

Name: _____

Date: _____

Student ID: _____

Campus: _____



CAREER PLANNING PROJECT

Galena Park ISD Career and Technical Education

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The student will select a career of interest from the Workforce Solutions High – Skill, High – Growth Jobs In the Gulf Coast Region. With that career in mind, the student will create a resume, elevator pitch, cover letter, and prepare for an interview.

TEKS addressed in this project are required in all CTE courses: (1) The student demonstrates professional standards/employability skills as required by business and industry. The student is expected to: (B) demonstrate professional standards and personal qualities needed to be employable such as oral and written communication, leadership, teamwork, appreciation for diversity, conflict management, customer service, work ethic, and adaptability; (C) demonstrate skills related to seeking and applying for employment; (D) create a resume and cover letter/letter of interest to document information such as work experiences, licenses, certifications, and work samples; and (E) demonstrate skills in evaluating and comparing employment opportunities.

CTE Credit Recovery

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Part One: Career Interest



Complete the following for this section:

- ✓ Complete *Hard Vs Soft Skills* activity (p. 3)
- ✓ Read *Workforce Solutions: High – Skill, High – Growth Jobs In the Gulf Coast Region* (included in packet)
- ✓ Complete *Career Selection* (p. 4)

Hard Vs Soft Skills

When searching for a job, it is useful to be able to describe your skills. Job skills are often described in two categories: hard skills and soft skills.

Hard skills are those you learn through on-the-job or institutional training. These include skills specific to a particular occupation, such as those involved in planning and teaching for teachers, or the ability to use specialized tools for a dental technician.

Soft skills are those that can be used in any occupation. These skills are often called transferable skills because you can transfer them from one job to another. Often, these are the skills that you use and develop in everyday situations, not necessarily in relation to work. Soft skills include organizational and team work skills, as well as qualities such as initiative and attention to detail.

A soft skill can be used in any job. A **hard** skill is learned for particular jobs. Being able to work well with others is a **soft** skill. A teacher who knows how to plan a lesson has a **hard** skill.

Indicate whether the following are hard or soft skills by **circling** the best answer.

pay attention to detail hard / soft skill	able to use dental technician tools hard / soft skill
write a computer program hard / soft skill	problem-solving hard / soft skill
do research on the Internet hard / soft skill	repair a car hard / soft skill
communicate effectively hard / soft skill	install carpeting hard / soft skill
resolving conflict hard / soft skill	facilitate meetings hard / soft skill
build a fence hard / soft skill	make contributions in meetings hard / soft skill
operate a cash register hard / soft skill	make decisions hard / soft skill
design a bridge hard / soft skill	landscape a yard hard / soft skill
maintain small talk hard / soft skill	wait on tables in a restaurant hard / soft skill
write an email or business letter hard / soft skill	nurse patients in a hospital hard / soft skill

Career Selection

After reading the *Workforce Solutions: High – Skill, High – Growth Jobs In the Gulf Coast Region*, write the career that most interests you below.

The Career I am most interested in is

List 3 hard skills and 3 soft skills that you believe are required for your selected career.

Hard Skills	Soft Skills
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

***You will simulate the application and interview process in Parts 2 – 5 for the career you selected.**

Part Two: Resume Writing



Complete the following for this section:

- ✓ Read *Resume Writing Tips* (p. 6)
- ✓ Fill out *Resume Writing Template* (pp. 7 – 12)
- ✓ Review Sample Resume 1 – 3 (pp. 13 – 15)
- ✓ Write or Insert Typed Professional Resume (p. 16)

Resume Writing Tips

- Pay careful attention to spelling, punctuation, grammar, and style.
- Proofread your resume carefully. Also, have several other people proof read your resume.
- Organize information in a logical fashion. The Resume Worksheet can help you with your organization of material.
- Keep descriptions clear and to the point – try to stay under 12 words.
- As an associate or bachelor degree holder, you will most likely only need a one-page resume.
- Use a simple and easy to read font. We suggest Times New Roman or Arial.
- Use a good quality white or off-white bond paper.
- Include as much work experience as possible – even if it does not obviously relate to the job you are seeking. Any job has transferable skills (i.e. computer skills, writing, speaking, etc.)
- Tailor your information to the job you are seeking.
- Be honest – don't exaggerate.
- Be specific and give examples. Provide numbers (i.e. # of people supervised, amount of your operating budget, etc.) whenever possible.
- Use simple, everyday language.
- Include dates whenever appropriate (i.e. dates of employment, activities, etc.)
- Write out what acronyms stand for because an employer may not know what they mean.

Resume Writing Template

Use the resume worksheet to brainstorm and organize information for your resume.

IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

Name: _____

Current Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work (or Cell) Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

CAREER OBJECTIVE

A good career objective is essential. It should serve as the focal point of your resume, indicating what sort of job you are seeking, and what experience/skills you have to offer. It should be broad enough to cover any suitable employment, yet specific enough to indicate that you have a specific position in mind. You can change your career objective depending upon the job you are applying for. See the sample resumes for ideas.

Some questions you may want to answer are:

- What kind of employment do you want? Internship, coop, full-time, part-time
- What type of position do you want? Customer services, sales etc.
- Is there a particular industry you want to work in? retail, hospitality, healthcare etc. Which objective style do you want on your resume?

Career Objective:

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

As a high school student, you will list the name of your high school and expected date of graduation on your resume. Generally, once you begin college or technical school, you can omit your high school information because it is assumed you have completed high school or obtained your GED. If you have taken, or are taking, college-level courses or vocational/technical training, you can list that first.

Name of school: _____

City and State of school: _____

Expected Graduation Date: _____

GPA (if above a 3.0) optional: _____

PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT & SUMMER JOBS

As a student you probably do not have much experience directly related to your career objective. That's okay! You may have held part-time or summer jobs, and believe it or not, through those experiences you have developed valuable transferable skills that employers like to see in applicants. It also shows that you have held a job for a certain amount of time, demonstrating your work ethic and ability to manage your time between school and work.

EXPERIENCE

When describing your responsibilities and accomplishments, try to highlight areas that are specifically relevant to the type of position you are seeking. Start each description with an action word (see list of action words below).

Name and city/state of company: _____

Job Title: _____

Date From: (Mo/YR)_____ Date To: (Mo/YR):_____

Description of responsibilities and accomplishments (Write your experiences in bullet statements):

- Example: Responsible for sorting 1,000 small packages each hour of operation.

- _____
- _____
- _____

Name and city/state of company:_____

Job Title:_____

Date From: (Mo/YR)_____ Date To: (Mo/YR):_____

Description of responsibilities and accomplishments (Write your experiences in bullet statements):

- _____
- _____
- _____

Name and city/state of company:_____

Job Title:_____

Date From: (Mo/YR)_____ Date To: (Mo/YR):_____

Description of responsibilities and accomplishments (Write your experiences in bullet statements):

- _____
- _____
- _____

HELPFUL ACTION WORDS

Use action words to describe your experience and accomplishments. You should use present tense (i.e.

“manage” or “collaborate”) when describing tasks that you are still doing. Use past tense (i.e.

“managed” or “collaborated”) when describing tasks that you are no longer doing.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • achieved • acquired • adapted • addressed • administered • analyzed • anticipated • assembled • assisted • audited • budgeted • calculated • centralized • changed • collaborated • composed • condensed • conducted • constructed • contracted • converted • coordinated • created • cultivated • demonstrated • designed • developed • devised • discovered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • drafted • edited • eliminated • enforced • established • evaluated • expanded • explained • forecasted • formed • founded • generated • guided • hired • implemented • improved • informed • insured • interpreted • interviewed • launched • maintained • managed • marketed • minimized • motivated • negotiated • operated • organized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • originated • oversaw • performed • planned • prevented • produced • programmed • promoted • provided • publicized • published • recruited • reorganized • reported • researched • resolved • reviewed • selected • separated • set up • simplified • solved • surveyed • staffed • supervise • taught • tested • trained • `used
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OTHER INFORMATION

Merit Scholarships, awards, honors, achievements (include dates) and languages you are fluent in.

Example: Honor Roll, Fall 2002 & Spring 2003; Fluent in Spanish, Perfect Attendance Award 2003,

Co-curricular activities (sports, clubs, volunteer activities, etc.) List full name of organization, include dates, and include offices/positions you have held if applicable. Example: Norton's Suburban Hospital, Volunteer, Summer 2003

Computer skills Example: Proficient in Microsoft Office, including Word, Excel, and Powerpoint

REFERENCES

It is fine to write "Reference available upon request" (see sample resume). However, you need to be prepared to present references in the event an employer requests this information. You should prepare an extra sheet of the same high-quality paper as your resume to be used as your reference page. You should be sure to put your contact information at the top of the page, preferably using the same header as is on your resume (see example). When thinking of references, consider supervisors you have worked

for and professors that you know in your discipline. Do not list friends or family as your reference.

Remember, you must ask someone to serve as a reference before you can list him/her as one. Use this opportunity to network. Let your reference know that you are looking for a position, the kind of position you are looking for, and ask if they have ideas on how to find one. Also, provide your reference with a copy of your resume so that he/she can speak about your qualifications when asked.

Name: _____ Title: _____

Company/Institution: _____ Dept.: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Title: _____

Company/Institution: _____ Dept.: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Title: _____

Company/Institution: _____ Dept.: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

SAMPLE RESUME 1

Kathy McBeel
2100 McIntyre Dr.
Shepherdsville, KY 40165
502-555-5665
kmcbeel@stu.kctcs.edu

OBJECTIVE

An administrative assistant position in the social service field using my data-entry skills, organizational ability, and strong work ethic.

EDUCATION

Smart High School Louisville, KY
Graduation Date: May 2005
GPA: 3.6/4.0

COMPUTER SKILLS

Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Access, Publisher, PowerPoint)
Microsoft Outlook
Internet Explorer

EXPERIENCE

Ride Attendant April 2003 to Present
Six Flags Kentucky Kingdom Louisville, KY

- Direct patrons of amusement park in getting on and off riding device.
- Maintain order among patrons waiting to ride device.
- Fasten patrons' safety belts and bars to prevent injuries during ride.
- Assist children and elderly patrons from ride.
- Collect tickets and cash fares.

Server/Hostess January 2001- January 2003
Applebee's Restaurant Louisville, KY

- Greeted guests, and escorted them to designated table
- Described menu specials, took orders, and delivered meals in a timely manner
- Assisted fellow servers in delivering orders to their tables, putting customer service first
- Trained new servers on restaurant policies and procedures

HONORS AND ACTIVITIES

Honor Roll 2001-Present
Students Against Destructive Decisions, Member 2003-Present
Co-Ed Y, President 2004- Present
Senior Varsity Women's Basketball Team 2003-Present
Junior Varsity Women's Basketball Team 2002-2003

REFERENCES

Available upon Request

SAMPLE RESUME 2

Jane Sassaby
P.O Box 111
Louisville, KY 40212
(502) 555-5555
sassabyj@hotmail.com

OBJECTIVE

To obtain an internship or part-time position in the banking industry utilizing my educational preparation in accounting

EDUCATION

Advanced High School, Louisville, KY
Graduation Date: May 2006
GPA: 3.5

EXPERIENCE

Cashier (9/03-Present)

McDonald's Louisville, KY

- Key in customer orders into register and prepare food tray or takeout bags accordingly.
- Serve cold drinks, using drink-dispensing machine, and frozen milk drinks and desserts, using milkshake or frozen custard machine.
- Press lids onto beverages and place beverages on serving tray or in takeout container.
- Demonstrated a positive attitude while processing customer cash and credit transactions.
- Maintain a clean and orderly eating and serving area.

Sales Associate (5/01-6/03)

Stein Mart Louisville, KY

- Assisted in the smooth and profitable operation of specialty clothing and home décor shop.
- Generated sales and maintained positive image among clients.
- Designed and constructed store displays.

COMPUTER PROFICIENCIES

Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, FrontPage, and Adobe Photoshop

HONORS AND ACTIVITIES

SADD President, 2004-Present
Dance Team, 2003-Present
Marching Band, 2003- Present
Norton Hospital Volunteer, 2004- Present
Honor Roll, 2003-2004

REFERENCES

Available upon request

SAMPLE RESUME 3

BRENT ADAMS

2522 James Dean Dr. • Covington, KY 41017 • 859-555-5555 • brent_adams@yahoohotmail.com

Objective: Seeking an entry level customer service position.

Summary:

- Precise and accurate worker with background demonstrating pride in performance and successful work accomplishment.
- Strong problem solving, organizational and communicative skills, paying particular attention to detail.
- Welcome new challenges, quickly learning new skills and procedures with excellent memory retention.

Education: **Smith High School** Louisville, KY
Graduation Date: May 2005

Experience: Babysitter Louisville, KY
Various Private Homes May 2000 to Present

- Attend children in a private home.
- Observe and monitor play activities and entertain children by reading
- Prepare and serve meals and baby formulas.
- Sterilize bottles and other equipment used for feeding infants.
- Dress and assist children in dressing and bathing.
- Accompany children on walks and other outings.

Skyline Chili Restaurant Louisville, KY
Waiter August 2003 to Present

- Served food to restaurant guests at counters and tables where food service was informal.
- Presented menu, answered questions and made suggestions regarding food and service.
- Wrote orders on checks, totaled bills and accepted payments.
- Ladled chili, tossed salads, portioned pies and desserts, and brewed coffee.
- Cleared and reset counters and tables.
- Assisted manager in opening and closing procedures, including cleaning store and preparing chopped vegetables for salads.

Subway Louisville, KY
Sandwich Artist May 2001 to August 2002

- Sliced cold meats and cheese by hand and machine.
- Prepared sandwiches to individual order of customers.
- Prepared garnishes for sandwiches, such as sliced tomatoes and pickles.
- Maintained cleanliness of restaurant by sweeping and mopping floor and disinfecting utensils.

Written or Typed Resume

Piece together the Resume Template and write your professional resume in the blank space below or insert your typed professional resume here.

Resume Rubric

	Unsatisfactory 2 pts	Developing 3 pts	Proficient 4 pts	Advanced 5 pts
Content	<p>Unsatisfactory</p> <p>Resume is missing 3 or more categories of information.</p>	<p>Developing</p> <p>*Resume is missing 2 or more categories of information.</p>	<p>Proficient</p> <p>*Resume is missing some information but contains most essential qualifications listed.</p>	<p>Advanced</p> <p>*Resume contains: *Contact Information *Education *Work Experience *Achievements *Volunteer Experience *Interests/Activities *Computer Skills</p>
Format	<p>Unsatisfactory</p> <p>*Does not follow clear and concise format and poorly written.</p>	<p>Developing</p> <p>*Does not follow clear and concise format but contains proper content.</p>	<p>Proficient</p> <p>*Either categories are not clearly defined or points not bulleted. *Resume not correctly formatted.</p>	<p>Advanced</p> <p>*Margin is flush and clean *Individual points bulleted *Categories well defined.</p>
Spelling/Grammar	<p>Unsatisfactory</p> <p>*Assignment is complete but has many errors.</p>	<p>Developing</p> <p>*Assignment is complete and has only five or six errors.</p>	<p>Proficient</p> <p>*Assignment is complete and has only two or three errors.</p>	<p>Advanced</p> <p>*Assignment is complete and without any errors.</p>
Attractiveness	<p>Unsatisfactory</p> <p>* Text fonts are difficult to read, or distracting and unattractive.</p>	<p>Developing</p> <p>* Some effort to make text fonts readable, attractive, however, it is difficult to read.</p>	<p>Proficient</p> <p>*Text fonts & sizes are readable, attractive format.</p>	<p>Advanced</p> <p>* Text fonts & sizes are well chosen, exceptionally attractive, neat work.</p>

Part Two: Resume Writing

Graded by: _____

Grade: _____ / 20pts

Part Three: Elevator Pitch



Complete the following for this section:

- ✓ Read *How to Create an Elevator Pitch with Example* (pp. 19 – 22)
- ✓ Answer *Elevator Pitch Thinking Prompts* (p. 23 – 24)
- ✓ Write *Elevator Pitch* (p. 25)

How to Create an Elevator Pitch With Example

How to Write a Perfect Elevator Speech

BY

ALISON DOYLE

Updated December 09, 2019

What's an elevator pitch, and how can it help your career? An elevator pitch – also known as an elevator speech – is a quick synopsis of your background and experience. The reason it's called an elevator pitch is that it should be short enough to present during a brief elevator ride.

This speech is all about you: who you are, what you do, and what you want to do (if you're job hunting).

Your elevator pitch is a way to share your expertise and credentials quickly and effectively with people who don't know you.

Done right, this short speech helps you introduce yourself to career and business connections in a compelling way. It can help you [build your network](#), [land a job](#), or connect with new colleagues on your [first day of work](#).

When and How to Use an Elevator Speech

If you're job searching, you can use your elevator pitch at [job fairs and career expos](#), and online in your [LinkedIn summary](#) or Twitter bio, for example. An elevator speech is a great way to gain confidence in introducing yourself to hiring managers and company representatives.

You can also use your elevator pitch to introduce yourself at [networking events](#) and mixers. If you're [attending professional association programs](#) and activities, or any other type of gathering, have your pitch ready to share with those you meet.

Your elevator pitch can be used during [job interviews](#), especially when you're asked about yourself. Interviewers often begin with the question, "[Tell me about yourself](#)" — think of your elevator pitch as a super-condensed version of your response to that request.

What to Say



Illustration by Maddy Price. © The Balance, 2018

Your elevator speech should be brief. Restrict the speech to 30-60 seconds. You don't need to include your entire [work history](#) and career objectives. Your pitch should be a short recap of who you are and what you do.

You need to be persuasive. Even though it's a short pitch, your elevator speech should be compelling enough to spark the listener's interest in your idea, organization, or background.

Share your skills. Your elevator pitch should explain who you are and what qualifications and [skills](#) you have. Try to focus on assets that add value in many situations. This is your chance to brag a bit — avoid sounding boastful, but do share what you bring to the table.

Practice, practice, practice. The best way to feel comfortable about giving an elevator speech is to practice it until the speed and “pitch” come naturally, without sounding robotic. You will get used to varying the conversation as you practice doing so. The more you practice, the easier it will be to deliver it when you're at a career networking event or job interview.

Practice giving your speech to a friend or recording it. This will help you know whether you're keeping within the time limit and giving a coherent message.

Be positive and flexible. You often aren't interviewing for a specific position when you deliver your pitch, so you want to appear open-minded and flexible. Don't lead with the stuff you'd rather not be doing. (For example, if you don't want to travel a lot for work, that's completely legitimate – but you needn't volunteer that information right off the bat.) This is your chance to make a [great first impression](#) with a potential employer. Don't waste it.

Mention your goals. You don't need to get too specific. An overly targeted goal isn't helpful since your pitch will be used in many circumstances, and with many different types of people. But do remember to say what you're looking for. For instance, you might say, "a role in accounting" or "an opportunity to apply my sales skills to a new market" or "to relocate to San Francisco with a job in this same industry."

Know your audience, and speak to them. In some cases, using jargon can be a powerful move — it demonstrates your industry knowledge. But be wary of using jargon during an elevator pitch, particularly if you're speaking to recruiters, who may find the terms unfamiliar and off-putting. Keep it simple and focused.

Have a business card ready. If you have a [business card](#), offer it at the end of the conversation as a way to continue the dialog. If you don't, you could offer to use your smartphone to share your contact information. A copy of your [resume](#), if you're at a job fair or a professional networking event, will also demonstrate your enthusiasm and preparedness.

What Not to Say and Do During Your Elevator Speech

Don't speak too fast. Yes, you only have a short time to convey a lot of information. But don't try to fix this dilemma by speaking quickly. This will only make it hard for listeners to absorb your message.

Avoid rambling. This is why it's so important to practice your elevator speech. While you don't want to over-rehearse, and subsequently sound stilted, you also don't want to have unfocused or unclear sentences in your pitch, or get off-track. Give the person you're talking to an opportunity to interject or respond.

Don't frown, or speak in a monotone way. Here's one of the downsides to rehearsing: it can leave you more focused on remembering the exact words you want to use, and less on how you're carrying yourself. Keep your energy level high, confident, and enthusiastic.

Modulate your voice to keep listeners interested, keep your facial expression friendly, and smile.

Don't restrict yourself to a single elevator pitch. Maybe you're interested in pursuing two fields — public relations and content strategy. Many of your [communication skills](#) will apply to both those fields, but you'll want to tailor your pitch depending on who you are speaking to. You may also want to have a more casual, personal pitch prepared for social settings.

Elevator Pitch Example

Example of an elevator speech when answering the “tell me about yourself” question in an interview:

I am passionate about the health and wellness of my community; specifically in the area of physical therapy. My experiences job shadowing in the Pre-Med core, and completion of junior and senior projects, helped me decide healthcare is my career of choice. I believe my strengths in leadership and motivating people are assets in helping people make a difference in their lives. This is why I would like the opportunity to work for your organization.

Elevator Pitch Thinking Prompts

Tell about you in 30 seconds! To develop an introductory statement that you can use in a variety of settings (waiting in line at Starbucks, sitting next to somebody on an airplane, sharing an elevator with somebody at work, participating in an interview), think about the following:

Who am I?

(the basics about you)

Example: "Hello, my name is... I'm a student at Windsor High School in the Pre-Med core."

The past and present

(your past experience and what you've been up to lately)

Example: "I just finished a 30 hour senior project, volunteering with a special needs T-ball team for children."

The future

(your longer term career goals)

Example: "My ultimate goal is to become a physical therapist."

The company or organization “fit”

(Why you’d be great for that company/organization+ why you’re interested).

Example: “My experiences in athletics and our medical core have developed my strengths in leadership and motivating people. I want to help you move your clients towards optimal health.”

Elevator Pitch Rubric

	Unsatisfactory 1 pts	Developing 2 pts	Proficient 3 pts	Advanced 4 pts
Introduction	<p>Unsatisfactory</p> <p>You just started in with info or forgot your name.</p>	<p>Developing</p> <p>You said your name and there is some attempt to create an intro, but I am not hooked. There was nothing unique or creative about the intro, or it was hokey or gimmicky.</p>	<p>Proficient</p> <p>You used a sentence to introduce yourself in a way that showed some relevance and there was some creativity and it was memorable in some way.</p>	<p>Advanced</p> <p>I'm hooked!!! You were honest, but used a twist and now I want to know more.</p>
Past / Present	<p>Unsatisfactory</p> <p>I don't know anything about what you do or have done.</p>	<p>Developing</p> <p>I don't know enough about what you do or have done.</p>	<p>Proficient</p> <p>I know what you do and have done that makes you an asset.</p>	<p>Advanced</p> <p>I know what you do and have done that makes you an asset and I want to know more.</p>
Aspirations/Goals	<p>Unsatisfactory</p> <p>I get no sense of what you want to do with your talent / skills.</p>	<p>Developing</p> <p>Your aspirations are either too narrow or not relevant to most audiences.</p>	<p>Proficient</p> <p>Grandma can understand your goals and so can I. They are mostly relevant. They seem to make sense for you.</p>	<p>Advanced</p> <p>Your goals immediately seem important to me too.</p>
Because/Why	<p>Unsatisfactory</p> <p>You made no attempt to tell me why your goals matter to anyone but you.</p>	<p>Developing</p> <p>I get some sense of who you are and why your art matters to you, but not much understanding about what it does for others.</p>	<p>Proficient</p> <p>You have told me what what your art will do with, through or for others.</p>	<p>Advanced</p> <p>You have told me what what your art will do with, through or for others AND it immediately seems important to me</p>
Grammar/Clarity	<p>Unsatisfactory</p> <p>Sentences and thoughts are incomplete.</p>	<p>Developing</p> <p>You did not get the basic structure right and there are grammatical mistakes.</p>	<p>Proficient</p> <p>Clear and correct, but you might tweak the order to get more of a twist.</p>	<p>Advanced</p> <p>Clear, correct and well organized</p>

Part Three: Elevator Pitch

Graded by: _____

Grade: _____ / 20pts

Part Four: Cover Letter



Complete the following for this section:

- ✓ Read *Cover Letter Tips and Suggestions* (p. 28)
- ✓ Review *Cover Letter Guide* (p. 29)
- ✓ Read the *Sample Cover Letters 1 - 2* (p. 30 – 31)
- ✓ Write or Insert a Typed Professional Cover Letter (p. 32)

Cover Letter Tips and Suggestions

COVER LETTER TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS

Your cover letter is a potential employer's first impression of you and can be the most vital part of the application packet. A well written letter entices the employer to read your resume. A poorly constructed cover letter may doom your resume to the "No Need to Read" pile. The same can be said for a college or scholarship application that includes an introductory letter. It is important to highlight your skills, knowledge, and experience. These will indicate what you can contribute to the company or school. Effective cover letters must convey a sense of purpose and project enthusiasm. A "form" cover letter rarely does this. Researching the employer, college, or scholarship prior to writing the cover letter will give you the opportunity to effectively personalize your letter.

1. **Always** include a cover letter when mailing your resume. A letter of introduction will prove useful when applying to colleges. It may act as the basis for a college essay or it may be a useful addition to an application packet.
2. Unless the advertisement specifies "no phone calls please" and the name is not given in the ad, find out the name and title of the individual who will be receiving your letter. Make sure you spell the name properly and get the proper abbreviation (Mr., Mrs., Ms.).
3. Do not use "form" letters or photocopies. Personalize each letter. If possible, explain why you want to work for the organization or attend the school.
4. Use a proper business format for your letters.
5. Make sure the letter is **PERFECT!** Spelling, punctuation, and grammar count. Have someone proofread the letter before mailing it.
6. Create the letter on a computer word processing program (Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, etc.) and use a laser printer, if possible. Use good quality paper. Cheap, flimsy paper makes your application seem very ordinary. However, do not use flashy colors!
7. Utilize a one inch margin on all 4 sides. This white space draws the reader to the body of the letter.
8. In the opening paragraph, tell the reader the purpose of the letter.
9. Use "I" statements and action verbs when describing your experience.
10. Get to the point! Employers do not have the time to read lengthy letters. A cover letter should never exceed one page.
11. Focus on the specific skills and interests you possess that you can offer the employer or college. Concentrate on skills which match the advertised employment qualifications or the desired program of study. Stress what you can do for the company or college, not what the company or college can do for you. Sound upbeat and confident. Sell yourself!
12. Don't mention salary expectations unless the advertisement specifically requests it. In that case, the best strategy is to give a range. For example, "My earnings have ranged from \$7.00 to \$10.50 per hour in the various sales positions I have held."
13. End by thanking the reader and stating that you look forward to meeting with them. Make a specific suggestion for the next step of the process and follow up as promised.

Before mailing a cover letter, can you answer the following questions with a "Yes"?

- Is it clear? Does it state exactly what I want it to state?
- Is it concise? Does it state what I want it to state in the fewest possible words?
- Is it well organized?
- Am I projecting to the employer or college the contribution I can make?
- Have I stressed areas in my experience and/or education that are relevant to the person reading it?

Cover Letter Guide

COVER LETTER GUIDE

PARTS OF A COVER LETTER	SAMPLE LETTER
HEADING	Your Mailing Address City, State Zip Code Today's Date (4 "Return"s or "Enter"s on Keyboard)
INSIDE ADDRESS	Employer's Name Job Title Business Name Business Address City, State Zip Code
SALUTATION	Dear (Mr./Mrs./Ms.) (Use the name of the person that will read the letter):
INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH Tell why you are writing.	In response to the February 24th advertisement in the <i>Bangor Daily News</i> , I have enclosed my resume for the Receptionist position.
1ST MAIN PARAGRAPH Describe your qualifications. Sell your skills and knowledge. Tell why you are interested in the company or college. Point out any related experience you have. Continue to describe qualifications. Highlight relevant training or classes that relate to the job or major for which you are applying.	I have two years of prior work experience as a receptionist with XYZ Telecommunications. My work has involved answering ten incoming lines and greeting customers in a fast-paced office setting. I have also been responsible for all incoming and outgoing mail, as well as purchase orders. I am very detail oriented and able to handle multiple tasks simultaneously. Administrative Assistant at Northern Maine Technical College. In completing this program, I have gained valuable experience in several computer programs including Microsoft Word, Excel, and Access. Additionally, my training has provided me with the skills to reach my goal of office management.
CLOSING PARAGRAPH Close by thanking the reader and requesting an interview.	I welcome the opportunity to discuss my qualifications with you in person. I can be reached at (207) 555-1234. Thank you for your time and consideration.
COMPLIMENTARY CLOSE	Sincerely,
SIGNATURE	(4 "Return"s or "Enter"s on Keyboard)
NAME	Joe Doe

SAMPLE COVER LETTER #1

5 Atkins Avenue
Northville, ME 04400
January 3, 2003

Ms. Christine Bailey
XYZ Law Offices
123 Main Street
Auburn, ME 04210

Dear Ms. Bailey:

This letter is in reference to the paralegal position that was listed through Central Maine Technical College's Career Center. I am familiar with XYZ Law Office's recent growth and I am confident that my skills and qualifications will benefit your company.

I am eager to utilize my research and writing skills while working as a paralegal. My academic courses at CMTC have required many research papers and projects. I have a tremendous capacity to undertake research and report findings in clear and concise fashion.

I work well under the pressure of deadlines, and I have been involved in many group projects. My work experiences have taught me that one must be prepared to work beyond the typical forty-hour week to achieve success. I am willing and able to do so for XYZ Law Offices.

Your consideration of my credentials would be greatly appreciated. I will call you next week to confirm your receipt of this letter and enclosed resume. Please feel free to contact me if you require additional information to support my candidacy.

Sincerely,

Signature

SAMPLE COVER LETTER #2

60 Treeline Drive
Springfield, ME 04040
(207) 555-9335
June 23, 2002

Ms. Jean Quimby
Personnel Manager
Campbell's Soup
65 Cedar Grove Ave.
Bangor, ME 04222

Dear Ms. Quimby:

A mutual friend, Troy McClure, mentioned to me that you may soon be looking for an individual in your Customer Relations Department. Please consider this my application for a position at Campbell's Soup Limited. I have two years experience as an Administrative Assistant, working with senior staff in the Customer Relations department.

I am a well-organized, highly motivated individual who enjoys the challenges of working in a fast-paced office environment. I have strong communication and computer skills, including a working knowledge of Windows 98 and Microsoft Word as well as Microsoft Excel. I also have experience in dealing successfully with a variety of customers.

Enclosed is my resume for your consideration. I will call you in a week to further discuss this position and to arrange a time that we can discuss my resume in further detail. I can be reached at the above number day or evening. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely

Signature

Written or Typed Cover Letter

Use the cover letter information to write your professional cover letter in the blank space below or insert your typed professional cover letter here.

Write your cover letter for the career you selected in Part 1 of this project.

Dear Future Employer,

Cover Letter Rubric

	Unsatisfactory 2 pts	Developing 3 pts	Proficient 4 pts	Advanced 5 pts
Spelling/Grammar	<p>Unsatisfactory</p> <p>*Assignment is complete but has 7 or more spelling errors. Writing is poor and needs a strong rewrite.</p>	<p>Developing</p> <p>*Assignment is complete and has only 3 to 6 spelling errors. Writing is vague or unclear at times. Tense may have some issues.</p>	<p>Proficient</p> <p>*Assignment is complete and has only 1 to 2 spelling errors. Writing is clear, but the occasional unclear spot. Tense may be kept throughout. Some phrasing issues.</p>	<p>Advanced</p> <p>*Assignment is complete and without any spelling errors. Writing is clear and understandable. Tense is kept throughout and good phrasing is used.</p>
Career Objective/1st Paragraph Identify job location and interest	<p>Unsatisfactory</p> <p>Missing first paragraph.</p>	<p>Developing</p> <p>Two of three things missing.</p>	<p>Proficient</p> <p>One of three things is missing.</p>	<p>Advanced</p> <p>Identifies job, location, and interest.</p>
Body Describes your qualification/skills for the job	<p>Unsatisfactory</p> <p>Content paragraphs are just a regurgitation of the resume or is missing.</p>	<p>Developing</p> <p>Content paragraphs are vague and mainly reference ideas already listed in resume with no explanation.</p>	<p>Proficient</p> <p>Content paragraphs describe how applicant would be qualified, but could be more in depth.</p>	<p>Advanced</p> <p>Content paragraphs fully describe how applicant would be qualified for the job. Not too much repeating of information from resume.</p>
Closing Statement Request for interview How to contact you? Signature line	<p>Unsatisfactory</p> <p>Closing is poor and no contact to your contact information is present.</p>	<p>Developing</p> <p>Closing is fairly strong, and reference to your contact is weaker.</p>	<p>Proficient</p> <p>Closing is mostly clear and refers to your personal contact information, but could be stronger.</p>	<p>Advanced</p> <p>Closing is clear and references your personal contact information as well a formal thanks.</p>

Part Four: Cover Letter

Graded by: _____

Grade: _____ / 20pts

Part Five: Interview Preparation



Complete the following for this section:

- ✓ Read *Interview Questions and How to Answer Them* (p.35)
- ✓ Answer *Common Interview Questions* (pp. 36 – 37)

Interview Questions and How to Answer Them

- Tell us about yourself.
 - Tell them how long you have lived in the area (if it has been several years or why you have recently moved here).
 - Quickly summarize your job skills or volunteer experiences.
- What did/do you like best about school?
 - Tell them you especially liked working on team projects, any time you were in charge of a project, or organized any activity.
 - If you are/were in a CTE class share some of the skills and abilities you obtained through that opportunity.
- Why are you leaving your current job?
 - I am looking to increase my responsibilities.
 - With this economy I needed more hours than they were able to supply.
 - Business is closing.
- Why do you want to work for us?
 - I believe my skills and abilities are a good match. (Be prepared to explain why)
 - I have enjoyed my past experience with this company as a customer, client etc.
 - It would fit with my long-range career goals.
- Have you ever been asked to leave a position?
 - My position changed and my available hours no longer matched those of the position
 - If other reasons- try and keep it positive
- Why should we hire you?
 - I am reliable and will work hard. If you hire me, you will get someone who is not afraid to learn and is willing to go the extra mile.
- Tell me about your weaknesses.
 - Probably my greatest weakness is my inexperience, but I am a quick learner, I want to work and you can teach me how you would like the job done.
- What are your strengths?
 - If you have any strengths that fit the job, share those, if not...
 - Tell them you want to work, to learn and do the best possible job you can.
- Tell us about a problem you had and how you solved it
 - Think of a situation at school, on a team, on the job and how you handled it. Talk about communication, getting help from someone else, etc.

Questions to Ask the Interviewer

- Describe your ideal employee.
- How does an employee succeed on your team?
- What are some of the objectives you would like to see accomplished in this job?

Common Interview Questions

1. What do/did you like best about school?

2. Why do you want to work in this field?

3. Why should we hire you?

4. What are your strengths?

5. Tell me about your weaknesses.

6. Tell us about a problem you had and how you solved it.

Career Planning Project Grade Sheet

Student Name: _____

ID: _____

Campus: _____

Point Value	Activity	Complete
5 pts	Hard Vs Soft Skills Activity (p. 3)	Y / N
5 pts	Career Selection (p. 4)	Y / N
10 pts	Resume Writing Template (p. 7 – 12)	Y / N
10 pts	Elevator Pitch Thinking Prompts (p. 23 – 24)	Y / N
10pts	Common Interview Questions (p.36 – 37)	Y / N
Point Value	Rubrics	
/20pts	Resume Writing (p. 17)	
/20pts	Elevator Pitch (p. 26)	
/20pts	Cover Letter (p. 33)	
/100pts	Total	

Graded By (print): _____

Graded By (signature): _____