



# COVER LETTERS AND RESUMES

## Table of Contents

Cover Letters.....	1
Resumes.....	1
Writing Accomplishments .....	2
Suggested Format for a Cover Letter.....	3
Sample Cover Letter .....	4
Chronological Resume Format .....	5
Sample Chronological Resume .....	6
Combination Resume Format.....	7
Sample Combination Resume.....	8

## COVER LETTERS

1. Purpose: Introduce yourself and entice employers to read your resume.
2. Sections
  - a. Introduction: Reason for writing, title of opening you are applying for, date & name of publication or person who referred you.
  - b. Middle: Brief description of how your background is suited to job and why you are interested in the position; summarize but don't repeat your resume
  - c. Conclusion: Thank them for their consideration. Indicate that you will call them (unless instructed not to in the job announcement) and how they can contact you.

## RESUMES

1. Purpose: Get you invited for an interview.
2. Formats: Chronological, Functional, Combination
  - a. Chronological: Work experience described in reverse chronological order.
    - (+) Emphasizes career growth.
    - (+) Titles show responsibility level
    - (+) Preferred by employers
    - (-) Shows gaps or frequent changes.
  - b. Functional: Experience grouped into 3-4 categories of expertise.
    - (+) Good for career changers or covering employment gaps
    - (-) Employers are suspicious because it lacks employment chronology
    - (-) De-emphasizes career growth
  - c. Combination: Describes functional skills and work history
    - (+) Combines the best elements of chronological and functional resumes
    - (+) Focuses on strong points without omitting employment chronology
3. Guidelines (all formats):
  - a. Objective is optional, but professional summary is highly recommended
  - b. Emphasize results; describe the impact and results of your work. Build a database of accomplishments and include those relevant to opening (see page 2 for information on writing accomplishments)
  - c. Target to the position of interest and the employer's needs (based on your research). The more focused on the employer's needs and the job opening, the greater chance to be interviewed.
  - d. Use action verbs: Example: instead of *Responsibilities included drafting letters* state *Drafted letters*. See next page for web sites of action verbs.
  - e. Sufficient white space on all margins for readability
  - f. No personal info (e.g., age, marital status, salary req., country of origin, religion)
  - g. Write your own resume instead of asking someone to write it for you
  - h. Dates: Flush with right margin (not left!)
  - i. Be concise: 2 pages maximum (except for federal government resume)
  - j. Consistency in use of font, periods, bolds, and dashes throughout the resume.
  - k. Consider fonts such as Verdana or Calibri and size 10-12 rather than Times New Roman
  - l. For a chronological resume, list your experience in reverse chronological order
  - m. For a combination resume, list 3 to 4 categories of expertise in bold (e.g., training, administration, customer relations) with a separate section for your employment history
  - n. Eliminate "References Available Upon Request"

## WRITING ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. Duties are the specific tasks performed as part of your job. Example: *Assisted customers by demonstrating products.*
2. Accomplishments describe the results of performing your duties. Ex: *Increased sales revenue by 20%.*
3. In developing accomplishment statements, think about
  - a. a problem or situation that created a need for your action,
  - b. what you did to resolve the problem,
  - c. the skills utilized and demonstrated in your actions, and
  - d. the results of your effort.
  - e. Ask who, what, where, when, how many, and why.
4. Questions to help you get started:
  - a. Your motivation. Why did you get started with the activity in the first place?
  - b. Your goal. What did you hope to accomplish?
  - c. The steps you took to reach your goal.
  - d. The results. What impact did your activity have? How many people saw it or were affected by it? What was the reaction of others?
  - e. The setting. Did you work alone, with one or two people, or a large group?
  - f. What about this activity caused you to write about it over others?
5. In a combination or functional resume, accomplishment statements can be drawn from experience outside of paid jobs, such as experience from home and/or volunteer activities.
6. Identify the common themes in your achievements and develop a skill profile. Ex: Do your achievements involve working with your hands, getting other people involved, negotiating, organizing?

### Use of action verbs. For a list of action verbs, go to:

- <http://www.writeexpress.com/action-verbs.html>
- [http://www.quintcareers.com/action\\_verbs.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/action_verbs.html)
- <http://www.tbrnet.com/resumes/actionverbs.php3?a>

### For help with writing duties/tasks:

- Go to <http://online.onetcenter.org>
- Click "Find Occupations"
- Type title in keyword box (or select job category under "Browse by Job Family" and select job title under category)
- Re-word tasks for simplicity

Go to [www.resumesthatjump.com](http://www.resumesthatjump.com) for additional resume writing tip and sample resumes that emphasize accomplishments.

## SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR A COVER LETTER

Name  
Street Address  
City, State, Zip Code  
Date

Name of person receiving letter  
Title (if known)  
Name of organization  
Street address, Suite #  
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr. /Ms. (last name):

OPENING PARAGRAPH: State the reason you are writing. If you are responding to an employment ad, indicate the job title and date and name of the publication where the job was advertised. If someone referred you, mention his/her name.

MIDDLE PARAGRAPH: Briefly describe how your background is suited to the job requirements and/or the company's needs. Also indicate why you are interested in the position (e.g., how the position and/or company's product/mission is in line with your career goals). Address any additional issues that were requested in the ad (e.g., salary requirements, availability date). If salary requirement was requested, indicate that it is negotiable and/or that you would be happy to discuss salary after you have had the opportunity to learn more about the position.

CLOSING PARAGRAPH: Thank the reader for his/her consideration, and inform him/her that you plan to follow up with a personal call, unless you are responding to an ad that requests no phone calls. Also include instructions on how the recipient can contact you.

Sincerely,  
*Your name (in italics)*

Enclosure(s): if requested

---

Reminders: When responding to a want ad, follow the instructions. Be as specific as possible about the job you are applying for and address all the issues raised in the ad; failure to do so may eliminate you from consideration. If no name is given in the ad, try to find out whom to send the letter to or address it to "Dear Hiring Manager." And remember--sign your letter! See the attached example.

## SAMPLE COVER LETTER

Jane Doe  
1111 Main Street  
Washington, DC 00000  
April 1, 2015

Mr. John Jones  
Association of Widget Manufacturers  
1000 Industry Lane  
Washington, DC 00000

Dear Mr. Jones:

This letter is in reference to the position of Director of Meetings as advertised in The Washington Post on March 28, 2015. My background includes a combination of training and experience that is uniquely suited to the position's requirements.

For the past five years I have worked as Associate Director of Meetings for a national trade association. In that capacity, I developed expertise in vendor negotiation and contracting, excellent supervisory skills, and the ability to handle both the day-to-day and strategic planning responsibilities of a meetings office. I am aware of the critical role that meetings play in the work of associations, and I would enjoy using my skills to provide excellent and cost-effective meeting planning services for AWM. Moreover I am aware of the excellent reputation for integrity that AWM has in the association industry, and I would be honored to join your staff. \*The position you have open is the type of challenge I am seeking, and therefore my salary requirements are negotiable.

I look forward to meeting you in person to discuss my qualifications and your needs. You may contact me at (777) 555-1229 or janedoe@somedomain.com to schedule an interview. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
*Jane Doe*

Enclosure: Resume

\*Only mention salary if providing salary requirements is requested in the job announcement. Otherwise, you can omit any reference to salary.

**CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME FORMAT**  
(Center, bold and capitalize sectional headings)

**NAME** (bolded, all caps)  
Address  
Phone Number(s)  
Email Address

**OBJECTIVE:** Specific job you are applying for or the type of job you are seeking. (The objective is optional)

**QUALIFICATIONS SUMMARY**

- 3-4 bulleted statements or a short paragraph of your experience and highest qualifications most relevant to your target job.
- Ask yourself, “What do I want to convey as the essence of what I have to offer?” OR “What mental picture do I want to paint in the mind of the reader?”
- If your summary is a paragraph, consider adding “AREAS OF EXPERTISE” in which you list your specializations in bullet form. See page 8 for an example.

**EXPERIENCE**

- Start with your current or most recent **title** (in bold), employer name and city/state location, dates of employment (month and year or just years).
- Summary of overall job responsibilities in italics, followed by bulleted list of duties and accomplishments. Duties are the specific tasks performed as part of your job; accomplishments are the results of performing your duties. See page 6 for examples.

**EDUCATION**

Title of degree bolded (ex: **Bachelor of Arts, History**), name and city/state of school, year of completion (do not list year of completion if you believe it may result in age discrimination).

- Begin with highest level of formal education or specialized training OR the degree most relevant for your job target if you have more than one degree
- If still in school, state *Currently pursuing* with name of degree you are seeking (see page 6 for example)
- Listing a high school diploma is optional if you have or are seeking a college degree or if your work experience exceeds 10 years.
- Education may be listed before experience if it is your strongest qualification.

OPTIONAL SECTIONS FOLLOWING EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION:

**OTHER EXPERIENCE**

Summary of paid or volunteer experience that is unrelated to the job you are seeking and/or is over 10 years

**LICENSES AND SPECIALIZED SKILLS**

Bulleted list of licenses, certifications, or specialized skills that are required or desired by your profession and that you did not list under “QUALIFICATIONS SUMMARY”

**AFFILIATIONS or VOLUNTEER SERVICE**

Membership(s) in professional associations and/or volunteer activities

## SAMPLE CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME

**JOHN C. DOE**  
123 Reindeer Drive  
Antelope, MD 99999  
(777) 555-6327  
johndoe@yahoo.com

**OBJECTIVE:** Corporate Communications Internship.

### SUMMARY

- Corporate communications internship experience with Hewlett-Packard.
- Experience in newspaper reporting and editing.
- Proficient with HTML, MS Office, Windows XP and the Internet.

### EDUCATION

Currently pursuing **Associate of Arts degree in Communications**, Howard Community College, Columbia, MD. Anticipated graduation May 2013, with plans to pursue **Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications**. Courses taken thus far include:

- Communication Strategies
- Intro to Public Relations
- Corporate Communications
- Intercultural Communications

### EXPERIENCE

**Assistant Editor/Reporter**, Student News, Howard Community College, Columbia, MD, 2006-2007  
*Researched and wrote news articles on all campus social activities.*

- Interviewed campus administrators, faculty, staff and students.
- Developed weekly stories without missing a single deadline.
- Consistently complimented on concise and clear writing style

**Corporate Communications Internship**, Hewlett-Packard, Baltimore, MD, Summer 2006

*Assisted the Communications Manager with generating ideas for and writing an employee newsletter*

- Worked with senior staff members to launch the first Intranet newsletter, allowing for more efficient and cost-effective delivery of corporate news.
- Developed HTML template to allow newsletter contributors to develop and deliver articles with little or no format editing.

### ACTIVITIES

- **Member**, Future Writers of America, Student Chapter, 2010 to present
- **Administration Liaison** for Student Council, Atholton High School, 2008-2009 school year

Adapted by permission from Collegegrad.com, Inc..

**COMBINATION RESUME FORMAT**  
(Center, bold and capitalize sectional headings)

**NAME** (bolded, all caps)  
Address  
Home Phone  
Email Address

**OBJECTIVE:** Specific job title you are applying for or a general/functional title

**QUALIFICATIONS SUMMARY**

- 3-4 bulleted statements or a short paragraph of your highest qualifications most relevant to your target job.
- Ask yourself, “What do I want to convey as the essence of what I have to offer?” OR “What mental picture do I want to paint in the mind of the reader?”
- If your summary is a paragraph, consider adding “AREAS OF EXPERTISE” in which you list your specializations in bullet form. See page 8 for an example.

**EXPERIENCE**

- Choose 3-4 functional areas of expertise related to the job you are seeking (Example: Communications, Customer Service, Information Technology).
- The functional areas become **subheadings** (in bold) under “EXPERIENCE.” Under each subheading, list bulleted duties and accomplishments that demonstrate your expertise in that area. Because you are not tying your experience to specific jobs, your duties can be drawn from paid, volunteer, and home activities.

**EMPLOYMENT HISTORY**

A list of your job **titles** (in bold), name and city/state of employer, dates of employment (months and years or just years)

**EDUCATION**

- Begin with highest level of formal education or specialized training: **Title of degree in bold** (ex: Bachelor of Arts, History), name of school, year of completion (do not list year of completion if you believe it may result in age discrimination).
- If still in school, state *Currently pursuing* with name of degree you are seeking (see page 6 for example)
- Listing a high school diploma is optional if you have or are seeking a college degree or if your work experience exceeds 10 years.
- Education may be listed before experience if it is your strongest qualification.

OPTIONAL SECTIONS OF RESUME FOLLOWING EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION:

**LICENSES AND SPECIALIZED SKILLS**

Bulleted list of licenses, certifications, or specialized skills that are required or desired by your profession and that you did not list under “QUALIFICATIONS SUMMARY”

**AFFILIATIONS or VOLUNTEER SERVICE**

Membership(s) in professional associations and/or volunteer activities

## SAMPLE COMBINATION RESUME

### ROBIN BYRD

123 Birch Tree Lane | Sparrow, MD 12345  
(777) 888-9999 | [robinbyrd@hotmail.com](mailto:robinbyrd@hotmail.com)

### SUMMARY

Human Resources professional with business management experience. Demonstrated strengths in improving and streamlining HR policies and procedures toward efficiency and employee satisfaction. Excellent interpersonal skills and strong attention to detail. Proficient with MS Office and QuickBooks. Areas of expertise: **Recruiting, Benefits Administration and Staff Development/Training**

### EDUCATION

**Bachelor of Arts degree in Business with a concentration in Human Resources**, University of Maryland, College Park, MD, 2000.

### EXPERIENCE

#### Human Resources

*Managed Human Resources processes for a privately-owned business that grew from 50 to 100 employees in five years.*

- Developed polices that streamlined the process for getting job vacancies approved for posting, resulting in a reduction in unfilled positions by an average of 25%
- Negotiated with IT staff to increase visibility of open positions on the company's web page and implemented incentive employee referral program. Costs for advertising in outside media was cut by 50% in one year.
- Gained approval from senior management for using savings in recruiting costs to increase the benefits budget, thereby improving benefit offerings and increasing staff morale and satisfaction.
- Developed and delivered in-house training and orientation sessions and hired contract trainers.
- Gained reputation for excellence and promoted to HR manager position within 3 years of hire .

#### Office Administration

*Provided sole administrative and clerical assistance to a Human Resources office of a Fortune 500 company.*

- Assisted the HR Director with maintaining records of employee relations concerns.
- Revised and improved filing system for confidential personnel files.
- Produced documents on MS Word, developed budget spreadsheets on Excel and designed presentations for executives on PowerPoint.
- Answered incoming calls and greeted and directed visitors
- Assisted the employment, benefits and compensation managers with daily paperwork and record keeping

### EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

**Human Resources Manager**, Association of Bank Executives, Anytown, MD, 2008-Present

**Human Resources Representative**, Association of Bank Executives, Anytown, MD, 2005 to 2008

**Office Assistant**, Commercial Creditors, Inc., Anytown, Maryland, 2000-2005.

### ACTIVITIES

**Member**, Society of Human Resource Professionals.

**Volunteer**, Habitat for Humanity, Summers 2005-Present. Assist with building houses throughout the U.S.