

2023 EDITION

# THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO RESUMES AND COVER LETTERS



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# RESUME AT A GLANCE

A resume is often your first introduction to an employer, explaining through your experiences why you are the best candidate for a position. The purpose of a resume is to grab the employers' interest to invite you for an interview. Most resumes will only get a 15-second scan, as employers look for reasons to screen out unqualified candidates quickly.

## KEY STRATEGIES TO KEEP IN MIND

### Begin documenting your experiences early.

- o Keep track of your activities in class, outside of class, and within the community.
- o Update your resume with projects, internships, part-time jobs, volunteer opportunities, member organizations, research projects, and more.
- o It is easier to create robust information about experiences as you complete them rather than try to remember later.

### Use the job description (or scholarship application, etc.) to develop your resume and your cover letter.

- o Each time you apply for a position, you should update your resume to include specific details that outline why you are a good candidate for the position.
- o Adjusting to each job allows you to highlight your important qualifications to the company of interest.

### Content is **IMPORTANT!**

- o Spend time writing, reviewing, and rewriting the critical sections of your resume.
- o Visit Career Services for a walk-in resume review and come back again after you update your resume to get more feedback.

### Proofread your work.

- o Resumes with errors, typos, and unclear or ineffective descriptions will likely be discarded without serious consideration.



### TIPS:

**Applicants who show how their experience, education, and skills are related to the targeted position are more likely to get an interview.**

# SECTIONS OF A RESUME

There are several sections on a resume. Some are required, while others are optional. It is essential to research industry-specific sections that should be considered to make sure you are highlighting relevant job-related skills and experiences.

## REQUIRED

- ✓ Resume Header/Contact Information
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Experience (paid & unpaid)

## RECOMMENDED

- ✓ Organizations
- ✓ Activities
- ✓ Awards

## INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC

- ✓ Skills (Technical, Computer, Laboratory, etc)
- ✓ Certifications (teaching, job specific, etc)
- ✓ License (medical, communication, writing/English)

## OPTIONAL

- ✓ Summary of Qualifications  
(placed under resume header)
- ✓ Publications
- ✓ Speaking Engagements
- ✓ Related Coursework

Neither references nor “references available upon request” are included on a resume. Rather, you will create a separate Reference page to list your references & upload it if employers request it on the application or ask for your references in person.

# RESUME HEADER

Your name should be the most prominent text on the page and the first thing to be seen.

It should include accurate contact information, including city, state, zip code, phone number (one phone number is adequate), email address, website, and LinkedIn link and/or portfolio, depending on the industry.

It isn't necessary to include a street address on your resume.

Use the same header for your cover letter and reference page to demonstrate consistency.

## Create Your Own Resume Header

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zipcode \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone number \_\_\_\_\_ Email address \_\_\_\_\_  
Website(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
LinkedIn \_\_\_\_\_ Portfolio \_\_\_\_\_

## EXAMPLES

**Robert E. Bearcat**

BobbyBearcat@gmail.com | 660-867-5309 | Maryville, MO 64468

**Bobby Bearcat**

BobbyBearcat@gmail.com | 660-867-5309 | Maryville, MO 64468 | LinkedIn: bbearcat

# SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

Use 3-4 bullet points, presenting your most relevant qualifications and achievements, and connect this section to the job description. Pay attention to the “preferred” or “ideal candidates” section of the job description.

Prioritize your bullet points to match the preferred qualifications in the job description, and use numbers and text to demonstrate achievements.

Your Summary of Qualifications should change with each position submission, matching the job description. If your experiences don't exactly relate, the use of strong action verbs & experiences will help you stand out from the rest.

## Top Ten Strengths or Achievements

Jot down your top ten strengths or achievements. Be as specific as possible.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

## EXAMPLE

### Summary of Qualifications

- Motivated professional with more than 3 years of experience in retail management.
- Managed 5 employees in accounting department to maintain highly efficient environment.
- Specializes in employee recruitment & retention.
- Designed and implemented two-year strategic marketing plan for sales department

# EDUCATION

If your major or overall GPA is 3.0 or above (on a 4.0 scale), you may wish to include this information. Set it on the far-right margin, under the graduation date.

You can include relevant coursework, research projects, independent studies, study abroad, publications, honors, and certifications in the education section. We recommend adding projects as an experience (see Experience Section).

## First-degree Info:

Associate/Bachelor of \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_

Institution info for first degree \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

## Second-degree Info:

Associate/Bachelor/ Masters of \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_

Institution info for second degree \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

## Third-degree Info:

Associate/Bachelor/ Masters/ doctorates of \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_

Institution info for third degree \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

# EDUCATION EXAMPLES

## Single Major

**Bachelor of Science: Biomedical Sciences- Pre-Veterinary**  
Northwest Missouri State University, Maryville, MO

**December 20XX**  
Overall GPA 3.8/4.0

## Single Major and Minor

**Bachelor of Science: General Chemistry | Minor: Biochemistry**  
Northwest Missouri State University, Maryville, MO

**December 20XX**  
Overall GPA 3.8/4.0

## Double Major

**Bachelor of Science Double Major: Marketing and Business Management**  
Northwest Missouri State University, Maryville, MO

**December 20XX**  
Major GPA 3.8/4.0

## Transfer student with an Associates degree

**Bachelor of Science in Political Science**  
Northwest Missouri State University, Maryville, MO

**May 20XX**

**Associate of Arts in General Studies**  
North Central Missouri College, Trenton, MO

**June 20XX**

## Two Bachelors degrees from the same institution, over different time periods

**Bachelor of Science in Interactive Digital Media: Visual Imaging Concentration**

**May 2021**

**Bachelor of Science in Computer Science**

**May 1999**

Northwest Missouri State University, Maryville, MO

## Masters and Bachelors degrees from different institutions

**Master of Science in Education Teaching: Middle School**

**May 20XX**

Northwest Missouri State University, Maryville, MO

Overall GPA 3.5/4.0

**Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education**

**May 20XX**

Missouri Southern State University, Joplin, MO

Major GPA 3.8/4.0



# EXPERIENCE

The Experience section is where any experience that will assist in future professional jobs is listed. (Bulleted statements are made to reflect your qualifications for the position to which you apply).

Paid and unpaid experiences should be recorded, as well as any academic projects, internships, work experiences, and other experiences relevant to the position.

- This is why we title this section “Experiences” or “Relevant Experiences” rather than Work Experiences. Include all the great things that have prepared you for this position, regardless of payment.

Statements with each experience will be written in bullet points.

- Any statement made should be proven with experience and examples. It is essential to spend time on this section.

List experiences in reverse chronological order; most recent first.

Include the job title, employer, location, and dates of employment, followed by three to four powerful bullet points describing your accomplishments and responsibilities.

Keep your format consistent on each experience throughout the section.

## Your Experience

Utilize this section to brainstorm and write down the necessary information for each experience. Remember, this may be previous employments, classwork, internships, volunteer work.

**Experience title:** \_\_\_\_\_ Dates of experience: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Company: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

**Experience title:** \_\_\_\_\_ Dates of experience: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Company: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

**Experience title:** \_\_\_\_\_ Dates of experience: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Company: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

**Experience title:** \_\_\_\_\_ Dates of experience: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Company: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

# EXPERIENCE

## Practice Bullet Point Writing

The more you practice writing bullet points for your experience section, the better you will become. It takes time to get it right, but it's worth the time.

When writing your bullet points, don't just think of the task; think about what you did and what outcome was produced. Below are many examples, starting with the task, identifying the result, and creating the bullet point.

### Powerful Bullet Points

The table below will help formulate strong bullet points for your experiences; please refer to this as you draft bullet points on the next page.

1) What did you do?	2A) How did you do it?	2B) Why did you do it?	3) Quantify
Sell advertising spots for campus media	Contacted 40 local and area businesses each week to buy advertising spots	To increase advertising sales income	25% sales increase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducted advertisement sales on a weekly bases throughout Maryville and the surrounding areas for newspaper, yearbook, magazine, radio, and television spots, increasing advertising sales by 25% from the previous year</li> </ul>			
Reading tutor	Spent 30 minutes with a student, three times a week to provide reading instruction	Improve reading proficiency	30 minutes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tutored six students, spending 30 minutes with each student three times a week, improving reading proficiency by an average of two steps over the school year</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>			

# STRONG ACTION VERBS

## STRONG ACTION VERBS

### Analyzed/Researched

Assessed	Computed	Detected	Examined	Investigated
Calculated	Concluded	Determined	Identified	Maintained
Clarified	Critiqued	Discovered	Inferred	Monitored
Compared	Deduced	Evaluated	Interviewed	Observed

### Assisted/Communicated

Advised	Consulted	Cooperated	Facilitated	Participated
Collaborated	Contributed	Corresponded	Interpreted	Translated

### Created/Developed

Acted	Conceived	Established	Illustrated	Originated
Adapted	Constructed	Executed	Improved	Performed
Authored	Corrected	Expanded	Initiated	Planned
Built	Designed	Fabricated	Integrated	Presented
Clarified	Devised	Formulated	Introduced	Prioritized
Composed	Drafted	Generated	Modified	Produced

### Improved/Increased

Achieved	Assured	Encouraged	Motivated	Renovated
Acquired	Augmented	Enhanced	Overcome	Revised
Advanced	Bolstered	Expanded	Provided	Strengthened

### Counseling/Instructed/Learned

Advised	Assessed	Consulted	Encouraged	Guided
Advocated	Charged	Coordinated	Established	Mentored
Aided	Coached	Demonstrated	Explained	Resolved
Applied	Communicated	Enabled	Fostered	Supported

### Organized

Arranged	Clarified	Engineered	Obtained	Reorganized
Assembled	Complied	Instituted	Planned	Reviewed
Budgeted	Coordinated	Located	Prepared	Scheduled
Built	Developed	Maintained	Prioritized	Updated

### Supervised/Managed

Authorized	Coordinated	Enforced	Implemented	Moderated
Coached	Delegated	Evaluated	Led	Motivated
Consulted	Directed	Expedited	Managed	Officiated
Controlled	Distributed	Facilitated	Monitored	Oversaw

# EXPERIENCE

Start with strong and effective action verbs that describe your skills and accomplishments. Refer to the list of strong action verbs on page 20.

When possible, quantify items using numbers or percentages such as budget size, the number of people supervised, etc. How many? How often? Was there an impact? Is the bullet point measurable?

Present and past tense verbs should be utilized if done correctly. Present Tense verbs should be used if the experience is currently happening. Use past tense if the experience is no longer happening.

## My Bullet Points

Utilize this section to brainstorm and write down possible bullet points. Remember to utilize the Bullet Point Helper on the previous page.

Your Experience 1:

- 
- 
- 

Your Experience 2:

- 
- 
- 

Your Experience 3:

- 
- 
- 

Your Experience 4:

- 
- 
-

# EXPERIENCE EXAMPLES

## Account Executive

August 2016 – May 2018

Northwest Student Media, Maryville, MO

- Conducted advertisement sales on weekly basis throughout Maryville and surrounding areas in newspaper, yearbook, magazine, radio and television, increasing advertising sales by 25% from the previous academic year
- Assisted local CPA office with QuickBooks, payroll processing, general bookkeeping, tax planning and income tax preparation
- Communicated weekly with 40 clients and created advertising campaigns specific to each client

## Supply Chain Management Intern

May 2016 – August 2017

Northwest Missouri State University-Purchasing, Maryville, MO

- Supported development and execution of campus contracts for low-value commodities
- Advised team of # on cost models, make vs. buy studies, spending analyses, and invoice issue resolution
- Maximized efficiency of supplier's performance by 15% through the utilization of Achieving Excellence process

## Elementary Teacher (5th Grade)

May 2018 – June 2021

Horace Mann Laboratory School, Maryville, MO

- Created a safe, nurturing environment for a class of 30 children to play and learn
- Partnered with parents with a shared desire to provide the best care and education for their children
- Cultivated positive relationships with families, teachers, state licensing authorities, community contacts and corporate partners
- Implemented KCE's curriculum in a way that is consistent with the unique needs of each child

## Rec Center Manager

January 2014 – June 2017

Family Center, Maryville, MO

- Planned and supervised over 50 children's summer recreational programs, adult programs, and fitness center
- Coordinated efforts with Recreation, Program & Facilities Supervisor in scheduling activities, events, and sports tournaments for the department and outside entities
- Managed a budget of \$50,000 and its expenditures for the department over the fiscal year
- Trained and supervised 6 full-time and 15 part-time employees

## Class Projects or Classes (to be included in Experience Section)

### Graduation Placement Data Collection Project

July 2021-August 2021

Northwest Missouri State University-Career Services, Maryville, MO

- Created four tables for MS Access to collect placement data from 800 graduating university students at six weeks, three months and six months following graduation
- Appended multiple tables of placement data to create one summarized data sheet
- Researched correct processes to ensure all necessary data was collected in the appropriate format

# EXPERIENCE

## Gather Information Draft Bullet Points

Utilize this section to brainstorm and write down the necessary information for each internship and start creating strong bullet points.

Internship experience can be a powerful addition to your resume.

Include your internship experience in the same format outlined in the Experience section. As with other work experience, descriptions should use strong action verbs and focus on your skills and accomplishments.

Don't forget to reference the bullet point tool and the strong action verb list.

**Experience Title:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Dates of experience:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Company:** \_\_\_\_\_ **City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Bullet Points:**

- 
- 
- 
- 

**Experience Title:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Dates of experience:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Company:** \_\_\_\_\_ **City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Bullet Points:**

- 
- 
- 
- 

## EXAMPLE

**Communications Intern**

**May 2021 - August 2021**

Iowa Finance Authority (IFA), Des Moines, IA

- Assisted in maintaining IFA's social media initiatives on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, producing weekly content on available services
- Prepared weekly news releases in cooperation with the communications staff
- Consulted with the communications staff in coordinating the 2021 Housing Iowa Conference, overseeing the use of the mobile app system, Agenda Pop

# ORGANIZATIONS, ACTIVITIES AND AWARDS

## Organizations/Activities/Awards

Listing your activities during your college years shows an employer you are a well-rounded person who is active in the community.

If you held an elected or appointed position, you should include the title, description of responsibilities, accomplishments, and dates.

If the activity or experience is significant and relevant to your career goals, you may wish to list it under related experience.

This information is a great space filler; however, this information is the first item to be left off when space is needed to be saved.

### Gather Information Draft Bullet Points

Utilize this section to brainstorm and write down the necessary information for each item and create strong bullet points. Don't forget to reference the bullet point tool.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates of experience: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Bullet Points:

- 
- 

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates of experience: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Bullet Points:

- 
- 

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates of experience: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Bullet Points:

- 
- 

## EXAMPLE

**Lambda Pi Eta Member  
Secretary**

**August 2017 – Present  
August 2020 – Present**

- Record detailed, accurate minutes at each meeting
- Communicate weekly with all members about upcoming dates and events

# INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC SKILLS

The following pages are research sections specific to your industry.

Students in a technology field often include a Technical Skills section, following the Education Section

## Gather Information Draft Bullet Points

Utilize this section to brainstorm and write down the skills you have gained through your experience that are specific to your industry or major

## EXAMPLES

### Graphic Information System (GIS) Examples

#### TECHNICAL SKILLS

**Programming Languages:** Java, HTML, C, C++, C#, ASP.NET, SQL, PL/SQL

**Development Tools:** NetBeans, Visual Studio, MS Office Suite, Eclipse 4.5, .NET 4.6

**Databases:** MySQL, Microsoft Access, Oracle 12c, Advance Topics in Data Systems

**Web Servers:** IIS 10, Tomcat, WAMP (Windows, Apache, PHP) Server

**Operating Systems:** Windows 7, Windows 8, Windows 10, Mac OS X

### Communications Examples

#### SKILLS

- Adobe creative suite: InDesign, Illustrator, and Photoshop
- Client Resolution & Retention
- B2B (Business to Business) Sales
- Video equipment operations and video editing
- Analysis of market trends & brand outreach

### Business Examples

#### SKILLS

- MIS: Oracle, SAP, AECOM
- Data analysis, trend identification, cash flow analysis
- Client needs assessment
- Loss & prevention
- Technical writing, interpretation, and negotiation



## EDUCATION EXAMPLES

### Practicum Experience

#### High School Special Education Practicum

January 2021-April 2021

Appleton City High School, Maryville MO

- Attended weekly Individualized Education Plan meeting to evaluate and document children's growth
- Observed lesson plans, exercises and projects accommodated to specific students
- Coordinated delivery of services with four teachers, across seven hours of instruction time

### Elementary Education Practicum

October 2020-December 2020

#### Orange Grove Elementary School, Cameron MO

- Assisted in classroom management of 23 students
- Participated in daily co-teaching strategies
- Produced project-based learning activities for 23 students once a week

## THEATER EXAMPLES

### Production Experience

Eve of Crimes	The New School Theater, St. Joseph, MO	December 2019
Le Mot Juste	ANY Theatre Co, Kansas City, MO	September 2019
West Side Story	City Theatre Co., Kansas City, MO	July 2019
Into the Woods	The New School Theater, St. Joseph, MO	May 2019

### Certifications

Certification are industry-driven and should be included in your resume.

If the certification is relevant to the job you are applying for, you can add it under the "education" section.

## EXAMPLES

### Certifications

#### Personal Fitness Trainer Certification

Expires: May 2023

Athletics and Fitness Association of American (AFAA)

#### First Aid & CPR Certified

Expires: July 2022

American Red Cross, St. Joseph, MO

#### Certified Nursing Assistant

Expires: December 2022

Grand River Technical School, Chillicothe, MO

# RESUME DESIGN

## Design Tips

**Graphics, shadowed boxes, colors, and lines** can add uniqueness and individuality to your resume, but they should never look more predominant than the text. Consider how well these items will photocopy in black and white within the potential company and communicate electronically to the reader's computer and software.

**Boldface type, underlining, and CAPITALS** can bring attention to important heading and information on your resume. However, be sure these features enhance your resume information without overwhelming the reader's eyes. Too many typestyles, lines, and bullets can create a cluttered appearance. It is suggested 3-4 typestyles max are used.

**Vertically aligned bullets give equal weight/value to all items.**

**Right alignment** will give a nice, finished look to the right margin of the resume as opposed to the often-seen ragged edge. Dates can be placed, so they end at the right margin.

**Choose and use one format consistently** to represent states, dates, and other repeated information. When there are changes in these items throughout a resume, it may appear as an error.

MO, Mo, Missouri	MM/YY-MM/YY	August YYYY - September YYYY
------------------	-------------	------------------------------

### DO

- Use an easy to read, common font.
- Use a readable font size (typically 10 or 12 point).
- Use bold, underline and italics with purpose.
- Limit to one page, if possible. As you develop more experience you may have a two-page résumé.
- Use uniform margins, usually between .5 to 1 inch.
- Be consistent in formatting.

### TRY TO AVOID

- Using tables and graphs. Those items do not always transfer well.
- Using colors or designs, unless specific for the industry.
- Using paragraph descriptions for experiences.
- Using clipart or photos.
- Using abbreviations, except for states and your GPA.

## Submitting Your Resume

### **SEND A PDF (NOT A .DOCX, .JPG, .PNG, ETC.)**

**If submitting your resume electronically, save it as a PDF to ensure the format is locked.**

Submitting your resume in a PDF keeps the employer's technology from automatically changing the formatting of your Resume; this allows you to build your Resume with the software you have and enables the employer to view it the way you intended.

### **NAME YOUR PDF FILE CORRECTLY**

**Use your full name and position title as the name of the document file when submitting your resume electronically—for example, Sam Smith Assistant Director Resume.**

Saving your resume as a PDF with this name format helps you send the correct Resume and allows the employer to quickly find the proper document. It never hurts for employers to see your name repeatedly.

### **USE THE SAME PAPER FOR COVER LETTER, RESUME AND REFERENCE PAGE**

**If submitting your resume in person or through the mail, use the same paper and heading for the cover letter and reference page.**

Humans remember things by repetition. Consistency is essential throughout all documents you submit for a job because it helps an employer remember you. Utilizing the same header and paper for your resume, cover letter, and reference page increases the reviewers' chances of remembering your application materials.

### **USE RESUME PAPER OR BRIGHT WHITE PAPER**

**Print your document on resume paper or bright white paper. The type of paper may depend on the industry. For example, the medical industry will often print on bright white paper.**

Printing your application materials on this paper shows you pay attention to details, and specialty paper increases the chances of your materials standing out from the rest.

# COVER LETTER AT A GLANCE

The purpose of a cover letter – also known as a letter of application or inquiry – is to encourage an employer to review your qualifications and consider you for an interview. A cover letter should be accompanied by a resume.

A cover letter serves as a personal introduction to your resume and should always accompany it unless you hand out copies of your resume in person.

***Applicants who best communicate how their experience, education and skills are related to the targeted position are more likely to get an interview.***

- o Cover letters are usually one page and are clear and concise. The letter should be typed in a professional business-style structure.
- o Match your cover letter design to your resume design to provide a consistent look throughout your application materials. Your resume, cover letter and reference sheet should have a consistent heading and font.
- o Read the instructions and send materials as they request them.
- o As often as possible, address cover letters to individual rather than “To Whom it May Concern”. To find a specific contact, look at resources such as the company website, LinkedIn, or other social media. If a contact person such as a human resources manager or personnel manager cannot be found through these means, simply call the organization, and ask, “Who is responsible for the hiring decisions of this position?” Make certain you get the proper spelling and note preferences for Ms., Dr., Mrs., Mr., their job title, and address.
- o Connect your cover letter and resume. Connect them both to the job description. Your cover letter should emphasize unique qualifications and personal characteristics which are relevant for the organization, industry, or job opportunity.



## ***DID YOU KNOW?***

**83% of hiring managers reported that cover letters are important in their hiring decisions (ResumeLab, 2019).**

## Questions to ask yourself as you begin to draft the cover letter:

- o What are your strengths?
- o What accomplishments are worthy of emphasis?
- o Do you possess specific skills or talents that are relevant to the job?
- o Can you demonstrate essentials of previous jobs?

Consider the employer’s perspective and select two or three of the most relevant and impressive facts from your analysis. Organize these facts according to the most appropriate strategy for your cover letter.

## DO YOUR HOMEWORK

- o A cover letter should explicitly address what YOU can do for the organization, not what the organization can do for you.
- o One of the most effective ways to do this is to research everything possible. Research the industry by reading their website, social media, LinkedIn reviews and company review websites.
- o Incorporate company research findings about new accounts, the work environment, products, service, growth areas, and history with your specific qualifications and experience. (“My experience at XYZ in public relations would be very beneficial as you expand new services into \_\_\_\_.”) “Contribute” and “mutually beneficial” are convincing words that would demonstrate what you could do for the organization.

## SECTIONS OF A COVER LETTER

There are **four** sections of a cover letter. It is important to include each section.

1. **Header** - including a greeting
2. **Introduction**
3. **Body** - including your qualifications
4. **Closing**

# SECTIONS OF A COVER LETTER

## HEADER

- o Use your resume header as the header of your cover letter (and Reference Page).
- o Use a formal, business letter format to include:
  - o The date
  - o The name, title, organization, and address of the person you are sending the letter to. Research the position announcement or company so that you address the correct person.
  - o (If you do not know the name of the individual, review the job announcement to determine the best option. That may include “Human Resources”, “Hiring Manager”, “Hiring Committee” or “Department Director.”
  - o Salutation, or “Dear...”
- o Pay special attention to the correct spelling of the name and company, as well as correct contact information.

## HEADER EXAMPLE

**John Smith**

**JohnSmith@gmail.com | 660-867-5309 | Maryville, MO, 64468**

Today's Date

Mr. /Ms. Person to Whom You Are Writing  
Title  
Name of Organization  
Street Address  
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr. /Ms. Last Name,

## INTRODUCTION

- o Start with passion, admiration, accomplishments, humor and creativity
- o Mention, by name, the position that you are submitting your resume.
- o Reference how you learned about the position.
- o Include a brief statement about why you are interested in the position, and specifically the company.
- o Use caution when using I and me to avoid a self-centered tone throughout the letter.

## INTRODUCTION EXAMPLES

Among my colleagues, I'm known as the one who can pick up the pieces, no matter what amount of you-know-what hits the fan. Which is why I think there's no one better to fill this customer service leader position.

Last December, I ousted our company's top salesperson from his spot—and he hasn't seen it since. Which means, I'm ready for my next big challenge, and the sales manager role at your company is exactly what I'm looking for.

## BODY

- o Refer the reader to your resume and mention a few of your main qualifications and skills from past experience and education, which directly relate to the organization and position at hand.
- o Describe some of your personal characteristics which are especially relevant.
- o Always write from the reader's point of view, emphasizing what you have to offer.
- o Avoid vague statements; give proof by concrete examples without repeating your entire resume.
- o It's not easy to start. Try using a table to identify what skills or qualifications are needed and what you can offer the position.

## BODY EXAMPLES

Managed 140 vendor accounts as the Accounts Receivable Manager, with quarterly performance monitoring and annual vendor reporting of 100% accuracy and accountability of all required documents for three years.

As the Lead Designer for Knacktive team, I developing and co-presenting a \$45,000 marketing solution to Bell City, incorporating marketing tools such as updated website, new phone app, new logo and branding of all City facilities, updated social media accounts, new welcome sign and new travel guide.

# SECTIONS OF A COVER LETTER

As a current 3rd grade teacher, I utilize the AMS curriculum as an asset in my classroom daily, to assist teaching all students of varying proficiency levels to art of decoding, comprehension, writing, speaking and listening.

In the role of Information Technology Student Support Assistant at Northwest Missouri State University Office of Information Technology from July 2020 through June 2021, I coordinated laptop assignment for deployment for over 6,000 students each fall.

With two years' experience as a Cat Caller at Northwest Missouri State University, I conducted cold calling an average of 60 alumni each week, tracking progress in the CATDash pipeline management tool to improve communication among all callers.

## CLOSING:

- o Thank the employer for their time and consideration
- o Express your interested in meeting to discuss the position and learn more about the team.
- o List your phone number and email contact method. Yes, it's on the top, but as they conclude the letter provide them with an opportunity to reach out and call.

## CLOSING EXAMPLE

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to an opportunity to discuss this position and your team further. Please contact me at **JohnSmith@gmail.com** or at **660-867-5309**

Sincerely,

(Your handwritten signature when possible)  
Your typed name



# ***SUGGESTED COVER LETTER FORMAT***

Today's Date

Mr. /Ms. Person to Whom You Are Writing

Title

Name of Organization

Street Address

City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr. /Ms. Last Name:

State why you are writing. Indicate the position, field, or general area about which you are writing. Explain how you found out about the opening and organization and briefly tell why you are interested in the organization, type of work, or location. Use caution when using I and me to avoid a self-centered tone throughout the letter.

Refer the reader to your resume and mention a few of your main qualifications and skills from past experience and education, which directly relate to the organization and position at hand. Describe some of your personal characteristics which are especially relevant. Always write from the reader's point of view, emphasizing what you have to offer. Avoid vague statements; give proof by concrete examples without repeating your entire resume.

In closing, seek to elicit a response from the employer. Restate your interest in the position; indicate your willingness to arrange an appointment at the convenience of the employer, suggesting possible dates and times. Another good option is to indicate that you plan to follow-up the receipt of your letter by making a phone call within a specific time period. Thank the reader for his/her interest and state that you are looking forward to talking with the employer.

Sincerely,

(Your handwritten signature when possible)

Your typed name

## ***OTHER TYPES OF COMMUNICATION EXAMPLES***

- o Use these examples simply as guidelines.
- o Your own letters should reflect careful self-analysis, research of the employer, and creativity.

### ***Thank you letter or email:***

Thank you for meeting me on Wednesday, April 14th to discuss the position of Copywriter at Burston-Marstellar. I appreciated the opportunity to discuss Burston-Marstellar's future and enjoyed interacting with the staff.

My ability to work under pressure and meet deadlines has been proven. I feel confident from our discussion of special qualifications for this position that my skills and experience mirror your needs. As indicated, I enjoy the challenge of a competitive environment in which success is based on achievement.

Again, thank you for considering me for this position. I look forward to hearing from you.

### ***Application status:***

Hello, this is \_\_\_\_\_. I am reaching out to check on the status of my application for the position of Human Resources Specialist. During our January 30th interview, you indicated a decision would be made by February 7th. I am still very interested in the position. Could you tell me where you are in the hiring process?

Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

### ***Thank you with acknowledgement:***

It was my pleasure to receive your phone call today offering the position of Branch Manager Trainee. The time you have given me to make my decision is appreciated. I am anxious to review the formal offer and benefits information you are forwarding to me.

Thank you for your positive response. I look forward to talking with you the first week of May.

### ***Thank you with acceptance:***

I am pleased to accept your offer to begin employment with Memorial Hospital as a Public Relations Specialist. I look forward to a successful future working with the public relations team.

Per our conversation, I plan to begin work on June 15th. Thank you for opportunity to work in such a dynamic health care organization.

- o References should be listed on a separate page from your resume.
- o Use your Resume Header as the Header for your reference page.
- o Three to five references are generally sufficient.
- o **Ask, don't assume:**
- o **Ask your reference for permission to use their names. Confirm the following:**
  - o Do the people you include as reference want to give you a reference?
  - o Does their schedule permit time to discuss your qualifications?
  - o Most importantly, what kind of references will they be? When it comes to references, neutral is the same as negative, so ask your contacts to be honest: Can the people you ask you a positive recommendation
- o **Choose your references carefully:**

Potential supervisors are not interested in hearing friends or relatives talk about how nice you are. They want to confirmation for their main objective: Are you going to deliver the duties of the job? Good references sources include previous supervisors, co-workers, professors, or a advisers. Think outside the box: If you voluntarily coordinated an organization's fundraising effort, the organization's supervisor could be a great reference. It doesn't matter that you weren't paid.
- o **Provide references with the appropriate tools:**

Give each reference a copy of your resume, so he or she has a complete picture of your background. Provide a description of the job to which you are applying. Knowing the duties and responsibilities ahead of time will prepare references for questions they may be asked and help them relate your experience to the potential job.
- o **Communicate with references:**

Alert references to potential phone calls. Contact your references and tell them to anticipate a phone call or e-mail. Tell them the name of the company, and the position for which you interviewed. If you know the name of the person who will check your references, offer that information, too.

# REFERENCES

Keep your references informed. Were you offered the job? If so, did you accept? When will you start?

Thank your references. When you accept a job offer, take the time to write each of your references a thank-you note. They have played a valuable part in your receiving an offer. Keep in touch. Don't end contact with your references. Send an e-mail, call or meet them for lunch on occasion. You never know when you may need to call upon them to be references in the future.

## EXAMPLE

### John Smith

JohnSmith@gmail.com | 660-867-5309 | Maryville, MO, 64468

Kevin John  
Business Instructor  
Maryville R - II Schools  
1520 South Street  
Maryville, MO 64468  
(555) 555-5555  
kjohn@mrii.k12.mo.us

Brenda Jokes  
Director, Writing Center  
Northwest Missouri State University  
800 University Drive  
Maryville, MO 64468  
(555) 555-5555  
bjokes@nwmissouri.edu

Lucy Barkalot  
Business Education Professor  
Northwest Missouri State University  
800 University Drive  
Maryville, MO 64468  
(555) 555-5555



**HIRE  
A  
BEARCAT**



**NORTHWEST MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY**

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