter is achieved.

Just as the pizza and wings ad always includes a photograph of a delicious looking pizza and succulent wings, your cover letter needs to provide a "picture" of you as the right employee for the job. Not an actual photo of course, but examples and statements. These will help employers see you as a good fit for their workplace.

## Cover letter resources

The good news is that, like the resume, the cover letter is discussed in many resources. Also like the resume, one of the best ways to improve your cover letter writing skills is to read lots and lots of letters. After a while you will get a sense of what a good cover letter looks and reads like. The following websites are helpful resources for cover letter writing.

1. CanadianCareers.com has excellent all around job search advice at [www.canadiancareers.com](http://www.canadiancareers.com)

To access great information on cover letters, click on the **Market yourself** link and then on **Cover letter guide**.

2. About.com has a good job search section that includes cover letter examples. [www.jobsearch.about.com/od/coverletters/Cover Letters](http://www.jobsearch.about.com/od/coverletters/Cover_Letters)

Or you can just search **cover letter examples** to be directed to hundreds of pages.

3. Quintessential Careers has excellent cover letter advice in a tutorial format at [www.quintcareers.com/cover letter tutorial](http://www.quintcareers.com/cover_letter_tutorial)

4. Job Bank also has some very helpful information on cover letters at

[www.jobsetc.gc.ca/pieces.jsp?category\\_id=202&crumb=1&crumb=34&crumb=106&crumb=202](http://www.jobsetc.gc.ca/pieces.jsp?category_id=202&crumb=1&crumb=34&crumb=106&crumb=202)

OR

You may find it easier to search from the Job Bank homepage.

1. Go to Job Bank and click **English**
2. Under Job Seekers/Workers click **More help with your job search**
3. Click **How Do I Market Myself**
4. Click **Cover letters**

## What to include in your cover letter

You can use this outline for a standard single page cover letter. This format includes the important parts of a good cover letter.

Your address  
City, Province  
Postal Code

Date

(Leave 4 spaces with your Enter key)

Name of person in charge of hiring  
His/her title  
Name of Company  
Company address  
City, Province  
Postal Code

(Leave 4 spaces with your Enter key)

Dear Mr./ Ms. \_\_\_\_\_:

**1st paragraph:** Tell why you are writing. List the position or title, or a description of the job to which you are applying. Tell how you heard of the opening or organization. Mention who referred you, if applicable.

**2nd paragraph:** Mention one or two of your best and most appropriate qualifications or skills for this particular position. Tell what you know about the company, based on research you have done. If you can, let the employer know of a particular place in the company in which you would fit. Describe any information that is directly related to the position you want.

**3rd paragraph:** Refer to the enclosed application and resume. Let the employer know when you will be calling to set up an interview.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

(4 spaces - Handwritten Signature)

Your name (typed)

Phone number

## Activity Nine: Writing a Cover Letter



### Essential Skills Tip: Writing

- Write a cover letter

1. Return to your Information Sheet on page 28.
2. Return to Activity Seven on page 37 and select one of the job ads you chose for that activity.
3. Use your information sheet and the job ad to help you write a cover letter using the format on page 45.

Make the employer want to meet with you by showing how your skills and experience meet the needs of the employer. It takes time to create effective, targeted cover letters, but it is definitely worth the time and effort.

CanadianCareers.com

### Here are some other tips to keep in mind for a well-crafted cover letter.

- ✓ Be brief. The cover letter should not exceed one page.
- ✓ Tell the employer why you are writing – don't assume they know! They may have several positions available. You want to let them know that you are applying for a specific position and not merely sending random resumes to various employers.
- ✓ Call attention to the skills and experience included in your resume that are particularly suited to the job.
- ✓ Use the job posting to guide your cover letter content. You should try to address all of the employer's requirements.

- ✓ Let your experience illustrate your skills. In fact, remember the wings and pizza! Showing the employer how you used your skills is much more effective than saying for example, “I am organized and have good time management skills.” Instead, mention that your boss entrusted you with organizing industry safety meetings.
- ✓ Quote a co-worker or use a line from a written evaluation to highlight your skills and abilities. This is a great way to emphasize your abilities without sounding conceited.
- ✓ Allow your personality to shine through in your cover letter with a positive and upbeat attitude. You want the employer to be interested in you and to want to know you better.
- ✓ Be accurate. Like your resume, you should double and triple check your letter and then have a friend or colleague with good grammar skills go over it as well.

Your resume and cover letter are the most important documents you will create for your job search. Take the time to do a professional job, using websites and resources to help guide you. Take advantage of expert tips and advice so that you can produce a resume and cover letter that will take you one step closer to a job: the interview.



Job interviews are the focus of **Workbook Six**.



## Remember to Check Your Skills

Take time to return to page 11 and fill in the Essential Skills Checklist. This checklist can help you keep track of the Essential Skills you use well and those that you have improved. It can also help you to highlight those skills that need more work and practice.

# Essential Skills for Job Search Success

## Workbook titles in this series include:

1. Essential Skills to Identify the Job Searcher
2. Essential Skills to Identify the Job
3. Essential Skills to Research Your Occupation
4. Essential Skills to Search for Jobs
5. **Essential Skills to Market Yourself with a Resume and Cover Letter**
6. Essential Skills to Market Yourself at the Interview
7. Essential Skills to Maintain Employability



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Phone: 519-681-7307

Web: [www.llsc.on.ca](http://www.llsc.on.ca)

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