

Resumes, Cover Letters, & Interviews

Learn how to create a perfect resume and cover letter and killer secrets for acing your next interview.

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Career Counselor

University of Delaware Career Center



RESUMES:

- A summary of your professional skills, abilities, and accomplishments submitted with an application
- The purpose is to get you to the interview stage

They represent you when you are not in the room to do it yourself.



The Best Resume is one that...

- Showcases your *achievements, experiences* and *strengths*.
- Relates to a *specific position*.
- Highlights *relevant experiences*.
- Is formatted *correctly, conservatively*, and *consistently*.



This means the “best resume” for you may (and should) not look the same as someone else’s.



Before you get started, keep in mind:

- Time and effort are two components of a good resume
- Critically think about ALL of your experiences
 - You often have more experience than you think!
- Experience does not have to equal just paid positions!
 - Think: internships, volunteer, job shadow, organizations, memberships, etc.
- Target your resume – Know your audience



Anatomy of a Resume

1. **Heading:** Name and Contact Information (email, phone, linkedin, professional website)
2. **Education**
3. **Targeted/Relevant Experience**
 - Jobs, internships, volunteer, shadowing
4. **Additional Experience**
 - Part-time jobs, unrelated work experience, activities
5. **Skills**
 - Computer, Technical, Foreign Languages

FIRST YEAR RESUME SAMPLE

First Year Student
(302) 831-2392, firstyearstudent@udel.edu
linkedin.com/in/firstyearstudent

EDUCATION:

University of Delaware Bachelor of Arts, History	Newark, DE May 20XX
Harrilton High School High School Diploma	Rosemont, PA May 20XX

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE:

University of Delaware, Resident Student Association Building Governor, George Reed Hall	Newark, DE August 20XX – Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Represent a group of approximately 500 first-year students and plan programs for residents.• Attend monthly Resident Student Association meetings to advocate on the behalf of first-year students.	
Harrilton High School Senior Class President	Rosemont, PA August 20XX – May 20XX
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Led a group of 1,000+ high school peers in various activities spanning from prom preparation to community service.• Served as the liaison between the general student body and faculty, staff and administrators.	

EXPERIENCE:

Belmont Hills Swimming Pool Lifeguard	Bala Cynwyd, PA May 20XX – August 20XX
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensured the safety and security of up to 150 community members at a time by conducting pool surveillance and enforcing aquatic center rules.• Facilitated swimming lessons for 2 year-olds, providing breath instruction and showing them how to have fun with water.• Certified in CPR/AED and First Aid.	
Macaroni Grill Server	Philadelphia, PA June 20XX – August 20XX
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Generate positive feedback from customers, resulting in favorable review by management.• Diffuse stressful situations by prioritizing customer needs in fast-paced, busy work environment.• Communicate with managers, cooks, other servers to ensure smooth operations during busy shifts.	

SKILLS:

Computer: Adobe Creative Suite, Microsoft Office (Excel, Word and PowerPoint), Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn)

Language: Spanish (Conversant)

Writing About Your Experience – Use Bullets

- **Bullets** allow you to provide information and **evidence** about the **skills** and **abilities** you have brought to a current/previous role
- Bullets are not sentences in the traditional sense, but rather statements that start with ACTION VERBS
 - Hint: Ask yourself, “What did I do?”, “Why?”, “How?”, “What was the result?”
 - Quantifiable Information:
 - e.g. Organize X school event- how many people attended?



Resume Action Verbs

Alphabetic List of Action Verbs			
Achieved	Adapted	Addressed	Administered
Advised	Analyzed	Arranged	Assembled
Assessed	Assisted	Attained	Audited
Budgeted	Calculated	Classified	Coached
Collected	Communicated	Compiled	Composed
Computed	Conducted	Consolidated	Constructed
Consulted	Coordinated	Counseled	Created
Critiqued	Defined	Designed	Detected
Determined	Devised	Diagnosed	Directed
Discovered	Displayed	Earned	Edited
Eliminated	Enforced	Established	Estimated
Evaluated	Examined	Expanded	Explained
Experimented	Financed	Formulated	Gathered
Generated	Grossed	Guided	Handled
Hypothesized	Identified	Illustrated	Implemented
Improved	Increased	Influenced	Initiated
Inspected	Installed	Instituted	Instructed
Interpreted	Interviewed	Invented	Investigated
Lectured	Managed	Marketed	Mediated
Modeled	Monitored	Motivated	Negotiated
Obtained	Operated	Ordered	Organized
Oversaw	Performed	Persuaded	Photographed
Planned	Prepared	Presented	Printed
Processed	Produced	Projected	Promoted
Proofread	Provided	Publicized	Purchased
Received	Recommended	Reconciled	Recorded
Recruited	Reduced	Referred	Refined
Rehabilitated	Repaired	Reported	Represented
Researched	Resolved	Responded	Restored
Retrieved	Reviewed	Scheduled	Selected
Solved	Sorted	Studied	Summarized
Supervised	Supplied	Surveyed	Tested
Trained	Transcribed	Translated	Traveled
Tutored	Upgraded	Utilized	Wrote



Resume Bullet Mad Libs

- **Provided administrative support to** (insert company description) **that provides services to** (insert data, number of clients) **on a daily basis.**
- **Assisted with confidential client registration** (insert database used and the number of clients you registered).
- **Conducted online research** (insert what you researched) **and** (insert what you did with the research: presented? Filed?).
- **Provided customer service for** (insert description of company, store, restaurant) **including** (list products and/or services the company sells/provides).
- **Started as** (insert former position), promoted to (insert current position) **because of** (insert explanation why you were promoted).
- **Provide customer service for** (insert number) seat, (insert restaurant style: casual? fine dining?) restaurant, specializing in (insert restaurant specialty: Seafood? Italian cuisine? American faire?).
- **Conducted** (insert date) tours per (insert frequency; daily, weekly) for (who did you conduct the tours for?) at (insert where you conducted the tours, give data to quantify volume).
- **Provided assistance to** (insert who you were assisting) in (insert where you are providing assistance and details about the company/department).
- **Provided sales support to** (insert explanation of your company) **with up to** (give dollar data) in sales per (insert frequency).
- **Supervised daily operations for** (insert company description) serving (insert data) customers per (insert frequency).
- **Reconciled deposits worth** (insert monetary amount) and handled (insert other responsibilities of your job and give details).
- **Supervised** (insert who you supervised) and trained (insert who you trained, add data) on (insert details about you doing the training).
- **Coordinated** (insert details about what you coordinated) for a (insert company information; explain the company, and either products/services or its clientele).
- **Conducted** (insert activity) and (insert second activity that piggybacks off the first one).



Anatomy of a Great Action Statement

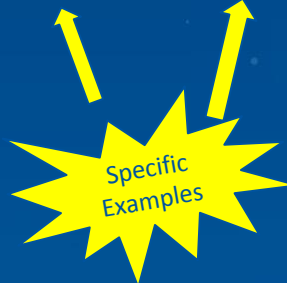
What did you do?

Promoted the organization...



How did you do it?

...on social media platforms
(ex. Facebook, Instagram)...



Why did you do it?

...to increase event attendance by 50%.



Resume Tips

- Create a master resume that lists all of your experiences and update it regularly. When applying for a position, tailor this document accordingly.
- Update and modify the format and content of your resume often
- The resume that you show to others or use to apply for jobs should be the one that highlights what you think are the most relevant experiences for the types of positions you are seeking.



Stay away from:

- Objectives
- Specific address in heading (City, State is fine)
- Pictures
- Personal opinions & pronouns
- Social security number, religion, political preference, salaries, or marital status
- “References available upon request” nor a list of actual references
- Exaggerations
- Templates found on the internet
- Soft skills (friendly, outgoing, hardworking, organized, etc.)
- Typos (big no no!)
- More than one page
- Color (unless pursuing a creative field and still looks professional)



Resources

Resume Samples & Templates

<https://www.udel.edu/students/career-services-center/students/resume/>

Action Verbs

<https://www.udel.edu/content/dam/udelImages/Career%20Services/Pdfs/actionverbs.pdf>

Resume Bullet Writing

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1f-TYJ9fp0DWgqZJWK6u1jvpIE8SCK-ozAfnWLciCd64/edit>



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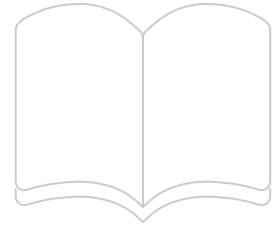
Cover Letters

What is a cover letter?

“Cover letters show your interest in a position and showcase your writing abilities. They link your resume and background to the position, showcasing your knowledge of the employer and highlighting relevant skills.”

Best Practices

- Research the employers
- Find name of hiring manager or supervisor of position, if possible
- Identify key skills desired in posting
- Proofread!
- Avoid starting all sentences with “I”
- Same font as resume
- Stay positive! Don’t say “I don’t have much experience, but...” Stick to your strengths.



Customize

- **Who you're writing to**
- **The exact position and company**
- **Why you're interested in this specific opportunity**
- **How you will be an asset to this specific position/company**



Sections

- Header
- First paragraph
- Middle paragraphs
- Closing paragraph
- Signature



First Paragraph

Dear Hiring Manager/Recruiting Team/HR Manager, etc.

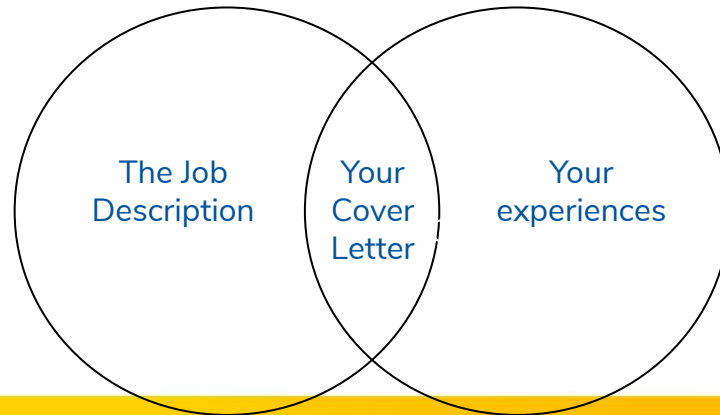
~~To Whom It May Concern~~

- Why are you interested in this position & employer?
- What in the position description got you excited for this opportunity?
- Grab the reader's attention
- Mention if someone referred you



Middle Paragraphs (1-2)

- Think: What makes you perfect for this position?
- Decide on 2-3 experience that connect knowledge, skills, and accomplishments directly to the position.. Show how you are a good fit.



Closing Paragraph

- Can you summarize your main points in one sentence?
- Final statement of interest.
- Thank the employer for their time.
- Reiterate ways to contact you.



Your Heading

Today's Date

Contact Name (include Mr., Ms. or Dr.)

Title

Company/Organization Name

Street Address or P.O. Box

City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. Last Name:

First Paragraph - The first paragraph should include information regarding why you are writing. Mention the position for which you are applying and how/where you learned of this opportunity. If someone referred you, include his/her name.

Middle Paragraph - Explain why you are interested in this position or this employer. You need to describe what you have to offer the employer, NOT why this position would be a good opportunity for you. Make strong connections between your abilities and their needs. Mention specifically how your skills and experience match the job. Do not simply repeat information in your resume, but expand on your qualifications which make you a good fit for the employer's needs. The goal is to convince the reader that they should consider you for an interview.

Final Paragraph - Include information on how/when you will follow-up (e.g., phone call in one week). State that you will be happy to provide additional information if needed. Conclude your cover letter by thanking the employer for considering you for the position.

Sincerely,
(handwritten signature)
Your name typed



Your Name

1 South Main Street, Newark, DE 19702 | 555-555-5555 | yourname@udel.edu
[linkedin.com/in/yourname](https://www.linkedin.com/in/yourname)

March 2, 20XX

The American Beverage Association
1210 I Street NW, Suite 300W
Washington, D.C., 20005

Dear Internship Coordinator:

I am applying for the Government Relations American Beverage Association Summer Internship advertised on the Handshake posting system at the University of Delaware. With my interests in government, law, and politics, I am enthusiastic about this opportunity to lend my administrative, organizational and leadership skills to support a national trade association.

I am attracted to the ABA because the association represents such a large number of workers who can be positively impacted and protected by legislation. Through my work in Senator Hagan's and Senator Gillibrand's offices, I gained insight into the legislative process and observed the important role trade associations play in guiding government. I am excited about and capable of researching political issues impacting the beverage industry, attending Congressional hearings, drafting letters, and providing other assistance to the government relations team. This summer opportunity would offer additional exposure to the legislative process and allow me to contribute to your team as well as to our nation's politics.

In addition to the administrative experience gained through my internships, I would bring strong organizational and leadership skills honed through my University of Delaware activities to this position. As President of the Multicultural Greek Congress, I have worked to hone my decision-making and interpersonal communication. Through this position, I have assumed more responsibility, learned time management, enhanced my communication skills, and grown as a team player. As a participant in the Blue Hen Leadership Program, I have learned successful leadership traits from University of Delaware staff, other student leaders, and community members. I have also polished my research and analytical capabilities through my experiences conducting undergraduate research through the Department of Political Science, and through my intensive liberal arts coursework at the University of Delaware. I am a hardworking, motivated student, and would love the opportunity to lend my skills to the ABA this summer.

Attached is my résumé, which illustrates my qualifications for this position. I am eager to hear from you and discuss how I could contribute to the ABA team. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Name

<https://www.udel.edu/students/career-center/students/resume>

Preparing for Varying Interviews

First Thoughts

- **Research** and **preparation** are the keys to successful interviewing
- Knowing how you'll answer **common questions**, and **practicing** being comfortable with them, will get you halfway through most interviews
- Interviews are **two sided**- both parties are interviewing
- Interviews show your **competence** with subject matter required for the position and your **fit** with the company – be yourself

Virtual Interview Considerations

Virtual Considerations

Virtual Types

- Live video
- Live phone
- Recorded video



Live Video

- Look into the camera (pretend it's the eyes of the interviewer) when answering
- Clear, blank background if possible, with good posture
- Don't panic with tech issues- everyone has them and your perseverance will be an asset
- Look for non-verbal cues
- Notes are still ok!
- Have water ready

Recorded Video

- Practice your answer before pressing record if it's an option
- Without feedback, give more detail than normal
- Smile through the silence
- Feel free to still take breaks
- Notes are still ok!

Video Backgrounds

- Avoid distracting background wall art
- Use your computer's photo booth app (or Zoom settings) to test your lighting- make sure it gives you a clear, bright image
- Try to keep the camera at eye level (avoid laps- use books if needed!)
- Avoid wearing the same color as your background
- Avoid virtual backgrounds if possible (if there is a clear space you can use) or use just a blank, solid color if needed

Live Phone

- Prepare a quiet space for 15 minutes before and after
- Smile while talking
- Take notes even more than you normally would - summarize each question
- Use a checklist of stories, skills, and examples if you would find it helpful
- You WILL talk over each other- don't sweat it!

Remember to:



It sets the tone for your brain!

Tips for Preparing Your Answers

Interview Question Types

- General Questions
 - Tell me about yourself
 - Strengths/Weaknesses
- Behavioral Questions
 - Tell me about a time...
 - What's an example of...
 - STAR
- Organizational Interest Questions
 - Why here? What do you know/like about us?
 - What specific area would you....
- Reasons for Hire Questions
 - What accomplishments....
 - How are you prepared for...

GREAT
QUESTION!

The STAR Method

Situation: Describe a specific event or situation, not a generalized description of what you have done in the past. This situation can be from a previous job, from a volunteer experience, or any relevant event.

Task: What goal were you working toward?

Action: Describe the actions you took to address the situation and keep the focus on YOU. What specific steps did you take and what was your particular contribution? Use “I,” not “we” when describing actions.

Result: Describe the outcome of your actions and don't be shy about taking credit for your behavior. How did the event end? What did you accomplish? What did you learn? Provide multiple positive results.

STAR Method Example

Situation: My student organization had a speaker fall through for a major event we had coming up, and we weren't going to have time to find a new one.

Task: As one of the event planners, I needed to think quickly to still make the event a success.

Action: After collaborating with my team to problem solve, we realized that there was a teacher who had a similar expertise to our former speaker. I asked the teacher if they would be able to fill in for us, explaining the situation and working to convince them to lend their time to our event.

Result: The teacher agreed to help and I worked with them to get what they needed to fill in at the event. Even though the speaker was different, students still really enjoyed and learned from the event. I understood the value of teamwork in problem solving after this, and learned to trust myself in influencing stakeholders.

“Tell me about yourself”

30 second elevator pitch

Quick summary of path up to now

Quick why for field and position (or university)

Option to include 2-3 personal details (hobbies, interests, etc.)

“What are your top strengths/weaknesses?”

Start with strengths

Be specific- use a word from a thesaurus not just a general skills

Be specific to the field and to how you'll work with people

DO NOT IGNORE THE WEAKNESSES

Provide 1-2, how they affect you, and how you are working on them

Be learning oriented and explain your coping plan

Strengths/Weaknesses

- Organization skills
- Collaboration
- Time management
- Committed to tasks
- Good with people
- An influencer
- Autonomous work
- Accountability
- Generating ideas
- Problem solving
- Creativity
- Difficulty prioritizing
- Need clear instructions
- Communicating needs
- Organization skills
- Advocating
- Sales
- Public speaking
- Future orientation
- Budgeting or finance
- Specific technologies

General Tips for Interviewing

Concise, Complete, Confident (through practice)

- **Concise-** answer the root of a question quickly and spend remaining time proving that answer
- **Complete-** Remember that interviewers want detail, even if it feels like forever- give it 30 more seconds
- Draw from all different types of experiences- even outside of formal internships/jobs
- Remember to explain organizations, events, and jargon
- **Confident-** Practice makes perfect in this area of career development

Questions?

Thank you!