

Résumés and Letters of Application

YOUR RÉSUMÉ is your introduction for a job, an internship, even a scholarship. In today's Internet world, employers receive many résumés for every available position. Therefore, your résumé needs to stand out and draw attention to your skills, education, and background. To secure a job interview, your résumé must be well written, concise, and neatly organized, and it must be tailored to fit the job you are seeking.



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
curriculum vitae
explanation of intent
letter of application
personal data sheet
résumé
statement of qualifications

The Purpose of Your Résumé

Your **résumé** is a written summary of your education, experience, and other qualifications. It has two main purposes: to provide information when you are not present and to serve as a quick summary of your qualifications and background. It is most often used in applying for jobs; however, it is also used in applying for awards and scholarships.

Your résumé also serves as a permanent record that can be placed into a file or attached to a letter or application form.

A résumé is sometimes called a personal data sheet or a curriculum vitae.

Personal data sheet is a term often used for a résumé because the document includes information about you. **Curriculum vitae** is a Latin term meaning “course of life.”

Information Included in Your Résumé

A good résumé is easy to prepare. The content should be accurate and positively reflect your qualifications. Six major items should be included in your résumé:

1. *Personal information*—Your name, address, telephone number, and email address should appear prominently at the top of the page.
2. **Career objective**—This is a statement indicating the type of position you are seeking and believe you are qualified for.
3. *Education and training*—This is a summary of your schooling and other preparation, with emphasis on particular aspects that relate to your career objective.
4. *Work experience*—This is a summary of previous employment, including duties and dates.
5. *School and community activities*—These should reflect your personal interests.
6. *References*—Often these are not listed on the résumé. Instead, the résumé states that they are “Available on Request.” Always obtain a person’s permission before naming him or her as a reference.

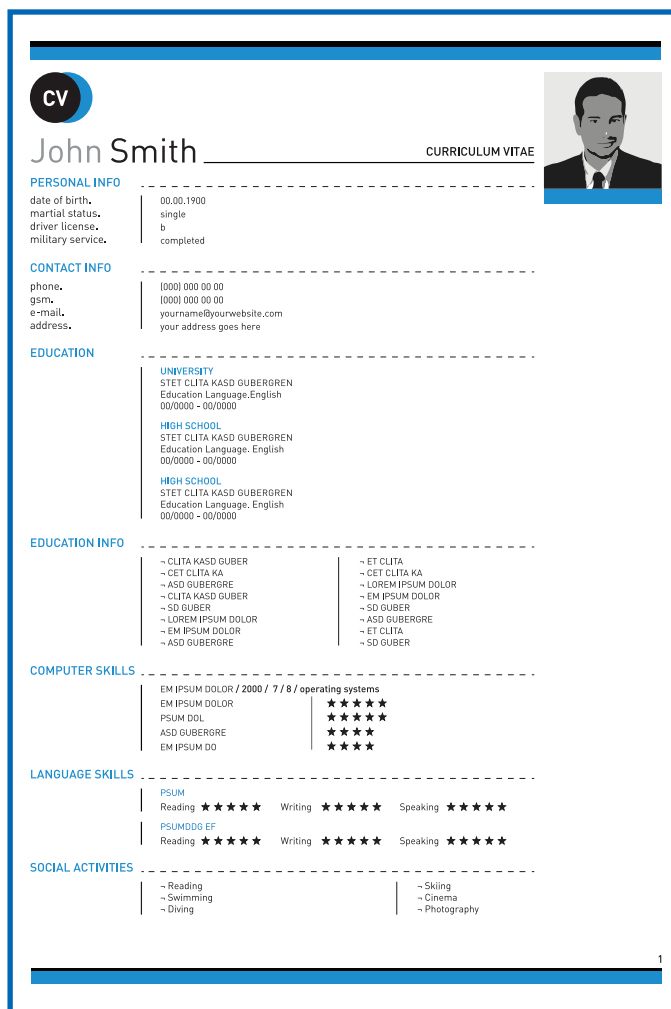


FIGURE 1. Your résumé is your introduction. To gain the employer’s attention, it must be unique, well organized, and readable.



BROADENING AWARENESS...

AMAZING ASPECTS:

Introducing Yourself to a Prospective Employer

Ninety-one percent of more than 1,000 executives of 20 companies told Robert Hoskin, Executive Director of OfficeTeam, Robert Half International, that letters of application, or cover letters, are influential in helping them determine interview choices. An outstanding cover letter is your first opportunity to make a good impression on the hiring manager. The cover letter shows how the skills on your résumé fit the position for which you are applying, whether it is an internship or a job.

Keep the cover letter brief and relevant. It should explain why the skills and experience listed on your résumé are right for the job. The letter should be no more than one page, single-spaced with a line between paragraphs. Make the letter neat and inviting. Keep your sentences short, direct, and active. Use three or four paragraphs in a type font that is easy to read, such as Times New Roman or Arial. The font size should be 10 or 12 point. Leave 1-inch margins on all sides. Make your letter attractive and readable. It must stand out from others.

You will need to introduce yourself, match your qualifications to the job, request an interview, and explain how to reach you for followup. Include your name, street address, city, state, and zip code, along with your phone number and email address.

Begin your letter with a name or “Dear Hiring Manager,” not with “To Whom It May Concern.” If you have an inside connection to the company, work that name into your first paragraph. In your final paragraph, restate how your skills fit the position and that you would like an interview. Thank the employer for his or her attention. Carefully re-read and proofread your letter, eliminating unnecessary words.

Purpose and Primary Elements of a Letter of Application

A **letter of application** is a business letter that indicates you are applying for a job. It provides an important first impression to the employer. The letter should be readable and concise. Its purpose is to entice the hiring manager to read your résumé and invite you to interview for the position. Often called a cover letter, your letter of application should include four primary elements:

1. **Explanation of intent**—This is a statement identifying the job you are applying for and should appear in the first paragraph of the letter.
2. **Statement of qualifications**—This section of the letter summarizes your education, training, and work experience. The information should be presented in one or two paragraphs. It serves as the body of the letter.

3. *Restatement of qualifications*—This paragraph should briefly summarize the information contained in the body of the letter.
4. *Conclusion*—This is a statement of your availability to discuss your qualifications further. A telephone number and the hours during which you may be reached should be included.

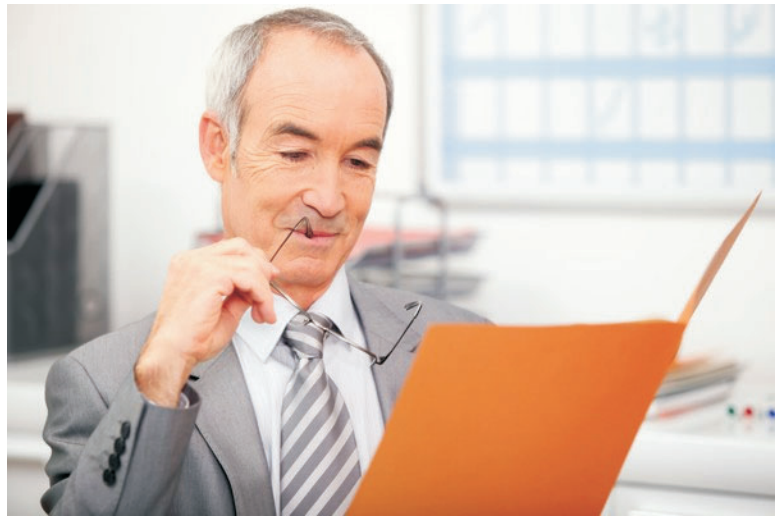


FIGURE 2. You will want to gain the attention of a prospective employer with your unique letter of application.

Summary:



Your résumé is a written summary of your education, experience, and other qualifications. Your résumé serves as a quick summary of your qualifications and background. The content should be accurate and positively reflect your qualifications. It should include your personal information, career objective, education and training, work experience, school and community activities, and references or a statement regarding their availability.

Your letter of application, or cover letter, accompanies your résumé. It should be readable and concise. Its purpose is to entice the hiring manager to read your résumé and invite you to interview for the position.

Checking Your Knowledge:



1. What are the two main purposes of your résumé?
2. Name the six points of information your résumé must include.
3. What is the unique job of your letter of application?
4. What information should the concluding paragraph of your letter of application contain?
5. Why is the appearance of your letter of application important?

Expanding Your Knowledge:



Visit CareerBuilder® (<http://www.careerbuilder.com>) and Monster® (<http://www.monster.com>). These websites break jobs down into geographic areas and allow you to store your letter of application and résumé to be forwarded to prospective employers. Online job boards provide a growing method of searching for jobs.

Choose a job that appeals to you, and create an appropriate letter of application and résumé.

Web Links:



How to Write a Letter of Application for a Job

<http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Letter-of-Application-for-a-Job>

Cover Letter Format: Letter of Application

<http://www.careers.uiowa.edu/guide/Correspondence/CoverLetterFormat.pdf>

Introduction to and Expectations for Résumés

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/564/01/>

Top 10 Employment Websites for Job Searching Online

<http://voices.yahoo.com/top-ten-employment-websites-job-searching-online-1722491.html>