

# Getting the Job

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Resumes  
and  
Cover Letters

# Resume or CV?

## What's the difference?

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- A resume is a one or two page summary of your skills, experience and education.
- A resume is brief and concise -- no more than two pages.
- A *Curriculum Vitae* is a longer (at least two pages) and more detailed synopsis.
- A *Curriculum Vitae* includes a summary of your educational and academic backgrounds as well as teaching and research experience, publications, presentations, awards, honors, affiliations and other details.

# Resume vs. CV

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- In Europe, the Middle East, Africa, or Asia, employers may expect to receive a curriculum vitae.
- In the United States, a resume is preferred for most positions, and a *curriculum vitae* is used primarily when applying for academic, education, scientific or research positions. It is also applicable when applying for fellowships or grants.

# Before You Begin...

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- Do some online research on the organization you're applying to
- Find out what their mission statement is, what their goals are, and the needs of the company
- Assemble your resume and cover letter with the organization's needs in mind, and think about *how you can be an asset to them*
- This level of awareness about the agency, and consideration of its needs, will be impressive to the person who receives your resume & letter

# Your resume should...

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- Act as an advertisement for YOU.
- Answer the question, "Why should I hire you?" or at least "Why should I interview you?"
- Communicate who you are and what you want to do.
- Emphasize your strengths, relevant skills and relevant experience.
- Give the employer a desire to meet you.

# The Basics

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- Keep the format simple, classic
  - No pictures, graphics, kittens, bunnies, colored paper, purple ink, etc.
- Use a basic 12 pt font (times, arial, new roman)
- Use 1" margins
- Include all of your contact information
- Proofread for spelling, punctuation and grammar errors
- Prioritize content
- Customize content

# Order of Information

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- Name and contact information
  - Get and use a professional email address, NOT [bunnygurlluv@yahoo.com](mailto:bunnygurlluv@yahoo.com), [surferdude420@gmail.com](mailto:surferdude420@gmail.com)
  - No one will take you seriously with that address
- Objective (customize)
- Relevant education and training (dates optional)
- Relevant job experience
- Relevant publications and presentations
- Relevant student and professional memberships
- Honors and awards
- References (optional)

# Prioritize and Customize Content

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- Prioritize: place most relevant content at the top, less relevant further down
- Omit irrelevant content
  - Or list it without detail
- Emphasize and expound relevant experience or education
- Make alterations to your resume for each job you apply for -- do not send out one generic resume for every job



# Examples

- See resume examples posted
- Note differences:

Weak	Strong
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ No objective listed</li><li>■ Jobs listed are not relevant to job sought</li><li>■ Candidate appears to have no relevant experience</li><li>■ References are available on request, but this requires the employer to request them</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Specific objective that emphasizes what the candidate can do for the employer</li><li>■ Education and skills are emphasized and expanded (so they seem like experience)</li><li>■ Irrelevant experience is listed but reduced, de-emphasized, and moved to the bottom</li><li>■ References with email are provided</li></ul>

# Cover Letters

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- The employer already knows you want the job
  - So do not talk about how great your life would be if you got the job
  - No one ever got the job simply because they *really, really wanted* it
- What the employer doesn't know is why s/he should give YOU the job

# Cover Letters

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- Most people think they need to make themselves sound *great* in a cover letter
  - This is not true
  - It's very difficult
  - And, if you do it, you sound ARROGANT
- All you really need to do is make yourself sound like *the right person* for the job
  - This is much easier, particularly if you *are* the right person for the job, and it makes you sound CONFIDENT
- FYI... you don't have to get the job with your cover letter, just convince the employer that it's in his/her best interest to seriously consider you as a candidate and want to interview you!

# How to begin

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- FIND OUT who the letter should be addressed to
  - Look online, make a phone call, whatever you have to do
- Use the person's correct title
- Use the person's last name (spelled correctly)
  - Dear Director Smith,
  - Dear Chairperson Jones,
  - Dear Dr. Jackson,
  - Dear Scholarship Committee Members,
- Never write: To Whom It May Concern
  - It will concern absolutely no one

# Introductory Paragraph

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- I am writing to introduce myself as a candidate for position of \_\_\_\_\_.
- Statement about how you know about this job opening
  - If you can drop a name, do it
- Compliment the organization to which you're applying / briefly explain your desire to be associated with that organization

# Body

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- Briefly summarize your educational and professional qualifications for the job
  - Ex: My qualifications for this position include a bachelors degree in chemical forensic science, a year-long research internship in explosives and trace analysis, and my training in expert testimony.
- Mention the personal qualities you will bring to the position
  - Ex: Some personal strengths I would bring to this position include my energy and enthusiasm for forensic science, and my strong work ethic.
- Include a statement that makes it clear how/why you are a good fit for the job, and how/why the job is a good fit for you

# Closing Paragraph

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- I would like very much to discuss with you how I might contribute to (organization you're applying to) as a (job title).
- You can reach me by email or phone any time.
- Thank you for your consideration.
- Use formal closing
  - Kind regards,
  - Yours truly,
  - Respectfully yours,
  - Sincerely,

# Tips

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- **Read the instructions of the application**
- **Make sure your application is complete**
  - These two areas are where most people get cut without further consideration
    - An applicant who fails to read the directions or who turns in an incomplete application has clearly communicated that he/she is **LAZY** and/or **CARELESS**
- **Proofread for spelling, punctuation and grammar errors**
  - Mistakes in writing will cost you the interview
  - If you have deficiencies in your writing skills, get help with them now, while you are in college



# Tips

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- Your writing should be concise and organized
  - Omit unnecessary or repetitive words/phrases
  - Be professional
  - Do NOT say that you like wine, skiing, kittens and walks on the beach
  - Do NOT include your personal philosophies
  - Do NOT mention personal problems or hardships
  - DO emphasize your relevant skills and strengths
  - DO sound confident, not arrogant
  - Do choose your words carefully

# Tips

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- Customize every cover letter you send
  - Read the job announcement closely and carefully
  - Cut and paste it directly into your cover letter so that you can keep referring to it as you write (and delete it as you add content to your letter)
  - Use some of the same words in your letter that appear in the job announcement (but don't be obvious about this)
    - Desired psychological effect: hey, this person is exactly what we're looking for!

# Tips

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- Be positive and affirmative, not tentative
- Avoid phrases like “I feel...”, “I believe...”, etc.
  - Compare:
    - *I feel that I am a good communicator.*  
with
    - *I am a good communicator.*
  
    - *I believe in diversity and equal opportunity.*  
with
    - *I am committed to diversity and equal opportunity.*

# Tips: Use Power Words

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- Demonstrated
- Managed
- Knowledge of
- Extensive experience with
- Initiated
- Orchestrated
- Established
- Analyzed
- Proficient in
- Committed to
- Actively sought
- Succeeded in
- Instrumental in
- Delivered
- Assigned to
- Familiar with
- Coordinated
- Organized
- Trained in
- Supervised
- Formulated
- Presented
- Enthusiastically

# Tips

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- Don't *not* apply because
  - You think you won't get it
    - Just put together the best application you possibly can
    - Let *them* tell you you don't have the job; don't tell yourself that
  - You're applying for something else instead
    - You may not get that other job
    - Apply for everything you want and see what comes back to you -- *then* make the decision about which opportunity to take

# What if I have no experience?

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- GET SOME!
- Focus your extra curricular activities on career-related objectives
- Do an internship
- Join a professional organization
- Attend conferences
- Join career-related club at college
- Ask to assist a professor with research
- Take advantage of free online training and certification courses
  - [DNA.gov](http://DNA.gov). [NIJ.gov](http://NIJ.gov)

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- Current Forensic Science Internships
  - San Mateo Latent Fingerprint Lab
  - San Mateo Crime Lab
  - Santa Clara County Crime Lab
  - Alameda County Crime Lab
  - Santa Clara County Medical Examiner's Office
  - SF Firearms Unit
  - OPD Crime Lab
  - Walnut Creek ATF
  
- Make contact with an organization you want to intern with. You may be able to create your own internship!

# Resources

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- Professors
- Peers, Peer Mentors
- Forensic Science Informational Binder
  - MQH 527



# Where to Find a Job

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- Check federal, state, county and city official HR websites for job announcements
- Bookmark these sites and check them weekly
- Register on HR websites and get on mailing lists for the jobs you want
- For jobs in Forensic Science, search AAFS, IAI, CSDIAI, CAC, etc.
  - <http://aafs.org/current-job-openings>
  - <http://www.theiai.org/jobs/>
  - <http://www.csdiainet.com/employmentinfo.html>
  - <http://www.cacnews.org/jobs/jobs.shtml>

# Consider Graduate School

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- Expands your knowledge & improves your skills
- Makes you more competitive for jobs
- Makes good use of your time while you are unemployed and waiting for the job fairy to bring you a job...

# For More Information:

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- Mary Juno
  - MQH 527
- Dr. Steven Lee
  - MQH 509
- Jan Hageman
  - Writing Center, JS Dept