



SANTA MONICA COLLEGE CAREER  
SERVICES CENTER PRESENTS:

How To Write Your

**RESUME**

And

**COVER LETTER**

## WRITING A RESUME

*The Purpose Of A Resume Is To Tempt And Attract An Employer Into Speaking To You Further, Not To Provide Every Detail Of Your Skills And Background.*

- A resume is a catalog of your qualifications. It is a personal advertisement, which outlines your transferable experience—one you can give to potential employers and or/mangers as you search for a job in your field of interest.
- Your resume should be a vivid verbal portrait of your greatest interests and strengths. In clear, concise and concrete terms, it should detail what you want to accomplish in the world of work and cite direct and related qualifying experience, which supports your objective.
- As with any sales tool, your resume should be written with the buyer (employer) in mind. The more you know about your chosen job, department, company or industry, the better you will be able to demonstrate to the employer, through your resume, that you are qualified.

## WHAT IS THE PERFECT RESUME?

The perfect resume is written communication that clearly demonstrates your ability to produce results in an area of concern to potential employers in a way that motivates them to meet you.

**YOU NEVER GET A SECOND CHANCE TO MAKE A GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION!!**

## GENERAL GUIDELINES

There are no absolutes in the preparation of a resume. However, there are certain factors, which contribute significantly to its effectiveness:

### **DO:**

- **BE ACCURATE.**
- Limit your resume to one page, unless in certain cases a second page is necessary.
- Put the education section of your resume before the experience section if your education is your strongest selling point.
- Always list a telephone number where you can be reached (preferably a phone with an answering machine). List an e-mail address if you have one.
- Write positively about yourself.
- **BOLD, CAPITALIZE** and **UNDERLINE** words you want to emphasize.
- Use “action” or “target” words to tell what you did and how well you did it.
- Keep your sentences and paragraphs short (**no paragraph over 10 lines**).
- Double space between paragraphs.
- Use simple terms rather than complex expressions that say the same thing.
- Put the strongest statements at the top, working downhill from there.
- Have someone with good English skills check for spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors. Do not rely solely on spell check.
- Use good quality paper in a conservative color. (Gray, off-white, or light blue)
- Use the jargon of your profession only if you are applying for a job within your field.

## **DON'T:**

- Include pictures.
- List names of references or relatives.
- List sex, weight, height, health or other personal irrelevancies. They are illegal for an employer to ask.
- Highlight problems (divorce, hospitalization, and handicaps).
- Include addresses of prior employers (city and state are okay).
- Include salary information in your resume, unless specifically requested by the employer. (Attach it on a separate page)

**While resumes and how they are written have gone through many trends, the current style most often used is the Chronological format.**

## PREPARING THE CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME

The chronological resume is a way to highlight a good work history directly related to your next job target without major gaps or numerous job changes.

### **RULES FOR THE CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME:**

- Start with your present or most recent position and work backward, with most space devoted to recent employment.
- Detail only the last four or five positions or employment covering the last ten or so years. Summarize early positions unless exceptionally relevant to the present.
- List month and year. Greater details can be given in the interview or application.
- You do not need to show every major position change with a given employer. List the most recent or present and two or three others at the most.
- Do not repeat details that are common to several positions.
- Within each position listed, stress the **MAJOR** accomplishments and responsibilities that demonstrate your full competency to do the job. Once the most significant aspects of your work are clear, it is generally not necessary to include lesser achievements, as employers will assume them.
- Keep your next job target in mind; and, as you describe prior positions or accomplishments, emphasize those, which are related to your next move-up.
- Education is not included in the work history section. It is a separate category listed in chronological order beginning with the most recent. If graduation is within the past five years, it should go at the top of the resume. If earlier than that, place it at the bottom. (This is not a hard and fast rule, however, and you can follow your own instincts whether to emphasize work or education).

Always try to keep the length to one page.



**CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME OUTLINE**

NAME  
STREET ADDRESS  
CITY, STATE, ZIP  
PHONE NUMBER  
e-mail

Job Objective: (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_

**HIGHLIGHTS OF QUALIFICATIONS**

(Start with action verb, use accomplishment statements, summarize relevant skill)

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**RELEVANT JOB HISTORY**

YOUR TITLE	COMPANY NAME, TOWN, STATE	YEARS (last job 1 <sup>st</sup> )
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- 
- \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_

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- \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_

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  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_

- 
- \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_

**EDUCATION**

NAME OF SCHOOL (POST H.S.)    DEGREE IF ANY, SUBJECT, YEAR GRADUATED

## WRITING COVER LETTERS

Cover letters are EXTREMELY important. Whenever your resume is sent by mail, a cover letter should go along with it.

1. **Address someone in authority** (by name and title) who could hire you. When it's IMPOSSIBLE to get that information, use a functional title ("Dear Manager") even if you have to guess ("Dear Selection Committee").
2. **Tell how you became attracted** to this particular company.
3. **Demonstrate that you've done some "homework"** on the company and can see THEIR point of view (their current problems, their interests, their priorities)
4. **Convey your enthusiasm and commitment** for this line of work.
5. **Balance professionalism with personal warmth and friendliness.** Avoid using generic alienation phrases like "enclosed please find" or "Dear Sir." This is a PERSONAL letter.
6. **Identify at least one thing about you that's unique** – say a special gift for getting along with all kinds of people – something that goes beyond the basic requirements of the position that distinguishes you AND is relevant to the position. (Then if several others are equally qualified there's a reason to pick YOU).
7. **Be appropriate** to the field you're exploring – **stand out**, but in a non-gimmicky way.
8. **Outline specifically what you are asking** and offering.
9. **Point directly to the next step**, telling just what YOU will do to follow through.
10. **Remain as brief and focused as possible.**

## SUGGESTION FOR COVER LETTER

Your name

Address

Phone number/e-mail address

(triple space)

Date

(double space)

Contact's name

Company name

Address

(double space)

Dear Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_,

(Double space)

**Opening paragraph:** Introduce yourself. Include how you became aware of the position. Grab the manager's attention. State the exact title of the job you are seeking, or the general type of work you are looking for. Explain why you chose this department, job or company. Mention that you want to work specifically in this area. State that your resume is enclosed.

**Middle paragraph:** Tailor this paragraph to specifically state how your work experience and skills will meet the employers' needs. Highlight any information within your resume you particularly want the employer to notice. This is the place to include any other job relevant information you have not noted elsewhere, and to really sell yourself!

**Closing paragraph:** Close by once again expressing an interest in the position and/or department. Be positive. Thank the employer for his/his her time and consideration. Request that you would like to follow-up and see if the employer could schedule some time to speak with you. If the employer hasn't called by a certain date, indicate that you will be in touch.

Sincerely,

(four spaces)

Your Name typed

Signature (hand signed)

## SAMPLE COVER LETTER

Susan Middleton  
1273 Twilight Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90045  
323.789.1422  
smiddleton@earthlink.net

March 12, 2001

Patricia Dobbs  
Health Tek Corporation  
1599 South Glen Boulevard  
Los Angeles, CA 90202

Dear Ms. Dobbs,

Your advertisement for a Director of Corporate Communications in the February 23 Los Angeles Times seeks a professional to communicate your company's successes to investors, clients and the general public. My qualifications closely match those you have established for this newly created position. The experience I can offer in both technical and financial communication would contribute to the continued success of Health Tek Corporation. I have enclosed a copy of my resume for your review and look forward to the opportunity to further discuss my qualifications in person.

For five years I have been employed by a medical research center, working directly with doctors, engineers and technicians to communicate the results of major research. I have also been involved in other assignments requiring application of technical knowledge. In earlier assignments I have been responsible for financial communications and production of annual reports that earned awards from Financial World Magazine. I feel that with both my education and my past experiences I can make a strong contribution to your organization.

At the present time I am seeking a new challenge, one where my innovative talents can be applied. Your company seems to offer such a challenge and my credentials match your requirements. I am looking forward to meeting with you to discuss this exciting, challenging position in more detail.

Sincerely,

Susan Middleton