

The Resume and Cover Letter Workbook

A Step-By-Step Guide to
Creating and Formatting Your
Application Documents

Welcome to The Resume & Cover Letter Workbook! SLCC Career Services created this resource to help students work through creating and formatting their resumes and cover letters as painlessly as possible. Before we start, let's answer a few basic questions...

“What are these things?”

A **resume** is an application document designed to provide an employer with a general overview of your background and qualifications.

A **cover letter** is an application document that provides specific examples of the skills and experiences that make you qualified for the job to which you are applying.

“How do they work together?”

Your resume gives employers a broad view of your experiences, education, and background. It contains information that might not be directly related to the job you are seeking. Your cover letter gives employers details that are directly related to the job you are seeking. In other words, **the resume provides breadth and the cover letter provides depth**. This combination should give employers the information they need to invite you for an interview.

“How should I use this workbook?”

This workbook will provide you with the tools to write and properly format a resume and a cover letter. Each part gives a detailed description of what should be in that particular section, then an example of what it should look like. After, there is space for you to brainstorm your own content. Once you have written out your ideas, type them into a word processing program (like Word or Pages) following the sample format. It's okay if it's not perfect – these are just drafts!

While it can be helpful to have specific positions and industries in mind, you can definitely use this workbook to write generic versions of a resume and cover letter than can be revised when you are ready to apply to jobs. Either way, be sure to bring your drafts into a Career Services office so that an advisor can help you polish your work.

Ready? Let's start with resumes!

General Resume Format

A resume is typically one page long and has most (or all) of the following sections:

- Heading
- Career Summary or Objective Statement (optional)
- Education
- Work Experience
- Other Experience (optional)
- Skills
- Professional Certifications and/or Awards (optional)

It should look something like this:

Ima J. Obseker 4600 South Redwood Road, Salt Lake City, Utah 84123 Ima.j.obseker@email.com 801-555-0000 imajobseker.com	
Education	
Salt Lake Community College, Salt Lake City, Utah Associate of Science, Business, GPA: 3.4	Aug 2017 – Present
College of Southern Nevada, Las Vegas, Nevada Certificate, Graphic Design	Aug 2017 – May 2016
Work Experience	
AlphaZeta Branding, Salt Lake City, Utah Marketing Intern	Jul 2017 – Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Result/Accomplishment/Responsibility• Result/Accomplishment/Responsibility• Result/Accomplishment/Responsibility• Result/Accomplishment/Responsibility	
Salt Lake Community College, Salt Lake City, Utah Coordinator 1, Marketing	Aug 2016 – July 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Result/Accomplishment/Responsibility• Result/Accomplishment/Responsibility• Result/Accomplishment/Responsibility	
United Parcel Service (UPS), West Valley City, Utah Sorter (Seasonal)	Nov 2015 – Jan 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Result/Accomplishment/Responsibility• Result/Accomplishment/Responsibility	
Other Experience	
The Road Home, Midvale, Utah Volunteer – 20 hours/month	Oct 2015 – Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Result/Accomplishment/Responsibility/Task• Result/Accomplishment/Responsibility/Task	
Skills	
Microsoft Office: Word, PowerPoint, Excel (advanced); Google: Docs, Sheets, Forms (intermediate); Adobe Creative Suite: Photoshop, InDesign (advanced); Spanish (native speaker), Japanese (beginner)	
Awards	
Student Designer of the Year, College of Southern Nevada – May 2016	

In the next few pages, we will dig deeper into each section so that you are able to create high quality content for your own resume.

Heading

Content. The heading section is pretty straightforward: just your name, street address, email address, and telephone number (cell is okay). You can also add links to your LinkedIn profile, ePortfolio, and/or personal website to this section of your resume. Be sure they contain information that is relevant to the position you are applying for, and will not detract from your application. For example, you may want to disable links from your personal site(s) to your social media accounts if they are not professional.

Format. Your name should be in bold and in a font that is a few sizes larger than the text of the rest of your resume. It should be the most prominent item on the page. Underneath is where you put your contact information. Your street address should be on the next line, with your phone number, email address, and any relevant links on the line that follows.

Example.

Ima J. Obseeker

4600 South Redwood Road, Salt Lake City, Utah 84123
ima.j.obseeker@email.com | 801-555-0000 | imajobseeker.com

Your Turn.

Career Summary or Objective Statement (optional)

Content. Below the heading comes the optional “Career Summary” or “Objective Statement” section. These two things are different, so be sure to pick the right one for you. No matter which option you choose, you must update this section for each job.

A **career summary** provides employers with a brief overview of your previous professional experiences. You can use this section to highlight key skills and abilities that you have and would like to continue to use.

An **objective statement** provides employers with an idea of where you want your career to go and how this job can get you there. You can use this section to highlight key skills and abilities that you would like to gain more experience with using in a professional setting.

Format. This section should be no more than three lines. Use proper grammar and syntax, and be as concise as possible.

Examples.

Career Summary: I am an experienced manager with five years in the industry. I am looking to leverage my supervisory skill set into a position with more professional responsibilities.

Objective Statement: I am a business student with customer service experience who is seeking an entry-level position that will allow me to utilize my knowledge, skills, and education to contribute to your team.

Your Turn.

Education

Content. This section contains all of your post-high school education. It does not matter if the institution is out of the area (or even out of the country), you should still list it. If you have breaks in your academic journey, only list education you have obtained in the past ten years. For each school, write the name, location, dates of attendance, degree/certificate earned or in progress, and your GPA (if it is/was above a 3.0).

Format. List your institutions in reverse-chronological order, meaning the current or most recently attended school should be first. (This will probably be SLCC.)

Example.

Salt Lake Community College, Salt Lake City, Utah Associate of Science, Business, GPA: 3.4	Aug 2017 – Present
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College of Southern Nevada, Las Vegas, Nevada Certificate, Graphic Design	Aug 2015 – May 2016
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Your Turn.

Work Experience

Content. In this section, outline your professional experiences. Include the name and location of each company, the dates of your employment, and your job title. Be sure to think through everything you did in a particular job, and get as specific as possible. Focus on your results, accomplishments, and key responsibilities. Employers like to see what you actually did in a job, rather than a list of the things you were supposed to do.

Your work history should go back a maximum of ten years. It does not have to be related to what you are applying to do, since this part of your resume establishes your employment track record. If you have done things that are relevant, however, be sure to explain them in detail.

Format. As with education, list your employment experiences in reverse-chronological order. If you currently hold multiple jobs, the one you started most recently should be first. Put your position descriptions in bullet points since this format is much easier for employers to read.

Effective bullet points follow this basic formula:

action + description of action + result/accomplishment/responsibility related to action

By hitting on all of these points, you ensure that your bullet points are as information-rich as possible.

You do not need to have a uniform number of bullet points for each work experience. If you had more responsibilities in one job than others, or one position is more related to the position you are applying to than others, that is perfectly fine. Your position descriptions should reflect the depth of work that you performed. As long as you describe each job well enough for an employer to be able to see what you did, then you are on the right track.

Example.

AlphaZeta Branding, Salt Lake City, Utah
Marketing Intern

July 2017-Present

- Result/Accomplishment/Responsibility
- Result/Accomplishment/Responsibility
- Result/Accomplishment/Responsibility
- Result/Accomplishment/Responsibility

Salt Lake Community College, Salt Lake City, Utah

Aug 2016 – July 2017

Coordinator 1, Marketing

- Result/Accomplishment/Responsibility
- Result/Accomplishment/Responsibility
- Result/Accomplishment/Responsibility

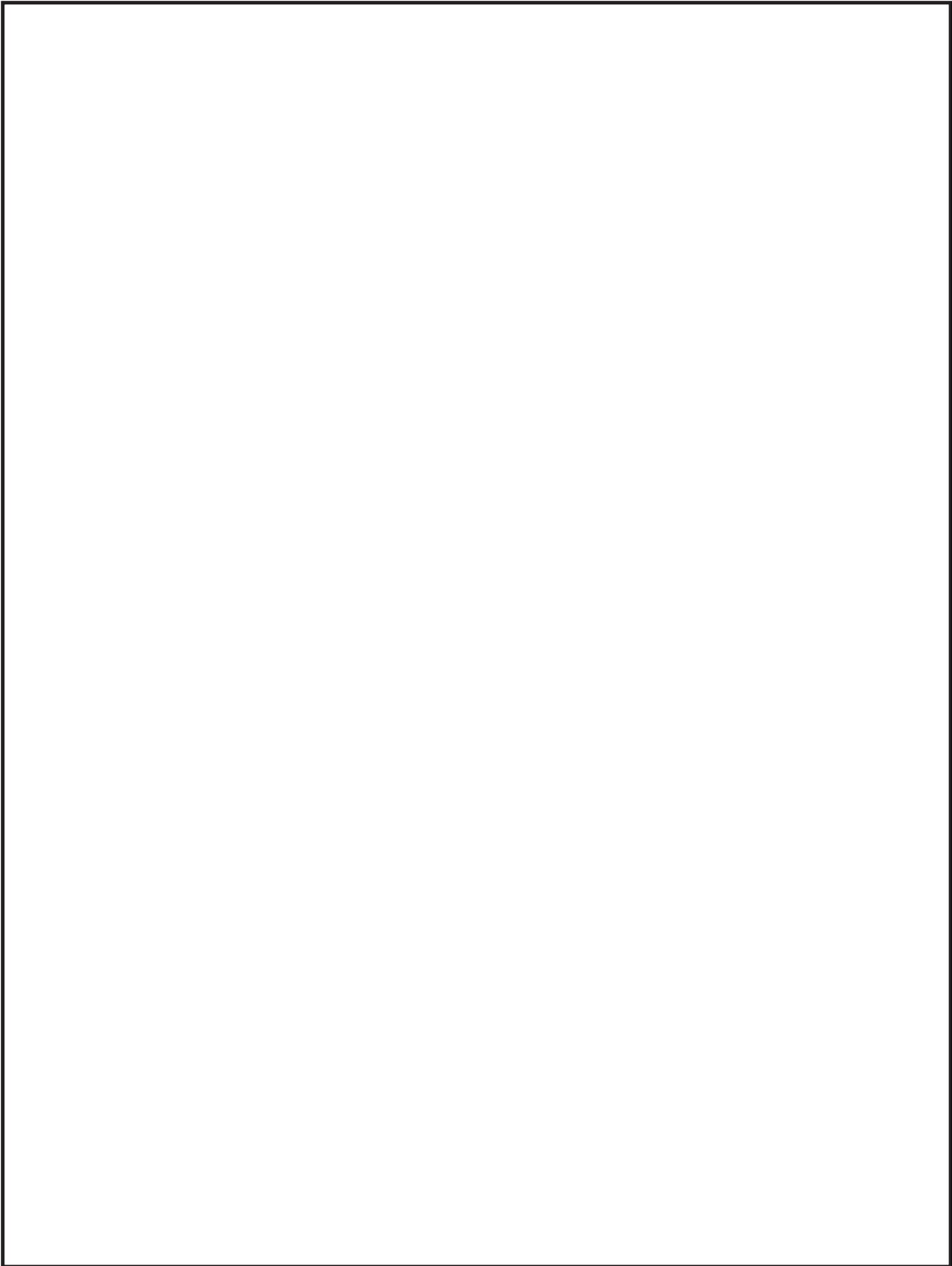
United Parcel Service (UPS), West Valley City, Utah

Dec 2015 – Jan 2016

Sorter (Seasonal)

- Result/Accomplishment/Responsibility
- Result/Accomplishment/Responsibility

Your Turn. (Continue to the next page if necessary. Use the list of action verbs on the next few pages if you get stuck!)



Action Verbs

Management & Leadership Skills

Administered
Analyzed
Appointed
Approved
Assigned
Attained
Authorized
Chaired
Consolidated
Contracted
Controlled
Converted
Delegated
Developed
Directed
Eliminated
Enforced
Enhanced
Established
Executed
Generated
Handled
Headed
Hired
Hosted
Improved
Incorporated
Increased
Initiated
Inspected
Instituted
Led
Managed
Merged
Motivated
Organized
Originated
Overhauled
Oversaw
Planned
Presided
Prioritized
Produced
Recommended
Reorganized

Supervised
Terminated

Communication Skills

Addressed
Advised
Apprised
Arbitrated
Arranged
Authored
Briefed
Clarified
Collaborated
Communicated
Composed
Contacted
Conferred
Consulted
Convinced
Corresponded
Debated
Defined
Described
Developed
Directed
Discussed
Drafted
Edited
Enlisted
Explained
Facilitated
Familiarized
Formulated
Incorporated
Influenced
Interacted
Interpreted
Interviewed
Introduced
Joined
Judged
Lectured
Listened
Marketed
Mediated
Moderated

Negotiated
Observed
Proposed
Publicized
Published
Reconciled
Recruited
Referred
Reinforced
Reported
Resolved
Responded
Solicited
Specified
Spoke
Suggested
Summarized
Synthesized
Translated
Wrote

Quantitative & Analytical Skills

Achieved
Acquired
Administered
Adjusted
Allocated
Analyzed
Appraised
Assessed
Audited
Balanced
Built
Calculated
Computed
Conserved
Corrected
Determined
Developed
Devised
Documented
Estimated
Evaluated
Explored
Forecasted
Formulated

Innovated
Managed
Measured
Minimized
Planned
Programmed
Projected
Reconciled
Reduced
Researched
Retrieved
Sourced
Surveyed

Technical Skills

Adapted
Assembled
Built
Calculated
Computed
Constructed
Converted
Debugged
Designed
Determined
Developed
Engineered
Extracted
Fabricated
Fortified
Installed
Launched
Maintained
Operated
Overhauled
Printed
Programmed
Rectified
Regulated
Remodeled
Reorganized
Repaired
Replaced
Restored
Solved
Specialized
Standardized

Studied
Upgraded
Utilized

Organizational & Administrative Skills

Approved
Arranged
Catalogued
Charted
Classified
Coded
Collected
Corresponded
Distributed
Executed
Filed
Generated
Implemented
Incorporated
Inspected
Installed
Logged
Maintained
Monitored
Obtained
Ordered
Organized
Prepared
Processed
Provided
Purchased
Recorded
Registered
Reserved
Reviewed
Routed
Scheduled
Screened
Set up
Submitted
Supplied
Standardized
Updated
Validated
Verified

(More) Action Verbs

Teaching & Helping Skills

Adapted
Advised
Advocated
Aided
Answered
Arranged
Assessed
Assisted
Cared for
Clarified
Coached
Collaborated
Communicated
Contributed
Cooperated
Counseled
Critiqued
Demonstrated
Developed
Diagnosed
Educated
Enabled
Encouraged
Ensured
Expedited
Facilitated
Furthered
Guided
Helped
Individualized
Informed
Intervened
Instructed
Motivated
Provided
Referred
Rehabilitated
Represented
Resolved
Set goals
Simplified
Stimulated
Supplied
Supported
Taught

Tested
Trained
Tutored
Volunteered

Entrepreneurial & Creative Skills

Accomplished
Adapted
Anticipated
Arranged
Assembled
Attained
Attracted
Authored
Budgeted
Combined
Composed
Conceptualized
Conducted
Consolidated
Created
Designed
Determined
Developed
Devised
Directed
Discovered
Engineered
Enhanced
Established
Expedited
Extended
Fashioned
Formulated
Generated
Implemented
Improved
Inaugurated
Incorporated
Increased
Informed
Initiated
Innovated
Installed
Interpreted
Introduced

Instituted
Invented
Launched
Marketed
Modernized
Modified
Negotiated
Operated
Optimized
Organized
Originated
Overhauled
Performed
Planned
Prepared
Presented
Produced
Programmed
Promoted
Publicized
Reorganized
Replaced
Resolved
Restored
Restructured
Revamped
Revised
Revitalized
Revolutionized
Salvaged
Saved
Shaped
Sold
Stimulated
Streamlined
Supplied
Systematized
Updated

Marketing & Selling Skills

Arbitrated
Attained
Augmented
Boosted
Broadened
Calculated

Centralized
Consulted
Convinced
Decreased
Developed
Dissuaded
Documented
Educated
Established
Excelled
Expanded
Expedited
Familiarized
Gained
Generated
Identified
Implemented
Improved
Increased
Influenced
Integrated
Launched
Led
Maintained
Marketed
Mediated
Negotiated
Persuaded
Produced
Promoted
Proposed
Publicized
Purchased
Researched
Resolved
Revamped
Revitalized
Secured
Sold
Solicited
Strengthened
Supplemented

Other Experience (optional)

Content. This section is where you can detail some of your significant experiences that are not related to traditional or paid employment. It is great for students who are heavily involved with school activities, or people who spend their time engaged in volunteer work. In addition, freelancers, independent contractors, and people seeking to reenter the workforce after significant time away can use this space to detail some of the skills that were gained while outside of the traditional workplace.

Format. Write out these experiences the same way you wrote your work experiences, especially if you are showing off skills related to the job to which you are applying.

Example.

The Road Home, Midvale, Utah

July 2017 – Present

Volunteer – 20 hours/month

- Result/Accomplishment/Responsibility/Task
- Result/Accomplishment/Responsibility/Task

Your Turn.

Skills

Content. The skills section is used to highlight any hard skills that you think are relevant to the job or industry that you are interested in entering. Hard skills are things that are easily accounted for, such as languages and computer/software programs. Things like work ethic and interpersonal abilities are soft skills, and should be described in the bullet points of the work experience section. Be sure to qualify your skill levels for each thing that you list. In other words, say how good you are at the particular skills you are highlighting. This way, the employer will know what they can reasonably expect from you.

Format. Depending on the space available on your resume, you should list the skills out either horizontally (comma/semicolon separated) or vertically. (Use more than one column if the list is long.) You can qualify your skill levels in parenthesis.

Example.

Horizontal

Microsoft Office: Word, PowerPoint, Excel (advanced); Google: Docs, Sheets, Forms (intermediate); Adobe Creative Suite: Photoshop, InDesign (working knowledge); Spanish (native speaker), Japanese (beginner)

Vertical

Microsoft Word (advanced)

PowerPoint (advanced)

Excel (advanced)

Google Docs (intermediate)

Google Sheets (intermediate)

Google Forms (intermediate)

Adobe Photoshop (working knowledge)

Adobe InDesign (working knowledge)

Spanish (native Speaker)

Japanese (beginner)

Your Turn. (Continue to the next page if necessary.)

Professional Certifications and/or Awards (optional)

Content. If you received any certifications or awards related to your industry, you can list them in this section. Be sure to include the dates that you received these accolades and the organizations that gave them to you.

Format. Your certifications and/or awards should be listed in reverse-chronological order. Try to keep the information on one line.

Example.

Student Designer of the Year, College of Southern Nevada – May 2016

Your Turn.

Cover letter time!

General Cover Letter Format

Cover letters are always one page long with a font size of 10-11. The font style should match that of your resume. They follow the standard business letter format:

- Your contact information
- Company contact information & Greeting
- Introductory paragraph
- One or two body paragraphs
- Closing

It should look something like this...

Ima Jobseeker
ima.jobseeker@email.com
801-555-0000

January 20, 2018

JoAnna Hiring-Manager
Neon Graphics, LLC
200 S 400 W
Salt Lake City, Utah 84116

Dear Ms. Hiring-Manager,

I am writing to express my interest in the Marketing Coordinator position that Neon Graphics, LLC has advertised on indeed.com. I am a current student at Salt Lake Community College, majoring in Business. I believe that my combination of educational and professional experiences make me a great candidate for this position.

My courses at Salt Lake Community College have prepared me well for this role. The General Education requirements allowed me to become better at the written and visual communication skills that are critical to marketing. Along with this, the Business program gave me insight into the economic aspects of this field. My success as a Marketing Intern at Alpha Zeta Branding is evidence of my ability to apply my academic experiences to a professional setting. In that role, I was able to create engaging content and learned how to track campaign analytics. These skills will allow me to add value to both your position and your company from day one.

Neon Graphics, LLC is one of the fastest growing design firms in the area, so the work that you do is cutting edge and dynamic. I am interested in the Marketing Coordinator role because I believe that I can be a valuable asset to the team that has made your company successful thus far. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Ima J. Obseeker

The pages that follow will walk you through the sections of a cover letter and give you space to brainstorm content. Cover letters should be written to match specific jobs, but if this is for practice, it is okay to be general. A Career Services advisor will help you tailor it for an application.

Contact Information & Greeting

Content. This section of your cover letter has your contact information, the date, the contact information for the company your application will go to, and a greeting. Your contact information should be your name, phone number, and email address. There is no need to add a street address or websites.

For the company contact information, try your hardest to make it as personalized as possible. If the application does not tell you the person that the position reports to, then look at the company website for a specific name. If you absolutely cannot find this information, then it is okay to address your cover letter to the hiring manager, hiring team, or selection committee.

Example.

Ima Jobseeker
ima.j.obseeker@email.com
801-555-0000

January 21, 2018

JoAnna Hiring-Manager
Neon Graphics, LLC
200 S 400 W
Salt Lake City, Utah 84116

Dear Ms. Hiring-Manager,

Your Turn.

Introductory Paragraph

Content. In the first paragraph, introduce yourself to the potential employer, and give a little background on your education and previous employment. If you are a current student or recent graduate, say your school and major/program. You also want to use this paragraph to foreshadow the rest of the letter by giving a line or two about why you are applying and why you believe you're qualified.

Example. I am writing to express my interest in the Marketing Coordinator position that Neon Graphics, LLC has advertised on indeed.com. I am a current student at Salt Lake Community College, majoring in Business. I believe that my combination of educational and professional experiences make me a great candidate for this position.

Your Turn.

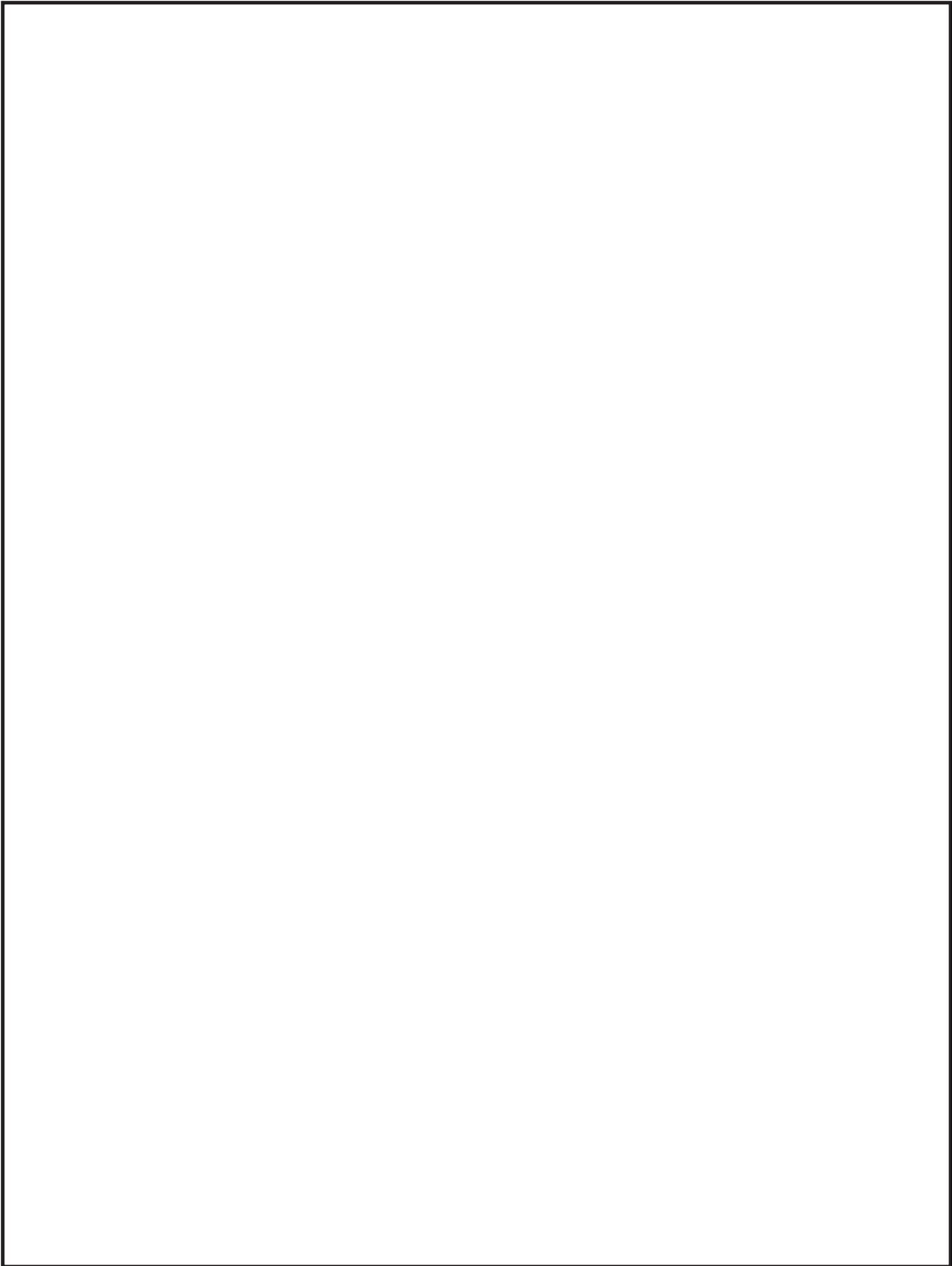
Body Paragraph(s)

Content. The second (and third, if needed) paragraphs of a cover letter are the body. Here, you give more details about why/how you are qualified. Use this space to expand upon the things that you touched on in the introduction. The body paragraphs are not a narrative version of your entire resume. Instead, you want to do a 'deep dive' into the two or three experiences that are most closely related to the job you are applying for. Give the reader more details than are okay for a resume, and use the job posting as a guide so that your examples are relevant.

If you are stuck on what to talk about, one trick is to put the body content into two buckets. For example, you can highlight hard skills in one part and soft skills in another, or work experience in one and academic ones in the other. As long as your examples are related to the job and show that you can do it, then they are okay to share.

Example. My courses at Salt Lake Community College have prepared me well for this role. The General Education requirements allowed me to become better at the written and visual communication skills that are critical to marketing. Along with this, the Business program gave me insight into the economic aspects of this field. My success as a Marketing Intern at Alpha Zeta Branding is evidence of my ability to apply my academic experiences to a professional setting. In that role, I was able to create engaging content and learned how to track campaign analytics. These skills will allow me to add value to both your position and your company from day one.

Your Turn. (Continue to the next page if necessary.)



Closing Paragraph

Content. In your closing paragraph, you want to reiterate your interest in both the position and the company. Show the employer that you have done your homework by saying what you like about the company and how you could contribute to their success. End this paragraph by thanking the reader for their time and consideration.

After this, end the letter with a professional sign off such as “sincerely” or “kind regards” and type your name. A handwritten signature is neither expected nor required.

Example. Neon Graphics, LLC is one of the fastest growing design firms in the area, and the work that you do is cutting edge and dynamic. I am interested in the Marketing Coordinator role because I believe that I can be a valuable asset to the team that has made your company successful thus far. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Ima J. Obseeker

Your Turn.

One last thing: “Do I really have to write a cover letter?”

If a job posting asks for a cover letter, then you have to submit one. There is no getting around it. If you want your application to be taken seriously, a cover letter is a must!

If a job posting does not ask for a cover letter, then it is up to you. If you feel that your resume speaks for itself, then do not write a cover letter. If you have specific things to highlight that you believe will enhance your candidacy for the job, then write one. There is no guarantee that an employer will read a non-required cover letter, but doing extra never hurts.

Now write your own and let us see it!

Use the notes you took in this workbook to write a resume and a cover letter. Follow the examples as a guide for formatting your sections. Remember: It does not have to be perfect! The goal is to have something on paper. Once you do, bring it in to any Career Services office for an advisor to review.

Locations

Taylorsville Redwood Campus: Student Center, Room 002 (Monday - Friday)

South City Campus: Room 1-061R (Monday - Friday)

Jordan Campus: High Tech Center, Room 100A (Tuesdays & Wednesdays only)

Miller Campus: Free Enterprise Center, Room 126 (Tuesdays only)

West Valley Center: Room 115 (Thursdays only)

Hours

8:00 am – 4:30 pm (appointments end at 4 pm)

We can't wait to see what you create!