

# writing resumes

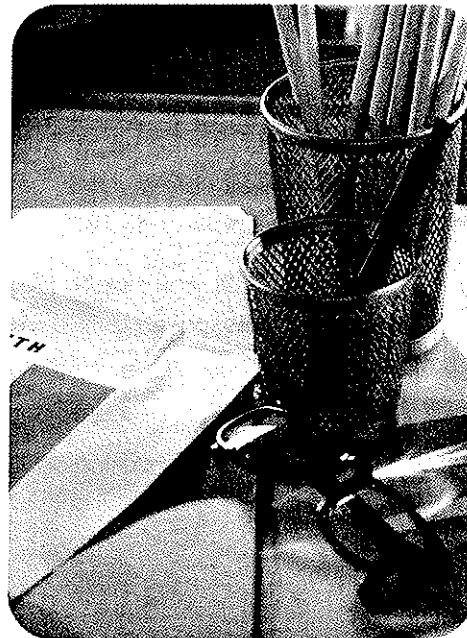
Your resume is your face to the professional world. It is your first impression and your best chance to make a second impression. It is very important that you put every effort into making the best resume you can; crisp, clean and to the point. You will need a resume whether you are applying for an internship or for a paid, professional job.

There are two basic resume formats, and most people actually use a combination of both. These are:

- **Chronological.** The chronological resume presents your job history and education by date, in reverse order with the most recent job and highest degree or diploma on top.
- **Functional.** The functional resume presents a summary of your qualifications first, followed by relevant experience, education and job history. The functional resume typically is used by a person with little work experience, as it downplays emphasis on jobs and dates worked.
- **Combination.** Most resumes actually use a combination of both formats: they start with an objective and summary of qualifications, followed by relevant work and education experience (or education and work experience if the former is more impressive).

## PARTS TO A RESUME

1. A resume starts with your name and most current contact information as a **heading**. Center the heading at the top of the page, and use a larger, darker font than you choose for the rest of the resume. Also, this might just be a good time to make a new email address – [judithnbrown@yahoo.com](mailto:judithnbrown@yahoo.com) is much more appropriate in the business world than [2hot4U@yahoo.com](mailto:2hot4U@yahoo.com)!



2. Next, many resumes list an **objective**. This can be as simple as "Seeking a permanent position as bookkeeper in an established physician's office," or more specifically tailored to a particular job: "Seeking to use my skills as a writer, editor and proofreader to further the goals of a non-profit organization through public outreach in the form of a national newsletter." With your own computer and printer (or even just access to a school computer lab), consider your resume a fluid document. You can change the objective for every job you apply for. Sharpen your words – if, for example, an interviewer uses an eloquent turn of phrase, change your objective to include it. The objective is the first thing a prospective employer reads and can pique his interest or turn her "off" in just one sentence. One aspiring office manager wrote as her objective, "Seeking to establish order out of chaos in an office that needs it." She couldn't understand why she didn't get any calls – but nobody wants to be told their office is a pigsty!
3. If you are a student with little job experience, education comes next. If you have worked at more and more responsible jobs since the age of 16, you might want to put employment history next.

**Education** – list the name(s) of your school(s), including high school if you went to a special school for the performing arts, technology, foreign language etc. Include the degree obtained and the date, along with your major and anything special such as, "Junior Year in Beijing, China," or "Graduated Magna Cum Laude in three years."

**Employment History or Experience** – list your jobs with the most recent one first, including company name, start and termination dates, title, and accomplishments. Note that "accomplishments" is different from "duties." It might be your duty to file, but your accomplishment was, "Created and maintained a filing system and cross-referencing index for 500+ clients and jobs."
4. Now come your particular skills. You can include categories such as **computer and technical expertise, languages spoken, awards received, professional memberships, volunteerism**, or whatever category you feel you SHINE in. Highlight your strengths!
5. Finally, most resumes end with the phrase "**References available upon request.**" Do not put names and contact information on the page, but be prepared to give them when asked.

### REMEMBER...

- Your resume should be short and to the point.
- The objective should capture the attention of the reader.
- Be positive. Use active verbs such as created, designed, managed, monitored.
- It may be effective to use bullets to separate events or activities, or to list accomplishments under a particular job.
- Spell-check and proofread your resume not once but three times. A spelling or grammatical error shows unforgivable carelessness in a day when such things are so easily caught and corrected on a computer. (oops! see how awful that looks?)
- Use a crisp, clean font absolutely no smaller than 10 point, bearing in mind that your potential boss might be over the age of 40 and unable to read the miniscule curly-cue writing you like for your instant messaging. Print your final copies in black ink on white bond paper (the good stuff – not the cheapest recycled photocopy paper).



Once you've finished, take your resume to your school's career center or writing lab and have it read and if necessary revised by an experienced writer. "Fresh eyes" can be very beneficial before you send your resume, along with your hopes and ambitions, out into the wide wide world.

**Carol Long**  
**1900 22nd Street North**  
**Arlington, VA 22207**  
**703-534-9643**  
**cclong@cox.net**

**PROFESSIONAL SKILLS**

*Office Management:* Proficient in all office skills including *Microsoft Office* (*Word, Excel, Access, Publisher, Powerpoint*); mailing list compilation and maintenance; legislative tracking; experience with payroll, accounting and taxation

*Editorial:* Writing, editing, proofreading and indexing for newsletters, journals and books; writing program proposals; research in such fields as history, education and environmental issues; experience with design and layout

**EXPERIENCE**

- 10/04-present    **Action on Smoking and Health**  
Legal Secretary to the Legislative Liaison
- 1/02-9/04        **The American Austrian Foundation, Inc.**  
Assistant to the Executive Director
- 1/01-10/01      **George Mason University; History Department**  
Lead Secretary; managed a team of three
- 2/97-11/01      **The American University**  
Editorial Assistant at The Frederick Law Olmsted Papers
- 1/95-6/97        **The Catholic University of America;**  
**Department of Economics**  
Secretary

**EDUCATION**

The Catholic University of America  
B.A. cum laude in History (Medieval), 1997

***References available upon request***

## THE COVER LETTER

Your resume showcases your skills and abilities along with your educational and employment history; it is a general document that can be used for any application. The cover letter discusses one specific job opportunity and demonstrates why you are the best candidate for that particular position.

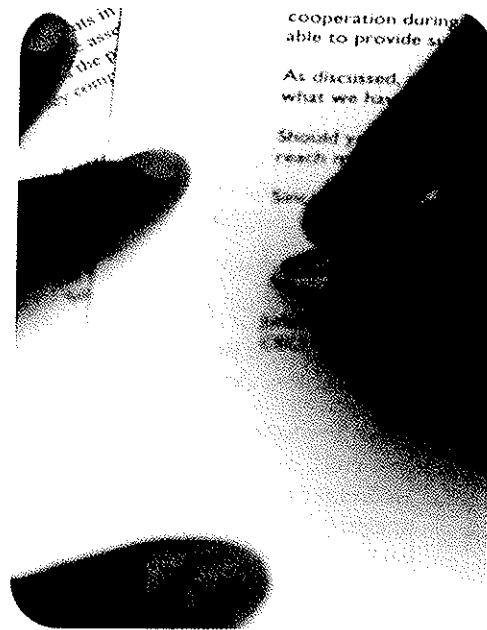
The cover letter should be on personal stationery, perhaps using the same heading as your resume. It should be brief; three or four paragraphs on one page at the most. If at all possible, address the letter to an individual rather than to "Dear Sir or Madam." If you do not have a contact name, look up the company on their website – search the "about us" pages to find the name of their Human Resources Department Head.

The first paragraph of the letter expresses your interest in the job and mentions where you heard about it. The second paragraph summarizes your skills, qualifications and any major accomplishments that are relevant to the advertised job. It is your chance to explain why you are the most uniquely qualified applicant for the job. The last paragraph states when you will be available for work and how you can be reached. It mentions the fact that your resume is attached and offers to provide more information or references if requested. Finally, it indicates that you hope to hear back soon with the date and time of an in-person or telephone interview.

Avoid any discussion of salary in your cover letter, even if the advertisement specifically asked for it. If the advertisement said that no application will be considered without a salary history, then give a general salary range and state clearly that your salary requirements are flexible.

### *Finally, as with your resume –*

- Spell-check and proofread your letter
- Show it to somebody you trust to be honest and critical
- Use a traditional font such as Times New Roman or Arial 12 point
- Print the final copy on crisp white paper



**Carol Long**  
**1900 22nd Street North**  
**Arlington, VA 22207**  
**703-534-9643**  
**celong@cox.net**

Mr. Paul Stanton  
Stanton Research Services, Inc.  
2307 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 720  
Arlington, VA 22209

Dear Mr. Stanton,

I am applying for the position of office manager, which was advertised August 4 in *The Washington Post*. The position seems to fit very well with my education, experience, and career interests.

According to the advertisement, your position requires excellent communication skills, computer literacy, and a college degree. I have a B.A. degree in Medieval History from The Catholic University of America. As you can imagine, my course load required a lot of research, and so I feel that my background fits nicely with your company's business. I also have several years' experience working in offices. I understand the position requires a candidate who is team- and detail-oriented, works well under pressure, and is able to deal with people in departments throughout the firm. Based on the enclosed resume, you will see that I possess these skills in abundance.

My background and goals seem to match your requirements well. I am confident that I can perform the job effectively, and I am excited about the idea of working for a research company.

If you would like to schedule an interview or otherwise discuss my interest in this position, please call me at 703-534-9643. I will be available at your convenience.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Carol Long*

Carol Long

Encl: resume