

# Resumes & Cover Letters

## MARKETING YOUR EXPERIENCE

Most internships, research opportunities, and full-time jobs require you to submit a resume and cover letter as part of your application. These documents introduce you and your experiences in a professional, succinct format to a potential employer or reference. Their purpose is to market you as an excellent fit for the position.

As a freshman or sophomore, your resume will be broad in scope; it's okay to list leadership roles and experiences from high school. Over time you will become more focused on professional interests and goals, and your materials will become more tailored to highlight the experiences that best represent the skills needed for positions you target.

## RESUME TIPS

### *What Your Resume Says About You*

Your resume is a visual tool that markets who you are and what you have to offer to employers. The content and format represent your personal brand. A document that is error free, easy to follow, and visually clean indicates your attention to detail and clear communication skills. Strive to include and describe experiences in the way that is most meaningful to your audience.

### *What To Include*

Most resumes include several standard sections. The samples in this handout show examples of these common sections and options for formatting. The following guidelines will help you make smart decisions as you build a document to highlight your professional value:

**Permanent address:** Listing an address is still generally expected and common, but giving a permanent address (where your parents live) in addition to your current address might not be necessary. Include it if you are looking for an opportunity in the same city to show that you can be readily available.

**Blog, portfolio, LinkedIn address, website:** If you have these, include links to show examples of your abilities, but be sure to edit and manage your online brand. Everything you put online says something about you. Control the message.

**Objective statement:** Most college students can skip this and instead use a cover letter to describe the fit between the employer's needs and what you have to offer. However, a summary is highly recommended for technical resumes (in which case, it may serve the purpose of the cover letter) and for resumes of highly experienced people. A good summary statement focuses on specific accomplishments and skills related to the position you're seeking.

## NEED HELP WITH YOUR RESUME AND COVER LETTER?

Stop by Quick Questions drop-in hours (Monday-Friday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. in DUC 110). No appointment needed. A Career Peer can review your application and provide you with edits and suggestions.

Engineers – Take advantage of Quick Advising Hours. Meet with an advisor for 15 minutes. Lopata Hall, Room 203: Monday - Thursday, 1:30 - 4:00 p.m.

All students can schedule a one-on-one career advising appointment by calling (314) 935-5930.

**Education:** List institution, degree, major(s) and minor(s), graduation date, and location. Include additional degrees, coursework, or special programs in reverse chronological order. Transfer students with significant experience at another school can also list that institution; however, it's not necessary if the bulk of your degree was completed at WashU. Dual degree students should list both institutions. Study abroad can also go in this section.

**GPA:** List your GPA in the Education section if you are proud of it or if the employer asks for it. You can list your cumulative GPA, major GPA, or science GPA depending on your goals. This information is more important in some fields than others. Ask advisors if you're unsure.

**High school experiences:** It is okay to list your high school and related activities as a freshman or sophomore. The closer you get to graduation, the more important it becomes to replace this information with more recent experience. You want employers to see you as a young professional.

**Relevant coursework:** Avoid long lists of typical classes. Include this section only if you wish to highlight a few specific advanced, technical, or elective courses that directly relate to the position you're seeking.

**Job experience:** Restaurants, retail, camps, and work study all give you transferable skills sets including valuable experience managing information and relationships.

**Internships, research, co-ops, leadership, service, shadowing:** Paid or unpaid, these are excellent ways to build your Experience section. Describe them in terms of your accomplishments. As your resume becomes more robust, you may want to break these into more tailored sections (e.g. Teaching Experience, Research Experience).

**Student groups:** Whether you list these as an experience, complete with description, or as an activity depends on your level of leadership and involvement. If you gained significant skills or affected change, list as you would an internship.

**Honors, awards, publications, professional memberships, exhibitions, presentations:** These are excellent things to include, particularly if they are from your college years. Be sure to give dates and, when necessary, brief descriptions to give context. Where you list these depends on how many you have. A career advisor, career peer or mentor can help you strategize.

**Hobbies, interests, personal travel:** Most often, these are not worth the valuable space they take to include, unless you know they'll help you connect with your audience. Exceptions include significant personal projects with defined skill sets (building robots, designing web sites) – these should be listed as experiences and described with bullets.

**Skills:** Indicate your knowledge of technical, language, research, computer (software, hardware, platforms, programming languages, operating systems, applications), and other specialized skills. Be accurate when describing your level of knowledge or proficiency (basic, proficient, fluent). Or, you can quantify your experience (2 semesters of college-level Spanish).

**Soft skills (such as "great communicator"):** These proclamations hold no water for employers. Instead, illustrate your skills through the examples in your bullet points and in your cover letter. Don't just say it, prove it.

## REFERENCES

Prepare a list of references on a separate page instead of writing "References available upon request." That way, you will have them ready to go if an employer asks for them. Copy and paste your name and contact information from your resume onto a second page and list the name, title, address, phone, and e-mail of three to four people. Great people to list include professors, employers, student group advisors, and internship supervisors. Contact all references before you list them to ensure that they are comfortable acting as a reference for you. Once you have provided the reference list to an employer, contact each reference and provide him/her with the job title, description, company name, and the name of the person who will be in contact.

## TAILORING YOUR RESUME

The position description and/or organizational research will help you identify the employer's needs and the characteristics they desire in an ideal candidate. Make it easy for them to see how you fit the bill with the following strategies:

### **Show them where to look:**

Devote the most real estate on your document to the experience that will resonate the most with the recipient. You probably don't need 4 bullets to describe your summer experience at Banana Republic, unless you're gunning for a buyer role there.

### **Use headings that highlight critical skills:**

Within each section, you should list experiences in reverse chronological order. However, as you develop more skills and experience, you can design the section headings and intentionally order them in a way that draws attention to the things that you most want the employer to notice. (e.g. Theater Design Experience, Project Management Experience)

### **Use key words:**

Notice and match the language from the position description and the organization's web site. This might mean slight tweaks to the way you describe your experience (saying "taught" vs. "coached", for example), but shows that you understand their goals and culture. You could also work in key words by adding relevant coursework. Some companies use software to cull through applications based on key word recognition.

### **Be judicious about what you include:**

In most cases, as a college student, your resume shouldn't go on for pages. You may have to cut out some things to make it easier for the recipient to focus on the most important things. It can be difficult to be objective about this, so seek opinions from others.

## THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A RESUME AND A CV

A curriculum vitae (CV) is very similar to a resume in terms of most key formatting. Some countries refer to the CV the same way we refer to a resume. In the US, a CV is distinct from a resume in the sense that it is used primarily in academic and research circles or in medical careers. CVs are more comprehensive than resumes because they can go beyond one page, and therefore do not need to be as tailored. They typically include academic research, publications, and presentations. For some good examples, look for the CVs of some of your professors to see how they've represented their body of experience. For most undergraduate students, the difference between a resume and CV is negligible.

## WRITING AN EFFECTIVE BULLET

Your goal is to make it easy for a future employer to see your capabilities, based on what you've done in the past. Are you good on the phone? Comfortable fielding questions from the public? Reliable with major projects requiring organization? Experienced at analyzing data on Excel? Employers will only know if you tell them.

- Say what you actually did: It does no good to use fancy words if your description is unclear or doesn't make sense. When the employer initially reviews your document, you won't be there to provide explanations or insight. Avoid vague phrasing and state your contributions accurately, simply, and clearly.
- Give numbers and details, in a concise way: How much money did you raise? How many people did you manage on the committee? Which major companies were on your client list? How, exactly, did you personally contribute to the project? Don't use a lot of words, but paint a defined picture.

*Example Bullet:*

- Helped plan sorority social

*Example Bullet Revised:*

- Collaborated as part of a five-member executive team to plan and implement a charitable social event that raised \$5,000 for a local non-profit

- Focus on accomplishments: When possible, state the results of your efforts rather than just your responsibilities.
- Describe your experience through the lens of transferable skills: Determine which aspects of your previous work most relate to the employer's needs, and describe your qualifications accordingly. For example, customer service skills you gained in retail could be valuable in other client-based work.

## MAKING IT ONE PAGE AND EASY TO READ

Employers spend just seconds reviewing each resume so it's critical to make your information easy to absorb. Most students should aim for a one page resume. If you have more relevant content, two full pages are preferable to an odd half page.

- Margins and typeface: Margins should be even on all sides, but can go as low as .5 inch. With the exception of your name, which should be bigger, your typeface should be 10-11 point font. It's generally smart to use the same professional typeface throughout. Don't use a template. These lock you into formatting that can be restrictive as your document develops.
- Make each line count: You might be able to slim down your name and contact information, or only use one address. Rephrase bullets that have one or two words that run to a second line. Condense words and phrases to make them more concise without losing meaning.

- Eliminate old or irrelevant experiences: This is especially important if they can be trumped by more recent, similar ones.
- Format: Check for consistency and parallel structure in the way you list key information such as headings, titles, dates, and locations. Also ensure your document is visually balanced, meaning you fill the page evenly and leave enough white space.

### **Sample 1 - Reverse Chronological Style (sophomore with high school and college experience)**

- Conservative font (e.g. Times, Arial). 10-12 point.
- One page, visually clean, no typos or spelling errors.

Include both addresses or choose the one that makes more strategic sense (you're applying for an internship in Pittsburgh and your home address is there).

List GPA if you are proud of it and if it is important to employers in your field. List to 2 decimal points.

- Spell out names of organizations that go by acronyms.
- Present tense for activities with which you are still involved; past for past.
- Ask several people to review your resume for flow, grammar, and formatting.

Chronological format: experiences listed within sections in reverse chronological order.

<p>JENNIFER McLAREN mclaren@wustl.edu / (412) 555-5555</p> <p>University Address: 6515 Wydown Boulevard, Campus Box 5555 St. Louis, MO 63105</p> <p><u>EDUCATION</u></p> <p>Washington University in St. Louis Candidate for Bachelor of Arts, May 2020 Major: Biochemistry    Minor: Spanish Honors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dean's List (Spring 2017)</li> <li>• Lock and Chain Sophomore Honorary, Member (2017 - present)</li> <li>• GPA 3.48/4.0</li> </ul> <p>Xavier High School Diploma, May 2017</p> <p><u>EXPERIENCE</u></p> <p>Alpha Epsilon Delta Member and Chair of the Community Service Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan monthly health-related volunteer activities for members of the Washington University pre-health honorary society</li> <li>• Mentor group of seven pre-health students on course selection and other academic and extracurricular issues</li> <li>• Lead bi-monthly planning meetings for the community service sub-committee</li> </ul> <p>Uptown Cafe Assistant Head Waitress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trained servers in procedures and customer service skills</li> <li>• Resolved operational and customer service issues</li> <li>• Provided excellent customer service</li> <li>• Earned "Employee of the Month" designation in July 2017</li> </ul> <p>Mano a Mano Volunteer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participated in cross-cultural youth leadership and service program</li> <li>• Crafted and delivered presentation to community groups in U.S. upon return</li> </ul> <p><u>SKILLS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proficient in Spanish</li> <li>• Proficient in Microsoft Word and Adobe Photoshop</li> </ul>	<p>Permanent Address: 1234 Paragon Street Pittsburgh, PA 15241</p> <p>St. Louis, MO</p> <p>Pittsburgh, PA</p> <p>St. Louis, MO April 2018 - present</p> <p>Pittsburgh, PA June - August 2017 &amp; June - August 2018</p> <p>Colombia, South America July 2016</p>
--	--

## **Sample 2 - Reverse Chronological style (senior seeking job in student conservation or advocacy)**

- Conservative font (e.g. Arial). 10-12 point.
- Top, bottom, and side margins may vary between half-inch and one-inch.
- If you have questions about whether or not to include your GPA, consult with a career advisor.
- Check for consistency and parallel structure. Make the info on your resume easy to absorb by listing each of your work, volunteer, and internship experiences in the same format.
- Think about how your skills are transferable to a new environment as you write descriptions of your past experiences.
- Limit your resume to one page.

Keep locations (MO vs. Missouri) and dates (May -August 2017 vs. Summer 2017) consistent throughout. Listing actual months (May - August) is preferred to listing the season (Summer).

<p><b>Benjamin Nguyen</b> 5555 Westgate Avenue, Apartment G, St. Louis, MO 63130 <a href="mailto:bnguyen@wustl.edu">bnguyen@wustl.edu</a> / (314) 555-1234</p> <p><b>EDUCATION</b></p> <p><b>Washington University in St. Louis, MO</b> Bachelor of Arts, May 2019 Major: English Minors: Psychology, Spanish</p> <p><b>University of Queensland</b>, Brisbane, Australia Spring Semester 2018 Focus: Environmental Studies and immersion in Australian culture</p> <p><b>INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE</b></p> <p><b>Interdisciplinary Environmental Law Clinic</b> <i>Student Consultant</i> Worked with student attorneys to provide legal and technical assistance on environmental and community health problems to individuals and organizations.</p> <p><b>Christine Campbell's Campaign to the U.S. Senate</b> <i>Intern</i> Gathered information, maintained a database, wrote letters, participated in organizing conferences, and represented the candidate in various situations. Participated in fundraising events and personally raised \$10,000 through telephone pledges and door-knocking activities.</p> <p><b>LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE EXPERIENCE</b></p> <p><b>Washington University Residential Life</b> <i>Resident Advisor</i> Supervise and advise 60 freshmen residents. Design and implement weekly floor programs intended to educate and develop residents. Completed 100+ hours of training in areas including conflict resolution, diversity awareness and leadership.</p> <p><b>Office of Judicial Affairs</b> <i>Board Member of Conduct Council</i> Appointed by the Director of Judicial Affairs and the Dean of Students to participate in four hearings for the resolution of complaints against students. Created and enforced academic and social sanctions against students who violated the Code of Conduct.</p> <p><b>Boston Visitor's Bureau</b> <i>Visitor Center Associate</i> Assembled, organized and mailed visitors packets to over 500 prospective tourists. Selected "July Associate of the Month" for providing superior customer service. Greeted tourists and promoted merchandise sales.</p> <p><b>SKILLS</b></p> <p>Computer: Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, and Dreamweaver. Language: Proficient in Spanish. Familiar with French.</p>	<p>St. Louis, MO June - August 2018</p> <p>Portland, OR May - August 2017</p> <p>St. Louis, MO May 2018- Present</p> <p>St. Louis, MO October 2016 - May 2017</p> <p>Boston, MA May - August 2016</p>
--	---

**Sample 3 - Reverse Chronological style (junior seeking internship in business)**

**Tailor this section with specific coursework relating directly to the opportunity you desire. Include only high-level courses, courses outside your major, or relevant electives - not courses that are typical for your major.**

- Quantifying your experience gives the hiring manager a concise fact that lends perspective to your accomplishment.

<b>Maria Lopez</b> mlopez@wustl.edu (314) 555-5555  Campus Address: 555 Delmar Boulevard, Apartment 408, St. Louis, MO 631130 Permanent Address: 5 Grove Drive, Rose, NJ, 07450	
EDUCATION	<b>Washington University in St. Louis</b> Bachelor of Arts Candidate, May 2020 Major: Political Science
	<b>Relevant Coursework:</b> Principles of Financial Accounting      Calculus I Capital Markets & Financial Management      Principles of Marketing
	<b>Washington University Praxis Program</b> (August 2017) Focus on work readiness skills for liberal arts students
HONORS AND ACTIVITIES	Washington University Danforth Scholar (2016-2017) Intramural Soccer (2016-2017)
EXPERIENCE	<b>Phi Lambda Psi, Women's Health and Wellness Honorary</b> , St. Louis, MO Secretary (Fall 2016- present) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-direct an AIDS Awareness Initiative on campus and designed flyers and promotional materials for the event.</li> <li>Manage communication during meetings and update 30 members about events.</li> </ul> <b>Wells Fargo</b> , Charlotte, NC Risk Management Intern (May-August 2018) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Researched compliance issues integral to major U.S. bank operations.</li> <li>Documented transportation routes around key hub and its four satellites for an Urban Check-Cashing Plot to allow compliance with the Community Reinvestment Act.</li> <li>Completed and anti-money laundering course.</li> <li>Assisted with administrative duties, as needed.</li> </ul> <b>Camp Miniwanca</b> , Shelby, MI Cabin Leader (June - August 2018) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supervised and mentored cabin of seven 11-year old campers.</li> <li>Developed outdoor cooking curriculum and taught 40 campers.</li> <li>Led morning reflection program to support camp philosophy of balanced living.</li> </ul> <b>American Red Cross</b> , St. Louis Chapter, St. Louis, MO Intern, Communication and Public Affairs Department (January-May 2018) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Researched, wrote, and edited articles for quarterly magazine and official magazine.</li> <li>Conducted interviews, gathered information, and wrote summaries for monthly volunteer newsletter.</li> </ul>
SKILLS	Computer: Proficient in MS Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, and Adobe Photoshop Language: Familiar with Italian

**Sample 4 - Pre-Medical Style (senior seeking admittance to medical school)**

- Conservative font (e.g. Arial). 10-12 point.
- Top, bottom, and side margins may vary between half-inch and one-inch.

 Check for consistency and parallel structure. Make the info on your resume easy to absorb by listing each of your work, volunteer, and internship experiences in the same format.

**Dinesh Patel**  
(813) 555-5555, dpatel@wustl.edu

School:  
5555 Tulane Avenue, Apartment G  
St. Louis, MO 63130
Home:  
2389 Lake Circle  
Hoffman Estates, IL 60179

**EDUCATION**

Washington University in St. Louis  
Bachelor of Arts Candidate, May 2019  
Major: Biology  
GPA: 3.77 / 4.0

**RESEARCH & CLINICAL EXPERIENCE**

Harvard Medical School  
Research Assistant, Marchal Cell Biology and Physiology Lab

Cambridge, MA  
May - August 2018

- Collected, pooled and analyzed data for study of the septin family of proteins in *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*.
- Performed Genomic DNA Preps, PCR, DNA transformations, Western blotting, gel electrophoresis, spectrometry, fluorescence microscopy, and other experimental procedures.
- Maintained detailed lab notes and assisted with lab upkeep.
- Co-authored journal article for national publication.

University of Illinois-Chicago Medical Center  
Hospital Lab Technician

Chicago, IL  
June - August 2017

- Performed chemical, bacteriological, serological and microscopic procedures on human specimens.
- Interpreted laboratory results and shared findings with physicians and other clinical staff.
- Worked with lab team to identify areas for process improvement such as identification of patients.
- Helped implement new priority identification system to reduce time specimens sit in queue.

**TEACHING & LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE**

Emergency Support Team  
Medic

St. Louis, MO  
September 2015 - Present

- Selected to be the first responder on Washington University campus for medical emergencies.
- Completed thorough training process resulting in licensure by the State of Missouri as an Emergency Medical Technician.
- Provided emergency response coverage six hours per week, including nights and weekends.

see page 2 &gt;

- For pre-med students the resume may exceed more than one page.
- Think about how your skills are transferable to a new environment as you write descriptions of your past experiences.

Patel, page 2

Pre-Med Society  
Events Chair  
Member

St. Louis, MO  
January 2017 - Present  
September 2015 - Present

- Planned and executed variety of special events including medical admissions panels and socials.
- Led group that provides advice and education for student support to 200+ pre-med students.
- Organized and steered committee that conducted fall visits to five medical schools across the country. Delegated tasks to committee members, ran meetings, and ensured planning committee met deadlines.

Washington University, Department of Biology  
Teaching Assistant

St. Louis, MO  
January - May 2018

- Served as teaching assistant for Biology 105 course with enrollment of 150 students. Took attendance, graded homework, and wrote exam questions.
- Held weekly office hours to help students better understand course materials and prepare for exams.

#### PUBLICATIONS

Scott McIntosh, Dinesh Patel, and Logan Short. "Biochemical and Crystallographic Analyses of a Portal Mutant." Journal of Biological Chemistry 12.8 (2015):12-18.

#### SKILLS

- Proficient in Microsoft Office
- Fluent in Spanish; knowledge of French

### Sample 5 - Technical Style (first year student seeking an internship)

- Conservative font (e.g. Times, Arial). 10-12 point.
- One page, visually clean, no typos or spelling errors.

Include both addresses or choose the one that makes more strategic sense (you're applying for an internship in Illinois and your home address is there).

List GPA if you are proud of it and if it is important to employers in your field. List to 2 decimal points.

- Spell out names of organizations that go by acronyms.
- Present tense for activities with which you are still involved; past for past.
- Ask several people to review your resume for flow, grammar, and formatting.

Chronological format: experiences listed within sections in reverse chronological order.

<p><b>Allison Ranard</b></p> <p>atr8@wustl.edu (412) 555-5555</p> <p>Current Address: 1515 Wydown Boulevard St. Louis, MO 63105</p> <p><b>SUMMARY</b></p> <p>First-year B.S. biomedical engineering student seeks summer internship to gain experience in the practical application of biomedical engineering in research and medicine. Applicant is motivated, hard-working, and flexible. Key skills include research, problem-solving, and communications. Available June 1 to August 15, 2019.</p> <p><b>EDUCATION</b></p> <p><b>Washington University in St. Louis</b> Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Engineering Minor: Biophysics, Expected Graduation: May 2022</p> <p><b>Munster High School</b> Graduated with an Academic Honors Diploma and Highest Honors May 2018</p> <p><b>ENGINEERING EXPERIENCE</b></p> <p><b>Washington University, Engineering Biomechanics Group</b> Student Researcher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquired the ability to perform basic Fourier analysis and image analysis with Matlab</li> <li>• Analyzing MRI data in Matlab in order to contribute to researching the mechanics of brain injury</li> </ul> <p><b>Shadowing Experiences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shadowed Dr. Ericson, pathologist, in gross room and histology lab</li> <li>• Shadowed Dr. David Jayakar, cardiothoracic surgeon, witnessed minimally invasive surgery</li> <li>• Shadowed Dr. James Cantora, internist and pediatrician, at wound clinic</li> </ul> <p><b>Operation Catapult, Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology</b> Summer Engineering Program, Participant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successfully created a "smart car" programmed to follow a white line on a black surface using concepts and equipment within electrical and computer engineering</li> <li>• Gained ability to problem-solve, write technical reports, and build circuits</li> </ul> <p><b>TECHNICAL SKILLS</b></p> <p>Software: proficient in MS Office and MS Windows, experience in Matlab Communication: experience in public speaking and technical writing, strong comprehension of Spanish and Hindi</p> <p><b>LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE</b></p> <p>Speech and Debate Team, Munster High School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Served as member of Speech and Debate Council, coached novices</li> <li>• Achieved Distinction in National Forensic League</li> <li>• Placed sixth in state of Indiana in Poetry Interpretation</li> </ul> <p>National Honor Society, Munster High School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Served as NHS Secretary</li> <li>• Tutored student in algebra and chemistry, improved grade from D to B</li> </ul> <p><b>AWARDS AND HONORS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dean's List</li> <li>• Departmental Award for Outstanding Achievement in Science</li> </ul>	<p>Permanent Address: 126 Sandy Ave. Munster, IL 76321</p> <p>St. Louis, MO GPA 3.8 / 4.0</p> <p>Munster, IN</p> <p>St. Louis, MO September 2018 - Present</p> <p>Munster, IN</p> <p>2017</p> <p>2017</p> <p>2017</p> <p>Terre-Haute, IN 2015</p> <p>Munster, IN</p> <p>2017-2018</p> <p>2015-2016</p> <p>2015</p> <p>2017-2018</p> <p>2016-2017</p> <p>2017-2018</p> <p>2017</p> <p>2017</p>
--	---

### **Sample 6 - Technical Style (senior seeking full-time position)**

- One page, visually clean, no typos or spelling errors.
- List GPA to 2 decimal points.

Tailor this section with specific coursework relating directly to the job you desire. Include only high-level courses, courses outside your major, or relevant electives - not courses that are typical for your major.

Bullets should be specific, descriptive, paint a picture, mention specific projects or clients, and focus on accomplishments versus responsibilities. They should make sense to someone unfamiliar with the role, industry, or employer.

- Answer the questions - who, what, when, how, how many, what purpose, what was the result, how were your contributions used?
- Other sections to consider: Shadowing Experience, Publications, Research, Leadership, Relevant Coursework, Affiliations & Memberships, Volunteer Experience

**JENNIFER D. ALGER**  
jdalger@wustl.edu

---

**SUMMARY**  
Motivated, Disciplined B.S. in Mechanical Engineering candidate with technical manufacturing experience. Strong desire to contribute in a manufacturing, design or technical support function utilizing my experience and education. Willing to travel and relocate. Available June 2018.

**EDUCATION**  
Washington University in St. Louis  
Bachelor of Science, Mechanical Engineering

Expected Graduation: May 2019  
GPA: 3.35/4.0

Fluid Mechanics	Optimum Design for Engineering Modeling, Simulation, and Control	Mechanical Engineering Design
Technical Writing	Engineering Design: CAD	Aerodynamics
Mech. Design and Machine Elements		Fracture Mechanics

**TECHNICAL SKILLS**

**Software:** AutoCAD, SolidEdge, MATLAB, MS Office, MS Windows

**Equipment:** CNC rotary turning Lathe and Mill, Resistance Welding Machines, Coordinate Measurement Machines, Heat Treat Ovens, Vibratory Bowls, x-ray Machines

**Manufacturing:** Hot & Cold Die Casting, Leak Testing, Adhesive Dispensing, Machining, Assembly, Inspection

**Methods:** Lean Manufacturing, QS9000 and Quality Systems, AS400, Product Launches

**ENGINEERING EXPERIENCE**

**Spartan Light Metal Products** Sparta, IL and Mexico, MO  
**Die Services Technician/ Maintenance Support Technician** May - August 2018

- Polished, de-burred and cleaned die inserts
- performed mechanical repairs to production tooling in Aluminum and Magnesium Die-Casting to reduce downtime of production operations
- Removed core pins and stuck castings from die inserts
- Worked on and repaired CNC machines to keep production running

**Process Control Technician** Sparta, IL  
May - August 2017

- Established statistical process control parameters for die casting machines
- Metal fluid flow and heat transfer analysis for mold design to improve castability and part profitability
- Evaluated porosity, non-fill, and crack issues, provided and implemented counter measures to resolve problems for production development

**Production Operator** Mexico, MO  
May - August 2016

- Operated die-cast, heat treatment, machining, and finishing machinery
- Ensured products were manufactured to customer demands and met internal metrics
- Programmed and operated robotic machinery

**DESIGN EXPERIENCE- Washington University in St. Louis**  
Optimization of machine layout on plant floor in manufacturing facility January - May 2018

- Converted manufacturing facility to GT cell operation using genetic algorithms in MATLAB and AutoCAD
- Successfully decreased the material handling cost and time of production by 20%

**Prescription bottle de-labeler** August - December 2017

- Led team of three students to design and construct prescription bottle de-labeling device
- Built prototype and tested for manufacturability
- Demonstrated and presented device to fellow students and facility

## JUMP TO THE ACTION

To craft a powerful resume, begin each description with a strong action verb using active voice, which makes you the actor of your statements instead of a passive bystander. Moreover, using active voice prevents excessive wordiness, helping to keep statements brief, clear, and simple. Avoid empty words like “responsibilities included.”

### *Led a Project*

Chaired	Executed	Orchestrated	Planned
Controlled	Headed	Organized	Produced
Coordinated	Operated	Oversaw	Programmed

### *Researched*

Analyzed	Calculated	Explored	Investigated	Quantified
Assembled	Discovered	Forecasted	Mapped	Surveyed
Assessed	Evaluated	Identified	Measured	Tested
Audited	Examined	Interpreted	Qualified	Tracked

### *Changed or Improved Something*

Centralized	Integrated	Refined	Restructured	Streamlined
Clarified	Merged	Refocused	Revamped	Strengthened
Converted	Modified	Remodeled	Revitalized	Transformed
Customized	Overhauled	Reorganized	Simplified	Updated
Influenced	Redesigned	Replaced	Standardized	Upgraded

### *Envisioned and Brought a Project to Life*

Administered	Designed	Engineered	Formulated	Instituted
Built	Developed	Established	Implemented	Introduced
Charted	Devised	Formalized	Incorporated	Launched
Created	Founded	Formed	Initiated	Pioneered

### *Increased Efficiency, Sales, Revenue, or Customer Satisfaction*

Accelerated	Boosted	Expanded	Generated	Outpaced
Achieved	Capitalized	Expedited	Improved	Stimulated
Advanced	Delivered	Furthered	Lifted	Sustained
Amplified	Enhanced	Gained	Maximized	

### *Brought in Partners, Funding, or Resources*

Acquired	Navigated	Partnered
Forged	Negotiated	Secured

## MORE ACTION WORDS

### *Managed a Team*

Aligned	Facilitated	Inspired	Recruited	Taught
Cultivated	Fostered	Mentored	Regulated	Trained
Directed	Guided	Mobilized	Shaped	Unified
Enabled	Hired	Motivated	Supervised	United

### *Informed*

Resolved	Audited	Explored	Mapped	Tested
Researched	Calculated	Forecasted	Measured	Tracked
Analyzed	Discovered	Identified	Qualified	
Assembled	Evaluated	Interpreted	Quantified	
Assessed	Examined	Investigated	Surveyed	

### *Wrote or Communicated*

Authored	Composed	Counseled	Edited	Promoted
Briefed	Conveyed	Critiqued	Illustrated	Publicized
Campaigned	Convinced	Defined	Lobbied	Reviewed
Co-authored	Corresponded	Documented	Persuaded	

### *Saved the Company Time or Money*

Conserved	Decreased	Diagnosed	Reconciled	Yielded
Consolidated	Deducted	Lessened	Reduced	

### *Supported Customers*

Advised	Arbitrated	Consulted	Fielded	Resolved
Advocated	Coached	Educated	Informed	

### *Achieved Something*

Attained	Demonstrated	Outperformed	Succeeded
Awarded	Earned	Reached	Surpassed
Completed	Exceeded	Showcased	Targeted

### *Oversaw or Regulated*

Authorized	Dispatched	Inspected	Screened
Blocked	Enforced	Itemized	Scrutinized
Delegated	Ensured	Monitored	Verified

## COVER LETTER 101

A cover letter is your introduction to a prospective employer. Your letter should demonstrate your ability to think clearly and write persuasively. An effective cover letter makes you stand out as a candidate. In fact, some employers consider it even more important than your resume.

Your cover letter should create a link between the needs of the organization and your skills and experience related to those needs. Demonstrate your motivation, creativity, and knowledge of the organization. Rather than restating what is on your resume, enhance your qualifications by describing HOW your past experience will benefit the employer. A cover letter should almost always accompany your resume. Occasionally, in engineering fields, a summary statement replaces a cover letter.

### **What Your Cover Letter Says About You**

Your cover letter answers the employer's question, "How does this candidate meet my needs?" A concise, focused letter of 3-4 short paragraphs demonstrates your ability to clearly and specifically communicate in writing. It also gives you the opportunity to show that you've done your homework. You can state why you want the position, how you fit with the organization's culture and how your passion or goals work to the employer's benefit. As with your resume, it is critical for your letter to be error-free.

### **What to Look For in a Job Description**

In addition to researching the organization, the job description is your key to writing a convincing letter. Begin by underlining the skills, experience, and characteristics the employer wants and then use your letter to prove that you have them. Your letter's format should be organized by 2-3 key things the employer wants, not by the story of your life.

### **The Difference Between Confidence and Arrogance**

Avoid using strong words ("I'm a perfect fit") or referring to skill sets ("my excellent analytical skills") without backing them up with specific examples. Here is where you can expand on your resume to describe how a past experience has directly prepared you for something specific that is listed in the job description.

### **The Importance of Tailoring**

It will be blatantly obvious to employers if you try to use a general cover letter with only minor tweaks. Your research, initiative, and knowledge about the position and organization will make you stand out. For example, if you're applying to work in a research lab, read and reference articles about the work in your letter to show that you're following progress in the field. Make the most of referrals and connections by naming the person who referred you or any previous encounters you've made with the recipient or his/her colleagues. The familiar name will grab the reader's attention.

## COVER LETTER FORMATTING

### Cover Letter Format

Your Full Street Address (no abbreviations)\*

City, State, Zip

Month Day, Year

\* Note: your address, the date, and the contact's address do not need to be added if you are posting the letter into the body of an email. Do add them if you attach the letter as a PDF.

Contact's Name

Contact's Full Title

Organization's Name

Organization's Full Street Address (no abbreviations)

City, State, Zip

Salutation:

**Opening paragraph:** In the first sentence, state why you are writing and/or the position or type of work for which you are applying. State how you heard of the opening or organization, including the name of your reference person, if applicable. The last line should give a brief synopsis of who you are and what you can contribute to the organization or position. The first paragraph should be three to four sentences.

**Middle paragraph(s):** Explain why you are interested in working for the employer by demonstrating your knowledge of the organization, and tell the employer how you will perform in your desired position based on concrete references to your previous accomplishments. Think from the employer's point of view as you write. How are you a good fit for the organization? Enhance your resume by connecting the dots between what the employer wants and how your past experience will enable you to fill his/her needs. When appropriate, talk about the results of your past responsibilities. Write with concise, confident statements. Remember that this letter will serve as a writing sample. If this paragraph starts to get long, split it into two short paragraphs to make them easier to absorb.

**Closing paragraph:** Indicate that you would like to talk with the employer in person to further discuss the opportunity. Give your phone number and email address in case they would like to contact you for further information. State your planned next steps, such as calling to ensure your application materials have been received. Close by thanking the person for his/her time and consideration.

Sincerely,

(Leave room to sign your name in black ink if you are mailing or hand-delivering the letter)

Type your name

Enclosure (This indicates your resume is enclosed in the envelope; you do not need to add this when emailing your resume.)

## COVER LETTER EXAMPLE AND WRITING TIPS

Write a custom cover letter for each position. Use the same font and print it out on the same paper as your resume so your materials look like a package.

Address your letter to a specific person. If you do not have a name, call the organization and ask for the name and title of the person who should receive your letter. As a last resort, you may use "Dear Hiring Manager."

- Focus on the reader's needs, not yours. Make your qualifications clear and emphasize how you can help the organization.
- Research the organization, study the position description, and tailor your letter accordingly.
- Suggest the next course of action (e.g., you will follow up with a phone call).

Sign your name on hardcopy or leave blank if emailing.

5656 Delmar Boulevard, Apt. 6  
St. Louis, MO 63130

January 10, 2017

Jennifer Stonebraker  
Director of Talent Sourcing  
301 South 6th Street Place  
Lincoln, NE 68510

Dear Ms. Stonebraker:

Please accept my application materials to join the Emerging Leader Associate Consultant program with the Gallup Organization in Washington, D.C. I learned about this opportunity from the Washington University Career Center website. My strong strategic conceptualization skills, ability to establish and maintain long-term working alliances, and desire to be a life-long learner would allow me to support Gallup's goal of providing cutting-edge employee and organizational performance development.

Gallup's focus on strengthening employee and customer engagement strategies is exciting. As an intern with the American Civil Liberties Union, I learned the importance of responding quickly to clients' needs, as well as how to develop a positive working relationship with a diverse clientele. While serving as the vice president of my sorority, I managed the process of identifying and coordinating a new philanthropy effort for our chapter. As the leader of this process, I discovered how to strategically consider an issue, identify different possible solutions to the problem, and gain support from different constituencies. My experiences demonstrate my ability to contribute and produce as a team-player; qualities that would enable me to add value to the Emerging Leader Associate Consultant program.

It would be a pleasure to discuss with you further your desired qualities for this position. Please contact me at (314) 555-8885 or at [ashaw@wustl.edu](mailto:ashaw@wustl.edu), if I may answer any additional questions for you. I will be in Washington D.C. March 15-18. If it works for your schedule, I would love to meet with you then to further discuss the position. I will follow-up with you via phone in the near future to discuss the opportunity. In the meantime, thank you for your consideration. I look forward to talking with you.

Sincerely,

*Allison Shaw*

Allison Shaw

Left justify your paragraphs; no need to indent. Leave a space between each paragraph.



## SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION MATERIALS

Pay close attention to what the position description says about submitting your materials.

### Hard Copy

If you will be handing someone your resume and cover letter in person, or mailing hard copies, be sure to print them on quality 24 lb. white or off-white paper rather than regular copy paper.

### Email

It is extremely important to exercise professionalism when corresponding with employers through email. Be sure to use a concise, business-like style and check for spelling, punctuation and grammar. Choose an appropriate subject line. When applying for a job, an example of an appropriate subject is "Tom Lauer, Public Relations Assistant application."

When you send your cover letter and resume via email, we generally recommend that you send it as one PDF attachment so it will print out as nicely as if you had mailed it. In a professional manner, introduce your attachments with a brief three to four sentence note in the body of the email. Your note must reference the position to which you are applying. Be sure to include your contact information.

If you choose to make your cover letter the body of the email, we suggest you draft it in a Word document first to ensure thoughtfulness and professionalism.

### Online Application Forms

Some employers require applicants to paste resume information into online application fields. In this case, you may want to remove your resume formatting so that the information is organized and easy to read in electronic form. If an application requires you to list your skills, carefully consider those you wish to include and provide a comprehensive list. Applicants are often sorted by the skills and experiences provided on the application.

Most electronic resumes are sent in Microsoft Word (.doc) or Adobe Acrobat Reader (.pdf). However, some guidelines might ask you to submit your resume as text-based or ASCII format. A text-based resume will eliminate most of the formatting such as bold, italics, bullet points and underlining. Review your text-based resume before you submit it to the employer. Be sure to check spacing and page alignment if you are pasting it from a Microsoft Word document.

Employers in some industries use computer systems that use OCR (Optical Character Recognition) technology to scan and screen resumes. You may want to work with someone at the Career Center if you have questions about preparing a scannable resume. Electronic and scannable resumes are only to be used at the employer's request.

## NEED HELP WITH YOUR RESUME AND COVER LETTER?

Stop by Quick Questions drop-in hours (Monday-Friday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. in DUC 110). No appointment needed. A Career Peer can review your application and provide you with edits and suggestions.

Engineers – Take advantage of Quick Advising Hours. Meet with an advisor for 15 minutes.  
Lopata Hall, Room 203: Monday - Thursday, 1:30 - 4:00 p.m.

All students can schedule a one-on-one career advising appointment by calling (314) 935-5930.