

Resumes, Cover Letters, and References

Discover, explore, and create resumes and cover letters. Learn how to find and use personal references.

What is a resume? A resume is a summary of your personal information, job skills and experience, and your education. It tells a hiring manager important info about who you are and what you've done. It has some of the same information as a job application, but it's more detailed. Plus, it shows that you took the time and initiative to create a resume for yourself. By the way, resume is pronounced "rez-zoo-may".

→ **Find the Sample Resume, located online.** Notice the following in the sample:

1. Personal info – name, address, phone number
2. Goals and Objectives – what do you want from your working life?
3. Job and Volunteer History – roles and results, name of company, dates
4. Education History – school, dates, notable accomplishments if any
5. Personal interests and hobbies – very brief, only if appropriate
6. Optional: pictures, references to contact – usually say "available on request"

Key rules for a resume:

- One page ONLY (you can add one page for each Nobel Prize you've won)
- If you really need to say more than what fits on ONE page, use a cover letter
- Nothing fancy or flowery (colors, fonts, background) unless you're applying for an artist job
- Flawless spelling, grammar, and formatting
- Follow standard format and layout, don't try to be different
- Include a cover letter (see below)

What is a cover letter? Your resume is the same no matter who you give it to - though sometimes you may change the "Objectives" section to fit the job. A **cover letter** does what it says: it goes with and provides a "cover" for your resume. You write cover letters to fit each job and each company you send your resume to.

→ **Find the Sample Cover Letter, also located online.** Notice in the sample:

1. Standard business letter format
2. Opens with the name of the hiring manager
3. Includes greeting
4. Body of letter has *specifics* about the job, company, you, etc.
5. Closing is a thank you
6. You should sign neatly before sending the letter
7. The "enc" refers to additional documents you might include

Key rules for a cover letter (same ones as a resume):

- One page ONLY
- If you really need to say more than what fits on ONE page, use a cover letter
- Nothing fancy or flowery (colors, fonts, background) unless you're applying for an artist job
- Flawless spelling, grammar, and formatting
- Follow standard format and layout, don't try to be different
- Always sign it!

How are resumes and cover letters used?

→ ***In your online account, you can download the two Resume Templates and the Cover Letter Template. Save these electronic files, open and edit to create your own.***

These templates provide a quick way to create a basic resume. Resumes and cover letters are important tools for marketing YOU. Here's a few of the ways you can use them:

- Mail them or fax them to hiring managers
- Email them to hiring managers
- Post them online on job boards, etc.
- Take them to a job application or interview
- Share them with family and friends

What are references? "References" are people that know you and are willing to tell others about your positive traits. Hiring managers often want to talk to your references to learn more about your character and work history. Your references could include current or former bosses, teachers, people you've volunteered for, or anyone else who can talk about how you do "on the job." (Don't use family members as references. Bosses know that they're likely to be biased. Only use friends if they can talk in detail about your work history.)

Before giving out the names and phone numbers of references, you should get their permission first. This is a simple courtesy. Plus, you'll want to be sure that your references will say positive things about you.

Below, think of three people who could be references for you. Describe how they know you: when, where, what did you do for them?

Your first reference:

How does this person know you, and what info can they provide about you?

Your second reference:

How does this person know you, and what info can they provide about you?

Your third reference:

How does this person know you, and what info can they provide about you?



© 2008 Pikes Peak Learning Company - TOLL FREE 866.471.4285