

# Entering the Work World





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# Introduction

You wake up one day and it is your first day of school. You are nervous, but you are also excited to begin a new adventure. Years pass and you spend most of your time learning; learning different subjects in school and also learning about yourself.

Now the time has come for you to start a new adventure once again: applying for a job.

By following these tips and suggestions, you will continue to learn many new things on your journey. This includes how to write a captivating cover letter, how to create a solid resume and finally how to impress your future employer during a job interview.

Your new adventure is about to begin...are you ready?

# How to Write a Resume

*A resume is your first chance to impress the company that you are applying to. It serves as a summary of your experiences, education, and professional skills. So, how do you write one?*

## ORGANIZATION

### 1. Header

The first part of making a resume is the header. This usually appears at the top left side of the page, or centered in the middle. The header consists of the following:

- Your full name
- Your address
- Your email address
- Your telephone number

### 2. Summary of Qualifications

There are two parts to the Summary of Qualifications section: a captivating introduction and three of your strongest skills with a description. Furthermore, the skills that you choose should be directly related to the job that you are applying for.

### 3. Education

In this section, you will include information about your education. You should always start with the most recent institution and

finish with the oldest. When listing your institutions and degrees, it is important to follow this format:

*Name of Institution. Years attended. Degree.*

In this section, you can also include any scholarships, grants, awards and special honors that you have received.

### 4. Experience

This is the section where you include your work experience. Like the Education section, always start with your most recent job first and then descend in chronological order. You must know certain things about your jobs:

- The name of the company
- The title of your position
- The start date and end date (in the format of: Month Year - Month Year)
- Brief description of your responsibilities
- Any specific accomplishments that greatly benefited the company

In relation with the description of your job responsibilities, it is important to be specific and concise. You will list these descriptions using bullet points that begin with action verbs. It is important not include "I" as the subject. If you are currently still working at that job, use the present tense.

## How to Write a Resume

### LANGUAGE AND VOCABULARY

*Imagine you are an employer and you have thousands of applicants for a new available job. Each one submits a resume and a cover letter, and you must read them all. Which type of resume will grab your attention?*

When writing a resume, you must pay close attention to the language that you use. Employers look for brief, specific and concise writing so they can quickly see who would be qualified for the position and who to dismiss right away. With the exception of your introduction under the Summary of Qualifications section, all of your other information will be without a subject. Additionally, when describing tasks at previous jobs it is common to use embellished language.

Example

**INCORRECT:** I helped customers find what they needed until they were happy and bought something.

**CORRECT:** Aided customers to discover their needs and made recommendations to generate sales.

### EXAMPLES OF STRONG ACTION VERBS

• accommodated • accomplished • achieved • added • advanced • advised • aided • alleviated • assisted • assured • attained • built • coached • combined • completed • consolidated • constructed • continued • contributed • cooperated • counseled • dealt • delivered • demonstrated • diminished • earned • eased • elevated • eliminated • enabled • endorsed • enhanced • enjoyed • enlarged • enlisted • enriched • ensured • excelled • expanded • expedited • extended • familiarized • finalized • fulfilled • gained • generated • grew • guaranteed • hastened • heightened • helped • improved • increased • innovated • integrated • interceded • introduced • invented • joined • launched • minimized • mobilized • modeled • modernized • obtained • opened • orchestrated • overcame • produced • protected • provided • received • renovated • restored • returned • saved • served • sustained • targeted • tutored • uncovered • validated •

## Tips for Writing a Resume

Remember – there are many different styles of writing a resume, but they all follow the same basic format. If you do not like the traditional look of a resume, search on the Internet for other ideas or ask your family or friends. It is also essential to know that resumes are different than CV's. One of the main differences is that a resume should not exceed more than two pages.

However, it is important to make sure that your resume can be easily read. In other words, try not to put too many stylistic designs or too much cluttered information on it – if your employer cannot read what you wrote, how can they possibly consider you for the job?

Additionally, when writing job descriptions, be careful about the verb tense that you use. If you are still working at your previous job, write the description in the present tense. For your current job, use the format “ Month Year – Present “ when writing the dates that you worked there. All of your previous work experience should be written in the past tense.

Lastly, research the company and find out what qualifications they are looking for in a future employee. Make sure that your resume highlights that you possess these qualifications and that you are a good match for the job!





## MODEL OF A RESUME

## JANE SMITH

25 Main Street, Boston, MA 02108  
 janesmith@gmail.com  
 555.123.4567

### SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

A creative, dependable and proactive **International Business Student**, demonstrating exceptional leadership, initiative and ability to apply global concepts to the business world.

Areas of expertise include:

#### **Problem Solving Skills**

Ability to multitask and prioritize responsibilities in a timely manner.

#### **Interpersonal Skills**

Natural ability to motivate and work with others, while respecting different opinions and offering new ideas.

#### **Customer Support**

Able to work with customers until their problem is solved while ensuring high customer satisfaction.

### EDUCATION

Harvard University 2012 – 2016. Bachelor of Science in International Business, Minor in Economics

GPA: 4.0

Dean's List

Presidential Scholarship Recipient

International Business Honor Society

### EXPERIENCE

Johnson's International Marketing Company, Inc.

#### **FRONT DESK ASSISTANT**

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September 2013 – Present

- Greet and provide exceptional customer service to diverse visitors and staff.
- Utilize organizational skills by sorting and distributing mail.
- Maintain and catalogue inventory into the online system and distribute the packages accordingly.
- Answer customer service related questions and customer inquires over the telephone.

International Council on Global Affairs

#### **INTERN**

///

June 2011 – September 2013

- Created proposals to bring international and multicultural visitors to the schools.
- Updated social media accounts and the official website.
- Spread awareness of upcoming events through social media. .
- Designed a database of resources categorized by field and alphabetical order.
- Proofread the biweekly newsletter.

# How to Write a Cover Letter

*You have just finished writing a resume, and now you need to complete the next step: writing a cover letter. How will you make yourself stand out amongst the other applicants?*

## ORGANIZATION

### 1. Header

A cover letter should include the following information on the top right side of the page:

- Your full name
- Your address
- Your email address
- Your telephone number

Then, skip a line and write the date.

Finally, skip another line and write the greeting.

If you know the person's name, write "Dear \_\_\_\_\_,"

Another option is to write "Dear Hiring Manager,"

Additionally, if you do not know who will read your letter, you can write "To Whom it May Concern,"

### 2. Introduction Paragraph

The first paragraph should be very brief and concise. Make sure to state your interest in the position and to highlight key points about yourself to show that you are qualified for the job.

### 3. Body Paragraph

This is perhaps the most important paragraph in your letter. Show the person reading it that you are extremely passionate about the field and relate your past experiences to the job you are applying for. Make sure to do your research – find out which qualifications the company is looking for and show that you have them.

However, it is simply not enough to state your qualifications. You must show proof with specific examples to support what you are saying.

### 4. Conclusion

This is the final part of the cover letter. Make sure to thank the person for their consideration and let them know if they need additional information that they can contact you.

End your letter with:

Sincerely,

(Your Name)



## How to Write a Cover Letter

### LANGUAGE AND VOCABULARY

*“Attention grabbing”, “passionate” and “qualified” are three words that should come to mind when thinking about a cover letter. How do you ensure that yours meets these requirements?*

When writing a cover letter, your writing should always be formal. This means you should not use contractions in your writing.

Example

**INCORRECT:** I can't wait to meet you.

**CORRECT:** I cannot wait to meet you.

Like previously mentioned, it is not sufficient to mention a qualification or skill, you must prove *how*. It is common to begin demonstrative sentences like:

- *In my previous job...*
- *I have mastered...*
- *I developed...*
- *Through my studies...*
- *Through my experiences...*

### COMMON SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

- Time management skills – *Able to complete tasks on time*
- Multitasking – *Able to complete many tasks at the same time*
- Organizational skills – *Extremely attentive to detail*
- Communication skills – *Able to communicate efficiently by written and oral communication*
- Teamwork/Cooperation – *Able to work on a team and respect other people's opinions and ideas*
- Ambitious – *Determined to grow, to complete tasks and to take on more responsibility*
- Self Motivated/Independent – *Needs little direction and instruction to complete tasks*
- Problem solving skills – *Able to think quickly to find a solution to a problem*
- Create thinking skills – *Able to generate new and innovate solutions*

## Tips for Writing a Cover Letter

Similar to the resume, a cover letter should show that you are a great candidate for the job and have the necessary qualifications. This is why research is an important theme that will continue to appear throughout the application process. Prove to your potential employer that you have what it takes to exceed at the job you are applying for.

Although you should not mention many personal details in a cover letter (remember – a cover letter is *not* a “personal statement”), don’t let that stop your personality from shining through. This is your chance to more thoroughly express in writing to your potential employer why you are qualified to do the job.

It is your last chance to make an impression before you have the opportunity to interview, so make sure to set yourself apart from the rest of the applicants.


Like previously mentioned, you must provide specific examples to prove that you have the skills you are claiming to have. Use precise details from your past jobs or your studies.

Example

Skill: Communication

*Through my previous job, I have mastered my communication skills by writing the biweekly newsletter and answering customer inquiries on the telephone.*





MODEL OF A  
COVER  
LETTER

Jane Smith  
25 Main Street, Boston, MA 02108  
janesmith@gmail.com  
555.123.4567

April 10, 2011

Dear Mr. John Doe,

It is with great interest that I apply for the International Council on World Affairs' Internship position. After completing my junior year of college at Harvard University studying international business, I believe my experience and capabilities are an excellent match for this position.

My desire to work for an organization focused on global efforts comes from a lifelong passion of improving the quality of life for people around the world. From experiences at my most recent job I have mastered the ability to multitask in a fast-paced working environment, along with effective communication with other employees and potential customers. Additionally, I developed the skills needed in efficient customer service after handling and resolving many problems. I look forward to serving as a cultural ambassador this fall to an Italian exchange student by aiding him during his stay in the United States. I hope to successfully apply this experience through this position.

Please contact me with any questions or if any additional information is needed. I hope to speak to you further about your vision for this position and my qualifications. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jane Smith

# The Interview: Questions

*Congratulations! You have impressed the hiring manager with your resume and cover letter. They have given you the opportunity to have an interview. How can you make sure that it is successful?*

On a job interview, you can expect to be asked many different questions. Here are the six most common questions that you will most likely be asked.

## 1. Tell me about yourself.

### **DO:**

- Talk about your education and work experience that is directly related to the job that you are applying for.
- Research what the company is looking for in a potential employee and demonstrate that you possess those qualities.

### **DON'T:**

- Say many personal details (for example, how many brothers you have, where you live, your favorite color, etc...)
- Talk about experience that is not directly related to the position.

## 2. What is your greatest strength?

### **DO:**

- Research and choose a strength that is important to the job and to the company.
- Relate a “success story” that demonstrates that you possess that strength. **NOTE:** A “success story” is a story that tells a time when you were successful in what you did.

### **DON'T:**

- Make claims that you cannot prove with a specific and brief example.
- Be too arrogant.

**INCORRECT:** *I am the best at everything.*

- Be too modest.

**INCORRECT:** *I am not very good at anything.*

## 3. What is your greatest weakness?

### **DO:**

- Show that you are aware of your weakness and what you have done to overcome it.

### **DON'T:**

- Say a weakness that is important to doing the job.
- Be too arrogant or too modest.

## The Interview: Questions

### 4. Tell me a time when...

#### **DO:**

- Choose an example that shows you solving a problem that could happen at the new company you are interviewing for.
- Be specific and concise.

#### **DON'T:**

- Talk badly about someone in your story if it involves a difficult customer.

### 5. Why should we hire you?

#### **DO:**

- Show the hiring manager that you are a perfect fit for the job by demonstrating you have the qualities the company is looking for.
- Tell a “success story” that shows you have the qualifications to fit the company’s specific needs.

#### **DON'T:**

- Simply say you need money.
- Answer why you want the job, but why you are the perfect person for the job.

### 6. Do you have any questions?

#### **DO:**

- Ask about something you have discovered in your company research.
- Prepare at least 3 questions you can ask.

#### **DON'T:**

- Say “No, I do not have any questions.”
- Focus your questions on yourself and what you can get from the company.

**Note:** You do not have to wait until the end of the interview to ask questions. If you ask questions during the interview it changes the tone from an interrogation into a conversation.

Examples:

- *What is a typical day like at this job?*
- *What happens next in the interview process?*
- *When can I expect to hear from you?*
- *What is your favorite thing about working here?*

# The Interview: Manners, Etiquette and Tips

*When interviewing for a job abroad, it is very important to know the customs and accepted social behavior in that country. You do not want to make a bad impression! Here are some guidelines that you should follow if you are interviewing in the United States.*

## ETIQUETTE AND MANNERS

### 1. Before the Interview Begins

In the United States, it is customary to always be at least 15 minutes early for your job interview. Let the receptionist or secretary know your name and the time of your interview upon arrival.

Example: *Hello, my name is Jane Smith. I have a 12 o'clock interview today.*

When the person who is interviewing you enters the room, stand up and shake their hand with a firm handshake. Make sure you maintain eye contact when you are greeting them.

**NOTE:** People in the United States do not kiss each other on the cheek when they first meet!

### 2. During the Interview

It is important to make eye contact with the person who is interviewing you, but you do not want to stare. Try to maintain a good balance. Eye contact shows the person that you are fully engaged in the conversation.

Additionally, smiling (with your lips closed) at the person while they are talking to you shows that you are a friendly person and interested in what they are saying.

However, do not be excessive – you do not want the person to think you are crazy!

### 3. After the Interview

When the interview is over, it is important to thank the person and to shake their hand again before leaving the room. You want to leave the impression that you are polite and respectful.

# Tips for a Successful Job Interview

It is completely normal to be nervous for a job interview, but during the actual interview you want to demonstrate that you are a confident person (even if you may not feel that way at the time!)

When some people are nervous, their hands shake. If this is true for you, a way to prevent that is to clasp your hands on your lap under the table.

In addition, to help calm your nerves it is very important that you are prepared. Practice interviewing with a family member or friend. The more times you do it, the more comfortable you will be when it is time for the real interview.



Furthermore, make sure you dress correctly for the occasion. Most companies have a “business casual” dress code. This means that it is slightly more fancy than casual, but not excessively fancy. For example, you do not want to wear jeans, a t-shirt or sneakers to a job interview. On the other hand, you also do not want to wear a tuxedo or an elegant dress.

For women, it is common to wear closed-toe shoes, pants, a nice shirt and a blazer. For men, it is common to wear dress shoes, khakis, a button-down shirt and a tie. Men can also wear blazers if they prefer.

Finally, take a deep breath and relax. You will do great!





SIMULATION OF A  
JOB INTERVIEW