Resumes & Cover Letters
Logistics

I cannot increase enrollment (campus-wide restriction on writing classes).

If you are going to drop, better sooner to help out your fellow classmates on the waiting list.
Logistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4/1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Read Advice for CS students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/3</td>
<td>Resumes, cover letters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WEEK 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4/8</td>
<td>Writing sample</td>
<td>Post your system (for the Tutoria bulletin board)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/10</td>
<td>Common mistakes (writing mechanics) &amp; Peer Review</td>
<td>Resume draft</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WEEK 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4/15</td>
<td>Personal statements, Wikipedia</td>
<td>Resume final</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assignment: Resume and cover letter**

For this assignment, you will prepare a resume and cover letter according to the guidelines described in class. To write the cover letter, find an actual internship or job position for which you would like to apply. You are encouraged to find a employer that will be participating in an upcoming Career Fair. There are numerous references for writing resumes and cover letters; please see the lecture notes.

**Requirements**

**Due dates**: Please refer to the schedule for due dates.

**Submission instructions**: Please refer to these guidelines for submission instructions.

**Draft**: Bring 3 drafts of your resume and cover letter to class for peer review on the draft due date.

**Final**: Bring a single copy of your final resume and cover letter.
Next Tuesday, there will be a pass/fail in-class writing sample.

I will give you an easy prompt - e.g., “Name your favorite color and tell me why”

Bring a pen, scrap paper, and any references you like (dictionary, lower-division writing guides, etc.)

No cell-phones / laptops

Write neatly!

You are required to pass to take this course
## Logistics

<table>
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I will not be present at lecture on Tuesday; TA will pass out prompts.
Assignment: System Tutorial and Pitch

For this assignment, you will examine some software system you're familiar with from a variety of perspectives: introducing new users to the system and proposing changes to the system.

Overview

Imagine, for example, that you are in charge of the Gmail for UCI Rollout. You will have to instruct new users, both students and faculty, on how to use Gmail. You might write an introductory document, explaining the basics of electronic mail and the kinds of operations one might expect to perform (creating and sending messages, receiving a message, printing it, saving it, and so on); later in that document, or in another document, you might give a tutorial providing the details of carrying out those operations (the specific commands to use), perhaps with a set of examples the reader would follow. You might also give an oral introduction to "Gmail" to groups of new users.

In addition, you might think that "Gmail" could be improved in various ways (such as a new graphical user interface or additional features). Probably you would have to convince someone (your boss, or a committee in charge of deciding what software enhancements are most important) that these changes would be worth implementing. You would make your case both in a written memo and in an oral presentation.

For this assignment, you will choose a software project on Sourceforge and do each of these things. You are not allowed to select the VLC media player. As you develop each of these different documents (and their corresponding oral presentations), focus on how the audience for each document is different - they have different experience, different needs, and so on, which means that how you write for each will be different, too.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Formality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pitch</td>
<td>Decision makers, who know about the software but must be convinced of the need to change (and the feasibility and advisability of the changes you propose)</td>
<td>Correct and professional, addressing corporate higher-ups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial</td>
<td>Novices, unfamiliar with the software, who need to learn its purpose and basic functionality</td>
<td>Friendly yet professional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part 1: Introductory message

First, you must decide what Sourceforge system you will use for these assignments. Select a system that is intricate enough to describe in three-four pages (double-spaced). Also make sure you are that you are familiar enough with the system to be able to suggest a modification. This proposed change will form the basis for the Pitch assignment. As listed on the schedule, prepare a post to the correct forum on the class bulletin board. Make sure your post includes (1) the name of the system, (2) a one to two sentence description of the system, and (3) a one to two sentence sketch of the proposed change.
Post message to forums
Outline

• Audience
• Resumes
• Cover letters
• Career Fair / Interviewing
Recap

What’s the purpose of a resume?

What’s the purpose of a cover letter?
Recap

What’s the purpose of a resume?

What’s the purpose of a cover letter?

To convince the reader (possible employer) to hire you
How do we determine the right principles for an effective resume and cover letter?

“Fundamental” laws of effective writing

Most freedom Most constraints

Me → My audience

First law
Adapt to your audience.

Second law
Maximize the signal/noise ratio.

Third law
Use effective redundancy.
Audience

Who will read your cover-letter/resume?

‘Skimmers and skeptics’

https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/638/01/
Skimmers are readers that are typically very busy. Pressed for time, they often skim employment documents in a rather short period of time. Consequently, the documents you prepare for this particular reader should:

- State the main point clearly and up front
- Place the most important information at the beginning or ending of paragraphs
- Highlight key dates or figures

BAD
Managed $10,000 in project accounts, compiled and published engineering reports as assistant to Vice President, coordinated registrations, payments, and literature for software training seminars.

GOOD
- Managed $10,000 in project accounts.
- Compiled and published engineering reports as Assistant to Vice President
- Coordinated registrations, payments, and literature for software training seminars.

“20 second test”
A Skeptic is a reader that is cautious and doubtful. Skeptical readers will tend to read a document carefully, questioning its validity. Ultimately, they will question the writer's claims. In order to meet the needs of the Skeptic, it is necessary to support your statements with sufficient details and evidence. Provide specific examples, numbers, dates, names, and percentages to meet the needs of the skeptical reader.

**BAD**

I performed very well in my classes.

**GOOD**

I received the Dean's List Honors 7/8 semesters and received a Women in Communications Scholarship in May 2001.
Site Reliability Engineer (Production Systems Engineer)

Location: Los Angeles, CA
Department: Technical Operations
Type: Full Time
Min. Experience: Experienced

WE ARE CURRENTLY CONSIDERING QUALIFIED APPLICANTS FOR THIS ROLE WHO ARE BASED IN LOS ANGELES.

The mission of the Technical Operations team is to equip the business with framework support. We are responsible for the building and maintenance of data centers, inventory management, monitoring services development, platform integration and management, capacity planning, global traffic management, release management, application and development support, network support and troubleshooting.

A member of the Technical Operations Engineer team must be able to ask the right questions, understand the business and technical requirements of internal and external clients, and then translate those needs into actionable items for execution in conjunction with other cross-functional team members. We are geared to support stability, scalability and outstanding service across the entire organization.

The Site Reliability Engineer (Production Systems Engineer) supports our global high performance infrastructure in a DevOps environment. Our requirement for low latency networking requires understanding and passion for high performance computing. You will be part of a team that supports real time, high volume complex advertising and bidding network, along with supporting a large Hadoop data warehouse.

Primary Responsibilities:
- Ensure the operational integrity of the global production infrastructure
- Build and expand infrastructure capacity at remote Data Centers and POPs
- Perform deployments and maintenance to implement code, architecture and configurations changes
- Provide support and diagnose issues to other teams related to our infrastructure
- Participate in 24/7 on-call rotation with other team engineers
- Develop and maintain new health checks for system and application-level monitoring

Qualifications:
- Comfortable operating in a Linux environment (LAMP STACK)
- Strong verbal and written communication skills
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• Provide support and diagnose issues to other teams related to our infrastructure
• Participate in 24/7 on-call rotation with other team engineers
• Develop and maintain new health checks for system and application-level monitoring

Qualifications:

• Comfortable operating in a Linux environment (LAMP STACK)
• Strong verbal and written communication skills
• Ability to adapt to a rapidly evolving code base on a global system
• Comfortable collaborating and supporting a diverse team of engineers
• Respond, diagnose, and trouble shoot system reported incidents
• Scripting in bash, perl, python or other unix like shell
• Flexible working hours and 24/7 on-call support
• Large Installation Systems Administration with Centos or Red Hat Linux
• Monitoring tools such as Graphite, Nagios, and Opsview
• Scripting in bash, perl, python or other scripting languages
• System Management with Puppet, Chef or other managed systems
• System installs with PXE, kickstart, and Cobbler
• Managing code stored in a revision control system
• Exposure to Hadoop Environment
• Atlassian tools including Bamboo, Fisheye, Crucible, Crowd, Jira, and Confluence
• VMware or other virtual system management
• Experience writing code in any language
In-class resume handout

(1) Split into groups by counting off
(2) Assign one recorder and one presenter
(3) Discuss and come up with (at least 3) critiques of handout
(4) Suggest a solution / rewording for each

Most freedom | Most constraints
---|---
Me | My audience

**First law**
Adapt to your audience.

Me | My audience

**Second law**
Maximize the signal/noise ratio.

Me | My audience

**Third law**
Use effective redundancy.

Skimmers (20 second test) & Skeptics
Some general principles
First-quadrant focus

Reader will spend most time in first quadrant

Re-order sections to place your strengths there
Resumes

Summarize your education, employment history, and experiences that are relevant to your qualifications for a particular job for which you are applying.

Goal: Obtain an interview

Goliath Barneby
4545 Wandzilak Blvd.
Fort Wayne, IN 46815
260.424.6583
gbarneby@purdue.edu

OBJECTIVE:
To obtain a full time position in the electronics industry that utilizes a background in electrical engineering

EDUCATION:
Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN May 2007
Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering GPA: 3.00/4.00

RELEVANT COURSEWORK:
Integrated Circuit Engineering; Semiconductor Devices; Semiconductor Measurements Laboratory

RESEARCH PROJECT:
Digital Logic: Designed and implemented circuits using Xilinx to make an elevator operate

COMPUTER SKILLS:
FORTRAN, C, C++, JAVA, and Matlab

EMPLOYMENT:
Pratt & Whitney, Space Propulsion Summer 2006
Summer Intern, West Palm Beach, Florida
• Aided testing in controls labs to test new hardware designs
• Helped determine requirements and deadlines for control system of hypersonic engine design

Blackhawk Swim Team Summer 2003-2005
Head Swim Coach, Fort Wayne, Indiana
• Taught children the importance of teamwork and acted as a mediator when necessary
• Improved the swimming skills of children ages 4-18 while encouraging the children to stay on task
Basic sections

Objective
Education
Work Experience
Contact Information
Objective

Short, concise, and user-centered (good):

Objective: Help ABC Aerospace achieve its mission of designing tomorrow's technology today by joining the Navigation Software Development Team as a programmer.

(don’t have to name company, but doesn’t hurt)

Applicant-centered (bad):

Objective: Expand my skills in programming in the software development field
Education

List undergraduate degree from Irvine
Don’t list high-school (unless somehow relevant)

- Institution where the degree was granted
- Date of graduation
- Level of degree (B.A., M.A., etc.) and field (Electrical Engineering)
- Any minors (English)
- GPA. You are not required to state your GPA, but potential employers may assume you left it off because it was low. However, if your GPA is lower than a 3.0, consider omitting it.
Education (cont’d)

Goal

- to persuade employers your educational background will help you do your job more effectively
- to provide evidence of your qualifications
- to foreground your areas of expertise

If relevant...

- courses
- special projects

(you may want list programming languages here or “skills” section)
Work Experience

For each position your held, list:

- Name and address of the organization
- Dates of employment
- Position title
- Responsibilities.
- Skills learned

You can write full sentences or a bulleted list (generally preferred) to describe responsibilities and skills learned.

(this is probably the most difficult section to write)
Work experience

Customer Service Representative
Pat Eddy’s Used Car Emporium, West Lansing, MI
March 2005 – November 2007

• Wrote service orders for customers dropping off cars
• Have managed service desk independently as needed
• Able to understand and write technical instructions
• Mastering technical detail in writing service instructions
• Earned three “Golden Customer Service” awards

Which reads better for a skimmer & skeptic? Why?
Work experience

Customer Service Representative
Fat Eddy’s Used Car Emporium, West Lansing, MI
March 2005 – November 2007

- Wrote service orders for customers dropping off cars
- I often worked independently as needed
- Able to understand and write technical instructions
- Three “Golden Customer Service” awards

Which reads better for a skimmer & skeptic? Why?
Sentences or bullets must be in **parallel** form (which means that each item must be grammatically formatted the same). Use an active voice with **action** verbs. Aim for 3 sentences or bullets, with most relevant duties listed first. Use **consistent** tense.
Verb tenses

- Supervise a team of six employees
- Am supervising a team of six employees
- Supervised a team of six employees
- Was supervising a team of six employees
- Have supervised a team of six employees
- Had supervised a team of six employees
- Had been supervising a team of six employees

Which is better?
Do they mean different things?
Verb tenses

• Supervise a team of six employees
• Am supervising a team of six employees
• Supervised a team of six employees
• Was supervising a team of six employees
• Have supervised a team of six employees
• Had supervised a team of six employees
• Had been supervising a team of six employees

Simple past is used by default (technically not correct for ongoing jobs)

http://www.englishpage.com/verbpage/verbtenseintro.html
Action verbs - list

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/543/02/

Data / Financial Skills

- Computed and recorded inventory valuation on a monthly basis
- Documented inventory counts at the end of each working day
- Verified the amount owed to the creditor in the Accounts Payable account

Other words: Adjusted, Allocated, Budgeted, Compared, Computed, Counted, Documented, Estimated, Forecasted, Inventoried, Invested, Predicted, Projected, Quantified, Recorded, Retrieved, Verified

Research Skills

- Examined a new mechanism that may reduce sickness on the campus
- Identified a major defect in a microscopic organism last month
- Surveyed a group of Purdue students with regard to Product A

Other words: Analyzed, Collected, Compared, Controlled, Detected, Diagnosed, Evaluated, Examined, Gathered, Identified, Investigated, Located, Measured, Organized, Reported, Replicated, Researched, Reviewed, Searched, Surveyed, Wrote

Technical Skills

- Assembled an entire computer programming simulation for my CPT course
- Designed a new form of Widget C for a manufacturing facility
- Programmed three new computer programs tailored for a network system

Other words: Analyzed, Assembled, Built, Calculated, Computed, Conducted, Designed, Devised, Engineered, Maintained, Operated, Programmed, Reengineered, Remodeled, Transmitted
Work Experience cont’d

Be creative and thoughtful in describing responsibilities and skills

(but don’t exaggerate)

Even if you worked at McDonald’s, you learned how to do the following:

- function efficiently in a team
- deal with customer service issues
- maintain flexibility in duties from shift to shift.
### Job skills checklist

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/626/1/

“things you might have learned at a job”

Useful phrases for cover letter and resume

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administering programs</th>
<th>Planning agendas/meetings</th>
<th>Updating files</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advising people</td>
<td>Planning organizational needs</td>
<td>Setting up demonstrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing data</td>
<td>Predicting futures</td>
<td>Sketching charts or diagrams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assembling apparatus</td>
<td>Rehabilitating people</td>
<td>Writing reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auditing financial reports</td>
<td>Organizing tasks</td>
<td>Writing for publication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budgeting expenses</td>
<td>Prioritizing work</td>
<td>Expressing feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calculating numerical data</td>
<td>Creating new ideas</td>
<td>Checking for accuracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding information</td>
<td>Meeting people</td>
<td>Classifying records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handling complaints</td>
<td>Evaluating programs</td>
<td>Coaching individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handling detail work</td>
<td>Editing work</td>
<td>Collecting money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imagining new solutions</td>
<td>Tolerating interruptions</td>
<td>Compiling statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreting languages</td>
<td>Confronting other people</td>
<td>Inventing new ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dispensing information</td>
<td>Constructing buildings</td>
<td>Proposing ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapting new procedures</td>
<td>Coping with deadlines</td>
<td>Investigating problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiating/arbitrating conflicts</td>
<td>Promoting events</td>
<td>Locating missing information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking to the public</td>
<td>Raising funds</td>
<td>Dramatizing ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing letters/papers/proposals</td>
<td>Questioning others</td>
<td>Estimating physical space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading volumes of material</td>
<td>Being thorough</td>
<td>Organizing files</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remembering information</td>
<td>Coordinating schedules/times</td>
<td>Managing people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contact Information

Required

• your current address (school and permanent)
• telephone number
• email

Optional

• cell phone numbers
• personal web pages.

Design options

• place name in larger font, center it
• add a line separating contact info from rest of page
Optional sections

- Computer skills
- Honors and awards
- Languages
- Certifications
- Volunteer experience
- Hobbies and interests
- Foreign travel
- Professional memberships
- Community service, etc.
Resume-length: 1 page or more?

Classically, resumes should be 1 page (some employers will still ask for this)
Your accomplishments might spill beyond that

Best approach: have both

Formatting extra pages:
1) Avoid splitting sections across pages
2) Title page to reflect a focus (e.g., Projects)
Make resume scannable

10 pt or more font size
Use common font (Times New Roman)
1 inch or more margins
Organizational layout

20-second skimmer & skeptic

Reader will spend most time in first quadrant

Re-order sections to place your strengths there
Management vs technical positions

- strong communication skills
- effective organization skills
- qualities of a team player

- programming languages
- class coding projects
Chronological resume

David Allan Taylor

Home Address: 230 South Boilermaker St.
             West Lafayette, IN 47906
             (765) 555-5555

Work Address: 1021 Melrose Place
             Anderson, IN 46011
             (765) 555-5555
             boiler@purdue.edu

Career Objective
A career in landscape design with emphasis on housing and real estate development

Education
Purdue University
Bachelor of Science in Landscape Architecture
Grade Point Average 5.46 on 6.00 scale
Candidate May 2010

Work Experience
Selig Landscaping, 123 St. Rd 36, Indianapolis, IN
May 2010 - August 2010
• Drafted planting designs for commercial and residential projects
• Figured cost estimates for subcontractor bidding
• Installed landscape designs and plant materials

Philip L. Strock Residence, 1018 N Notting Ave., Anderson, IN
May 2009 - August 2009
• Drafted residential planting designs
• Installed landscape plans

Indianapolis Museum of Art, 123 W 1st St., Indianapolis, IN
May 2008 - August 2008
• Maintained the landscape of the Lily Mansion and Art Museum
• Worked in turf maintenance, tree pruning, and shrub care

TGZ Interiors, 11 E 23rd St., Anderson, IN
Summers 2007, 2006, 2005
• Waited on clients
• Received and priced inventory

Honors and Activities
Sigma Lambda Alpha - Landscape Architecture Honorary
Pi Alpha Xi - Horticulture Honorary
Dean’s List - Fall 2009, Fall 2008, Spring 2007

(emphasizes where you’ve worked; good if you’ve consistently been working)
Skills resume

Xxxxx X. Xxxx
xxxx 9th Street Apt. #xxx
Lafayette, IN xxxx
(XXX) XXX-XXXX • XXXXX@XXXX.XXX

Objective

To obtain a Tax Law Assistant position with Jones, Smith, & Schultz, LLP to help strengthen the tax practice area of your firm.

Education

Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN
Candidate for B.A. degree in English
- Focus: Professional Writing; Pre-Law
- Expected to graduate in May 2008

Work Experience

Cordaro Law Group, LLC – Tax Law, Internship 02/04 – Present
- Prepare case summaries, file, and perform miscellaneous tasks upon attorney’s request.

Delta Auto Body, Finance Management Administrator 05/99 – Present
- Analyze cash and check transactions, supervise customer and employee problems, and operate the central computer system.

Awards/Honors

- The National Dean’s List – 28th edition 03/2005
- Member of Phi Theta Kappa, International Honor Society 02/2005 – Present
- Active member of Phi Alpha Delta, International Law Fraternity 12/2004 – Present

Skills

- Operating Systems: Microsoft Windows NT/XP and Macintosh OS
- Software: Microsoft Office 2000/2003/XP, Adobe Photoshop 5.5/7.0/CS, Internet Explorer, Netscape Navigator, Mozilla, Telnet, Macromedia, Pro-Law
- Bilingual in English and Spanish, proficient in Portuguese
- Punctual, hard working, and dedicated with great initiative and leadership skills

References

Michael Smith
Cordaro Law Group, LLC
xxxxx Main Street
Lafayette, IN 47909
(XXX) XXX-XXXX

Ralph K. Kang
Delta Auto Body
xxxxx 4th Street
Lafayette, IN 47909
(XXX) XXX-XXXX

Dr. Henry Duckett
xxxxx Hanover Pkwy, Ste B
Kokomo, IN 20770-3603
(XXX) XXX-XXXX

(emphasizes your skills; good if you’ve worked many places)
Kevin Dolan

Local Address: 123 Boilermaker Ave.
West Lafayette, IN 46907
(765) 555-5555
boiler@purdue.edu

Permanent Address: 1965 E 250 N
Lebanon, IN 46052
(317) 555-5555

Employment Objective
A summer position that would utilize my experience in program development and human relations.

Education
Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN
Bachelor of Science in General Management
Bachelor of Arts in Sociology
Major GPA (6.0 scale): Management - 5.8, Sociology - 5.5
GPA Overall: 5.6
Distinguished Student Program

Expected: May 2015
May 2009

Experience
President, Purdue Grand Prix Foundation
May 2008-May 2009
- Coordinated work and activities for 175 students
- Set up and managed $3,000,000 budget
- Oversaw planning of 15 major events involving over 17,000 students and 6,000 non-students
- Designed statewide publicity program utilizing alumni representatives of five major corporations
- Raised over $50,000 for individual and general scholarships

Assistant Chair, Purdue Grand Prix Foundation
June 2007-May 2008
- Secured over $2,000 in donations
- Allocated fuel for cart crews

Chair, Purdue Boiler Bouts Association
May-October 2009
- Organized fraternity boxing matches to raise money for charity
- Raised over $2,700 for Boys’ Club and United Way Fund

Additional Activities
FSBIT Advisory Board
Student Alumni Coalition
President’s Council

References
Available Upon Request

Functional Skills Résumé. Copyright The Purdue OWL

(emphasizes your job titles/functions)
Outline

- Audience
- Resumes
- Cover letters
- Career Development
- Career Fair / Interviewing
Cover letters

Compliments your resume (provides relevant detail)

Illustrates your communication skills

Often the first document an employer sees, so it matters

(might be in e-mail form)
What is goal?

Convince skimmer and skeptic to hire you

20-second test still (more-or-less) applies
In-class exercise

(1) Split into groups again, with a recorder and presenter
(2) Discuss and come up with (at least 3) critiques of cover-letter handout
(4) Suggest a solution / rewording for each

**First law**
Adapt to your audience.

**Second law**
Maximize the signal/noise ratio.

**Third law**
Use effective redundancy.
Dear Ms. Lockridge:

After speaking with Emily Richards about her past summer in the internship program, I am very interested in your Human Resources Summer Internship position. I worked with employee benefits this past summer and became very interested in the human resources aspect. I have obtained many leadership opportunities while working as a Business Writing Consultant Assistant Coordinator at Purdue’s Writing Lab that would be valuable in a career at Uline.

As Business Writing Consultant Assistant Coordinator at Purdue’s Writing Lab, my primary role is to help train new tutors for the Writing Lab. I work directly with the Business Writing Coordinator teaching classes and participating in mock tutorials to allow students to obtain hands-on experience tutoring business documents. I also organize educational workshops to refresh the skills of current Business Writing Consultants. My position as a Boiler Gold Rush Team Leader also challenged me to use my enthusiastic personality to motivate incoming freshmen to be involved in campus activities. As a Human Resources Intern at Uline, I could use all of these leadership skills while learning more about recruiting and hiring practices.

Thank you for considering me for this position. I would love to discuss these and other qualifications with you. If you have any questions, please call me at 765-450-7583 or e-mail me at slo@purdue.edu.

Sincerely

Stacy Lolkus

Enclosure: Résumé
• Make sure you address the letter to a specific person if possible (preferably the interviewer)
Audience awareness

- Do you’re homework on the company/organization (mission statement, corporate culture, terms in their industry....)

- For this assignment, find an actual position you would like to apply for

https://techjobs.uci.edu/
Purpose:
• Introduce yourself
• Explain purpose of letter (what position are you looking for)
• Explain how you came to know of this position
• Explain why interested in the position or the company
  – Culture?
  – Approach?
• Preview the rest of the letter
After speaking with Emily Richards about her past summer in the internship program, I am interested in your Human Resources Summer Internship position. I worked with employee benefits this summer and became interested in the human resources aspect of the position.
Middle Paragraphs

• Highlight skills and benefits to the company
• Emphasize interest in the company
• Provide concrete evidence
  – Show don’t tell (use information from resume)
  – Include specific, credible examples of qualifications for the position
• Begin paragraphs with topic sentences
As a technical sales representative in the campus bookstore, I provided quality customer service while promoting the sale of products to customers. I handled close to $10,000 each day and was responsible for managing customer complaints and questions.

As a banking representative at Chase, I provided quality customer service while promoting the sale of products to customers. I also handled close to $20,000 each day and was responsible for

What’s the topic of this paragraph?
Tone

• Avoid cliches “I think outside the box”, “I am a team player”, ....

• Use an appropriate level of formality
I worked as a ramp agent at Comair.

As a ramp agent, I assisted in loading baggage, oversaw fueling the aircraft, and stocked commissary items on the aircraft.
I would like to discuss these and other qualifications with you to further explain how I can contribute to your Middle East operations. I look forward to meeting you soon. If you have any questions, please call me at 555-555-5555 or e-mail me at abcd@uci.edu.
Other hints

Be specific and simple and **concise**

Roughly speaking, less than 150 words
Editing for conciseness

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/572/01/

One of the biggest differences between spoken language and written text

Basic approach: interrogate every word in a sentence

Does it contribute to making your reader understand the goal of the cover letter?
Editing for conciseness

Avoid overusing noun forms of verbs

**Wordy:** The function of this department is the *collection* of accounts. (10 words)

**Concise:** This department collects accounts. (4 words)
Editing for conciseness

Change phrases into single-words and adjectives

**Wordy:** The employee with ambition...

**Concise:** The ambitious employee...

**Wordy:** We read the letter we received yesterday and reviewed it thoroughly.

**Concise:** We thoroughly reviewed the letter we received yesterday.
Editing for conciseness

Change unnecessary that, who, and which clauses into adjectives

Wordy: The system *that is most efficient and accurate*... (8 words)

Concise: The most efficient and accurate system... (6 words)

Wordy: The report, *which was released recently*... (6 words)

Concise: The recently released report... (4 words)
Editing for conciseness

Combine Sentences

**Wordy:** Ludwig's castles are an astounding marriage of beauty and madness. By his death, he had commissioned three castles. (18 words)

**Concise:** Ludwig's three castles are an astounding marriage of beauty and madness. (11 words)

**Wordy:** The supposed crash of a UFO in Roswell, New Mexico aroused interest in extraterrestrial life. This crash is rumored to have occurred in 1947. (24 words)

**Concise:** The supposed 1947 crash of a UFO in Roswell, New Mexico aroused interest in extraterrestrial life. (16 words)
Editing for conciseness

Eliminate redundant determiners and modifiers

*Wordy:* Any *particular type* of dessert is fine with me. (9 words)

*Concise:* Any dessert is fine with me. (6 words)

"Filler" words to watch out for

- kind of
- sort of
- type of
- really
- basically
- for all intents and purposes
- definitely
- actually
- generally
- individual
- specific
- particular

Redundant pairs to watch out for

- various differences
- true facts
- important essentials
- future plans
- end result
- final outcome
- free gift
- past history
- unexpected surprise
- sudden crisis
- large in size
- often times
- heavy in weight
Editing for conciseness

Eliminate round-about expressions

- "because," "since," "why" =
  - the reason for
  - for the reason that
  - owing/due to the fact that
  - in light of the fact that
  - considering the fact that
  - on the grounds that
  - this is why
- "must," "should" =
  - it is crucial that
  - it is necessary that
  - there is a need/necessity for
  - it is important that
  - cannot be avoided
- "can" =
  - is able to
  - has the opportunity to
  - has the capacity for
  - has the ability to
- "may," "might," "could" =
  - it is possible that
  - there is a chance that
  - it could happen that
  - the possibility exists for
Conciseness checklist

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/572/1/
E-mail cover letters

Same format as standard cover letter, but typically shorter

Do not waste subject line

- Should clearly state the specific job for which you are applying
  - e.g., “Bilingual CPA seeks account manager position”

Make notice of any search keywords
Grading Rubric

Audience awareness
Resume and cover letter are targeted to the particular position and company, and do not look "boiler-plate". Both documents highlight experience and skills relevant to the employer. The objective in the resume is specific and user-focused, not vague and applicant-focused. The cover letter addresses any gaps/issues in the resume that may concern an employer.

Development and Structure
The layout of the resume highlights strengths (coursework, skills, a/or jobs) particular to the individual. The resume has standard sections (objective, education, work experience, and contact information). Cover letter has an introduction, main body, and conclusion. The main topic of each paragraph is easily identifiable, and follows a natural and logical progression. The main body highlights or identifies concrete examples of relevant information not present in the resume.

Language and style
The prose is concise, with perfect grammar and spelling. Both the resume and cover letter should use strong action verbs (http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/543/02/). Both the resume and cover letter should use consistent, parallel language, particularly when describing job responsibilities. Sentences are written in a consistent tense (http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/601/04/). The prose in the cover letter has a formal business tone.
Look back

- Audience
- Resumes
- Cover letters
- Career Development
- Career Fair / Interviewing