



Fundamentals of Résumé and Cover Letter Writing

Learn the essential elements of constructing a résumé and cover letter, which are the first important step in any job application. The purpose of a résumé is to convey to the employer that you have the skills and expertise required for the position. A well-written, formatted, and organized résumé that is easy to read will help you secure an interview. The cover letter expands on your experiences and demonstrates how your skills will benefit the company, explaining why you are the perfect fit for the job position.

In this packet, you will gain key knowledge and tips on how to create an effective résumé and cover letter.

What is a Résumé?

- A personal advertisement showcasing your skills, qualifications, experiences, education, and attributes relevant to the job description.
- A tool to capture the employer's attention and increase your chances of being considered for an interview.

Characteristics of a Résumé

- Use action words to highlight your skills, achievements, and responsibilities.
- Write sentences that are clear, concise, and specific.
- Making connections to the job description through your experiences.
- Ensure your résumé is free of spelling and grammatical errors.
- Avoid using "I" or Me."
- Tailor the language of your résumé to match the industry.
- Include only truthful information that can be supported.

Format of a Résumé

- | | |
|---|--|
| • 1-2 <u>Full</u> Pages | • Font Size: 10-12 |
| • Avoid Empty Gaps | • Employ Bullet Points |
| • Margins: Between 0.5 – 1 Inch | • Strategically Usage of CAPS, Bolding & <i>Italics</i> |
| • Adequate Line Spacing | • Convert Résumé to PDF for Emailing/Uploading |
| • Legible Font Styles: Ex. <i>Times New Roman</i> , <i>Calibri</i> , <i>Arial</i> | • Résumé Grade Paper (<i>Optional</i>) |

Sections of a Résumé

I. Header

- 1st Line: **Full Name** Bold and 16-18pt font.
- 2nd Line: **City, ST Zip Code | Phone Number | Professional Email | LinkedIn URL**
 - LinkedIn is Optional

II. Summary

- Write **3-5 clear and concise sentences** summarizing your qualifications, experiences, and who you are as a professional.
- The goal of a summary is to contextualize your experiences, explaining how you meet the qualifications for the job.
 - **Example:** If you do not have direct experience, highlight relevant work experiences that demonstrate your qualifications for the job.
 - **Example:** If you have extensive experience in the field, use the summary to showcase your key achievements and responsibilities that align with the job description.

III. Education

- Most recent education first.
- List degree/certificate, name of college institution, city, and state.
 - Ex: **Santa Ana Community College** **Santa Ana, CA**
Associate of Arts in Sociology Aug 2023 - Present
- Year Started (Ex. *Aug 2023 – Present*) or Year Completed (Ex. *June 2024*).

IV. Skills & Qualifications

- List 6-9 bullet points that include both hard and soft skills.
- Consider what the employer is looking for by reviewing the job description.
- **Hard Skills:** Can be taught or certified in:
 - Words Per Minute, Cash Handling, Microsoft Office, Bilingual Proficiency, First Aid, CPR, etc.
- **Soft Skills:** Personal Attributes:
 - Punctuality, Team Collaboration, Leadership, Time Management, etc.

V. Professional/Volunteer Experience

- List experiences in **reverse chronological order**, including **3-5 bullet points** that highlight skills developed, achievements made, and responsibilities handled.
- Begin each bullet point with an action verb in the appropriate tense.
- Name of job title, company, city, state, and timeline date.
 - Ex: **Barista – Starbucks, Lakewood CA** **Aug 2023 – Present**

VI. Other

- This section is sometimes referred to as the “Extra Credit” section, where you can highlight additional information that you want employers to know about you.
 - School Clubs, Organizations, and/or Sports
 - Certificates, Honors, and Achievements
 - Professional Development/Training

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SUMMARY

Advocate and team player who encourages group collaboration to create a welcoming environment for customers. Introduce creative innovative strategies to increase customer sales. Comfortable in taking on projects and leading focus groups.

EDUCATION

Santa Ana Community College

Associate of Science in Psychology

Certificate of Achievement in Paralegal

Santa Ana, CA

Aug 2023 – Present

SKILLS

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Written & Verbal Communication | • Public Speaking & Presentations | • Leadership & Project Management |
| • Intercultural Awareness | • Time Management | • Microsoft Office Suite |
| • 70 WPM | • CPR | • Zoom |

EXPERIENCE

Barista – Starbucks, Night City CA

Mar 2023 – Present

- Reinforce policies, procedures, and addressed issues through Starbucks protocol.
- Incorporate strong interpersonal skills to establish a basis of teamwork to increase customer satisfaction.
- Conduct quality control on inventory to ensure that health code standards are met.
- Market seasonal promotions to customers while providing a welcoming experience.
- Mitigate conflicts when difficult situations arise due to team conflict and/or customers dissatisfaction.

Student Associate – Arasaka Inc., Night City CA

Jan 2022 – Mar 2023

- Tested new applications and created reports on their effectiveness.
- Analyzed data on various programs to learn about current student trends.
- Coordinated with other associates and helped lead special projects.

ACTIVITIES, CERTIFICATES, AND AWARDS

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------|
| • Intramural Sports Tournament | Present |
| • Edgerunners Honor Society | 2024 |
| • Microsoft Office Certification | 2023 |

What is a Cover Letter?

- A cover letter is a **one-page document** submitted with your résumé that provides the employer with more detailed information about you, your accomplishments, and how you can benefit their company.
- It is used to screen candidates for job positions before moving forward in the hiring process.
- A well-written cover letter can give your application an advantage, especially when competing with equally qualified candidates.
- Every cover letter should include **3-4 paragraphs**, each serving a specific purpose.
- A cover letter **must be customized and tailored** for every job application. **Do Not Copy and Paste!**
- You are not required to submit a cover letter if the job description explicitly states not to include one or if there is no option to upload/insert it.

Sections of a Cover Letter

I. Header

- Use the same header from your Résumé.
- 1st Line: **Full Name** Bold and 16-18pt font.
- 2nd Line: **City, ST Zip Code | Phone Number | Professional Email | LinkedIn URL**
 - LinkedIn URL is optional.

II. Opening Paragraph (1 Paragraph)

- Introduce yourself, express enthusiasm for the company, and specify the position you are applying for.

III. Body Paragraph (1-2 Paragraphs)

- Highlight key qualifications that best align with the job description.
- Mention relevant background and experiences beyond your work history.
- Explained how your skills and expertise will contribute to the company/organization.

IV. Closing Paragraph (1 Paragraph)

- **Call to Action:** State confidence in your abilities and your interest in discussing employment opportunities further.
- Provide a closing statement and thank the reader.
- Insert a written or virtual *signature* between “**Sincerely**” and your name.

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Dear Mr. Skywalker,

With great enthusiasm, I present my application as an ideal candidate for the Barista position at Marriott Irvine Spectrum. I am well-versed in communicating and providing excellent customer service to all patrons. I bring to the team my versatile skill sets, dedication to craftsmanship, and making every customer's experience a welcoming one.

I have a robust background in providing hospitality through education, retail, and public services. As an individual who enjoys the art of creation, I have extensive knowledge of coffee. I am very experienced crafting coffee beverages such as cold brew, Vietnamese coffee, Turkish coffee, and various brewing strategies. From my years as a barista and supervisor at Starbucks, I have always succeeded in leading a team, ensuring customer satisfaction, and following policies. I have received positive feedback from many customers on the quality and aesthetics of my handcrafted beverages. I uphold a high standard to ensure every drink creation is perfect and consistent. I proactively interact with my patrons and provide a welcoming atmosphere while implementing proper cleaning and sanitation routines to meet expectations.

I am a driven individual who goes above and beyond by taking on new challenges and exploring new heights. I always aim to provide top-of-the-line service that goes beyond one's expectations. I look forward to meeting the selection committee to discuss further how my qualifications align with the seasonal barista position and how I'd be an excellent fit for your establishment.

Sincerely,

David Martinez

David Martinez

What is a List of References?

- References are individuals who can confirm your claims about your professional achievements, education, experience, habits, skills, and character.
- Employers use references to verify your previous experience and to learn more about you to determine whether you are a good fit for their company/organization.
- It is important to carefully consider who you choose to list as references, as they will be asked to speak on your best qualities and strengths to the employer.

What to include in a Reference Page

- Reference's Name
- Position Title
- Company/Organization Name
- City and State
- Reference's Preferred Contact Number & Email Address

Types of References

I. Professional References

- Individuals you have worked with, such as managers, supervisors, and coworkers, who can highlight your work experience, skills, and professional accomplishments.

II. Academic References

- Educators and advisors who can elaborate on your personal character, knowledge, and critical thinking skills.

III. Personal References

- People who have known you for a long time and can speak on your personal traits, integrity, and reliability.
- Consider long-time friends, community leaders, and individuals from places where you volunteered.

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References

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Personal Attributes

- | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| - Analytical | - Fast Learner | - Problem Solver |
| - Communicator | - Flexible | - Public Speaking |
| - Conflict Resolution | - Highly Organized | - Presentation |
| - Cooperative | - Innovative | - Reliable |
| - Dependable | - Leadership | - Responsible |
| - Detail Oriented | - Motivator | - Resourceful |
| - Efficient | - Persuasive | - Self-starter |
| - Energetic | - Presentation | - Time Management |
| - Enthusiastic | - Proactive | - Tenacious |

Action Verbs

- | | | |
|----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| - Accomplished | - Encouraged | - Motivated |
| - Achieved | - Established | - Negotiated |
| - Advised | - Evaluated | - Organized |
| - Advocated | - Expanded | - Oriented |
| - Analyzed | - Facilitated | - Planed |
| - Arranged | - Guided | - Processed |
| - Built | - Implemented | - Produced |
| - Coached | - Improved | - Proved |
| - Controlled | - Increased | - Raised Profit |
| - Created | - Initiated | - Reduced Cost |
| - Demonstrated | - Inspired | - Researched |
| - Designed | - Interpreted | - Sold |
| - Developed | - Invented | - Supervised |
| - Directed | - Led | - Supported |
| - Effected | - Managed | - Wrote |

Technical Skills

- | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| - Application Design | - Interactive Media | - Project Management |
| - Bilingual in Spanish | - Marketing Analysis | - Python &SQL |
| - Brand Management | - Marketing Strategy | - Quality Control |
| - Budget Strategy | - Medication & Injection | - Risk Management |
| - Content Management | - Delivery | - Statistical Analysis |
| - CPR & First Aid | - Microsoft Office Suite | - Technical Design |
| - Cybersecurity | - Online Promotion | - Troubleshooting |
| - Data Analysis | - Photoshop | - Website Design |
| - Equipment Diagnosis | - Program Language | - Zoom |

EXPERIENCE EXAMPLES

Sales Associate

Macy's Department Store, Costa Mesa, CA

- Presented and explained merchandise in enthusiastic and information manner in upscale Men's department.
- Handled customer complaints and solve problems.
- Priced, stocked, inventoried, and ordered merchandise in department exceeding \$10,000 in daily sales.
- Spontaneously and informally trained 5-10 retail associates to ensure knowledgeable and productive staff.
- Promoted from Sales Assistant to Sales Associate in recognition of hard work and performance.

Cashier

Target Store, Santa Ana, CA

- Performing opening and closing procedures on computerized registers.
- Recorded monetary transactions; collected cash, checks and credit card charges.
- Relieved co-workers of their duties in multiple departments, worked efficiently throughout the store.
- Worked well under pressure in extremely busy work environment; maintained courteous and efficient attitude.

Barista

Starbucks, Long Beach, CA

- Provided quality beverages, whole bean, and food products consistently for all customers by adhering to all recipe and presentation standards.
- Followed health, safety and sanitation guidelines for all products.
- Maintained a clean and organized workspace so that partners can locate resources and product as needed.
- Anticipated customer and store needs by evaluating environment and customers for cues.

Receptionist

Blue Pharmaceutical, Santa Ana, CA

- Greeted customers efficiently and courteously and directed them to appropriate personnel.
- Answered multiple phones with heavy use in professional and courteous manner.
- Provided excellent customer service; answered general questions about the company.
- Responsible for general office duties including typing, mailing, computer data entry and use of all office machines.

Clerical Assistant/File Clerk

County of Orange, Garden Grove, CA

- Provided general clerical support in busy office; data entry, filing, receptionist, copying, collating and answering phones.
- Organized and filed paperwork in efficient and highly productive manner.
- Promoted from File Clerk to Clerical Assistant in a short period of time; recognized for efficiency and hard work exceeding expectations.