

CITY
COLLEGE
OF SAN FRANCISCO

**Career Development
Counseling Department**
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RESUME HANDBOOK

**How to
create a
resume &
cover letter**

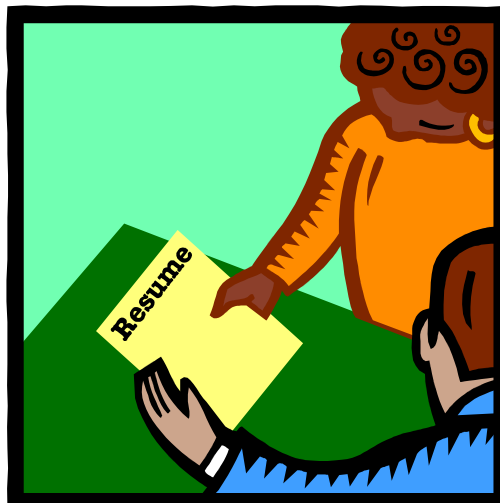
**Example
resumes &
cover letter**

**Tips &
advice to
make your
resume
stand out**



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For more assistance with your resume, make an appointment to see a career counselor at the Career Development and Counseling Center, Ocean Campus, Multi-Use Building M039
Call: (415) 239-3117.

RESUME TYPES

A good resume should give an employer a quick overview of what you have to offer that **relates** to the job for which you are applying. It's a marketing tool, it's **YOU IN WORDS**. Because it usually goes to the employer before you do, your resume is **YOUR REPRESENTATIVE** and it must be **AS GOOD AS YOU CAN MAKE IT**. Ideally, it will give the employer a clear, **MENTAL PICTURE** of you doing his or her job, and therefore, get you an interview! But, before you can write your resume, you must do a thorough **ASSESSMENT** of your skills, knowledge, and experience. Otherwise, how will you know what you've got? Attend workshops or meet with a counselor if you do not know how to analyze your skills and experience or identify your knowledge and talents.

There are **two main types** of resumes (although there many other varieties):

- 1) **CHRONOLOGICAL** (based in time) and
- 2) **FUNCTIONAL, also called SKILLS-BASED**

Chronological resumes are fine for:

- 1) people who are "climbing the ladder" in a particular field or industry
- 2) people who are moving from job to job in the same type of position

Functional resumes are good for:

- 1) career changers (who usually highlight their retraining or education)
- 2) people who have worked many different kinds of jobs
- 3) people with little work experience

EVERYTHING OUTLINED BELOW APPLIES TO BOTH TYPES OF RESUMES.

- **ALWAYS LIST THE PHONE NUMBER THAT ALLOWS YOU TO RECEIVE A VOICEMAIL MESSAGE** (to avoid employer confusion, list just ONE number). *Make it easy for an employer to contact you.* If a land line is your only phone, get an answering machine – DON'T rely on family members or roommates to take your messages. If you list a cell phone number, be careful about **where** you answer a call. You must be in a place that is quiet enough to talk to a prospective employer. Remember, **THE PHONE CONTACT IS YOUR FIRST INTERVIEW.**
- **You MUST list an e-mail address**, but it must be businesslike. *Avoid "FUNNY" or CUTE* – **krazykid@hotmail.com** is OK for friends and family but does *not* make a good impres-

sion on an employer. A **BETTER IDEA** is to get an e-mail address just for your job search, and make it some kind of easy-to-type combination of your name. A separate address means that your personal e-mail won't be mixed in with your job search messages. **REMEMBER: CHECK YOUR E-MAIL EVERY DAY.**

- **USE AN OBJECTIVE** (the title of the job you want). Without it, an employer might not know which job you are applying for, and you will lack an **ORGANIZING KEY** for the rest of your resume. **YOU MUST KNOW WHAT THE RESUME IS FOR** or you can't select which accomplishments and experiences to highlight.
- **ALWAYS FOLLOW THE OBJECTIVE WITH A SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS.** You can call it what you want—Profile, Highlights, Qualifications—but it must be there. Why? Because employers have very little time to screen resumes, and if they do not find what they are looking for quickly, the resume goes in the garbage. If you have a job description listing qualifications, your summary should show which qualifications you have that match the employers needs.
- **USE ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENTS**, when talking about your work history, don't just list tasks and responsibilities. Employers want to know how **YOU** did the job so they can imagine you doing **THEIR** jobs. Remember **PAR**—**Project** or Problem you worked on, **Action** you took, and **Results** of your work. Start with the action by using **ACTION VERBS**. Example: “Designed and produced (**ACTION**) informational brochure for nonprofit organization (**PROJECT**) that increased membership by 10% in 6 months (**RESULTS**).
- **DON'T GIVE YOUR WHOLE LIFE HISTORY**, focus on what is relevant to the job you want. It is **NOT** lying to leave out parts of your life that don't relate to your objective. It is easy for an employer to choose you for an interview if he or she doesn't have to sift through a lot of unnecessary text to find the good stuff!
- **AVOID NEGATIVES.** Human beings discriminate, and you don't want to be ruled out before you get to the interview. If a piece of information doesn't help you, follow the old saying, **WHEN IN DOUBT, LEAVE IT OUT** (see above).

- **NEVER, NEVER, NEVER** leave misspellings, grammatical errors, stray marks, or any other “goofs” on any of your documents. If you do, what does it say about you? (See above—**YOUR REPRESENTATIVE.**). Proofread, proofread, proofread.

RESUME WORKSHEET: Gather the Information

Heading:

Name: _____ Address:

Phone (with voicemail): _____ E-mail address:

Resume Focus – What job is this resume for?

Objective or Job Target:

Qualifications or Capabilities relating to the objective:

Experience:

Education:

_____ Communication Skills:

_____ Computer Skills:

Personal Strengths:

Education (anything relevant—names of classes relating to the objective, club memberships, good GPA, awards, etc.):

Jobs or Skill-building Situations (volunteer positions, internships, self-employment, community service, assistance to family, etc.):

1)

Analysis of tasks, skills developed, knowledge gained:

2)

Analysis of tasks, skills developed, knowledge gained:

3)

Analysis of tasks, skills developed, knowledge gained:

4)

Analysis of tasks, skills developed, knowledge gained:

5)

Analysis of tasks, skills developed, knowledge gained:

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS, EVENTS, TALENTS:

RESUME TIPS (FOR ALL FORMATS)

- 1) Always “**CUSTOMIZE**” your resume for each employer:
 - a) Make a copy of your resume and alter the copy (save the original)
 - b) Use the employer’s objective (the title of the position)
 - c) Top load your resume by **ALWAYS** including a **PROFILE or SUMMARY of QUALIFICATIONS** after the objective; the employer will read this first
 - d) Take your cues for this from the job description; give your qualifications based on what the employer is asking for
 - e) If you don’t have a description, imagine yourself as the employer and ask yourself “What would I be looking for in an applicant for this type of position?”
- 1) List your **PERSONAL STRENGTHS** as they relate to the job. These are often adjectives that describe you or how you work. Examples: detail oriented, self-motivated, highly organized, efficient, outgoing, thrive under pressure.
- 2) **SELL YOUR EDUCATION**. This is especially important for recent graduates and career changers who may not have work experience outside of the classroom. Describe honors, awards, special projects, and list coursework **BY NAME**, not by number. English 123 doesn’t mean anything to an employer.
- 3) Use all of your experience **THAT RELATES TO YOUR OBJECTIVE. WORK IS WORK IS WORK**, whether paid or unpaid. Consider volunteer work, part-time and temp positions, internships, self-employment, odd jobs, informal services for friends and relatives – any situation that helped you build needed skills for your future job. **A SKILL IS A SKILL IS A SKILL** whether you obtained it on or off the job.
- 4) If you are a career changer or have a varied work history, highlight **TRANSFERABLE SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, and FUNCTIONS** you have that relate to your new career or job.
- 5) Use **SUPERLATIVES** with accomplishments: first, only, highest, best, most. Example: “Won award for highest sales total achieved each week for eight consecutive weeks.”
- 6) **QUANTIFY ACCOMPLISHMENTS** whenever possible—this shows results of achievement and scope of responsibilities. Example: “Prepared forms and correspondence for 9 managers in a busy department handling \$5,000,000 of business per year.”

RESUME PROBLEMS

- 1) **GAPS** in work history: most people these days have some date gaps. If they are not **LONG** gaps, you can usually fill them in by avoiding months (1999 – 2000 instead of 5/1999 – 2/2000).
- 2) Longer gaps can be addressed by stating **SOMETHING POSITIVE**. Examples: “independent study abroad, volunteer, full-time student, full-time homemaker, self-employed, full-time caregiver.” Most people without work aren’t just sitting around.
- 3) **AGEISM**: Although employers are not supposed to discriminate, **THEY ARE HUMAN**. If you are at either end of the spectrum, think about **DATES** and **YEARS** before you mention them. You may not want to give the year you graduated from college. As a general rule, you need not go back further than 10 years in your work history.
- 4) **CAREER CHANGERS**: use a functional, skills-based style of resume.
- 5) **WIDE VARIETY IN TYPES OF JOBS HELD**: as stated above, use the skills-based style.
- 6) **NO EXPERIENCE**: get some through an internship or a volunteer position; in the meantime, highlight your education.
- 7) **SHORT-TERM JOBS**: omit them unless you really need them to support your objective, or explain them: short-term contract, temporary position, etc. You can combine many temporary jobs by listing the **AGENCY** as your employer.
- 8) **BAD JOB TITLES**: rename the job (assuming there will be no conflict with your previous employer). If you performed the function of an Administrative Assistant but your official job title was Clerk, use Administrative Assistant, or Administrative Assistant/Clerk as your title.
- 9) **BIAS FOR CHRONOLOGICAL RESUMES**: if you can’t present yourself well using a chronological type of resume, it’s pointless to use one. Pick the type that represents you the best, whether or not the employer is biased. Remember, the top 1/3 of both types **IS THE SAME**, and that may be all you need to invite an interview.

E-MAIL RESUMES AND COVER LETTERS

- 1) Save your resume as a **TEXT FILE** in a word-processing program.
- 2) Copy that text file **INTO THE BODY OF AN E-MAIL** or into the website's template (box) when you apply for a job.
- 1) Be sure to send a clear message with your **SUBJECT LINE**. Example: APPLICATION FOR POSITION OF ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT.
- 2) **CHECK** instructions before submitting a resume as a Word attachment; if possible send a PDF instead so that it will look good on the other end.
- 1) If you'll be posting your resume on a bulletin board for employers to view, **DON'T GIVE YOUR HOME ADDRESS** or **PRIVATE PHONE NUMBER** and use a new e-mail address just for the job hunt.
- 2) **LIMIT EACH LINE** in your resume to 60 characters if pasting into the body of an e-mail or into an online template.
- 3) Use **UPPERCASE** for headings (i.e., OBJECTIVE, PROFILE), use * (asterisk) for bullets; all other special formatting will drop out.
- 4) **TOPLOAD** your resume by putting the most important information first in a summary or profile.
- 5) Run the **SPELLCHECK**, if it is available.
- 6) **PROOFREAD** several times – spell-check won't flag “morals” when you meant to say “morale.”
- 7) Always **SEND A SHORT COVER LETTER**; many employers want to check to see if you can write a coherent sentence. Address the letter to the contact person OR to the Human Resources Manager or Personnel Director or the Hiring Committee as appropriate. Say: **1)** where you saw the listing **2)** that you have the skills to do the job as advertised **3)** why you'd like the work and what you can contribute, including something you know about the company (if it's been identified). **READ THE COMPANY'S WEBSITE** and pay special attention to what they say about themselves, their vision, their mission, and their statement of goals, if any.

SCANNABLE RESUMES

- 1) A scannable resume is one that can be read by a computer with special resume scanning software (such as RESUMIX) that hunts for **KEYWORDS**.
- 2) For scannable resumes, avoid italics, underlines, columns, and boxes.
- 3) Use a standard font: **HELVETICA, TIMES NEW ROMAN, FUTURA, ARIAL** are good choices.
- 4) Use an appropriate font size: **12 POINT** is good; no smaller than 11.
- 5) If sending by snail mail, use white paper; no staples on a two-pager; uppercase letters only for **HEADINGS**.
- 6) **NO BRACKETS OR PARENTHESES** in phone numbers. Example: 415-852-3304
- 7) Use the **KEYWORDS** that were **MENTIONED IN THE JOB DESCRIPTION** or that are applicable to the position title. Example: if you are applying for a job as an electronics technician, you must say **ELECTRONICS TECHNICIAN** somewhere in the resume.
- 8) Focus on **NOUNS** rather than active verbs. Examples: self-starter, team leader, public speaking, HTML programmer.
- 9) Use the **BUZZWORDS** of the industry to which you're applying. **AVOID** abbreviations.
- 10) If sending your resume by snail mail: use a laser printer rather than an inkjet, and don't fold it. **NO SMUDGES**.
- 11) **DON'T FAX** a resume that will be scanned – e-mail is OK if the employer says so. When you don't know if a company scans resumes, call up the human resources department and ask, or check the website. Scanning programs are often used by **LARGE** organizations and companies (banks, for example).

POSITIVE ACTION WORDS

To make your resume stand out, you must choose words that are action-oriented and memorable. This will help employers see the qualities that make you a good employee.

Tip: Although the following lists of words are synonyms for each others, it is recommended that you look up the definition of the words you would like to use. This ensures that you are describing your qualification(s) accurately.

Management	Communication	Research
Developed	Defined	Recognized
Planned	Clarified	Clarified
Organized	Listened	Surveyed
Executed	Explained	Interviewed
Supervised	Presented	Investigated
Scheduled	Demonstrated	Inspected
Assigned	Influenced	Gathered
Directed	Persuaded	Synthesized
Coordinated	Helped	Examined
Analyzed	Directed	Diagnosed
Prioritized	Led	Reviewed
Delegated	Reasoned	Organized
Hired	Sold	Evaluated
Fired	Developed	Critiqued
Recommended	Recruited	Perceived
Evaluated	Created	Collected
Administered	Negotiated	Wrote
Contracted	Arbitrated	Interpreted
Produced	Arranged	Extrapolated
Controlled	Mediated	Decided
Reviewed	Reconciled	Synthesized
Managed	Merged	Analyzed
Set Priorities	Obtained	
Negotiated	Wrote	
Monitored	Interpreted	
	Enlisted	
	Motivated	
	Manipulated	
	Read	
	Spoke	
	Organized	

Financial	Manual	Helping
Calculated	Operated	Related
Computed	Tended	Guided
Planned	Controlled	Led
Managed	Ground	Adjusted
Budgeted	Assembled	Serviced
Audited	Set-up	Referred
Appraised	Fed	Rendered
Researched	Cut	Attended
Analyzed	Bound	Cared
Detailed	Drove	Listened
Accuracy	Moved	Spoke
Allocated	Lifted	Directed
(Financial Cont'd)	(Manual Cont'd)	(Helping Cont'd)
Administered	Bent	Monitored
Developed	Pulled	Counseled
Prepared	Shipped	Facilitated
Solved	Handled	Interfaced
Projected	Punched	Coordinated
Forecast	Drilled	Responded
Handled	Monitored	Advised
Organized	Manipulated	Served
Prioritized	Maneuvered	Assisted
		Aided

Creative	Teaching	Detail	Selling
Innovated	Influenced	Approved	Contracted
Developed	Persuaded	Validated	Persuaded
Created	Briefed	Retained	Reviewed
Imagined	Informed	Executed	Inspected
Planned	Encouraged	Dispatched	Determined
Designed	Communicated	Responded	Informed
Conceptualized	Advised	Followed-through	Inventoried
Synthesized	Guided	Implemented	Assessed
Integrated	Coached	Enforced	Appraised
Abstracted	Instructed	Arranged	Supplied
Generated	Explained	Collected	Promoted
Perceived	Enlightened	Compiled	Advised
Memorized	Stimulated	Purchased	Discussed
Visualized	Invented	Systemized	Displayed
Humored	Adapted	Tabulated	Explained
Fashioned	Adopted	Compared	Estimated
Shaped	Facilitated	Inspected	Observed
Wrote	Coordinated	Organized	Calculated
Directed	Developed	Classified	Exhibited
Painted	Enabled	Operated	Arranged
Performed	Clarified	Collated	Ordered
Acted	Valued	Copied	Analyzed
Played	Motivated	Recorded	Modeled
Shared	Decided	Processed	Computed
Invented	Initiated	Facilitated	Projected
	Demonstrated		Negotiated

RESUME CHECKLIST

- Does your name stand out—**BOLD FACE, ONE POINT LARGER AND/OR ALL CAPS?**
- Do you have an answering machine or **VOICEMAIL** with the phone number you have listed? Remember, the employer may not call you more than once—there are lots of other resumes in the pile.
- Have you given a **JOB OBJECTIVE?** Is it short, clear, and specific?
- Have you given a **SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS** after your objective? Does your summary highlight your relevant personal strengths?
- In the body of your resume, have you led with what best supports your objectives—be it **EDUCATION OR EXPERIENCE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS?**
- For **EDUCATION**, have you listed relevant degrees, certificates, coursework, scholarships, honors, and GPA (only if it is good)?
- Have you used **ACTION VERBS** to begin your accomplishment/experience statements? Have you avoided “responsible for”, “duties include”, or other overused phrases?
- Have you **QUANTIFIED** your accomplishments, achievements, and responsibilities wherever possible (if the numbers are good)?
- If your resume is **FUNCTIONAL/SKILLS BASED**, have you grouped your accomplishment statements into **SKILL, KNOWLEDGE, and/or FUNCTION GROUPS?**
- Are your skill groups and accomplishment statements listed in **ORDER OF IMPORTANCE** rather than chronological or random order?
- Have you reviewed all activities, **PAID AND UNPAID**, that used/developed skills supporting your objective? Are the strongest on your resume?
- Are any **GAPS IN YOUR WORK HISTORY** explained briefly and **POSITIVELY?** Have you limited that history to the past 10 years? If no, why not?
- Is everything listed on your resume **RELEVANT** to your job objective? Have you deleted any irrelevant or negative information?
- Is your resume free of **TYPOS, GRAMMATICAL ERRORS, and MISSPELLED WORDS?** (If you used spell-check on your computer, make sure to read it over again.)
- If you are sending a hard copy, have you used a **GOOD QUALITY** printer or copier to produce your resume?
- Have you kept your resume to **ONE PAGE** (if possible)? If it is two pages, is all the important information on the first page?
- Is the resume targeted to the **JOB YOU WANT** not the jobs you’ve had?

- Have you made the strongest possible case for yourself? Remember your resume is **YOUR REPRESENTATIVE**—it's a word picture of you on the job!

CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME GUIDELINES

NAME

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE NUMBER (with voicemail capability) and E-MAIL ADDRESS

OBJECTIVE: The job you want next

SUMMARY of QUALIFICATIONS

- How much experience you have related to your job objective, either directly or indirectly (i.e., sales objective, customer service experience).
- What specific training or credentials do you have for this objective (if any).
- An overview of your communication and interpersonal (teamwork) skills.
- Your computer proficiency: programs you know that apply to your objective.
- What someone would say about you as a recommendation (adjectives).

EXPERIENCE and ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Job title Company Name, City, State 20XX -XX

An accomplishment you're proud of that shows you'll be good at your job objective.

A problem you solved and the results (good results ONLY).

An accomplishment that saved money, made money, or increased productivity.

Awards, recognition, commendations, praise, etc. you received for your work.

Job title Company Name, City, State 20XX -XX

A project you worked on or completed that relates to your job objective.

An accomplishment that shows you can work effectively with a team.

Experience that is quantifiable, i.e. supported 6 departments; served 100 customers.

An occasion when you were the best: sold the most; gained the most clients, etc.

Job title Company Name, City, State 20XX -XX

An accomplishment you're proud of that shows you'll be good at your job objective.

A problem you solved and the results (good results ONLY).

EDUCATION

A.S., City College of San Francisco; coursework completed includes:

- Name of course related to objective - Name of course - Name of course
- Name of course related to objective - Name of course - Name of course

Other RELATED degrees, education, or training

SAMPLE CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME

Jane Doe

1800 Broadway Street, San Francisco, CA 98888

(415) 888-2222, JDoe@yahoo.com

OBJECTIVE: Position in office support at COOL Industries

QUALIFICATIONS

- Experience working in customer service in a busy school bookstore
- Enrolled in general education courses at City College of San Francisco
- Excellent oral and written communication skills; demonstrated ability to answer tele-phones in a professional manner
- Computer literate: type using MS Word; familiar with Excel, PowerPoint
- Able to file by alphabet or number; know form for memos; use copier
- Learn quickly; work well independently or with a team; resourceful

EDUCATION

City College of San Francisco, 2007-Present; planning on transferring
College of San Mateo, San Mateo, CA, 2001-2003; English, College Success

RELATED WORK HISTORY

Clerk College of San Mateo Bookstore, San Mateo, CA 2001
-2003

- Answered questions (by phone and in person) concerning location of books, number of titles of books for each course, availability of used books.
- Operated electronic cash register and scanning device for cash, credit card, and check transactions; up to 100 customers per day.
- Labeled the textbooks according to course number, placed books on shelf by department to ensure easy access.
- Handled packaging of textbooks sold together; used shrink-wrap machine, applied prices accurately.
- Shelved overstocked labels, school supplies, snacks, logo clothing, and computer supplies according to instructions from supervisor.

VOLUNTEER WORK

Tutor St. Joseph's Church, San Francisco, CA 2005-2006

For an after-school program for children in the parish:

- Assisted children age kindergarten through third grade with homework assignments: math, English, and science.
- Planned and supervised activities such as board games, outdoor games, arts and crafts to keep children actively engaged.

SKILLS-BASED (also called Functional) RESUME GUIDELINES

Name

Street City, State Zip Phone E-mail address

JOB OBJECTIVE: the job you are seeking now

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- A statement about your experience using the skills required for this objective.
- An overall statement about your degree, certificate, credential that applies to this job.
- A statement about your level of computer skills, if applicable (and only if good).
- A positive statement about your communication skills and/or languages spoken.
- Adjectives that describe your personal strengths that relate to the job.

EDUCATION and TRAINING

City College of San Francisco, 20XX - XX; coursework completed includes:

- Name of course related to objective - Name of related course - Name of related course
- Name of course related to objective - Name of related course - Name of related course

Other RELATED degrees, education, or training; name of institution, city and state

SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Major Skill, Skill Group, Function, or Knowledge Base

- An accomplishment statement that shows you will be successful at the job objective.
- A problem you solved using your skills and/knowledge that relates to the new job.
- Statement about number of hours spent learning about a function or training in a skill.
- A project you completed well using skills or knowledge, or performing a function.
- Any recognition/commendation you received for performing a function/using a skill.

Another Major Skill, Skill Group, Function, or Knowledge Base

- An accomplishment statement that shows you will be successful at the job objective.
- A problem you solved using your skills and/knowledge that relates to the new job.
- Statement about number of hours spent learning about a function or training in a skill.
- A project you completed well using skills or knowledge, or performing a function.

Another Major Skill, Skill Group, Function, or Knowledge Base

- An accomplishment statement that shows you will be successful at the job objective.

- A problem you solved using your skills and/knowledge that relates to the new job.

WORK HISTORY

Title	School or business name, self employed, etc.	20XX – XXXX
Job title	Company Name, City, State	20XX – XXXX
Job title	Company Name, City, State	20XX – XXXX
Job title	Company Name, City, State	20XX – XXXX

SAMPLE SKILLS-BASED (also called FUNCTIONAL) RESUME

Jane Doe

1800 Broadway Street, San Francisco, CA 98888
 (415) 888-2222 JDoe@yahoo.com

OBJECTIVE: Position in office support at COOL Industries

QUALIFICATIONS

- More than ten years of experience in office and business administration
- Effective communication and customer service skills; bilingual, English/Spanish
- Use Windows applications MS Word, Excel, and Access; Internet applications
- Performed Internet research and data entry; prepared correspondence
- Professional demeanor; dedicated to completing assigned tasks and projects

EDUCATION

Currently attending City College of San Francisco; taking business courses:
 - MS Word - Excel - Access - Research using the Internet

EXPERIENCE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Office Support

- Performed research on Mexican paper companies in order to compile a directory for the international paper industry; work included:
 - Comparing information from current international directories with old directory
 - Contacting 90+ companies by phone and fax to determine existence and verify locations
 - Sending data request forms and letters to cooperating companies to update directory
 - Performing Internet search to augment information on operations and production
 - Entering updated and new information into database using Datamax program
- As an administrative assistant for the department of pediatric endocrinology at UCSF:
 - Typed letters and memos and needed, faxed notes and documents, for four doctors
 - Answered phone inquiries from patients regarding appointments, prescriptions; took calls from doctor's offices and medical centers requesting patients' medical files
 - Located, pulled, organized, and returned patient files as per doctors' needs
 - Provided Spanish/English interpretation assistance to medical staff

Administrative/Public Relations

- As the proprietor and manager of a small business:
 - Developed excellent customer service skills through heavy public contact
 - Performed routine bookkeeping tasks: bills, invoices, payroll, daily cash receipts
 - Applied for and renewed permits and licenses; oversaw compliance with regulations
 - Called contractors when needed; ordered supplies, took inventory

WORK HISTORY

Research/Admin. Assistant Present	Apple One, Manpower, San Francisco	2000-
Clients: Miller Freeman Inc and University of California, San Francisco		
Full-time Homemaker	San Francisco, CA	1998-1999
Proprietor/Manager -1998	Bailey's Cocktails, San Mateo, CA	1987

WRITING COVER LETTERS

(Adapted from Quintessential Careers: [The Dynamic Cover Letter's Formula for Job-Search Success](http://www.quintcareers.com/cover_letters.html) by Katharine Hansen, Ph.D., and Randall S. Hansen, Ph.D. http://www.quintcareers.com/cover_letters.html)

Things to remember before writing a cover letter:

- Make each cover letter specific to you and the employer. Making one cover letter for several employers may show them you aren't truly interested in the job!
- Keep your cover letter brief. The letter itself should be under one full page and contain paragraphs with no more than one to three sentences.
- If you're emailing a cover letter, shorten it to three short paragraphs to keep it to one screen.

Beginning Your Cover Letter

First Paragraph

Do not waste this opening paragraph of your cover letter. It is essential that your first paragraph sparks the employer's interest, provides information about the benefits the employer will receive from you, and helps you stand out from all the other job seekers who want the job.

- Focus on the one thing that makes you different from all the other job-seekers – and identify two or three benefits you can offer the employer.
- *Weak opening paragraph:* I am writing today to apply for the account manager position you have posted on your company Website.
- *Better opening paragraph:* I have increased the size and sales levels of my client base in every position I have held, which in turn has increased the revenues and profits of my employers. I want to bring this same success to the account position you have posted.

Second Paragraph

Provide more detail about your professional and/or academic qualifications. Provide more information about how you can provide the benefits you mention in the first paragraph. Be sure to stress accomplishments and achievements rather than job duties and responsibilities. Expand on specific items from your resume that are relevant to the job you are seeking. Use solid action verbs to describe your accomplishments and achievements.

- If you do not have much solid experience in the field you are trying to enter, remember to focus on key skills that can easily transfer from your previous work experience to the new job.
- If responding to a job posting or ad, tailor this paragraph to the needs described in the ad.

Third Paragraph

Relate yourself to the company, giving details why you should be considered for the position. Continue expanding on your qualifications while showing knowledge of the company.

- You need to do your homework – show that you know something about the organization (Research by visiting the company's website, reading brochures, etc.)

Fourth Paragraph

The final paragraph of your cover letter must be proactive and request action: ask for the job interview (or a meeting) in this paragraph. Express your confidence that you are a perfect fit for the job. Put the employer on notice that you plan to follow-up within a specified time.

- *Weak closing paragraph:* I hope you will review my resume, and if you agree with what I have stated here, consider me for the position. I look forward to hearing from you soon.
- *Better closing paragraph:* I am eager to help advance the success of your company, and I am convinced that we should arrange a time to meet. I will call your office next week to schedule an appointment (but DON'T say this if they say "no calls.")

HOW TO WRITE A COVER LETTER

Your resume should always have a good cover letter attached, as a personal communication between you and the individual who received the resume.

Most people are intimidated by this task, but it's not that hard if you think of it as just a friendly, simple communication from one person (who's looking for a good job) to another (who's looking for a good employee). It is in the interests of both parties to make a good connection!

How to Write a Good Cover Letter

- 1. Be sure to address it—by name and title—to the person who could hire you.** When it's impossible to learn their name, use their functional title, such as "Dear Manager." You may have to guess ("Dear Selection Committee") but never say "To whom it may concern" or "Dear Sir or Madam"!
- 2. Show that you know a little about the company,** that you are aware of their current problems, interests, or priorities.
- 3. Express your enthusiasm and interest** in this line of work and this company. If you have a good idea that might help the employer resolve a problem currently facing their industry, offer to come in and discuss it.
- 4. Project warmth and friendliness,** while still being professional. Avoid any generic phrases such as "Enclosed please find. . . ." *This is a letter to a real live person!*
- 5. Set yourself apart from the crowd.** Identify at least one thing about you that's unique—say, a special talent for getting along with everybody at work or some unusual skill that goes beyond the essential requirements of the position—something that distinguishes you AND is relevant to the job. (Then, if several others are equally qualified for the job, your uniqueness may be the reason to choose YOU.)
- 6. Be specific** about what you are asking for and what you are offering. Make it clear which position you're applying for and just what experience or skills you have that relate to that position.
- 7. Take the initiative** about the next step whenever possible, and be specific. "I'll call your office early next week to see if we could meet soon and discuss this job opening," for example, OR—if you're exploring for unannounced jobs that may come up—"I'll call your

office next week to see if we could meet soon to discuss your company's needs for help in the near future.”

- 8. Keep it brief**—a few short paragraphs, all on one page.

Yana Parker, *The Damn Good Resume Guide* © 2002

FREQUENT COVER LETTER ERRORS

- Using pre-printed form letters rather than individually typed letters
- Spelling, typographical or grammatical errors
- Using overly formal language rather than writing in a conversational tone
- Printing on low quality paper (copier paper) rather than using printing paper
- Failure to organize information correctly (i.e. no opening paragraph, lack of information)
- Forgetting to sign the letter, thus showing lack of detail
- Failing to address the letter to the appropriate party (i.e. using titles such as Human Resources Direct when instructions says address to Mr. or Ms. _____)
- Using the wrong format (i.e. wrong margin size, typed too high or too low on the page)
- Including personal information other than that related to the job
- Listing all your skills and accomplishments in the letter
- Failing to make it clear that you are interested in the job
- Failing to ask for an interview at the close of the letter

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

Your name
Mailing address, City, state, and zip
Telephone number
Email address

(JUST COPY-AND-PASTE YOUR HEADING FROM YOUR RESUME)

Date, 200X

Your addressee's name
Professional title
Organization's name
Mailing address
City, state and zip

Dear Mr. (or Ms.) last name OR Human Resources Manager,
In response to your advertisement in the San Francisco Chronicle, please accept this letter in application for the position of community health worker currently available with your clinic.

As you can see from the enclosed resume, I have the required certificate, and have completed a successful internship in a community-based health organization. I truly love this work, and I am excited about the possibility of joining your team. I know that your clinic has a wonderful track record of success, and I desire to help you maintain and expand your services to the community.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss my qualifications with you at a mutually convenient time. Thank you for your kind consideration of my application.

Sincerely yours,

Your handwritten signature

Your name (typed)

Attachment: resume

(NOTE: an e-mailed cover letter (not a cover letter as a Word attachment) contains the same information, but does not require the address headings for the job seeker or employer, or a signature.)

SAMPLE REFERENCES PAGE

Jane Doe

1800 Broadway Street, San Francisco, CA 98888
(415) 888-2222, JDoe@yahoo.com

REFERENCES

Title* and Name
Company
Address
City, State, Zip Code
Work Phone
Personal Phone (optional)
Relationship, if not obvious
Which of your qualifications this person can discuss

Title* and Name
Company
Address
City, State, Zip Code
Work Phone
Personal Phone (optional)
Relationship, if not obvious
Which of your qualifications this person can discuss

Title* and Name
Company
Address
City, State, Zip Code
Work Phone
Personal Phone (optional)
Relationship, if not obvious
Which of your qualifications this person can discuss

Title* and Name
Company
Address
City, State, Zip Code
Work Phone
Personal Phone (optional)
Relationship, if not obvious
Which of your qualifications this person can discuss

*For example: supervisor, long-time friend, colleague, minister/rabbi/imam, client, teacher

THE APPLICATION*

Before you start writing on your job application, read the following tips.

Check it over

Read the application thoroughly before filling it out. Some applications have instructions or comments you should be aware of on the last page or portion of the application form. Failing to fill out sections may ruin your chances of gaining the job!

Beware of the fine print

In many cases, particularly with large companies' forms, there are directions in fine print under some of the block headings such as "complete in your own handwriting", "please print", or "put first or last name first." Following these directions is essential as it indicates to many employers your ability to read, follow instructions, as well as how careful you are.

Be prepared with your identification

Have the following with you when you're submitting your application:

- Social Security Card
- Your driver's license or California identification card
- The names, addresses, phone numbers and zip code numbers of those people you have CONTACTED and who have consented to provide you with a good reference
- If you have the reference letters ready, take the originals AND machine copies with you. You won't want to leave original letters, but it's important that employers see them in the original form.

Create a master application form

Have an application that is already completed perfectly to keep for your records. Make sure it has been checked and rechecked for accuracy, spelling, correct addresses, hire and termination dates for previous employment. This way you do not have to recreate the material every time you write out a new job application!

Completing the form

- After your master application form is completed, use it to copy the information onto your new job application form. Make sure to make it exceptionally neat and well-organized.
- Remember, all that is left of you when you leave is the job application paper. How it looks represents YOU!
- Fill out all blanks. If they do not apply, put a dash mark (-) or an "N/A" (not applicable) to indicate that the area got your attention and you did not overlook it.

- Use block printing if your handwriting is bad (unless the employer requests your own handwriting)

COMMON MISTAKES

- 1. Only writing down the initials/nickname of your highest level of school.** Many applications require you to circle highest school year and ask for the name of the school. Many applicants circle the year but only write the school's initials using no city or state to complete identification. The interviewer then has to ask.
- 2. Failure to sign the application when it is fully completed**
- 3. People who ignore the military service brackets on the application form should indicate N/A if you have not had service.**
- 4. Applications completed in pencil.** They fade and rub off in a very short time and it makes them difficult to read. If there is a choice about which application gets the most attention, the one that is easiest to read is the easiest to deal with.
- 5. Applicants do not reread the application** all the way through, word for word, to catch possible errors of omission or commission before they turn it in—they have to explain or apologize during the interview.
- 6. Many times there are sections for your comments on the application form.** Most applicants make a simple statement like, "I would really like to have the job." This is the place where you tell them that they are the company you have CHOSEN to work for. This is a great way to get into good conversation when you get into the interview after they have looked the application over
- 7. Unclear information in the Employment History section,** such as "Machinist", and then failure to list what exact machines they used.

SOME GOOD IDEAS

Most people are not sure about exact employment dates or termination dates, or even position titles and salary if it has been a long time since they have worked for a company. Send your former employers a stamped, self-addressed post card with spaces marked out for verification of your employment with them. You will want a start date, termination date, position, and last salary. This will make certain that our records agree with theirs. Employment history is verified most of the time before you are hired; this is fairly common. It is most unusual to have exact dates and if you want to surface as being well-organized and very accurate, this is one way to do it well.

If it is possible, pick up two application forms from the company before you are scheduled to arrive for the interview. Have the original beautifully completed when you arrive (in pen, proofread for errors, signed, etc.). It will save you waiting time in many cases and will allow you to have a complete record of what is on the application form if the company files as well as your own files.

DO THE APPLICATION AS THOUGH YOUR FUTURE DEPENDED ON IT. IT JUST MIGHT.

*Adapted from:

Employment Development Department

Education/Industrial Liaison Office

State of California

SAMPLE APPLICATION

This master application is a sample of the types and ranges of questions seen on applications for work.

(Created by the Career Advancement Unit 09/03)

PLEASE COMPLETE ALL SECTIONS

NAME Last	First	Middle
STREET ADDRESS E-MAIL ADDRESS		
CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE
PHONE Home Work	SS#	
POSITION DESIRED	SALARY REQUIRED	
HOW WERE YOU REFERRED TO US? PLEASE CHECK ONE Ad___ Walk -in___ Friend/Referral___ Agency___ Internet___ School/ College___ Other___		
HAVE YOU EVER BEEN EMPLOYED BY US?	IF SO, WHERE?	WHEN

AVAILABILITY

I am available to work on the following days and shifts (check all that apply)
time _____ Part-time _____

Full-

Shift	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
DAY							
SWING							
GRAVE							

If your application is considered favorably, on what date will you be available for employment?

EDUCATION

High School		Diploma Received Yes____ No____	
Name	Address		
COLLEGE OR VOCATIONAL SCHOOL(S)			
Name	Address	From	To
Name	Address	From	To
Name	Address	From	To
Name	Address	From	To
Name	Address	From	To
UNDERGRADUATE			
AREA OF COURSE WORK EMPHASIS:			
GRADUATE			
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS AND EX-TRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:			

PAST WORK EXPERIENCE

COMPANY ADDRESS	Street	City	State	
PHONE				FAX
POSITION HELD				FRO
NATURE OF WORK				
IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR				TITL
REASON FOR LEAVING				
MAY WE CONTACT THIS EMPLOYER?				IF N

COMPANY ADDRESS	Street	City	State	
PHONE				FAX
POSITION HELD				FR
NATURE OF WORK				
IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR				TITL
REASON FOR LEAVING				
MAY WE CONTACT THIS EMPLOYER?				IF N

COMPANY ADDRESS	Street	City	State	
PHONE				FAX
POSITION HELD				FRO
NATURE OF WORK				
IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR				TITL
REASON FOR LEAVING				
MAY WE CONTACT THIS EMPLOYER?				IF N TIM
COMPANY ADDRESS	Street	City	State	
PHONE				FAX
POSITION HELD				FRO
NATURE OF WORK				
IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR				TITL
REASON FOR LEAVING				
MAY WE CONTACT THIS EMPLOYER?				IF N TIM

LIST ANY ACHIEVEMENTS OR ACTIVITIES THAT YOU CONSIDER RELEVANT TO YOUR ABILITY TO PERFORM THE JOB FOR WHICH YOU ARE APPLYING, SUCH AS: AWARDS, RECEIVED, MEMBERSHIP OR OFFICES HELD IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, LICENSES HELD, COMPUTER LANGUAGES OR SOFTWARE PROGRAM KNOWLEDGE, FOREIGN LANGUAGES (PROFICIENCY IN SPEAKING AND WRITING), ETC.

**FOR
PLEA**

US MILITARY

BRANCH	RANK AT TIME OF SEPARATION	YEARS SERVED
DUTY ASSIGNMENTS		
EDUCATIONAL/WORK RELATED SKILLS ACQUIRED		

BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION DATA

LIST ALL YOUR ADDRESSES FOR PAST TEN YEARS, STARTING WITH YOUR CURRENT ADDRESS

1.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	Street	Apt. #	City	State	Zip Code
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	Street	Apt. #	City	State	Zip Code
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	Street	Apt. #	City	State	Zip Code
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	Street	Apt. #	City	State	Zip Code
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	Street	Apt. #	City	State	Zip Code
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	Street	Apt. #	City	State	Zip Code
7.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	Street	Apt. #	City	State	Zip Code

LIST ANY OTHER NAMES OR ALIASES: _____

DO YOU POSSESS A VALID DRIVERS LICENSE OR STATE ID CARD? YES _____ NO _____ LICENSE OR ID # _____
STATE _____

CONVICTION RECORD

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN CONVICTED OF, OR ARE YOU AWAITING TRIAL FOR, A FELONY OR MISDEMEANOR? YES ___ NO ___	
IF YES PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS BELOW	
CHARGE	CITY

PLEASE ACCOUNT FOR ALL PERIODS OF 12 MONTHS OR MORE THAT YOU WERE NOT EMPLOYED OR A FULLTIME STUDENT.

DATES	ACTIVITY (SEEKING WORK, TRAVEL, SCHOOL, ETC.)	NAME OF REFERENCE WHO CAN CONFIRM (NON-RELATIVE)	TELEPHONE # WITH AREA CODE	
FROM	TO			
FROM	TO			
FROM	TO			
FROM	TO			
FROM	TO			

PERSONAL REFERENCE

LIST THREE (3) REFERENCES: DO NOT INCLUDE RELATIVES, IN-LAWS, OR PEOPLE WHO SHARE YOUR CURRENT ADDRESS. GIVE COMPLETE AND ACCURATE INFORMATION.				
Name				Occu
Address	City	State	Zip Code	
Name				Occu
Address	City	State	Zip Code	
Name				Occu
Address	City	State	Zip Code	

CERTIFICATION AND UNDERSTANDING

I represent that all information entered on this application and on any other forms completed or to be completed by me or statement made by me in connection with my application or during the course of my employment, if I am hired, to be true and correct. I understand that my misrepresentation, omission, or concealment of requested information will be reason for dismissal if I am employed.

I understand that as part of employment procedure an investigating report by an outside agency may be made whereby information may be obtained from a third party, such as family members, business associates, former employers, financial sources, friends, neighbors or others. I also understand that as part of the selection procedure, assessment of my candidacy will be made which may include various tests (medical and otherwise), interviews, etc. The results of which may or may not be made known to me whether or not I am offered employment.

I agree to the above stipulations.

PLEASE PRINT NAME

APPLICANTS SIGNATURE

DATE

