Cover Page.

# Resumes, References, and Cover Letters

A Helpful Guide for Entering the Job Market

[A diverse collection of student photos. There are three males and three females. All students are dressed professionally and are smiling.]

[Logo for KU. University of Kansas.]

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## Resume Writing Tips and Instructions

### Step 1

#### Brainstorm

Employment trends indicate workers will change careers not just jobs — several times in a lifetime. For this reason it is important to know that resume writing is a skill you will use throughout your life.

Before beginning your resume, put together an accomplishments history, including your most significant achievements from work, hobbies, volunteer projects, school, extracurricular activities, travel, and other life experiences.

##### Write everything down and do not limit yourself!

Action verbs from the list on page 12 may help you remember things you have done and give you ideas for new ways to describe those activities. Friends or family familiar with your work and work style can be good sources of assistance as well. (Refer to Action Verb List)

Gather documents related to your experiences, such as performance reviews, letters of appreciation, job descriptions, documents, or presentations you wrote or prepared. This can be helpful now with your brainstorming and later to review, check, and confirm details. Categories to generate ideas and organize your information include:

* Education (universities attended, classes related to your career goal, certifications, special training) Experience (paid/unpaid, part/full-time, internships, military)
* Volunteer experience (church, civic groups, tutoring) Activities and honors (student organizations, professional associations, scholarships, academic achievements, sororities or fraternities)
* Important career-related skills (computer proficiency, foreign languages, problem solving, critical thinking, communication abilities)
* Personal achievements (financing your education, overcoming obstacles)
* Hobbies and interests (planning trips, managing personal investments)

[Image of two people talking while sitting down.]

Keep your accomplishments history file and add to it over time because this will not be the last time you write a resume. Once you compile and organize information in your accomplishments history, it will be invaluable for all resumes you write throughout your career.

[Inserted diagram. Black text within a blue and yellow rectangle. Title; Possible section headings. Listed text; Objective, Summary of Qualifications, Profile, Awards and Recognition, Honors, Honors and Awards, Education, Specialized Training, Accomplishments, Activities, Relevant Experience, Related Experience, Internships, Employment History, Leadership, Volunteer Experiences, Professional Experience, Additional Experience, Study Abroad Experience, International Experience, Other Experience, Relevant Skills, Computer Skills, Technical Skills, Computer Software, Certification, Licensure, Languages, Professional Memberships, Professional Affiliations, Additional Information, Work Authorization.]

### Step 2

#### Organize Initial Draft

##### Name & Contact Information (Required)

* Include your name, phone number, address, and email. Include your permanent address if it serves a purpose, such as moving back to your hometown.

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* If you use your cell phone as your contact phone number, be prepared to handle a professional conversation wherever you may answer your calls. Only use a work phone if it is appropriate for you to receive calls at work.
* Your phone number should be listed using one of these formats: 785-987-6543, (316) 123-4567, 785.555.5555 (DO NOT USE (555)-555-5555).
* Your email address should be professional (DO NOT USE hotlips@ku.edu).
* Your name is generally bold and a few points larger in font size than the rest of the resume.
* Be consistent with the name you use across all of your materials including resume, cover letter, references and online application.

[Inserted diagram. Black text within a blue and yellow rectangle. Title; What’s in a name? Body of the diagram is as follows; Students who go by a name different than their legal name or those who’ve changed their name due to their marital status may be confused when it comes to deciding on what to use when applying for a job. It’s best to be consistent across all job-related materials. Remember that employers will need to match up your resume, cover letter, online application materials, calls to references, and background checks.

Below are some tips for addressing this issue in your professional documents:

If you go by your middle name, include your legal first name as well (James (Dave) Phillips).

If you go by a nickname or are an international student who has chosen an alternative name that you wish to be referred by, include your given name along with your preferred name (Wenfei (Cathy) Zhouor John “Jack” Smith, Jr.).

If you have hyphenated or multiple last names, you may want to use your middle initial, instead of your middle name, to signal to the employer where your last name begins (Mary J. Kelly Gregory).

If your last name has changed, for example, due to a change in marital status, you may include your former last name such as Sarah (Williams) Hanson. It’s also important to let your references know that your name has changed before an employer calls them for a reference check. They may not realize that Sarah Hanson is the same Sarah Williams they knew at one time.

It’s a good idea to send a copy of your resume (including both names) to all of your references prior to the reference check—it will give them a better idea of your professional activities and serve as a reminder that your name has changed.]

[Illustration of a torn piece of paper with black text. The text is as follows;

John “Jack” Anderson IV

1415 Louisiana Street

Lawrence, KS 66045

785-123-4567

Jack.andersonIV@ku.edu]

##### Objective (Optional)

A well-crafted objective indicates that you are clear about opportunities available with an employer and that you are clear about the position you are seeking. Objectives can be a liability if they do not match the position for which you are applying.

You may not need an objective when posting a resume to an electronic job board or when handing it out at a career fair. Objectives work best when they are written for a specific job or career.

Employers expect applicants to customize their resumes for each position. The employment objective needs to be supported by the content of your resume.

Examples of objectives:

* To obtain an entry-level sales position in the consumer products industry.
* Seeking a summer internship in investment banking with XYZ Company.

##### Summary of Qualifications/Profile (Optional)

Typically used by job seekers with more professional experience, this summary should focus on the big picture and help the employer understand how your experiences fit together. Summary information briefly communicates your experience, training, and personal abilities as they relate to the specific job you seek. Information of this type may be included in a cover letter, eliminating the need to include it in the resume. Details of your experiences belong in other sections of the resume.

Examples:

* Two years of experience in a medical environment; familiar with confidentiality issues and medical terminology.
* Strong analytical skills developed through lab experience in chemistry and biology.
* Proven communication skills as demonstrated through club leadership, debate competition at state level, and writing for the university student newspaper.

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##### Education (Required)

This section can include your credit-based higher education degrees and certificates as well as noncredit learning. Your information should include:

* Degree (i.e., Bachelor of Science, Master of Arts)
* Major(s)
* Minors, concentrations, or areas of emphases
* University name, city, and state
* Month and year of graduation
* GPA(s) (typically if above 3.0)—If you list anything other than your overall GPA, be sure to specify which GPA you are using.

[Illustration of a torn piece of paper with black text. The text is as follows;

Education

Bachelor of General Studies in Geography, May 2015

The University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas

Minor in Geology

GPA 3.65

Independently financed 75% of college education through scholarships and employment.]

List your most recent degree first (Ph.D., Master’s, Bachelor’s). You don’t necessarily need to list every college or university at which you have taken classes. Once you are in college, high school is not typically included on a resume unless you are a freshman or you have a good reason why you want an employer to know where you went to high school.

Including academic awards or scholarships can show academic breadth and intellectual accomplishment. Sometimes it may be beneficial to include GPA (typically 3.0 or higher), and/or relevant courses.

If applicable, it can be a good idea to include a statement about your contribution toward financing your education.

##### Experience (Required)

The experience section should communicate what you accomplished in past paid or unpaid work experiences.

* Include the position title, employer/organization name, location (city, state), and dates with months and years.
* Typically your experience is listed in reverse chronological order with your most recent experience first.
* Highlight transferable skills and abilities rather than describing work duties and responsibilities. Think about the types of things that you did in your job or activities that relate to the types of things you will be doing in your future professional positions.

For example, “Interviewed, hired, and trained new team members” or “Led closing of store by assigning roles at the appropriate time, balancing the cash registers, securing all cash, and setting the alarm.”

* Describe your experience in a result-oriented fashion because employers know the best predictor of future performance is past performance.

[Inserted diagram. Title; White text on blue background. Descriptions of Experience. The diagram is split into three columns. From the left to right the headings are; Not Good, Better, Best. The data for the columns is as follows;

Not Good: Responsible for publicity, Duties included handling customer complaints, Responsibilities included adhering to safety policies and ensuring other lifeguards knew policies, Dealt with delinquent youth.

Better: Interacted successfully with public affairs representatives and local media, Resolved service and billing problems, Carried out safety precautions and instructed staff in the proper use of equipment, Explained team strategies and instructed youth on how to execute strategies.

Best: Increased community awareness of agency through interaction with public affairs representatives and local media, Resolved service and billing problems. Consistently recognized for promptness and professionalism, Carried out safety precautions and instructed staff in the proper use of equipment, resulting in a 50% reduction of injury accidents over the summer, Explained team strategies and instructed youth on how to execute them. Development of enthusiasm and skills led to winning the city competition.]

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* Whenever possible, use concrete information to qualify and/or quantify your experience. For example, “Increased sales by 25% over a three month period” or “Taught a class of 300 students.”
* Do not use full sentences to describe your experience; use short phrases beginning with an action verb.
* Consider the type of position for which you are applying. You may want to try to use the words listed in the position description when describing your experience. Highlight the skills that are most relevant to the position for which you are applying.
* Generally new college graduates will not include experiences from high school or earlier. However, if you have relevant experience (i.e., you owned your own business) or if you are earlier in your college career (i.e., a freshman or sophomore), it may be appropriate to include experiences from high school.
* Include around 2 to 5 bullets to describe each experience.
* Use present tense when describing current positions. Use past tense when describing your past experiences.

##### Activities & Organizations (Optional)

This section can include membership in campus or community activities, professional organizations, volunteer activities, or relevant interests. You may choose to format this section as a list, or you may choose to set it up with the same format as your jobs with descriptions of the leadership roles you performed in these organizations.

Activities might:

* Demonstrate a well-rounded person with more dimensions than just work.
* Point out skills that have been demonstrated in your nonprofessional life.
* Account for gaps in employment.
* Start conversations (possibly the employer shares or is intrigued by our interest).

[Illustration of a torn piece of paper with black text. The text says;

Activities

University of Kansas Student Ambassador

Association of Collegiate Entrepreneurs

Alphi Chi Omega Sorority

Scholarship Coordinator

Chairperson of Recruitment Committee

Big Brothers/Big Sisters Volunteer.]

[Image of a student in an interview. The student is sitting at a round desk with the interviewer who is taking notes. The student is dressed professionally.]

When you choose to include activities and interests, be aware of “hot buttons.” A hot button is an activity or interest to which some employers may have a strong positive or negative reaction, such as religious or political affiliations. When you have an activity or interest that is a “hot button,” you have three options. Make an informed and reflective choice.

Options include:

* Include this information on your resume—Many applicants feel the employer should know who they are, inside and outside of the workplace, and they may not want to work for an employer who cannot accept them as a whole individual.
* Omit this information—You may want the opportunity to present yourself as a candidate rather than be prematurely discounted due to the employer’s bias.
* Generalize these activities/interests—Present them in a generic form at (“Director of a choir” without specifying religion or denomination).

Interests are unstructured individual pursuits and can be included if relevant. Examples would be golf, marathon running, personal investment management. When considering if you want to include an interest, think about how the employer would view the activity as well as the space available on your resume.

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##### Honors & Awards (Optional)

This section can include scholarships, honor roll, dean’s list, competitive awards, juried shows, and so on.

* You may want to provide some information on the context of the award if it is not evident. For instance, “One of ten students selected from across the nation for the Fullbright Scholarship.”
* Do not include dollar amounts for scholarships.
* Your honors and awards may be listed as a separate section or may be included within your Education section if there are only a few items in your list.

[Illustration of a torn piece of paper with black text.

Honors and Awards

Golden Key National Honor Society

Dean’s List, six semesters

Leadership Scholarship.]

##### Skills (Optional)

This section is included to highlight particular abilities. Frequently, technical skills, laboratory skills, and proficiency or fluency in a foreign language are found in this section. Items in this section should relate to the positions for which you are applying. The placement of this section on your resume may vary depending on the relevancy to the employer.

[Image of a checklist. There are five boxes stacked vertically. A red sharpie is lying next to the boxes. The top three boxes are checked with the red sharpie.]

[Inserted diagram. Title; White text on blue background. Remember…

Body; Black text on yellow background.

Resumes do not get jobs; they get interviews.

Resumes should convey your unique skills and abilities as they relate to the position for which you are applying.

Some items may be appropriate under various headings. For example, scholarships could be listed under Education, Honors and Awards, or Study Abroad sections. Use your best judgement to determine which section makes the most sense for your resume.

Resumes should not include every detail about you. They should highlight the specifics that make you a qualified candidate for the position you seek.

Resumes should not be so short or so vague that an employer has no idea what your skills are or what you did in your last job.

Human resources professionals know that the best predictor of future performance is past performance. In your resume, highlight the results of your experiences.]

##### Work Authorization (Optional)

You can include this section if it is important for you to share your work authorization status. International students would not generally include their work status on their resume unless specifically requested by an employer.

[Illustration of a torn piece of paper with black text.

Work Authorization

United States Permanent Resident – fully authorized to work in the U.S.]

##### References (Required but separate from the resume)

The statement “References Available Upon Request” is not needed as this is a given in the job search process. Reference names and information are generally listed on a separate page (see References section in this handout). Usually references are provided to an employer once they are requested or at an interview.

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### Step 3

#### Format It

There are many different ways to write a resume and a lot of different opinions about what is good. Your opinion is important too, so be sure to create a resume that reflects who you are while also targeting the employer’s needs.

Pass the 15-second glance test. Employers see hundreds of resumes, and they skim first. If this first test is passed, they may look at your resume more thoroughly.

* When ordering information and section sin your resume, prioritize according to the needs of the employer. Put the most important information toward the tip and to the left.
* Choose a format and headings that effectively communicate the combination of skills and abilities that highlight your qualification for the position and provide insight into you as a unique person. Refer to Possible Section Headings box for ideas on headings (See Page 1).
* Length of resume varies according to field of interest and level of experience. Generally, an undergraduate with little or no professional experience will have a one-page resume. Experienced workers and some graduate students, along with students in certain disciplines, may have two pages. See your career services office for help in determining the appropriate length.

[Inserted diagram. Title; White text on blue background. Formatting and Writing Tips. Body; Black text on yellow background.

Make the resume easy to skim: bullets, short declarative phrases, easy-to-read font – 10 to 12 points, no abbreviations.

Use one font style throughout the resume; avoid script fonts. Times New Roman and Arial are good choices.

Do not use graphics, shadowing, clip art, or decorative bullets (use [plain bullets]).

Use bold or underlining appropriately but sparingly.

Put key information on the left and near the top of the page whenever possible (for example, job title rather than employment dates listed at the far left).

Write your material in order of importance and relevance to the employer/position.

Begin phrases with action verbs.

Avoid generalities and focus on specifics about experience, projects and products.

Quantify experience when possible (Employee of the Month, Received customer service ratings of 9.8/10, Managed a budget of $20,000).

Be consistent in the format, layout, and spacing throughout.]

[Image of students in a classroom.]

##### Resume Styles

Reverse Chronological Resume: the traditional resume style lists everything in reverse chronological order, starting with the most recent experience and working backward. Most resumes for new college graduates are written in this format, and employers are accustomed to seeing this style of resume.

Reverse Chronological resumes are particularly effective in the following cases:

* You are or will be a new college graduate.
* You have experience in the field of interest.
* You can demonstrate measureable results from work activities (“Marketed events, resulting in 50% increase in attendance”).
* You have held impressive job titles and/or have worked for big-name employers.
* You can demonstrate promotions and increased responsibilities.

Functional Resume: summarizes your professional “functions” or experience and minimizes employment history. Functional resumes are often useful for:

* Experienced workers and those returning to the workforce because it minimizes dates.
* Career changers because it outlines transferable work skills.
* Emphasizing knowledge and skills that have not been used in recent work.

Elements of both reverse chronological and functional styles can be combined if needed to show your experience.

Resume templates and resume wizards: Your resume is a reflection of you and your accomplishments. Utilizing a word processing template or wizard that produces a document similar to others may reflect that you did not give significant thought and consideration to your application. It is important that you learn how to write and produce an effective resume that best represents the value you can bring to an employer. Difficulty in formatting and inappropriate headings are just two of the issues that often arise with resume templates and wizards. KU Career Services staff members are available to assist you in getting started and finding the most appropriate resume writing solution for you.

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### Step 4

#### Proofread and Edit

Many human resource directors see the resume as a reflection of the applicant. Spelling errors, poor grammar, misalignment, poor organization, smudges, wordiness or vagueness will produce negative impressions.

Have several others critique your resume.

* Contact your career services office and make an appointment to have a professional career advisor look over your resume.
* Ask your references to take a look and give feedback.
* Ask a family member, friend, or roommate to look over the resume. They are often great at catching typing errors.

[Inserted diagram. Title; White text on blue background. Checklist for Proofreading Your Resume. Body; Black text on yellow background.

Spell check your resume, but be aware that it will not pick up on all errors.

Is the resume pleasing to the eye?

Does it fit comfortably within the page? Is there an appropriate amount of white space?

Is the resume on cotton bond paper?

Is the print clear, unsmudged, and large enough to read – does it pass the photocopy test?

Did you use too much bold, italic, or underlining?

Does content support the objective?

Could you be more concise?

Is it too short? Does it look as though you struggled to fill a page?

Has extraneous material been eliminated?

Does the format present your qualifications in the most effective manner?

Is all important information included and easy to find?

Is the format uniform throughout?

Does the resume market your abilities and paint a picture that makes an employer want to know more about you?]

### Step 5

#### Prepare Different Versions

Paper Version: highly designed with bullets, underlining, and other highlights. For the finished paper resume, use good quality paper (at least 20% cotton bond): white, ivory, or a very pale gray. Avoid patterns that would give a “dirty” appearance when copied.

Electronic Version: looks the same as your paper version when emailed or pasted into a company resume database. Send it as a PDF file to preserve formatting.

Plain Text Version: you would remove any stylized formatting (i.e., bullets, bolding, italics) and then it can be pasted into an email message or cut and pasted into online forms.

* Save as text files.
* Enter no more than 65 characters (including spaces) across the screen, then hit the “return” or “enter” key to force the line to wrap. In some instances 65 characters per line may be too many.
* Indent lines by using the space bar.
* Use ALL CAPITAL LETTERS for section headers.
* Surround formerly bolded subheadings within major sections with asterisks (\*).
* Rebuild lists using a hyphen (-), asterisk (\*), or plus sign (+) at the beginning of each line instead of bullets or other special characters.
* If horizontal lines are desired, create them by using a series of dashes.

Email your resume to yourself and a friend to see how it looks. Identify and correct any formatting problems before sending it to potential employers.

##### Online Resumes

Before posting your resume on the Internet, consider whether you want your resume to be public. There are security issues inherent in posting personal contact information online. Check the confidentiality of the database or service where you are posting your resume. Never use your Social Security Number, date of birth, or other information that might make you vulnerable to identity theft.

There are ways to control the information you make available online:

* Consider creating a free email account at Yahoo! Or Gmail to use only for job-search purposes with the possibilities that you will stop using the email account once employment has been secured.
* Consider renting a post office box or a private mail box from a mail receiving agency to use during your job search. This will eliminate the need to use a street address as your mailing address in the information posted on the web.
* Determine whether your posted resume can be updated at no cost and whether it will be deleted from the databank if you do not update it within a specified time.

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#### Business Resume Examples

[Inserted illustration of a resume paper. Black text on white background. Main heading left justified in bold as student’s name. For example, Joe Business. There is a black bar running horizontally separating the name from the body of the resume. Underneath the bar is the students address, city, state, zip code, phone number, and email.

The resume is structured as the following;

Heading title left justified

Business/organization left justified, location right justified on the same line.

Position left justified, date right justified on the same line.

Positon details in list format.

The example given in the resume example is as follows;

Education (Heading title)

The University of Kansas (Organization left justified) Lawrence, KS (Location right justified)

Bachelor of Science, Marketing (Position left justified) May 2013 (Date right justified)

International Business and Chinese Concentration

Overall GPA: 3.85; Marking GPA: 3.92 (Details in list format)

This format is repeated down the page.]

[Inserted illustration of a resume paper. This paper is formatted in the same way as the previous resume with different examples. Some format changes include the student name is bolded and centered at the top of the page with the students details and contact information also centered underneath, and underneath the Education section is a line for Accounting Majors intending to do the MAcc which says;

Intend to complete Master of Accounting.]

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#### Computer Engineering Resume Examples

[Inserted illustration of a resume paper. Black text on white background. Main heading left justified in bold is student’s name. Underneath students name is current address and Permanent address (left justified) and email and phone number (right justified).

The structure of the resume is as follows;

**EDUCATION**:

**Organization**

*Position and date*

Details in list format

One example of this structure within the resume is as follows;

**INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE:**

**Koch Industries, Inc., Minneapolis, Minnesota**

*Project Manager Intern, Summer 2013*

Provided engineering support for the Build-it and Construction group including design, permits, and certification for planned projects.

Organized and led all client meetings and oversaw all project communication.

Managed five projects, estimated at $1.5 million.

This format is repeated down the page.]

[Inserted illustration of a resume paper. This resume has the same structure as the previous resume with different examples. Some format changes includes no use of italics, and there is a line underneath an Education section which instructs “Only include your high school if you are a freshman or there is a specific reason why the employer needs to be aware of this information.” This section has the example as follows;

Free State High School, Lawrence, KS.

High School Diploma, Awarded June 2013

GPA 3.9/4.0]

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Journalism/Creative Resume Examples

[Inserted illustration of a resume paper. Black text on white background. Main heading is right justified at the top of the page as follows;

Student’s name

Address

City, State Zip Code

Phone number

Email

The structure of the main resume is as follows;

The body is split into two columns, with headings on the left and descriptions on the right.]

[Inserted illustration of a resume paper. Black text on white background. The students name is in large font and bold while centered at the top of the page. Underneath the name is the students work title “Multimedia Visual Journalist”. The body of the resume is split into two column by a vertical bar. The left column is structured from the top down as follows;

Website

Phone number

Email address

Social media link

Education

Details

Skills

Details

Activities

Details and dates

Awards

Details

The right column is structured from the top down as follows;

Work

Position

Details in list format

Position

Details in list format

This structure is repeated for the rest of the page.]

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#### Liberal Arts and Sciences Resume Examples

[Inserted illustration of a resume. Black text on white background. Student name is in large font and bold print while centered at the top of the page. Underneath the name, also centered, is address and contact information. The structure of the resume is as follows;

Heading title (for example Education)

Position (for example Bachelor of Arts, Environmental Studies) left justified. Date and location right justified.

Details in lift format.

This structure is repeated down the page.]

[Inserted illustration of a resume. Black text on white background. Student name is in large font and bold print left justified at the top of the page. Email is right justified. Address is underneath student name. Phone number and website underneath email address. The structure of the resume is the same as the previous resume with one exception. Before the first heading is a summary section titled “Summary of Qualifications” followed by details in list format.]

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#### Action Verb List

##### Accomplishments

achieved
awarded
benchmarked
completed expanded exceeded improved pioneered
reduced (losses) resolved (issues) restored
reversed spearheaded succeeded surpassed transformed
won

##### Analytical & Research

analyzed
assessed
calibrated
clarified
collected
compared
conducted
critiqued
detected
determined
diagnosed
evaluated
examined
experimented
explored
extracted
formulated
gathered
identified
inspected
interpreted
interviewed
invented
investigated
located
measured
observed
organized
proved
researched
reviewed
searched
screened
solved
specified
summarized
surveyed
tested
validated

##### Communication & Persuasion

addressed advertised arbitrated arranged articulated authored clarified collaborated communicated
composed
condensed
consulted
conveyed
convinced
corresponded
debated
defined
demonstrated
described
developed
directed
discussed
dissuaded
documented
drafted
edited
educated
elicited
enlisted
established
explained
expressed
formulated
furnished
illustrated
incorporated
influenced
informed
interacted
interpreted
interviewed
involved
joined
judged
lectured
marketed
mediated
moderated
negotiated
observed
outlined
participated
persuaded
presented
promoted
proposed
publicized
published
reconciled
recruited
referred
reinforced
reported
resolved
responded
solicited
specified
spoke
suggested
summarized
synthesized
translated
wrote

##### Creative

acted
adapted
began
combined
composed
conceptualized
condensed
created
customized
designed
devised
developed
directed
displayed
drew
entertained
established
fashioned
formulated
founded
illustrated
initiated
instituted
integrated
introduced
invented
modeled
modified
originated
performed
photographed
planned
revised
revitalized
shaped
solved

##### Financial & Data

administered
adjusted
allocated
analyzed
appraised
assessed
audited
balanced
budgeted
calculated
computed
conserved
controlled
corrected
cut
decreased
determined
developed
estimated
managed
marketed
measured
planned
prepared
programmed
projected
purchased
reconciled
reduced
researched
retrieved
tabulated
trimmed
tracked
quantified

##### Helping

adapted
advocated
aided
answered
arranged
assessed
assisted
cared for
clarified
coached
contributed
cooperated
counseled
demonstrated
diagnosed
educated
encouraged
ensured
expedited
facilitated
guided
helped
intervened
motivated
prevented
provided
referred
rehabilitated
represented
resolved
simplified
supplied
supported
volunteered

##### Interpersonal & Teamwork

advised
collaborated
enabled
focused
initiated
interacted
involved
listened
mediated
mentored
moderated
negotiated
partnered
teamed

##### Leadership & Management

accomplished
acted
administered
advanced
advised
analyzed
appointed
approved
assigned
attainted
authorized
chaired
completed
considered
consolidated
contracted
controlled
converted
coordinated
counseled
decided
decreased
delegated
determined
developed
directed
dispatched
disseminated
diversified
eliminated
emphasized
enforced
enhanced
enlisted
ensured
established
examined
executed
explained
founded
generated
governed
guided
headed
hired
hosted
improved
incorporated
increased
influenced
initiated
inspected
inspired
instigated
instituted
instructed
integrated
introduced
launched
led
lowered
managed
merged
modified
motivated
organized
originated
overhauled
oversaw
pioneered
planned
presided
prioritized
produced
proposed
recommended
recruited
reorganized
replaced
represented
restored
reviewed
saved
scheduled
secured
selected
shaped
solidified
stimulated
streamlined
strengthened
supervised
terminated
trimmed
verified

##### Organization & Detail

approved
arranged
catalogued
categorized
charted
classified
coded
collected
compiled
contained
coordinated
corrected
corresponded
distributed
executed
expedited
filed
generated
implemented
incorporated
inspected
logged
maintained
monitored
obtained
operated
ordered
organized
planned
prepared
processed
provided
purchased
recorded
registered
reserved
responded
restructured
reviewed
routed
scheduled
screened
set up
standardized
submitted
supplied
updated
used
validated
verified

##### Teaching & Training

adapted
advised
appraised
clarified
coached
communicated
conducted
coordinated
critiqued
demonstrated
developed
educated
enabled
encouraged
evaluated
explained
facilitated
focused
guided
influenced
informed
instilled
instructed
motivated
persuaded
set
stimulated
taught
tested
trained
transmitted
tutored

##### Technical

adapted
advised
analyzed
applied
assembled
automated
built
calculated
coded
computed
computerized
conserved
constructed
controlled
converted
debugged
designed
determined
developed
diagnosed
drafted
engineered
fabricated
fortified
identified
implemented
inspected
installed
located
maintained
monitored
networked
operated
overhauled
prevented
printed
programmed
proposed
recorded
rectified
regulated
remodeled
repaired
replaced
restored
retrieved
solved
specialized
specified
standardized
studied
supported
trained
troubleshot
upgraded

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## References

[Image of a younger woman and an older man sitting at a table in front of a large spread of papers.]

Resumes and cover letters win interviews; excellent references can win job offers.

If you are being considered for a job, it is likely that the potential employer will speak with your references. Once you have gotten this far in your job search you must be certain that your references will provide a good recommendation. A less-than-enthusiastic reference at a critical juncture can spell disaster, so select your references carefully.

### Who

To identify as many potential references as possible, consider current and former bosses, professors, advisors, volunteer coordinators, co-workers, and subordinates who have first-hand knowledge of your work and abilities.

Be sure to find references who know you well enough to speak on your behalf. Roommates, friends, and family members do not make good professional references.

### What

Next, call or meet with the people on your list who are likely to deliver a very positive report and have seen you perform well. Begin by explaining that you are in a job search, and then ask whether they would be willing to act as a reference for you. You might say something like: “Dr. Thomas, I will be graduating in May and will be seeking a full-time position. I realize how important references can be, and I was wondering if you would be comfortable serving as a reference?”

The answer will usually be positive. Be prepared to provide a brief idea of what you have been doing recently and the type of position you seek. With past co-workers or supervisors, you may want to state why you left that job because they are likely to be asked by the potential employer. Deliver a current copy of your resume to your references so they will be familiar with your experiences and what you have highlighted for employers.

### How Many

You will generally be asked to provide at least three references. It is a good idea to have a “backup” on the list in case one or more of your references is unavailable.

### Where

Do not include references on your resume. Names and contact information for references take up a lot of space and usually have little meaning to a potential employer at the “resume stage.” Make a separate reference page. Be sure to include your name and contact information at the top. When delivered with your resume and cover letter, the three documents should be complementary and professional. It is a good idea to print all three on the same high-quality bond paper.

Include reference’s name, current title, agency or organization with which they are currently affiliated, address, preferred phone number(s), and email address. In some cases, you may also want to note your relationship to the individual, such as a former supervisor at KU Library, particularly if your reference has moved to a new organization. Be certain everything is correct!

### When

Provide your reference list to a potential employer only when requested.

[Inserted diagram. Title; White text on blue background. Helpful Tips. Body; Black text on yellow background.

Alert your references that potential employers may be calling and provide them with your most recent resume.

Notify your references if your name has changed since they knew you.]

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[Inserted image of a reference page. The structure of the reference page is as follows;

Name is bolded and left justified at the top of the page.

Address and contact information.

Heading is bolded and left justified (Professional References).

Reference name (relationship to the reference in italics and within parentheses).

Details including the reference’s current job title and where they work along with current contact information.

There are some reference tips in red text pointing out some areas of the resume. These tips are; Ask you reference how they would like to be contacted and include only those phone numbers or emails. If your reference has changed jobs since you worked with him/her, note that on your reference page.]

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## Cover Letters

### When to use a cover letter

Many employers will require a cover letter as part of your application. There may be other times when a cover letter is also appropriate. Include a cover letter with your resume when you cannot present it in person, for example if sent through U.S. Postal Service or email. Remember, whatever you write in your email IS your cover letter. A cover letter is not necessary when you deliver your resume to a potential employer at a career fair.

### The purpose of cover letters

The purpose of the cover letter and resume package is to motivate the employer to take action and invite you for an interview. When delivered together, the two documents should be complementary and work together to accomplish your purpose. The appearance of your resume/cover letter package will be enhanced if both documents are printed on the same high-quality bond paper.

A cover letter should work like advertising copy. It should:

* Catch the reader’s attention (opening paragraph)
* Communicate skills and experience (middle paragraph)
* Support your statements with specifics (middle paragraph)
* Compel the reader to act (final paragraph)

Employers report that an impressive cover letter is often more important than the resume when making a decision whether to interview a candidate, so it can be a mistake to focus too much attention on the resume and ignore the potential value of a well-written letter. Like the resume, the cover letter is not intended to get you the job—it is intended to get you an interview (when you can convince the employer face-to-face that you are the right one for the job).

[Image of a younger woman and an older woman sitting at a table in front of a spread of papers.]

The most important aspect of a cover letter is employer focus. Present the employer with indications of your personality and style along with your skills and abilities.

Highlight your qualifications for the specific position you seek, clearly stating your interests and qualifications relative to the employer’s needs.

Always customize your cover letter! Sending out a general cover letter and resume to hundreds of employers is rarely successful. It can create a perception on the employer’s part that you are not a serious and thoughtful person, that you are desperate for a job, or that you don’t really care enough about their organization to learn about them.

Your letter should be just a few paragraphs and only one page in length. While there is no “perfect formula” regarding length and what to include, keep it relevant and relatively brief.

[Inserted diagram. Title; White text on blue background. Things to Avoid in Cover Letters. Body; Black text on yellow background.

Starting every sentence with “I” or “my”.

Extraneous words and wordy phrases, such as “in order to” and “for the purpose of”.

Confusing and complex language and sentence structure (HINT: Read your letter aloud to identify awkwardness, then correct it).

Long sentences and paragraphs.

Weak or overused words.

Font sizes smaller than 10 point and larger than 12 point.

Nondescript phrases such as “I was a computer lab assistant.” Instead, say: “I provided technical assistance”. “I conducted research activities using observation and data analysis skills while…” instead of “I worked as a research assistant”.]

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#### Sample Cover Letter

[Inserted illustration of a cover letter. The structure of the cover letter is as follows;

Your Address

Date

First and Last Name of contact person or “Human Resources Manager” if name is unknown

Title of Contact Person

Employer Contact Information

If employer name is not available, use Human Resources Manager, Director or Hiring Manager

First Paragraph:

Why you are writing

What position you are applying for

How you learned about the position

Who referred you (if applicable)

Body:

Why you are interested in the position

What you can contribute

How your qualifications would benefit the organization

How your skills and experience match their needs

Last Paragraph:

Refer to documents enclosed or available such as list of references

Give the phone number and time that you can be reached or when you will contact them

Thank them for their time and consideration of your application

Or, “Respectfully”

Type your first and last name

Leave four spaces so you can sign your name in ink after it is printed Leave only one blank line and type your name for emailed letters.]

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## Professional Communication

Whether you are submitting an application for a position or developing a networking contact online, all of your communication needs to be done with professionalism. Employers are evaluating your communication skills with every piece of correspondence, so be sure they will get a good impression.

Many of your connections with professionals will be done through electronic media. In online correspondence it is important to follow the same basic guidelines as you would in any other formal style of communication. Below are some examples.

### Networking Through Email

[Inserted diagram of an email. Subject: Request to Connect from a KU Student

Dear Ms. Ellsworth:

Dr. Studia, professor of sociology at the University of Kansas, suggested that I contact you. As a fellow Jayhawk, she felt you might be willing to visit with me about my career path.

I am a junior at KU, majoring in sociology, and am currently exploring career options. Your background in human rights work and your leadership in non-profit organizations are both very interesting to me. I would like to learn more about what it’s like to work for a nonprofit, and was hoping you might be willing to give me advice on how to prepare myself for this career path.

Would you be willing to visit with me briefly about your experiences? I’m available between December 5 and January 10 and would be happy to connect through email, on the phone, or in person.

Sincerely,

Jay Hawk

jhawk@ku.edu

555-555-5555]

[Image of a student in professional clothing working on his computer. He is sitting outside on a park bench with the laptop on the bench and the student is twisted sideways to reach it.]

### Informational Interview Request Through Email

[Inserted diagram of an email. Subject: Informational Interview Request from Jay Hawk.

Dear Mr. Budig:

I am currently a junior finance student at the University of Kansas and am interested in learning more about careers in the finance industry. After a class discussion and personal research, one particular career that has sparked my interest is financial advising.

Would you be willing to take 20 to 30 minutes out of your day to provide me with advice and expertise based on your experiences in this field? I am available on Monday and Friday afternoons through the next four weeks. If this is a possibility, please email me back or contact me at 555-555-5555. Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,

Jay Hawk

jhawk@ku.edu

555-555-5555]

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[Inserted diagram of an email. Subject: Positions in Software Development.

Dear Mr. Haworth:

After reading a description of your company on LinkedIn, I would like to know about possible job opportunities in your software development department. I am a senior in Computer Science, and will earn my bachelor’s degree in May.

Last summer, I had the opportunity to do an internship for the XYZ Solutions Firm where I worked closely with a team to develop business technology programs. My training also included testing existing systems. This experience confirmed my interest in a career in software development, and I believe your company would be an excellent match for my skills.

My resume is attached for your consideration. I realize that you have many demands on your time, but I would appreciate an opportunity to discuss employment possibilities with your company. Would you be available the week of January 10 to meet briefly? If you would prefer to contact me by phone, my number is 555-555-5555.

Thank you very much for considering my request. I look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,

Jay Hawk

Jayhawk@ku.edu

555-555-5555]

### Networking Introduction Through Social Media Messaging

[Inserted diagram of an email.

Dear Ms. Fraser:

I am currently a psychology major at the University of Kansas exploring career options. While researching people who work in higher education and live in Chicago, I found your profile. I will be in Chicago during the week of March 18-22. Would you be willing to take 20-30 minutes of your time to talk to me about your experiences in this field? If you would rather connect by email, I can be reached at jhawk@ku.edu. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jay Hawk

jayhawk@ku.edu

555-555-5555]

### LinkedIn Invitation to Connect Message (Someone you’ve never met)

[Inserted diagram of an email.

Dear Mr. Sabatini:

I am a photo media major at the University of Kansas exploring career options. I joined the Photo

Marketing group, and enjoy reading the discussions there. Would you be willing to connect with me so that I can learn more about your work?

Sincerely,

Jay Hawk

jayhawk@ku.edu]

### LinkedIn Invitation to Connect (Someone already known to you)

[Inserted diagram of an email.

Dear Ms. Higuchi:

I enjoyed the time I spent working for you at ABC Company. The help you offered me during my internship was invaluable. I hope you will connect with me on LinkedIn so we can stay in touch in the future! Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Jay Hawk

jayhawk@ku.edu

555-555-5555]

[Inserted diagram. Title; White text on blue background. Tips for Online Professional Communication. Body; Black text on yellow background.

DO

Spell check ALL written communication.

Proofread electronic messages just as thoroughly as you would printed documents.

Use a subject line in ALL emails such as “Application for Marketing Internship”.

Be respectful of the person you are contacting; don’t ask for something they can’t provide.

Use formal greetings and closings when possible.

Create an email “signature” that includes all of your contact information.

Use a formal greeting such as Mr./Ms. unless they have given you permission to call them by their first name or you know them well.

DON’T

Use informal text shortcuts such as “ur” for “you are”.

Use emoticons in any of your communication.

Use an informal tone in your writing.

Attach a resume in a request to connect, or in a request for an informational interview.]

End Material. White text on blue background.

Business Career Services Center

125 Summerfield Hall

Phone 785-864-5591

Fax 785-864-5078

Email bcsc@ku.edu

www.business.ku.edu/bcsc

Engineering Career Center

1001 Eaton Hall

Phone 785-864-3891

Fax 785-864-5643

Email ecc@ku.edu

www.ecc.ku.edu

Music Career Center

450 Murphy Hall

Phone 785-864-4466

Fax 785-864-5387

[www.music.ku.edu](http://www.music.ku.edu)

Journalism Career Center

120 Stauffer-Flint Hall Phone 785-864-7630 Fax 785-864-5318

Email pnoland@ku.edu www.journalism.ku.edu

University Career Center

110 Burge Union

Phone 785-864-3624 Fax 785-864-4572

Email ucc@ku.edu career.ku.edu

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