

UNAVCO

BROWN BAG DISCUSSION:
RESUMES, CVS, COVER LETTERS



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- What is a **resume**?
 - A concise introduction of your experiences and skills as they relate to a particular career or position you hope to acquire
 - Goal: construct a professional identity
- What is a **curriculum vitae** (also called a CV)?
 - A detailed overview of your accomplishments, especially those related to the realm of academia and research
 - Goal: construct a scholarly identity
- Let's take a look at each of these more closely....

RESUME: NAME, CONTACT, AND OBJECTIVE

- Name and contact information
 - Current address
 - Telephone number
 - Professional email
- Objective statement
 - “At a glance” picture of you and your career interests
 - Short and concise (1-3 lines; sentence fragment)
 - User-centered: tailored to specific organization and position
 - State organization’s name and job position title; briefly outline how the applicant will help the org. achieve its goals

A good Objective Statement answers these questions:

- What position(s) are you applying for?
- What are your main qualifications?
- What are your career goals?
- What is your professional identity?
- How can you help the company?



OBJECTIVE BRAINSTORM ACTIVITY

Questions about You	Questions about Employers
What are your main qualifications, strengths, skills, and areas of expertise?	What qualifications are most desired by employers in your field?
What position(s)—or type of position—are you seeking?	What positions are available on the job market? What are they titled?
What are some of your professional goals?	What are some goals of these organizations that interest you?
What type of organization or work setting are you most interested in?	What kinds of organizations are now hiring?

DEVELOPING AN OBJECTIVE STATEMENT

For practice, fill in the brackets:

1. To utilize my [qualifications, strengths, or skills] as a [position title]
2. A position as a [position title] for [company name] allowing me to develop my [qualifications, strengths, or skills]
3. An opportunity to [professional goal] in a [type of organization, work environment, or field]
4. [position title] with emphasis in [areas of expertise]

RESUME: EDUCATION SECTION

- Education
 - Emphasizes your educational background and formal training; individualizing for an organization
- Content
 - Highest degree earned
 - Institution, date of graduation, level of degree (B.S., M.S., PhD, etc)
 - Additional certifications earned
 - GPA (optional)
 - Courses taken outside of classes typical to your major that may add to your qualifications for the job

Education:
B.A. in English
Purdue University
West Lafayette, Indiana
Graduation: December
2007
GPA: 3.4/4.0

How might this sample be improved? Content? Visuals?

Education

B.A. in Professional Writing, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana,
May 2007 (Funded 100% of Schooling)

Concentration: Business and Technical Writing

Select Coursework: Computer-aided Publishing, Writing for the Computer
Industry, Business Writing, Technical Writing, Advanced Professional Writing

Overall GPA: 3.4/4.0

Major GPA: 3.7/4.0

Is this sample any better than the
previous one? Why? Why not?

RESUME: EXPERIENCE SECTION

- Experience section
 - Demonstrates your **most relevant experience** in work or activities
 - Helps your resume **stand out** from the others in the stack
- Content
 - Name and address of organization
 - Dates of employment
 - Position title
 - Responsibilities, duties, achievements, etc.: use *action verbs* to describe your duties (e.g. Planned field campaign)

Should the Education Section be placed above or below your experience section?

- *Which is stronger, your education or your work experience section?*
- *How much relevant work experience do you have?*

Place the strongest, most relevant section closest to top of the page

Activity: List your past and present experiences.

Include:

- Jobs
- Volunteer positions
- Appointments
- Assistantships
- Internships
- Any activities that involved the same duties or qualifications that might be needed in the job you're applying for

Activity (cont.):

- To tailor the content of this section, circle each item that is...
 - Related to your career goals
 - Asked for in job ads and descriptions
- Then choose one experience you circled and describe briefly

DESCRIBING YOUR EXPERIENCES

- Use a variety of action words to describe your experiences
- Answer the journalistic questions:
 - *Who? ... With whom did you work?*
 - *What? ... What duties did you perform?*
 - *Where? ... Where did your job fit into the organization?*
 - *Why? ... What goals were you trying to accomplish?*
 - *When? ... What timelines were you working under?*
 - *How? ... What procedures did you follow?*

Description Before: Planned activities



Questions: *What activities? How? When? For whom?*



Description After: Planned arts, crafts, activities, and exercises weekly for physically-challenged children

RESUME: PARALLEL DESCRIPTIONS

COLUMN A (not parallel)

- Recording OSHA regulated documents
- Material purchasing and expediting
- Prepared weekly field payroll
- Responsible for charge orders

COLUMN B (parallel)

- Recorded** OSHA regulated documents
- Conducted** material purchasing and expediting
- Prepared** weekly payroll
- Processed** charge orders

RESUME: DON'T SELL YOURSELF SHORT

Try to see your experiences as a professional would!



UNDERSTATED

- Answered phone
- Wiped tables



PROFESSIONAL

- Acted as liaison between clients and legal staff
- Created a healthy environment for customers and maintained a positive public image



FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

- Tailor for your audience
- Use appropriate headings
- Include required content
- Organize your section strategically
- Develop your descriptions
- Make your descriptions parallel
- See through a potential employer's eyes

RESUME: OPTIONAL SECTIONS AND ARRANGEMENT

- Optional sections
 - Fills up white space
 - Provides **additional evidence** of your qualifications
 - Gives employers a sense of **who you are** outside of school and work
- Content
 - **Honors and awards:** Emphasizes your participation in relevant activities and any honors you have received
 - Computer skills
 - Languages
 - Volunteer experience
 - Hobbies and interests
 - Foreign travel
 - Professional memberships
 - Community service

Where should I place the optional sections?

- Usually the last section on the page
- **Can be moved up if information is especially important or relevant**
- Sometimes omitted if there is a lack of space or relevant information

RESUME: OPTIONAL SECTIONS

Which Honors and Activities should I include?

- Consider which honors and activities are **most relevant to the job** to which you are applying.
 - Which honors and activities would **most interest prospective employers?**
- How much **space** do you have?
- Choose and organize your information to **emphasize the most relevant activities.**

Brainstorm

- Decide what to include based on relevance, interest-value, and space
- Match organization and design with rest of your résumé
- Seek critical feedback

CV: CURRICULUM VITAE (E.G. “YOUR LIFE”)

- **Name and contact information**

- **Areas of interest**

- Listing of your varied academic interests

- **Education**

- List of your degrees earned or in progress, institutions, and years of graduation
- Reverse chronological order
- May also include titles of your dissertation or thesis here

- **Grants, honors, and awards**

- List of grants received, honors bestowed upon you for your work, and awards you may have received for teaching or service

- **Publications and presentations**

- List of your published articles and books, as well presentations given at conferences

- **Employment and experience**

- May include separate lists of teaching experiences, laboratory experiences, field experiences, volunteer work, leadership, or other relevant experiences

- **Scholarly or professional memberships**

- Listing of the professional organizations of which you are a member
- If you have held an office or position in a particular organization, you can either say so here or leave this information for the experience section

- **References [optional]**

- List of persons who write letters of recommendations for you, which includes their contact information

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- There is no universal guideline for formatting or organizing a resume or CV
- Use common sense
- Stick with commonly used fonts
 - “**fancier**” fonts may *distract* the reader from the content
 - Maintain consistent font sizing (few exceptions)
- Seek out and evaluate examples
 - Look for examples of resumes from the same field (or closely related)

RESUME OR CV?

- Under what circumstances would you send a resume? A CV?

COVER LETTERS

- **Purpose: introduces you and your resume to potential employers or organizations you seek to join**
- Cover letters do more than introduce your resume. A cover letter's importance also includes its ability to:
 - Explain your experiences in a story-like format that works with the information provided in your resume
 - Allow you to go in-depth about important experiences/skills and relate them to job requirements
 - Show the employer that you are individualizing (tailoring) this job application
 - Provide a sample of your written communication skills

PREPARING TO WRITE YOUR COVER LETTER

- **Learn about the job**

- Learn as much as you can about the organization, its goals and needs
- Learn what kind of employee the organization needs
- Learn what an employee will be expected to do

- **Information gathering - Do your homework!**

- Contact the organization; speak to an “insider”
- Read the organization’s website
- Use college career centers

COVER LETTER: WHAT TO INCLUDE?

- Relate your experience to the job advertisement
 - Identify key words
 - Words that signal what an employer considers important or essential in hiring for a position.
 - Words that give you insight into the skills, accomplishments, personality traits, and levels of education and experience your employer desires.
 - Create table linking organization mission/goals to your goals and values
- Decide which qualifications to include
 - Answer the question: *How can I help the organization?*
 - Identify your transferrable skills
 - Learn which skills are most relevant to the job for which you are applying
 - Include proof that you have the most important qualifications for a position
 - **Be specific!** Provide concrete examples where your abilities led to measurable results.

Some transferrable skills:

- **Leadership qualities**
- **Ability to complete multiple tasks at the same time ("multi-tasking")**
- **Teamwork skills**
- **Ability to meet deadlines**
- **Interpersonal skills**
- **Initiative to complete projects without supervision ("ability to work independently")**
- **Written communications skills**
- **Verbal communications skills**
- **Computer skills**

COVER LETTERS: FORMATTING

- A cover letter has four essential parts
 - **Heading:** provide **contact information** and address the recipient
 - **Introduction:** briefly **overview** why your values and goals align with the organization's and how you will help them
 - **Argument:** **persuade** your reader why you are a good fit for the company and job
 - **Closing:** **restate** your main points and **reveal** what you plan to do once the reader has received your resume and cover letter

COVER LETTER: HEADING

- Your contact information followed by the date and the organization's contact information
- Address the letter to a specific individual if possible, otherwise address to "Dear Hiring Professionals"
- Use spacing effectively



Dear Sir/Madam...
Dear Potential Customer...
Dear fellow citizen...
Dear friend...
Mon ami...
Hey you gorgeous thing, you...
Dude...

COVER LETTER: INTRODUCTION

- Your introduction should discuss the following:
 - Where you saw or heard about the position
 - A brief background on the organization and its goals
 - How your experience matches the position
 - How you will help the organization achieve its goals
- **Your objective: an interview**





COVER LETTER: ARGUMENT

- Body Paragraph 1 should discuss the following:
 - More detail on company goals/mission
 - More detail supporting your claim that you can help them achieve goals/mission
 - Specific example based on information in résumé
 - How you will help the organization
- Body Paragraph 2 should discuss the following:
 - More detail on position requirements
 - More detail supporting your claim that your experience fulfills these requirements
 - Specific example based on information in résumé
 - How you will help the organization



COVER LETTER: CLOSING PARAGRAPH

- This paragraph should do the following:
 - Repeat your main objective: an interview
 - Provide contact information
 - Close the letter in a professional manner
 - Provide signature block
 - Provide enclosure information



COVER LETTER: GENERAL FORMATTING

- Single-space your cover letter
- Leave a space between each paragraph
- Leave three spaces between your closing (such as "Sincerely" or "Sincerely Yours") and typed name
- Leave a space between your heading (contact information) and greeting (such as, "Dear Mr. Roberts")
- Either align all paragraphs to the left of the page, or indent the first line of each paragraph to the right
- Use standard margins for your cover letter, such as one-inch margins on all sides of the document
- Center your letter in the middle of the page; in other words, make sure that the space at the top and bottom of the page is the same
- Sign your name in ink between your salutation and typed name

COVER LETTER: BEFORE YOU SEND

- Always, always, always proofread your letter carefully!
- Put letter aside for a few days, then come back and re-read
 - You may discover areas for improvement!
- Share your letter with colleagues and ask for constructive feedback



RESOURCES

- Purdue Online Writing Lab: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>
- UNC-Chapel Hill Writing Center: <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/curricula-vitae-cvs-versus-resumes/>