

JOB
SEARCH
STRATEGIES

RESUME WRITING AND COVER LETTER GUIDELINES

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A resume is a brief summary of your qualifications, education, and experiences relevant to your job search objective. The purpose of a resume is to obtain an interview. Employers will spend less than 30 seconds reviewing your resume; therefore, the information must be conveyed in a clear, well-organized style. To get started on your resume, make a list of information about yourself—details of your experiences including pertinent coursework, paid and volunteer work, awards, clubs, research projects and special skills. The sections of a resume are listed below.

Your Name

Current Address
Telephone number
Cell phone number if applicable
Email address
Web page address (if pertinent)

Permanent Address
and Telephone number
if applicable

Objective

This section, while not required, is helpful as it tells the employer, at a glance, the type of position you are seeking. The objective can include the specific position you are seeking, skills you wish to use on the job, field or organization type by which you wish to be employed, or a combination of all of the above.

Education

This section should include:

- Name of the degree-granting institutions; List most recent first.
- Degree received and major
- Graduation date or projected graduation date, or dates of attendance if a degree was not completed
- Overseas academic experience

Optional:

- Any minors, specialization or focus areas
- Courses relevant to the position for which you are applying
- Honors and GPA (if they are a strong selling point). Indicate GPA based on a 4.0 scale.
- Senior research/honors thesis title and brief description
- Freshmen and sophomores can include high school

Experience

This is a summary of experience and/or accomplishments. List most recent experience first. You should include:

- Title of the position
- Name of the organization and location (city and state)
- Dates, including month and year
- Descriptions of responsibilities beginning with action verbs (avoid phrases such as “duties included”)
- Believable, verifiable accomplishments
- Paid jobs, internships, volunteer community service, extracurricular projects involving leadership or teamwork, special academic research or honors projects
- You may choose to divide your experience into two or more sections. Possible section headers might include Research Experience, Teaching Experience, Leadership Experience, Volunteer Experience or Relevant Experience.

Additional Information

This section could include computer skills, languages, volunteer work, sports, and interests. If one of these areas is relevant to the job, however, you may choose to put it in the “Experience” section. You may also choose to use more specific section headers such as:

- Skills
- Activities
- Interests
- Honors and Awards

Sample Objectives

- *A position as an editorial assistant.*
- *Electrical engineering internship.*
- *To obtain a position in finance.*
- *A program coordinator position in a community organization working with youth.*
- *Seeking a position in museum administration requiring strong writing skills and a background in art history.*
- *To apply decision and systems analysis to strategic planning in the telecommunications industry.*

TIPS FOR CREATING A SUCCESSFUL RESUME

Dos

- Do design your descriptions to focus on your accomplishments, using action verbs to clearly indicate the skills you've used. See Sample Action Verb list on page four.
- Do try quantifying results in your descriptions, such as "Created marketing campaign that increased club membership by 25%."
- Do keep your resume brief enough to fit on one page (or two pages if your experience is extensive). Academic CVs are often two pages or longer.
- Do print your resume on good quality bond paper, either white or conservative tones. If printed on plain computer paper, copy onto good quality bond paper.
- Do accompany your resume with a cover letter in most cases.
- Do have others look over your resume for content and grammar. Career Counselors and Peer Counselors are available at the CDC to critique your resume during same day appointments.

Don'ts

- Don't make your margins and font size too small: margins no smaller than one inch and font size no smaller than 10 point.
- Don't include personal pronouns (e.g. I, me, we).
- Don't include personal information, physical characteristics, or photographs on your resume. However, individuals from other countries may include these on their resumes.
- Don't include the last line: "References available upon request" (see Sample Reference List).

Other Tips

- It is more appropriate for freshmen and sophomores to include high school experiences. However, important high school experiences that have some relevance to your job objective may be appropriate for upper classmen.
- For International Students it is sometimes a disadvantage to include your non-immigrant visa status or permanent address (if outside the U.S.) on your resume. Usually your visa status should be discussed later during the interview. If you have obtained permanent residency or U.S. citizenship, it might be to your advantage to list the information on your resume.

RESUME FORMATS

There is no single way to format your resume. The format you choose should present your strengths clearly. See sample formats and layouts on pages 7-11.

Chronological Format

This format is most familiar to employers and most commonly used by Stanford students. This style of resume presents your experience and education in reverse chronological sequence, starting with the most recent. Date, job title, organization's name, location and a description of your activities are listed as part of the experience section. This format is simple, straightforward, and especially useful for anyone with a history of directly relevant experience.

Functional/Skills Format

This format focuses on areas of skill and can be effective in conveying your strengths to an employer, although many employers are not as familiar with this format as with the chronological or combination format. This style of resume draws attention to accomplishments and highlights your skills by function rather than your work experience and is more commonly used by people with very little formal work experience or are returning to the workplace after being away or otherwise involved.

Combination Format

This format is appropriate when you have relevant work experience for each of several skill areas and combines both the chronological and functional formats. This style allows you to group your experiences or key selling points together by functional areas (such as Research Experience and Teaching Experience), and then list those experiences in reverse chronological order within each section. It is also a familiar format to employers.

SUBMITTING RESUMES ELECTRONICALLY

Email

Send your resume as an attached file and paste the text into the body of the email. Having your resume in the body of the email as well as an attachment gives the employer the opportunity to see your resume in the event they cannot open your attachment or do not take the time. Use a simple format for the resume you put in the body of the email: left justified, no bold, no italics, no underlines, no tabs. See Sample Electronic Resume on page 6. Don't forget to include a cover letter in the body of the email too. If you have your resume in a PDF file, you can also attach that with your email. The PDF version will allow the employer the opportunity to see your resume in an attractive format, utilizing bold and underlines.

When emailing resume files, name them so the employer can easily identify them as your resume. Last name, followed by first name and the word "resume" is most helpful.

Resume Scanning

Companies receiving large quantities of resumes may scan each resume as an image, and then sort the image into recognizable letters, words, and symbols. These scanned images are entered into a database and then searched for key words, which indicate skills, education and knowledge areas the employer is seeking. Left-justify all text and avoid using underlining, italics, bullets, bold, and columns.

Every occupation and career field has its own jargon, acronyms and buzzwords – these are helpful key words to use. If you are responding to a job listing, use words from the job listing in your resume and cover letter.

CDC RESOURCES

Publications with additional relevant advice available at the CDC web site and Career Resource Center:

- Internships and Summer Jobs Resource Packet (includes sample summer resume)
- Curriculum Vitae and Cover Letters (for academic job searchers)
- PhD Pathways: Exploring Your Career Options
- Resumes and Cover Letters for Graduate Level Students
- Teaching K-12

Books available in the CDC Resource Center:

- *Be Your Own Headhunter Online*, Dixon and Tiersten
- *Creative Careers: How to Put Together a Winning Resume*
- *Damn Good Ready to Go Resumes*, Parker
- *Expert Resumes for Health Care Careers*
- *Electronic Resumes for the New Job Market*, Weddle
- *Encyclopedia of Job-Winning Resumes*, Fourier and Spin
- *From College to Career*, Asher
- *Heart & Soul Resumes*, Cochran and Peerce
- *Hook Up, Get Hired! The Internet Job Search Revolution*, Kennedy
- *Internet Resumes*, Weddle
- *Resumes*, National Business Employment Weekly
- *Resumes for Performing Arts Careers*
- *Resumes that Mean Business*, Eyer
- *Same-Day Resume: Write an Effective Resume in an Hour*
- *The Smart Woman's Guide to Resumes and Job Hunting*, King and Sheldon
- *The Global Resume and CV Guide*, Thompson
- *Trashproof Resumes*, Princeton Review
- *Use the Internet to Land Your Dream Job!*, Goodwin, Cohn, and Spivey
- *Vault Guide to Resumes, Cover Letters, and Interviewing*. 3rd Edition, Howard Leifman, et al

SAMPLE ACTION VERBS LISTED BY FUNCTIONAL SKILL AREA

COMMUNICATION

Aided
 Arbitrated
 Advised
 Clarified
 Consulted
 Co-authored
 Collaborated
 Coordinated
 Counseled
 Defined
 Enlisted
 Formulated
 Influenced
 Informed
 Inspired
 Interpreted
 Interviewed
 Mediated
 Merged
 Negotiated
 Promoted
 Publicized
 Recommended
 Represented
 Resolved
 Suggested

CREATIVE

Acted
 Abstracted
 Adapted
 Composed
 Conceptualized
 Created
 Designed
 Developed
 Directed
 Drew
 Fashioned
 Generated
 Illustrated
 Imagined
 Improvised
 Integrated
 Innovated
 Painted
 Performed
 Planned
 Problem solved
 Shaped
 Synthesized
 Visualized
 Wrote

DETAILED ORIENTED

Analyzed
 Approved
 Arranged
 Classified
 Collated
 Compared
 Compiled
 Coordinated
 Documented
 Enforced
 Followed through
 Met deadlines
 Prepared
 Processed
 Recorded
 Retrieved
 Set priorities
 Systemized
 Tabulated

FINANCIAL

Administered
 Allocated
 Analyzed
 Appraised
 Audited
 Budgeted
 Calculated
 Computed
 Developed
 Evaluated
 Figured
 Maintained
 Managed
 Performed
 Planned
 Projected

MANUAL SKILLS

Arranged
 Assembled
 Bound
 Built
 Checked
 Classified
 Constructed
 Controlled
 Cut
 Designed
 Developed
 Drove
 Handled
 Installed
 Invented
 Maintained
 Monitored
 Prepared
 Operated
 Repaired
 Tested

PROVIDING SERVICE

Advised
 Attended
 Cared
 Coached
 Coordinated
 Counseled
 Demonstrated
 Explained
 Furnished
 Generated
 Inspected
 Installed
 Issued
 Mentored
 Delivered
 Referred
 Repaired
 Provided
 Purchased
 Submitted

ORGANIZING

Achieved
 Assigned
 Consulted
 Contracted
 Controlled
 Coordinated
 Decided
 Delegated
 Developed
 Established
 Evaluated
 Negotiated
 Organized
 Planned
 Prepared
 Prioritized
 Produced
 Recommended
 Reported

LEADERSHIP

Administered
 Chaired
 Convinced
 Directed
 Examined
 Executed
 Expanded
 Facilitated
 Improved
 Initiated
 Managed
 Oversaw
 Produced
 Recommended
 Reviewed
 Supervised

RESEARCH/ INVESTIGATION

Calculated
 Cataloged
 Collected
 Computed
 Conducted
 Correlated
 Critiqued
 Diagnosed
 Discovered
 Examined
 Experimented
 Extrapolated
 Evaluated
 Gathered
 Identified
 Inspected
 Investigated
 Monitored
 Proved
 Reviewed
 Surveyed
 Tested

TECHNICAL

Assembled
 Built
 Calculated
 Computed
 Designed
 Engineered
 Fabricated
 Maintained
 Operated
 Programmed
 Remodeled
 Repaired
 Solved

TEACHING SKILLS

Adapted
 Advised
 Clarified
 Coached
 Developed
 Evaluated
 Encouraged
 Informed
 Inspired
 Motivated
 Represented
 Participated
 Provided
 Supported
 Taught
 Trained
 Verified

SAMPLE REFERENCE LIST
REFERENCES FOR JOHN AVILA

Dr. Jan Smith
Department of Biological Sciences
Stanford University
Stanford, CA 94305
650-555-3218
Email: jans@stanford.edu
Relationship: professor

Jerome Titan
Senior Scientist
Genentech
1204 Lloyd St.
South San Francisco, CA 94080
650-555-2222
Email: jtitan@genentech.com
Relationship: past internship supervisor

Vanessa James
Store Manager
The Gap
1999 Main St.
San Francisco, CA 94105
415-555-3333
Email: Vanessa@thegap.com
Relationship: past supervisor

- *References should be listed on a separate sheet of paper.*
- *Typically, references are requested at the point you are considered a finalist for the position.*
- *It is important to contact your references prior to submitting their names to potential employers.*

SAMPLE ELECTRONIC RESUME

AUDREY CRENSHAW
P.O. Box 12345
Stanford, CA 94309
650.497.1234
student@stanford.edu

OBJECTIVE

Summer intern position focusing on software development

EDUCATION

Stanford University, Stanford, CA
Bachelor of Science, Computer Science, expected June 200X
Coursework: Java, C, LISP, programming paradigms and algorithms, databases, and artificial intelligence

COMPUTER SKILLS

C, Java, LISP, Perl, VisualBASIC, Oracle, PL/SQL, ODL/OQL, XML, SQL/CLI, PSM, UNIX, Linux, HTML Web page design, Dreamweaver, Fireworks, Flash, Photoshop, GoLive, Illustrator, Acrobat, FileMakerPro, Lotus Notes Databases

EXPERIENCE

Career Development Center, Stanford University, Stanford CA
Computer Technician and Programmer, 10/200X-present

- * Set up and maintain JSP server for connectivity to FileMakerPro databases
- * Help design and maintain center web site

Adobe Systems, Adobe Solutions Network, San Jose, CA
Database Intern, 6/200X-9/200X

- * Set up and maintained JSP web pages for connectivity to MySQL databases
- * Redesigned and maintained related FileMakerPro, Lotus Notes, and Oracle databases with team of two engineers

City of Orange, Orange, CA
Civil Engineering Intern, Summers 200X-200X

- * Assisted with organizing road design plans

HONORS/AWARDS

Bausch and Lomb Achievement Award
National Society of Women Engineers Award

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Youth Science Center, Teacher's Aide
Campaign for Congress, Volunteer
Campaign for City Council, Volunteer

ACTIVITIES and INTERESTS

Society of Women Engineers
Illustration, Writing Poetry

Emailing Resumes

- *Don't forget to include a cover letter in the body of the email.*
- *When emailing resume files, name them so the employer can easily identify it as your resume. Last name, followed by first name and the word "resume" is most helpful.*

Optical Scanning

- *Optical or electronic scanning technology allows organizations to handle large amounts of information on incoming job applicants by scanning resumes for key words which indicate skills, education and knowledge areas the employer is seeking. Your resume is scanned into the computer as an image. Optical character recognition (OCR) sorts the image into recognizable letters, words and symbols.*
- *Left-justify all text and avoid using underlining, italics, bullets, bold, and columns.*

**Sample Chronological Resume
(Times – 10pt)**

IRMA JONES

Present Address:
P.O. Box 1234
Stanford, CA 94309
650-555-3212

e-mail: irmaj@stanford.edu

Permanent Address:
9856 Howe Drive
Hometown, CA 90777
707-555-0000

EDUCATION:

- 9/0X – present **Stanford University**, Stanford, CA
Expected Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, 6/05
Pursuing a minor in English (optional). Coursework includes: economics, statistics, and computer science. GPA: 3.7/4.0 (GPA optional)
- 3/0X – 6/0X **Stanford-in-Washington**, Washington DC
(Might also mention: overseas programs, summer school coursework, and other universities attended)

WORK EXPERIENCE:

- 9/0X – present **Resident Assistant**, Casa Zapata, Stanford University, Stanford, CA
Work with a team of four resident assistants in a 90-student, four class dorm. Create, plan, and organize academic, cultural, and social activities for student residents. Enhance community spirit and guide residents in assuming responsibility for their personal and communal lives. Position attained through competitive selection process.
- 6/0X – 9/0X **Legal Assistant**, Law Offices of Garcia, Hernandez & Harrison, Sacramento, CA
Sorted and cataloged proceedings, correspondence, and information related to race discrimination cases. Performed document research and conducted initial intake interviews with prospective clients. Summarized depositions, composed correspondence, answered phones, Gained knowledge of Microsoft Word and FileMaker Pro.
- 1/0X – 6/0X **Studio Operator**, Stanford Instructional Television Network, Stanford, CA
Taped classroom instruction, operated camera and audio equipment.
- 6/0X – 9/0X **Research Assistant**, United States Trade Council, Washington DC
Researched Latin American trading blocs. Analyzed trade patterns and produced summary briefs on trade developments. Maintained various internal databases.
- 6/0X – 9/0X **Community Service Intern**, Second Harvest Food Bank, San Jose, CA
Oversaw adult volunteers in procuring over 60,000 pounds of fresh produce from farms in the Central Valley. Assisted with food distribution to low-income residents. Analyzed participation in volunteer programs using Excel spreadsheets. Designed and conducted volunteer orientation programs; contributed articles to organization's monthly newsletter.

SKILLS:

- Computer:** Experienced with Macintosh/IBM. Software includes MSWord, Excel, PageMaker, PowerPoint, FileMaker Pro. Avid Internet surfer.
- Languages:** Fluent in Spanish; working knowledge of French.
Trained in making presentations, conducting research, writing and editing.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Other work experience includes: camp counselor, math tutor, retail sales associate, and teachers aide.
- Member, Haas Public Service Center Advisory Board (20XX – 20XX)
- Staff member, Stanford Quad Yearbook (20XX – 20XX)
- Have financed substantial portion of educational expenses through scholarships, loans, and summer/academic year employment.

Sample Chronological Resume (Sports)

Arial – 10pt

IMA SWIMMER

Present Address:

PO Box 11443
Stanford, CA 94309
(650) 497-4444

iswim@stanford.edu

Permanent Address:

1949 Diamond Court
Denver, CO 80918
(719) 599-3333

EDUCATION:

Stanford University, Stanford, CA (9/20XX-present)

BA in Communications expected, 6/20XX. Pursuing minor in Economics. Coursework includes Political Science, American Studies, Psychology, Humanities, and Journalism. Intend on taking a web design course next quarter. GPA: 3.5/4.0

Awarded Stanford University Department of Athletics Honor Athlete and Scholar Athlete, 8/XX

Partners for Academic Excellence participant 10/XX-6/XX

Martin County High School, Gillette, MO (8/XX-5/XX)

Class Valedictorian; Cumulative GPA: 4.6/5.0

Leadership experience as Junior Class Government Representative and Senior Class Government Secretary. Parliamentarian for the Future Business Leaders of America.

EXPERIENCE:

Seminar Coordinator, Focused Care Dentistry, Colorado Springs, CO (12/XX-present)

Organize dental seminars. Reserve venues, confirm speakers, design brochures, compile introductory information packets, process reservations, and delegate staff responsibilities.

Social Chairman, Kappa Kappa Gamma Sorority (KKG), Stanford University (1/XX-present)

Work with a team of two social chairmen to create, plan, and organize eight social activities per quarter for KKG members and assign responsibilities within the chapter.

Trained Speaker/Volunteer, Bay Area Sports Organizing Committee (BASOC), Palo Alto, CA (1/XX-present)

Trained to speak, on behalf of BASOC and the San Francisco 2012 Olympic Bid, to local companies and schools.

Member, Stanford Varsity Women's Swim Team, Stanford, CA (5/XX-11/XX)

Balanced coursework with 30 hours of practice per week. Traveled across the country for meets, developed ability to work closely with a team and perform individually under high-pressure circumstances. Competed for Stanford in the 20XX Olympic Trials as well as the 20XX Pacific 10 Championship Swim Meet.

Camp Coordinator, Gillette Gator Swimming Camp, Gillette, MO (Summers 6/XX – 9/XX)

Planned, organized, and conducted the Gillette Gator Swimming Camp for the Gillette Gator Swim Team and other teams across the State. Worked with young aspiring athletes to perfect their swimming technique and develop a winning attitude.

ACADEMIC AWARDS:

- Academic All-American (20XX-20XX)
- Math Excellence Award (20XX-20XX)
- Spanish Honors (20XX-20XX)
- Society of Women Engineers Highest Honor 20XX

ATHLETIC AWARDS:

- 13-time high school All-American
- Former National High School record holder in the 50 yard freestyle
- Two-time High School National Champion in the 50 yard freestyle (20XX, 20XX)
- State Record Holder in the 50 yard free, 100 yard free, 200 medley relay, 400 free relay

SKILLS:

Languages: Working knowledge of Spanish

Computer: MSWord, PowerPoint, avid Internet surfer and online shopper

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Volunteer with Stanford Project on Hunger (SPOON) to help the local homeless population

Sample Functional Resume
(Helvetica – 12 pt)

MARY JAN MARTIN

1444 Walnut Drive
Redwood City, CA 94063
650-555-2222
Cell: 650-555-6789
mjm2@stanford.edu

OBJECTIVE: Production Artist in an advertising agency or magazine publishing environment where excellent design skills can be utilized.

EDUCATION: **Stanford University**, Stanford, CA
B.A. degree in Art, expected 6/200X
Elective coursework in math, computer science, psychology;
GPA 3.6/4.0

SKILLS: **Design:** Created cover designs for publications including newsletters and brochures utilizing PageMaker & Quark.

Electronic Media: Designed page layouts in Dreamweaver for several university academic department web sites. Created virtual post cards using Shockwave and Flash 4 technology.

Photography: Coursework and self-acquired knowledge in black/white and color photography. Expert in shooting both indoor/outdoor candid, groups, nature and sports pictures. Experience in darkroom work, and dry mounting, and matting.

Additional Computer Skills: Excel, FileMaker Pro, MS Word.

WORK EXPERIENCE:

9/0X – present **Office Assistant**, Slide Collection, Humanities & Sciences, Art Department, Stanford University

6/0X – 9/0X **Production Artist**, Miller Advertising, Cupertino, CA

6/0X – 9/0X **Sales Associate**, Franklin Frame Shop, Palo Alto, CA

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Fluent in French, working knowledge of Spanish.
- Interests include calligraphy and ceramics.
- Volunteer: Created and designed brochures for Boys and Girls Club, Redwood City, CA

Sample Combination Resume
(Times New Roman – 10pt)

SARAH ANDERSON

123 Main Street • Los Altos, CA 94022 • Cell: 650-XXX-XXXX • sanderson@stanford.edu

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS:

- Outstanding analytical and quantitative skills
- Knowledgeable in systems design, programming, and data management
- Excellent communicator, effective mentor and tutor
- Effective as a team member and capable of performing independently

EDUCATION:

Stanford University, Stanford, CA (9/0X – present)

Master of Science, Electrical Engineering, expected June, 200X

Stanford University, Stanford, CA (9/0X – 6/0X)

Bachelor of Science, Electrical Engineering, GPA 3.9/4.0

Coursework: logic design, computer architecture and networks, analog design lab, device electronics, signal processing

International School of Geneva, Geneva, Switzerland (9/9X – 6/9X)

PROJECT EXPERIENCE:

Research Assistant, Electrical Engineering, Stanford University, Stanford, CA (6/0X – 9/0X)

Member of the Architecture and Arithmetic Group, with Professor Martin Morf as mentor. Investigated wireless network technologies, such as wireless modems, Bluetooth technologies and IEEE's 802.11b.

Research Assistant, Electrical Engineering, Stanford University, Stanford, CA (6/0X – 9/0X)

Member of a team designing Hydra, a single-chip multiprocessor. Designed an interface that allowed Hydra to be tested on an FPGA that consisted of two components, a graphical user interface and the hardware implementation in Verilog.

WORK EXPERIENCE:

Course Assistant, School of Engineering, Stanford University, Stanford, CA (9/0X – present)

Leader in the Accelerated Calculus for Engineers Program for freshmen. Improve students' math ability and performance, thereby increasing student confidence. Encourage collaborative group learning process. Conduct student counseling/advising.

Software Engineer Intern, Xerox Corporation, Rochester, NY (6/9X – 9/0X)

Part of a team of engineers and technicians testing machine software and software upgrade tools by developing test procedures and processing test results. Conducted presentations to the team, documented test procedures and software download instructions.

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE:

President, Society of Black Scientists & Engineers (SBSE), Stanford University, Stanford, CA (5/0X – 6/0X)

Oversaw operations of Chapter Executive Board of 13 officers. Promoted membership and provided opportunities for members' professional development. Managed and approved community outreach programs as well as the organization's budget.

Academic Excellence Chair, SBSE, Stanford University, Stanford, CA (5/9X – 6/0X)

Managed a team of six to organize/implement projects and activities that cultivated the academic vitality of the membership.

SKILLS: Computer: Macintosh/IBM; hardware proficiency with CAD tools including Xilinx Foundation Tools, Viewlogic Workview Office and P-Spice. Additionally, UNIX, Windows 9x, 2000 and NT, and Mac OS platforms.

Language: Fluent in French.

INTERESTS: • Camping, hiking, rock-climbing, sailing, soccer, and travel

Sample Summer Resume
(Helvetica – 10pt)

JOE FROSH

Present Address:

P.O. Box 123
Stanford, CA 94309
(650) 555-5555
Email: xxx@stanford.edu

Permanent Address:

345 Summer Job Lane
Hometown, IL 11111
(213) 555-5555

OBJECTIVE: To obtain a summer position or internship in the field of advertising

EDUCATION:

9/XX-present **Stanford University**, Stanford, CA
BA degree, expected 6/XX.
Coursework includes: communication, English and psychology.

9/XX-6/XX **ABC High School**, Hometown, CA
Advanced placement courses in math, science and English.
Salutatorian

**HONORS/
AWARDS:**

- National Achievement Scholar
- AP Scholar
- National Honor Roll
- Gates Millennium Scholar Finalist

EXPERIENCE:

9/XX-present **Student Assistant**, Career Development Center, Stanford University, Stanford, CA
Answer daily telephone inquiries from students and employers. Greet employers visiting Stanford for on-campus recruiting. Type and file correspondence letters. Manage database of student passwords.

9/XX-6/XX **Yearbook Editor**, ABC High School, Hometown, CA
Supervised a staff of 18. Set timelines for project completion, divided and assigned tasks, and managed all aspects of publication's production. Served as liaison between yearbook staff and school administration. Assisted in soliciting over \$5000 in funding for publication. Conceptualized new layout and design format for yearbook.

6/XX-9/XX **Head Lifeguard**, Sink Like a Rock Pool, Hometown, ST
Oversaw the safety of 100+ swimmers daily. Assisted in the hiring, training and supervision of new lifeguards. Organized pool competitions and special events. Developed flyers to publicize events to the community. Promoted from position of lifeguard 6/XX.

SKILLS:

Computer: Familiar with Macintosh software including MS Word, PageMaker, Excel.
Languages: Fluent in Spanish; working knowledge of basic French.

ADDITIONAL

INFORMATION:

- Member, ABC High School Varsity Baseball team
- Traveled throughout the United States and Mexico
- Eagle Scout
- Interests include jazz, basketball, and baseball card collecting
- Certified American Red Cross CPR and First Aid Instructor

The cover letter provides you with an opportunity to introduce yourself and state your objective, personalize your resume, and highlight information that addresses the needs and interests of the employer. Bear in mind that letters you write not only convey your interest and qualifications, but also give the employer an opportunity to observe your attentiveness to detail, spelling, grammar, and the overall quality of your written communication. **Flaws in your letters will often be interpreted as flaws in your qualifications.** The best cover letters are short and to the point, generally three paragraphs in length.

Your Name

Address
City, ST Zip Code
Date

Name, Title
Company/Organization Name
Address
City, ST Zip Code

- Resumes are only as good as the letter accompanying them. So make sure that you spend some time on your letter and direct it to the appropriate person.

Opening Paragraph:

What is your intent in writing this letter? What position are you applying for and how did you learn about it?

Briefly introduce yourself, your major, and the degree anticipated. If you are aware of a specific opening, refer to it. If you are not aware of a specific position, state your area of interest. This paragraph can also be used to refer to the individual who recommended that you contact the organization, or other factors that prompted you to write. If possible, convey why you are interested in the organization and anything you know about their product or service.

- What you write and how you write it tells potential employers a great deal about your professionalism, competence, and personality.

- In a job search aimed at business and professional circles, proper procedures and communication etiquette are important.

Second Paragraph:

What are your qualifications? Why do you want to work for this organization? What would you enjoy doing for them? Sell yourself and be brief. What the employer's appetite so that he/she will want to read your resume and schedule an interview.

Describe highlights from your background that would be of greatest interest to the organization. Focus on skills, activities, accomplishments, and past experience you can contribute to the organization and its work. If possible, demonstrate that you know something about the organization and industry/field. Use action verbs that describe relevant skills and expertise you can contribute. Mention specific knowledge you may have such as computer applications, foreign languages, lab techniques, writing and editing capabilities. You are attempting to create a match or "notion of fit" between the employer's hiring needs and your interests, experience, and skills.

- A cover letter should entice an employer to want to take action on your resume. It should persuade the employer to invite you for a job interview.

Third Paragraph:

What is your plan of action? Do you want to follow up with a phone call or do you want them to contact you?

Close your letter by stating that you would like to discuss employment opportunities or other information with the individual and that you will call to follow up on your letter. This demonstrates your initiative and follow-through and will help you maintain some control of your efforts.

Other points that can be made in the last paragraph:

- Express your willingness to provide additional information
- State a specific time when you will follow up by phone or e-mail
- Let them know if and when you are going to visit their area
- Thank the person receiving your letter for their time and interest

Most importantly, remember to address the cover letter to a person. If you do not have a name, call the department or human resources to find out to whom your letter should be addressed. As a last resort, address your letter to the personnel manager, hiring manager, or recruiting representative.

TIPS FOR CREATING AN EFFECTIVE COVER LETTER

- Collect your thoughts. Your ideas may not come out logically or sequentially, but write them down. Don't judge and evaluate, simply collect them.
- Spend time on your letter. As the adage goes, "With part-time effort, you get part-time results."
- Write a draft, let it cool off overnight, and then rewrite if necessary.
- Use a strong close, e.g. "After you have had an opportunity to review this letter, I will call you..." Avoid weak endings such as "I look forward to your reply" or "Please call me at your earliest convenience."
- Limit your letter to one page; a letter is an opportunity to sell, so say something about you, while also focusing on the needs of the employer. Write the way you talk. It should be well-worded, concise, and controlled in the use of the pronoun "I".
- While a general cover letter can be used, best results come from personalizing each letter to fit the specific circumstances, position, or organization.
- Ask for opinions, advice, and feedback from friends, a counselor, or someone in the profession. Check spelling and grammar.
- Avoid cluttered desktop publishing. Business letters should look conservative. If you want to be creative, do so in your choice of words. It should be aesthetically appealing with careful attention to spacing and format. Use letter-quality printer paper or high quality bond paper. Stick with white, ivory, or off-white.
- Remember to sign it personally and include your telephone number and e-mail address.
- Don't use someone else's letter and if you are using the same letter for several companies, remember to change the name in the body of your letter.
- Devise a system to keep track of the follow-up steps you will take and the responses you receive. Most students have found that binders or file folders for organizing the job search and its correspondence are essential.
- Follow-up, follow-up. People will call you, but you'll improve your odds dramatically if you follow up your letters with a phone call.
- Don't mark letters "personal and confidential" unless there is a solid reason why a secretary or an administrative assistant can't open them. If your letter is persuasive enough, it will get through.

COVER LETTERS ONLINE

More and more job seekers are asked to send their resumes and cover letters online. These letters are about half the length of a regular cover letter. It is important to mention in your letter how you found out about the position, what you are looking for, and what you have to offer. You might also mention a few key words the organization might want to hear. Most importantly, be succinct. Most experts recommend that you compose your cover letter off-line first before importing it into an outgoing e-mail message. You can do this by using your software's "copy and paste" feature to enter the text into your e-mail or you can send it as an attachment.

TYPES OF COVER LETTERS (*Used by Stanford students*)

Sample #1

This letter accompanies a completed application form or may be used to respond to a specific job listing that requests a letter and resume, and possibly other documentation.

Sample #2

While not always required, resumes submitted for campus interviews are often accompanied by cover letters. This letter provides you with an opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge of the organization, indicates why you are interested in the position, and highlights your background and experience as it applies to the position.

Sample #3

Mailing unsolicited letters is another way to tap into the hidden job market. While the "letter campaign" is not the most effective strategy for every job seeker, unsolicited letters may work well for applicants with unique expertise in a given area or special technical skills, or for those who wish to work for small organizations in a specific capacity.

Sample #4

Approach letters request information about an organization or industry. They are generally sent to specific contacts you may have obtained from a friend, the Stanford Alumni Network, a career fair representative or faculty member. Depending on your purpose, you may or may not want to send a resume with this type of letter. Please see the **Networking** publication available at the Career Development Center for additional information on Network/Approach Letters.

CDC RESOURCES

Publications with additional relevant advice available at the CDC web site and Career Resource Center:

- Internship and Summer Job Resources
- Resumes and Cover Letters for Master's Level Students
- Curriculum Vitae and Cover Letters (for academic job searchers)
- Contacting Employers Directly
- Teaching K-12

Additional Resources:

- Binder of Sample Resumes and Cover Letters that contains copies of actual cover letters written by Stanford students and identified by CDC counselors as especially well written.

Books available at the Career Resource Center:

- *Cover Letters that Knock 'em Dead*, Yate
- *Cover Letters That Will Get You the Job You Want*, Wynett
- *Cover Letter Magic: Trade Secrets of Professional Resume Writers*, Bendow and Kursmark
- *Dynamic Cover Letters for New Graduates*, Hansen
- *Dynamite Cover Letters*, Krannich and Krannich
- *201 Dynamite Job Search Letters*, Krannich
- *201 Killer Cover letters (with CD-Rom ed.)*, Podesta and Paxton
- *Finding a Job on the Internet*, Glossbrenner and Glossbrenner
- *From College to Career; Entry Level Resumes for Any Major*, Asher
- *Hook Up, Get Hired*, Kennedy
- *The Everything Cover Letter Book*, Graber
- *Vault Guide to Resumes, Cover Letters and Interviewing*, 3rd Edition, Leifman, et al

SAMPLE #1- Letter of Application, in response to a Job Listing

(Times 10 pt)

P.O. Box 000033
Stanford, CA 94000
October 19, 20XX

Ms. Marian Armstone, Human Resources Manager
LEK Consulting
9999 Oak Street
Palo Alto, CA 9003

Dear Ms. Armstone:

I am applying for the Associate position at LEK Consulting. After speaking with Jo Kimmer at Stanford's Career Fair on October 9, I believe that I have the skills, academic training, and work experience that qualifies me for this position.

I will complete a Master of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering in June 2004. My coursework includes technical, computer science, and economics courses that have honed the analytical and quantitative skills I believe are needed to succeed in this position. In addition, my hands-on experience in various internships and students leadership positions supports my qualifications as an Associate.

As an intern at General Motors this past summer, I developed analytical skills by taking measurements on a development vehicle identifying design problems, offering solutions for improvement, and making recommendations in a written report. I was awarded a General Motors scholarship for my exceptional contributions as a member of the S-10 Crew Cab launch team.

At Stanford, I demonstrated leadership ability by serving as the elected president for a service organization with over one hundred active members. In this effort, I have my ability to make good decisions, plan and organize my time, work well on a team, and have developed sound interpersonal, oral, and written communications skills. Finally, I bring an entrepreneurial spirit and creativity to this position, as evidenced by my experience designing, patenting, and marketing my own product.

I would enjoy speaking with you further to discuss, in detail, how I am a match for the Associate position. I will follow up in two weeks to see if there is additional information you would like me to provide or answer questions you may have (another option: I am eager to apply my energy, experience, and enthusiasm to the work of LEK and look forward to hearing from you soon.).

Sincerely,

(Signature)

John Duncan
Attachment:

SAMPLE #3-Unsolicited or Broadcast Letter

(Helvetica 10pt)

P.O. Box 22445
Stanford, CA 94309
August 7, 20XX

Dr. John Allen, Associate Director
INT Consulting Company
12396 Park Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 93032

Dear Dr. Allen:

I am currently a student at Stanford University pursuing a BA degree in economics. I am very interested in business related careers and am seeking opportunities to develop and utilize my skills and qualifications. I have researched your company and believe that your commitment to excellence and service is in alignment with my career goals and beliefs.

In addition to economics, my academic training includes extensive coursework in the sciences where I've developed very strong analytical, quantitative, and technical skills. My research has honed the writing, planning, and organization, and presentation skills that I believe are essential in a business environment.

As an Investment Banker Summer Intern at Morgan Stanley, I collaborated with brokers to market on-line investing, consulted with prospective clients and networked through the Internet and other computer software. As my resume indicates, I have demonstrated strong leadership and decision-making skills through active participation in campus organizations. In my effort to continue to develop these important skills, I will serve as a Head Academic Advisor this coming year, teaming with resident assistants and faculty members to plan educational and social programs for freshmen to help them plan their academics and adjust to campus life.

I am excited about the many facets of the business world and welcome the opportunity to discuss opportunities to explore in your company. I will follow up in a week to answer questions you may have or provide additional information. In the meantime, should you have questions, I can be reached at 650-600-0000 or e-mail:

Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

Maria Johnson
Attachment:

SAMPLE # 4: Approach Letter Or Networking Letter

(To request advice and an informational interview, not a direct request for employment)

(Times New Roman 10pt)

P.O. Box 12345
Stanford, CA 94309
650-999-1212

February 10, 20XX

Ms. Laura Valencia, Manager
Creative Services Department
Putnam, Blair and Associates
12 Front Street
San Francisco, CA 94108

Dear Ms. Valencia:

This June, I will graduate with a B.A. degree in English from Stanford University. I have a strong interest in advertising and will soon seek a position as a Junior or Assistant Copywriter. Robert Blum encouraged me to contact you, suggesting that you might be willing to meet with me and provide an insider's view of how I can best identify employment opportunities in this field.

It may be helpful for you to know that I completed a summer internship in the Marketing Department of a small high-tech company and have worked as the Advertising Manager at the *Stanford Daily*. I believe that both experiences are relevant to future work in advertising. I have strong writing and communication skills and enjoy working in a fast-paced environment. In addition, working throughout my Stanford career to finance a substantial portion of my education has strengthened my time management skills and determination to pursue and achieve my goals. These skills, together with my passion for photography, fascination with the consumer market, and personal interest in the creative side of advertising lead to my strong interest in this field.

I will be in touch with you by phone this week. At your convenience, I would like to set up a short 20-30 minute meeting with you at your worksite. Any advice or suggestions for my job search are welcomed.

I understand you are busy, and I appreciate your time.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

Amy Chen
Attachment:

SAMPLE #2- Letter Accompanying a Resume for an On-Campus Interview

(Arial 10pt)

2468 College Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94306
January 10, 20XX

Mr. John Boulton (or if name is not known, "Recruiting Staff")
Director, Technical Administration
Hillview Laboratories
22244 Stevens Creek Blvd.
San Jose, CA 94000

Dear Mr. Boulton:

I appreciate the opportunity to meet with you this coming Thursday to discuss employment opportunities at Hillview Laboratories and to expand on my qualifications for the (title of position). I reviewed your web site and literature at the Career Development Center (or Business School Library) and also spoke with Janet Morris, who works at Hillview. Her comments have given me a clearer idea of your R & D efforts and the work with which I might be involved. In particular, I am impressed by your state-of-the-art laboratories and how Hillview has effectively integrated a participatory management style in its total operation.

As my resume reflects, I have previous research experience in the area of... where I... (explain what you did). You will note my graduate work also directly relates to the type of work currently being done at Hillview (Or highlight previous summer experience, coursework, thesis topic, or special skills that may be relevant to this employer. DO highlight or expand on a relevant entry from your resume, but DO NOT simply repeat what is already on your resume.).

Thank you for your interest in my application and your willingness to come to Stanford University for interviews. I look forward to meeting you and discussing how my background and experience can contribute to your work.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

Jason E. Jefferson
Attachment:

