

# Write a Résumé and Letter of Application

**A**S YOU BEGIN to apply for jobs, awards, and scholarships, it will be important for you to capture your education, experience, and achievements in a single document in summary form. It will also be necessary for you to state your desires and qualifications in letter format. A properly constructed résumé and letter of application are vital for any serious student and future employee.



## Objectives:



1. Explain the purpose of a résumé.
2. List the main items that should be included in a résumé.
3. Describe the purpose of a letter of application and its primary elements.

## Key Terms:



career objective  
explanation of intent  
letter of application  
personal data sheet  
résumé  
statement of qualifications

## The Purpose of a Résumé

A **résumé** is a written summary of a person's education, experience, and other qualifications. Certain formats are acceptable. A résumé is used to market yourself, your skills, and your achievements to prospective employers.

A résumé has two main purposes: to provide information about you when you cannot or should not be present and to serve as a quick summary of a person's qualifications and background. It is most often used in applying for jobs; however, it is also used in applying for awards and scholarships.

A résumé (**personal data sheet**) serves as a permanent record that can be placed into a file or attached to a letter or application form. It is critical that your résumé be 100 percent accurate and free of grammatical and formatting errors. Any mistakes are a negative reflection on you and your abilities.

## Main Items in a Résumé

A good résumé makes a positive impression. The content should be accurate and should reflect your qualifications. There are several résumé styles, but the most common and the best for younger applicants is the chronological format. Six major items should be included in any résumé, regardless of the style or format.

It is best to outline all of your information on a practice sheet before formatting your document. Get all of your information, dates, names, and details organized before keying your document. After it is formatted, proofread it several times and have several other experienced résumé writers review your work. Make edits as needed. Verify that the information is formatted and presented in the same style and format. It would be inappropriate for one section to be left flush, another with many tabs, and another centered or right justified.



### ON THE JOB...

#### CAREER CONNECTION: Applying for a Fictitious Job

To better practice the actions you would take to apply for a fictitious job, role play with the help of your business education teacher or the counselor at the career center. Ask if he or she would play the part of the prospective employer. Use the career center at your high school or the Web links at the end of this unit to create a draft résumé and a letter of application.

Give time and attention to the proper preparation of the career objective. In your letter of application, write a careful sentence that states your interest in the "ideal" job and the qualifications you possess that make you the perfect candidate. Pay close attention to format, content, and grammar.

Mail your documents to your role-playing partner. After five days, call your role-playing partner and ask if you could meet to discuss the appearance and content of your letter and résumé. Ask, if based on the materials sent, if he or she would call you for an interview and request an explanation.

## PERSONAL INFORMATION

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A résumé must include personal information: your name, your address, and your telephone number. A cell phone number is not acceptable unless it is the only number at which you can be reached. (Make sure that your outgoing message on your phone is appropriate for a prospective employer or a school, which will lend credibility to your credentials.) All of your personal contact information should appear prominently at the top of the page.

## CAREER OBJECTIVE

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Next in your document is your **career objective**—a statement that outlines your desired employment position or award/scholarship. This statement should capture your goal in one sentence.

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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Then there should be a summary of your education and training. Both should be summarized with an emphasis on the particular aspects that relate to the stated career objective.

## WORK EXPERIENCE

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Work experience should be listed next. Each entry should include the name of the business, location, dates employed, and duties performed. Your most recent job should be listed first, the next most recent, and so on.

## EXTRACURRICULAR OR COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

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School and community activities can be listed next. These should reflect your personal interests. This section is not mandatory.

## REFERENCES

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The final section of your document, which is optional, is the references. These can be stated on the résumé as “Available Upon Request.” Prepare a separate sheet of three references, including the reference names, employer or position, and contact information. If the reference is not a former employer, list the relationship type (e.g., counselor, Sunday school teacher, or neighbor). Always obtain a person’s permission before using his or her name as a reference. Use references who can relate your skills to the specific position for which you are applying. Consider using employers, teachers, coaches, and leaders of organizations to which you belong.

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**OBJECTIVE: Office Manager**

**EMPLOYMENT HISTORY**

October 20XX to present           **Office Manager:** A-1 Supplies, Tinley Park, IL  
Hired, trained, and supervised clerical employees. Managed annual budgets ranging from \$90,000 to \$250,000 for three organizations, including payroll; state and federal tax forms; payment of bills, budgeting, monthly, quarterly and yearly financial statement; computerized ledgers

May 19XX to 19XX               **Secretary:** AAA Trucking, Orland Park, IL  
Maintained inventory control and purchased supplies

June 19XX to 19XX              **Columnist:** Crabapple Cove Daily, Tinley Park, IL  
Wrote and edited copy for weekly and monthly publications

January 19XX to 19XX          **Office Manager:** Honeycutt Auto, Chicago Heights, IL  
Maintained inventory control and purchased supplies. Receptionist for front desk; provided customer service to clientele

**EDUCATION**

University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN  
**B.A., Business Administration, 19XX**

**ADDITIONAL SKILLS**

15 years office management experience  
Highly organized, efficient, dedicated  
Excellent written and oral communication skills  
Ability to prioritize multiple assignments and consistently meet deadlines  
Microsoft XP, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, Info Path, and Publisher  
Typing speed 98 wpm  
Ability to use various high-speed copy machines, calculators, fax machines, scanners  
Filing, answering phones, ordering supplies, assisting clients

**FIGURE 1.** A sample résumé format. Note the flush left format and the neat, non-conventional style. A résumé is no place to demonstrate your creativeness or originality.

# The Letter of Application and Its Primary Elements

A **letter of application** is a business letter that indicates a candidate is applying for a desired job, award, or scholarship. It provides an important first impression to the employer or school/organization. Certain primary elements should be included.

## EXPLANATION OF INTENT

The letter of application should begin with a clear **explanation of intent**—statement regarding the job, award, or scholarship for which the candidate is applying. This should appear in the first paragraph.

## STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS

The main section of the letter should contain the **statement of qualifications**, which summarizes your education, training, and work experience. The information should appear in one or two paragraphs.

## RESTATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS

Next, you should have a restatement of qualifications. This paragraph should briefly summarize the information contained in the body of the letter.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion is a statement of the candidate's availability to further discuss his or her qualifications. A telephone number and the hours during which the candidate may be reached should be included.

### Summary:



The purpose of a résumé is to capture your education, experience, and achievements in a single document. It is helpful because it provides information about you when you cannot or should not be present. It also serves as a quick summary of your qualifications and background. A résumé must include personal information, your career objective, a summary of your education and training, a list of your work experience, extracurricular activities, and references. It is one of the finest marketing tools for selling yourself.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Return address and date)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (Addressee's Name, Title, and Complete Address)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

(Explanation of Intent) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Restatement of Qualifications) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Conclusion, discretely asking for interview) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sincerely,

Student's Name (typed)

FIGURE 2. A sample letter of application.

A letter of application is a business letter that indicates a candidate is applying for a desired job, award, or scholarship. It provides an important first impression to the employer or school/organization. Certain primary elements should be included: a clear explanation of intent, a statement of detailed qualifications, a restatement of summarized qualifications, and the conclusion. An accurate and properly formatted résumé and letter of application are critical for any student and future employee.

### Checking Your Knowledge:

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1. List two terms often used for a document that lists a summary of job qualifications.
2. What is the purpose of a résumé?
3. List the six major items to be included in a résumé.
4. Write a career objective for yourself that would relate to your ideal job. Summarize in one sentence what you would like to do.
5. What are the primary elements of a letter of application?

### Expanding Your Knowledge:

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Visit your high school career center for relevant information on the topic of creating a résumé and letter of application. Also, consult research books, Web sites, and other resources on the topic. Prepare a personal data sheet that you can keep as a permanent file. Edit and update it as needed. Also, prepare two practice letters of application. Prepare one as if you were applying to a school for a scholarship and another as if you were applying for a job for which you were qualified. Keep the drafts. Edit and update them as needed.

### Web Links:

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#### Create Résumé

<http://www.careeronestop.org/ResumesInterviews/ResumeAdvice/CreateResume.aspx>

#### Cover Letters

<http://www.careeronestop.org/ResumesInterviews/Letters/CoverLetters.aspx>