

# Strategies for Writing Resumes, CVs, & Cover Letters

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# Agenda

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- Announcements
- Compare & contrast resumes v CVs
- Tips for writing resumes and CVs
- Critique resumes and CVs
- Introduce the genre of the cover letter
- Strategies for writing cover letters

# Announcements

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- UMES's Research Symposium is back! Submit and register by March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The research symposium runs from April 17<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>. For more information, visit the website: <https://wwwcp.umes.edu/symposium2023/>
- Dissertation House is coming soon! The DH will be held from Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>-Saturday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Details to follow.
- Join my study!



# Definitions & Similarities

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- Resume: a French word for “summary”
- Curriculum Vitae (CV): is Latin for “course of life”
- Key takeaways:
  - They are specific to the job or company you are applying to
  - They should represent you as the best qualified candidate
  - They are used to get you an interview

# Comparing & Contrasting Resumes and CVs

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## Resume

- Emphasize skills
- Used when applying for a position in industry, non-profit, and public sector
- Is no longer than 2 pages, with an additional page for publications and/or poster presentations if highly relevant to the job
- After 1 year of industry experience, lead with work experience and place education section at the or near the end, depending upon qualifications

## CV

- Emphasizes academic accomplishments
- Used when applying for positions in academia, fellowships and grants
- Length depends upon experience and includes a complete list of publications, posters, and presentations
- Always begins with education and can include name of advisor and dissertation title or summary (see examples). Also used for merit/tenure review and sabbatical leave

# Tips for Writing Resumes and CVs

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## Resume

- Active language (verbs)
- Varied verb-use
- 1-2 pages in length
- The aesthetics/design should privilege readability
- Include sections & headings
- Uses bullet points, less narrative
- Uses language of the job call/posting
- Present the most relevant information first
- Follow industry standards/models
- Use consistent formatting

## CV

- Active language (verbs)
- Varied verb-use
- Many pages in length
- The aesthetics/design should privilege readability
- Include sections & headings
- Can use bullet points, but small paragraphs with semicolons preferred (more narrative)
- Uses language of the job call/posting
- Education section usually comes first, but after that, present the next most relevant information
- Follow industry standards/models
- Use consistent formatting

# Let's critique these resumes

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- <https://resumegenius.com/blog/resume-help/bad-resume-examples>
- <https://novoresume.com/career-blog/resume-examples>

Let's review some CVs

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# Definition of a Cover Letter

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- a document you send with your resume/CV that provides additional information about skills and experiences related to the job you're applying to. It typically includes three to four paragraphs that highlight your skills, experience and achievements in relation to the position you're applying for.

# Importance of a Cover Letter

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- A cover letter is essential because it **explains details on your resume/CV in more depth and is the first impression a hiring manager has of you.** Employers use cover letters to narrow down the applicant pool and choose the group of candidates they want to interview.

# Types of Cover Letters

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Application

Referral

Cover Letter

Letter of Interest

Value Proposition

# What to Include in a Cover Letter

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- How your educational experience meets the job requirements
- How your work experience meets the job requirements
- Why you want to work there
- Specific examples of your experiences that might resemble an anecdote
- Why you are uniquely qualified for the position

# Typical Cover Letter Formula

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# Typical Cover Letter Formula: Introduction

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- Introductory paragraph:
  - Contains greeting
  - The first sentence should state your name and which role you're applying for.
  - The next few sentences should provide a short overview of your strengths and greatest accomplishments related to the role.
  - Close first paragraph by expressing your excitement and briefly explain how the role matches your career goals.

# Typical Cover Letter Formula: Educational/Job Experiences

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- Second paragraph:
  - Discuss your most recent and relevant educational experiences (think Master's thesis work, Doctoral work, relevant research, dissertation, etc.).
  - Discuss your most relevant work experiences.
  - Give an overview of relevant past accomplishments.
  - Explain the impact of your accomplishments and when possible, quantify your successes.
  - This might turn into 2 paragraphs (one for educational experiences and another for work experiences)

# Typical Cover Letter Formula: Your Unique Qualifications

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- Third paragraph or woven throughout:
  - Detail what makes you uniquely qualified for the position
  - Use specific examples from previous professional experiences and explain why you want to work there.
  - This would be a good time for an anecdote.



# Typical Cover Letter Formula: Your Unique Qualifications Example

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- When I was a systems engineer at NumberOneSuperOKWorldwide, after reading the manual for our soft-ware I discovered we were using a less efficient way of processing orders. The tax deadline was in a week, and we still had one hundred clients to go. Working at a small firm, that normally meant long nights. So I implemented the correct procedures, and trained my coworkers on them, saving us all more than five hours of work. We were able to get our clients' information into our system and finish them all in just one afternoon. If you hire me as a junior accountant at BigMoneyTaxesFunTime Company, you'll get someone who's not only adept at solving complex problems, but also has a track record of innovation, saving money, and excellence.

# Typical Cover Letter Formula: Conclusion

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- Last paragraph:
  - Thank the employer for their time and consideration of your application.
  - Express your interest in moving along in the hiring process.
  - Closing statement/sentence.
  - Signature

# Tips for Writing Cover Letters

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- Do some research on the company/institution you are applying to first.
- You might want to reach out to the hiring manager and ask a “smart” question before writing your cover letter so that you can reference this exchange in the letter.
- Focus the cover letter on the future and what you want to do (your resume/CV is focused on the past). Think of the cover letter as a bridge between what you did and what you hope to do.
- If you are a career changer, explain the change.
- Open strong. Start with why this job is exciting to you and what you have to offer. “I’m an environmental fundraising professional with more than 15 years of experience looking for an opportunity to apply my skills in new ways, and I’d love to bring my expertise and enthusiasm to your growing development team.”
- Don’t rehash your resume/CV, expand on it.

# Tips for Writing Cover Letters Continued

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- Mention any personal connections you might already have with the company/institution.
- Emphasize your personal value: adaptability and ability to learn quickly and problem solve are most sought after skills right now (bonus points for demonstrating this in your anecdote).
- Convey your enthusiasm.
- Watch your tone (be authentic...don't go overboard with flattery and don't sound desperate).
- Try to keep it to a page or slightly less in instances outside of higher ed.
- Get feedback on your cover letter before submitting it.

# You can make a website for your job portfolio

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- <https://bethtowle.com/>
- <https://www.theawilliamson.net/>

# Resources

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- <https://wwwcp.umes.edu/grad/graduate-writing-center/>
- <https://www.financialsamurai.com/examples-of-good-resumes/>
- <https://zety.com/blog/resume-formats>
- <https://www.myperspectives.com/resume/examples>
- <https://hbr.org/2014/02/how-to-write-a-cover-letter>
- <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/what-is-a-cover-letter>
- <https://novoresume.com/career-blog/resume-examples>
- <https://www.nbcnews.com/better/careers/how-write-cover-letter-people-will-want-read-n753416>

Questions? Comments?

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