

# INTRODUCTION

This Career Guide is intended to help you prepare of your resume. After you have completed a rough draft using this booklet as a guide, drop off your resume at the Career Center, or email it to [career.center@valpo.edu](mailto:career.center@valpo.edu) so a staff member can critique it for you.

**Prepared by the Valparaiso University Career Center staff**

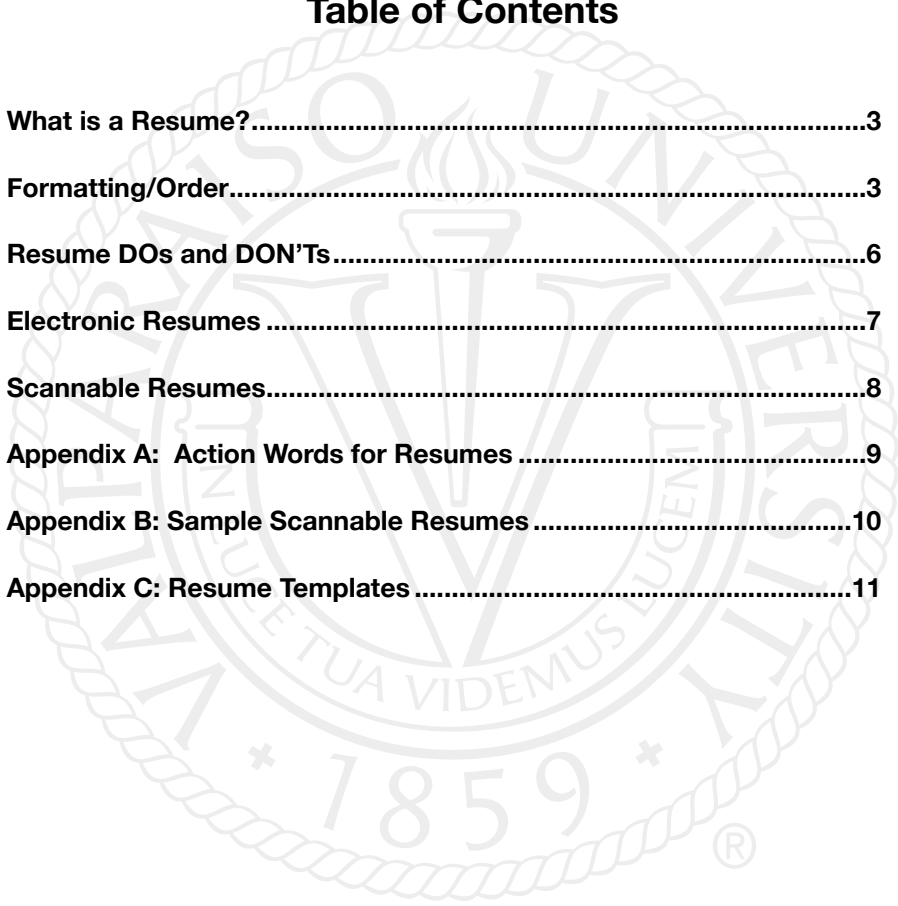
Alumni Hall  
Valparaiso University  
1602 LaPorte Avenue  
Valparaiso, Indiana 46383

Phone: 219.464.5005  
Fax: 219.464.5519  
[career.center@valpo.edu](mailto:career.center@valpo.edu)  
[www.valpo.edu/career](http://www.valpo.edu/career)

Hours: Monday through Friday  
8:00AM to 5:00PM

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## WHAT IS A RESUME?

A resume is a written tool you use to market yourself to employers and, more important, to obtain interviews. It should be both thorough and concise, and it should highlight your education, experience, skills, and accomplishments in order to distinguish you from other applicants and to attract an employer's attention. While your resume might not be solely responsible for securing a job, it's an essential component of your job search process.

The most important aspect of your resume is content: it must contain relevant information that gives an employer a clear sense of who you are as a student, an individual, and a potential employee. A close second priority is appearance: a resume must look professional, since it's the first impression an employer will have of you. It must also be carefully typed with no spelling, grammatical, or typographical errors, and it should be organized in a highly legible and visually appealing format.

Formatting your resume with a time-tested, professional template is always a good idea. The Career Center offers three downloadable templates on our website ([www.valpo.edu/career](http://www.valpo.edu/career)).

*See Appendix C for sample resume templates.*

If you're submitting a hard copy of your resume, print it on high quality, woven bond resume paper. You can buy inexpensive packets of resume paper at the Valpo Book Center and local office stores.

## FORMATTING

The first step in the resume writing process is selecting an appropriate format. The two most common formats are chronological and functional. Current students and recent graduates typically choose a chronological format, which is arranged in reverse chronological order, with the most recent experiences listed first. Chronological resumes are ideally one page long.

A functional resume focuses on skills and abilities, so it may be a better choice when your experience isn't directly related to the position you're seeking or the field you wish to enter. You might also choose to use a functional resume if you've gained particular skill sets through a variety of experiences, or if you've spent an extended period of time out of the job market. Functional resumes can be two pages in length.

## **ORDER**

### **Contact Information**

Always list your name at the top of your resume in a font that's larger than the rest of the text, and possibly in all capital letters or a boldface font. Below your name, list all your contact information, including your campus and permanent addresses, your home phone and cell phone numbers, and your email address. The more information you provide, the easier time an employer will have contacting you.

### **Objective**

The next item should be your Objective. When applying for a specific job, include detailed information such as the position title, the company name, and the name of the position you are seeking. Even if you don't have a particular job in mind, you can still include specifics such as your area of study and the type of organization you're interested in. Use phrasing such as, "To obtain a social work internship with a non-profit organization" or "Seeking a full-time accounting position with a Fortune 500 company."

As you think about what to include in your Objective, concentrate on your skills and attributes and how your contributions can positively impact an employer. Employers are always pleased to learn what you can do for them.

For the next sections, decide whether your Education or your Experience is more important for the position you're seeking. Most often, Education will be most relevant for current students or new graduates. Once you've been out of school for a year or more, consider moving your Education section further down the page.

### **Education**

This section should include the college or university you are currently attending, as well as colleges or universities you have attended in the past, listed in descending chronological order. Indicate the name of the degree, and the month and year you expect to graduate (if applicable). Also include your major(s) and minor(s), as well as any study abroad experiences, senior projects, or honors theses.

Freshmen, and occasionally sophomores, can also include high school information. Make your decision based on the amount of space available in your resume.

You may also list your GPA in this section. If your major GPA is significantly higher than your cumulative GPA, consider listing your major GPA as well. Employers are often interested to learn that you have performed well in your major classes.

An additional note about GPAs: if you have doubts about whether you should include this information, consult a Career Center staff member.

## **Experience**

Next, list your employment Experience, typically in reverse chronological order. Include paid and non-paid positions, especially those that relate to the field you're pursuing. Also include the name of the employing organization, the location (city, state), your job title, the dates of your employment, and a brief descriptive summary of your job duties and accomplishments.

Use action verbs to describe your job professionally, and to inject some life into the composition of your resume. Phrase your job description in terms of outcomes and accomplishments; this information can help employers understand how you can contribute to their organization.

If space permits, use two to four bullet points to organize the description clearly and succinctly.

## **Additional Sections**

Additional sections may include Volunteer Experience, Campus or Community Activities, Honors, Professional Memberships, and Skills. For Skills, include computer programs, foreign language proficiency, and other relevant job- or major-related skills that don't appear elsewhere in the resume.

## References

Most employers will request a list of three to four references following an interview. Don't list references on your resume; instead, include them on a separate sheet of paper. Select your references from business, educational, and personal contacts. Always be sure to ask permission to include these people on your list of references, then find out what sort of contact information they'd like you to provide. For example, some people may want to be contacted by email, and others may not want to give out their home phone numbers. Be sure to respect their preferences.

Contact information typically includes the person's name, title or position, name of employer (if applicable), complete mailing address, phone numbers, and email address.

Also include a brief mention of how you know the person. For example, if the person is a professor, list the number of classes you have had, or the amount of time you have known the person. This information can be extremely helpful to employers when they decide whom to contact.

Be sure to discuss the type of work you're seeking with the people you select so they'll be prepared to talk effectively to prospective employers. You might also want to give them a current copy of your resume so they'll be familiar with your recent accomplishments.

Employers will typically contact your references after a second interview. If you're offered a second interview and the employer hasn't yet asked for a copy of your references, you may want to provide a copy at this time.

## RESUME DOs and DON'Ts

### *Do . . .*

- Present your information in an organized, legible format
- Create a smoothly flowing document
- Use action verbs
- Use parallel verbs of the same form, voice, and tense whenever possible
- Write clearly and concisely
- Depict your experiences in a positive light
- Describe your work experience in terms of outcomes and accomplishments
- Tailor your resume to the particular job you're seeking
- Incorporate transferable skills such as teamwork, leadership, communication, and organization
- Format your resume to look neat and clean
- Make sure your resume is aesthetically balanced (top to bottom and left to right)
- Update your resume regularly
- Proofread! Proofread! Proofread!

### *Don't . . .*

- Jeopardize your integrity by exaggerating or falsifying your information
- Misrepresent your educational qualifications
- Include geographic limitations
- Mention salary requirements
- Expound on your personal philosophy or values
- Offer negative information
- Include reasons for changing past employers
- Provide personal information unrelated to job performance (marital status, age, gender)
- List high school information
- Use personal pronouns (I, me, my)
- Type in a font smaller than 10 points
- Use abbreviations

## **ELECTRONIC RESUMES**

Employers are using online technologies more and more these days to find the right candidate. By using the internet, for example, employers are able to gather applications from a much larger pool of candidates than they could in the past. Of course, competition increases along with an expanded number of candidates. For this reason, you should take steps to make your resume stand out from the masses.

Create an electronic resume by removing all formatting from your standard resume. By removing tables, borders, and shading, you'll make it possible for any employer to open and read the resume, regardless of the software he or she is using.

As a further courtesy, don't send your electronic resume as an attachment to an email message; attachments occasionally carry viruses or other security threats. Instead, copy the electronic resume and paste it into the body of an email message. You can also upload your electronic resume onto online resume databases, such as Experience e-Recruiting, which is available in the Valparaiso University Career Center.

To create an electronic resume, follow the steps below:

1. Open your standard resume, then click on File and Save As
2. Type a name for the new document
3. Open the drop down menu beneath the document's name, and select Plain Text or Text Only
4. Click OK

To make your electronic resume easier to read, add spaces between lines and use capital letters. Substitute dashes or asterisks for bullet points, and avoid using any italics, bold, or other special font formatting.

## **SCANNABLE RESUMES**

Organizations that receive large volumes of resumes from potential employees often use optical character recognition (OCR) devices to scan resumes into company databases. The computer system then searches through resumes and looks for specific keywords. This process is becoming increasingly popular, as it saves recruiters the trouble of reading hundreds, or even thousands, of resumes.

Scanned resumes don't need to be aesthetically pleasing, since a machine will be reading them. Instead, concentrate on text and wording, and be sure to include a selection of keywords.

### **Using Keywords**

Keywords are exactly what they sound like: important words that relate to your target job. They generally include qualifications, industry jargon, technical expertise, and personality traits. You can find keywords by carefully reviewing a job posting or job description, and looking for words that recur, or words that are specific to the position. For example, keywords for a business-related position might include:

- Development
- Market, marketing
- Budget
- Analysis

Your goal should be to include as many keywords as possible. But don't make the mistake of simply throwing in words randomly; some OCR devices are smart enough to read for context—and they'll ignore words that don't make sense.

## **TIPS FOR SCANNABLE RESUMES**

- Aesthetics aren't that important. Don't use bullets, italics, underlining, or bold type. Instead, use capital letters to emphasize information or to make the resume easier to read.
- Wording IS essential. Incorporate plenty of keywords into your text.
- Print on plain white paper with black ink. Avoid using paper that has a watermark. Don't fold your resume if it's going to be scanned.
- Include your contact information. Make sure your name, phone number(s), address(es), and email address are all on your scanner friendly resume.
- Incorporate white space. Plenty of white space will ensure the separation of words and categories.

*See Appendix B for a sample Scanned Resume.*

## APPENDIX A: Action Words for Resumes and Cover Letters

Accelerated	Earned	Pinpointed	Supervised
Activated	Edited	Planned	Supported
Adapted	Effected	Prepared	Taught
Administered	Eliminated	Prescribed	Tested
Advised	Established	Presented	Trained
Analyzed	Evaluated	Processed	Translated
Approved	Examined	Produced	
Arbitrated	Expanded	Promoted	
Arranged	Expedited	Proposed	
Assembled	Formulated	Protected	
Assisted	Founded	Proved	
Audited	Generated	Provided	
Built	Invented	Purchased	
Calculated	Implemented	Realized	
Charted	Improved	Received	
Collected	Increased	Recommended	
Completed	Identified	Recorded	
Compounded	Influenced	Reduced	
Conducted	Installed	Referred	
Conserved	Instituted	Reinforced	
Consolidated	Instructed	Rendered	
Constructed	Interpreted	Reorganized	
Consulted	Interviewed	Represented	
Controlled	Launched	Researched	
Coordinated	Led	Restored	
Counseled	Lectured	Revamped	
Created	Logged	Reviewed	
Delegated	Maintained	Revised	
Delivered	Managed	Routed	
Demonstrated	Mastered	Scheduled	
Designed	Motivated	Selected	
Detected	Navigated	Served	
Determined	Negotiated	Set up	
Developed	Obtained	Simplified	
Devised	Operated	Sold	
Diagnosed	Ordered	Solved	
Directed	Organized	Streamlined	
Discovered	Originated	Structured	
Dispensed	Oversaw	Studied	
Disproved	Participated in		
Distributed	Performed		
Drew up			

## **APPENDIX B:** Sample Scannable Resume

3700 Sheffield Drive  
Fort Atkinson, WI 53538  
(920) 442-7200

JOHN DOE  
John.Doe@valpo.edu  
200 Main Street  
Valparaiso, IN 26383  
219-012-3456 cell  
219-987-6543 permanent

### **OBJECTIVE**

Full-time Public Relations position

### **EDUCATION**

Bachelor of Arts, Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, IN, May 2007  
Major: Public Relations; Minor: German  
Overall GPA: 3.1 (on a 4.0 scale)  
\*Overseas Study Program: Reutlingen University, Fall 2005

### **EXPERIENCE**

CAMP ARCADIA, Arcadia, MI  
Program Staff/Kitchen Staff, Summer 2006  
\*Worked cooperatively with directors and staff as a member of the resort staff  
\*Planned and coordinated activities for guests of all ages  
\*Cooked, prepared, and presented meals to resort guests

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION, Valparaiso, IN  
General Office Assistant, January to May 2006  
\*Maintained good academic standing while balancing a work load of 15 hours per week  
\*Performed general office work including answering and directing departmental phone calls, assisting with computer duties, communicating with and aiding departmental professors and students

STATE FARM, Merrillville, IN  
Marketing Assistant, January to May, 2005  
\*Communicated the benefits and quality of State Farm Insurance to vastly diverse audiences through telemarketing, advertising, press releases, and setting client appointments

GALYANS TRADING COMPANY, Indianapolis, IN  
Sales Associate, June 2002 to May 2004  
\*Assisted and advised a wide variety of customers  
\*Helped train new staff

### **ACTIVITIES**

\*Public Relations Society of America (PRSSA), 2003-2007  
\*Association for Women in Communication (AWC), 2004-2007; President, 2006-2007  
\*Chi Omega National Fraternity, 2004-2007: Social Coordinator 2006, Executive Board Panhellenic Representative 2006  
\*German Club

## APPENDIX C: RESUME TEMPLATES

### RESUME 1 (YOUR NAME HERE)

---

1600 Campus Drive, Memorial Hall  
Valparaiso, IN 46383  
(219) 464-0000  
james.doe@valpo.edu

9870 Home Street  
Anytown, IN 46210  
(219) 589-5341

#### OBJECTIVE

Write one or two sentences about the type of position you're seeking, the type of organization you're seeking it in, and the skills you want to use on the job.

#### EDUCATION

**Valparaiso University**, Valparaiso, Indiana  
*Bachelor of \_\_\_\_\_* – expected \_\_\_\_\_ (Month, Year)  
Major: \_\_\_\_\_ Minor: \_\_\_\_\_  
Overall GPA: \_\_\_/4.0 Major GPA: \_\_\_/4.0

#### HONORS

- List academic scholarships, awards, or honors
- Include Dean's List if applicable

#### ACTIVITIES

- List student or community organizations
- Include dates and any leadership roles you've held

#### EXPERIENCE

August 2006  
to present

**ABC Manufacturing Company**, Valparaiso, IN  
*Job Title*

- Describe your work with active verb phrases
- Use one bullet point per main skill set or responsibility

January 2006  
to May 2006

**XYZ Manufacturing Company**, Chicago, IL  
*Job Title*

If you don't have room for bullet points, describe your work and accomplishments in a brief paragraph.

May 2005  
to August 2005

**123 Manufacturing Company**, Valparaiso, IN  
*Job Title*

- Use simple present tense verbs for jobs you currently have, and simple past tense verbs for jobs you no longer hold.

#### SKILLS

- List any computer skills, especially those related to your major.
- List any foreign language skills, and be sure to include your level of proficiency.
- Indicate any other skills related to your major and not included elsewhere on your resume.

#### AVAILABILITY

Month, Year

#### REFERENCES

Available upon request

## RESUME 2 (YOUR NAME HERE)

---

1600 Campus Drive, Valparaiso, IN 46383  
9870 Home Street, Anytown, IN 46210

219-464-0000

mary.student@valpo.edu

219-589-5341

### OBJECTIVE

---

Write one to two sentences about the type of position you're seeking, the type of organization you're seeking it in, and the skills you want to use on the job. Avoid using personal pronouns.

### EDUCATION

---

**Valparaiso University**, Valparaiso, IN

*Bachelor of \_\_\_\_\_* – expected \_\_\_\_\_ (Month, Year)

Major:

Minor:

Overall GPA:   /  4.0

Major GPA:   /  4.0

Honors: List any honors, honor societies, awards or scholarships and the dates you received them. Include Dean's List and the number of semesters if applicable.

### RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

---

**Name of Organization**, City, State

*Job Title*

Dates of Employment

- Describe your work using active verb phrases
- Use one bullet point per main skill set or responsibility

**Name of Organization**, City, State

*Job Title*

Dates of Employment

If you don't have room for bullet points, describe your work in a brief paragraph.

### OTHER EXPERIENCE

---

*Job Title*, Name of Organization, City, State

Dates of Employment

*Job Title*, Name of Organization, City, State

Dates of Employment

If you don't have room for this section, include the following at the bottom of the Experience section: Held other positions, including: *Waiter, Lifeguard, and Lawn Care*  
– Dates of Experience

### ACTIVITIES

---

- List student or community organizations you've been involved with
- Include leaderships roles and dates of involvement

### SKILLS

---

- List any computer skills, especially those related to your major
- Include any foreign language skills, along with your level of proficiency
- Indicate any other skills related to your major and not included elsewhere on your resume

## RESUME 3 (YOUR NAME HERE)

---

1600 Campus Drive, Memorial Hall  
Valparaiso, IN 46383  
(219) 464-0000  
james.doe@valpo.edu

9870 Home Street  
Anytown, IN 46210  
(219) 589-5341

**OBJECTIVE** Write the type of position you're seeking, the type of organization you're seeking it in, and the skills you want to use on the job. Avoid using personal pronouns.

**EDUCATION** **Valparaiso University**, Valparaiso, Indiana  
*Bachelor of \_\_\_\_\_* – expected \_\_\_\_\_ (Month, Year)  
Major: \_\_\_\_\_ Minor: \_\_\_\_\_  
Overall GPA: \_\_\_/4.0 Major GPA: \_\_\_/4.0

**HONORS**

- List academic scholarships, awards, or honors

**ACTIVITIES**

- List student or community organizations. Include dates and any leadership roles you've held.

### EXPERIENCE

**ABC Manufacturing Company**, Valparaiso, IN  
*Job Title* *Start Date to End Date*

- Describe your work with active verb phrases.
- Use one bullet point per main skill set or responsibility.

**XYZ Manufacturing Company**, Chicago, IL  
*Job Title* *Start Date to End Date*  
If you don't have room for bullet points, describe your work and accomplishments in a brief paragraph.

**123 Manufacturing Company**, Valparaiso, IN  
*Job Title* *Start Date to End Date*

- Use simple present tense verbs for jobs you currently have, and simple past tense verbs for jobs you no longer hold.

**SKILLS**

- List any computer skills, especially those related to your major.
- List any foreign language skills, and be sure to include your level of proficiency.
- Indicate any other skills related to your major and not included elsewhere on your resume.

**AVAILABILITY** Month, Year

**REFERENCES** Available upon request

# INTRODUCTION

Writing job letters is an essential part of the job search process. Whether you write a letter to network with alumni, to follow up on an interview, or send your thanks to an interviewer, effective communication before, during, and after landing a job can set the tone for your employment experience. Keep in mind that a letter is often the first tangible evidence an employer gets of your qualifications.

A note of clarification: job letters are any form of correspondence related to a job search, and can include networking letters, acceptance letters, etc.

Cover letters are a specific form of job letter that accompany resumes.

The Career Center staff can assist you with any stage of the letter-writing process, from brainstorming to polishing your final draft.

**Prepared by the Valparaiso University Career Center staff**

Alumni Hall  
Valparaiso University  
1602 LaPorte Avenue  
Valparaiso, Indiana 46383

Phone: 219.464.5005  
Fax: 219.464.5519  
career.center@valpo.edu  
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**This table of contents will be altered once the final layout is approved. The page numbers on all pages following this page will also be changed, and then sent for a final approval.**

## FORMATTING A STANDARD JOB LETTER

So that you can present yourself effectively, use a proper business format for your job letters. See the sample letters that begin on **page 43** for examples.

- Type your return address and the date in the upper left-hand corner of the letter. Do not include your name here.
- Next, double space then insert the employer's name, title, department, and complete mailing address on the left-hand margin.
- Begin the letter with a salutation that reads, "Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name" followed by a colon.
- If at all possible, address your letter to a specific person. If you don't have a person's name, call the employer and ask for the name of the hiring manager or the person coordinating a particular job search. Whomever answers the phone will usually be able to give you this information.
- The body of the letter usually consists of two to four paragraphs.
- Single space the sentences within each paragraph, and double space between paragraphs.
- Complete your closing with "Sincerely," followed by four spaces and your typed full name.
- Sign the letter in ink between the closing and your typed name.

## ADDITIONAL TIPS

- Always rigorously proofread your letters for grammatical and spelling errors. Also ask someone else to proofread the letter for you; don't make the mistake of relying only on your computer's spell check program.
- Use a laser printer, or a high quality ink jet printer, for all letters.
- Avoid using form letters. Instead, customize each letter you write with specific information about the employer.
- Limit all job letters to one page in length.
- Limit all paragraphs to four or five lines each.
- Print or type your return address and the employer's address on the mailing envelope.
- Keep copies of all correspondence for your records.

## TECHNOLOGY AND JOB SEARCH LETTERS

Email and fax machines have made applying for jobs much easier. However, be sure to keep the following tips in mind when using these technologies.

- Always include a cover letter with a faxed resume, or a clearly worded message with an emailed resume.
- Also use a cover sheet with a faxed resume to make sure it reaches the intended person.
- Follow standard business letter guidelines when emailing a resume; using text abbreviations, slang, or casual language in the body of your message can make a very negative impression.
- If you're applying for a job posting that doesn't list an email address or fax number, call the employer and ask if you can submit your materials electronically. Some employers prefer to receive hard copies of materials, so respect preferences.
- Whenever you send application materials electronically, always follow up with a personal phone call to make sure the employer has received your materials and to emphasize your interest in the position.
- Don't be annoying, however, by making too many follow-up phone calls or sending too many emails. Balance is essential.

## COVER LETTERS

Cover letters are perhaps the most important of all the job letters. A cover letter introduces you to an employer, and gives you an opportunity to supplement and expand upon your resume. While the content of a resume must be extremely focused, a cover letter can give the reader a better sense of your personality, and can do an excellent job selling the writer—that's you—to a potential employer.

A good cover letter will be:

- Customized to suit the particular employer and position
- Free of grammatical errors or typos
- Well-worded and concise
- Free of slang or other informal usages
- Able to clearly demonstrate that your qualifications match the employer's needs
- Originally worded, not copied verbatim from this booklet or another source
- Highly legible with a clean, simple font 10 to 12 points in size
- Printed on high quality, woven bond resume paper

Remember that a cover letter should not repeat the information included in your resume. Instead, it should enhance your resume by emphasizing specific details about

your qualifications, goals, experience, and personality. A cover letter, in short, is a marketing piece about you—and so it should entice a potential employer to want to learn more about you and your qualifications by reading your resume.

Before you begin writing your cover letter, first visit the employer’s website and do plenty of research. Use this information to demonstrate your knowledge about the employer, and to establish a clear correlation between your qualifications and the employer’s needs.

An important pointer: use specific language that appears in the job posting to demonstrate that you clearly understand the requirements and are prepared to meet them.

## **JOB LETTERS**

In addition to the cover letter, a variety of other job letters are essential to the job search process.

### **Networking Letters**

In the early stages of career exploration, one very important step is gathering information about your intended career field. Job seekers can also benefit enormously from making personal contact with people in their desired field, and getting a clear sense of what a job in that field is like.

Since the vast majority of job seekers find positions through networking, never underestimate the value of making contacts with and seeking advice from a wide variety of people. Frequently, friends and family members are excellent sources of this kind of information. Valpo alumni are also a great resource—and our alumni are typically very generous when sharing their time and expertise for this purpose.

Consider writing networking letters to inquire about the nature of a particular job, types of entry-level positions, and required qualifications. You can also use networking letters to ask for advice about what you can be doing right now—that is, while you’re still in school—to best prepare yourself for internships and full-time employment.

### **Thank You Letters**

Thank you letters are very important details of the job search process, and yet many job seekers don’t bother to send them. All employers appreciate such courtesies, however, and the most successful job candidates often distinguish themselves from their competitors by attending to such important details.

## **Your thank you letter should be:**

- Sent within 24 hours of the interview
- At least a few paragraphs in length, but no longer than one page
- Addressed to each person who participated in the interview
- Addressed correctly, with accurate spelling and job title(s)

Typically, a handwritten note on simple stationery is the best choice for a thank you letter. If your handwriting is difficult to read, you might consider typing a letter instead. We don't recommend sending emails, but in important situations, this option may be the most expedient. And an emailed thank you letter is preferable to no thank you letter at all.

## **Follow-Up Letters**

When you interview for a job, always request a time frame for the hiring decision. If you know the designated date, and a week or so passes beyond this date, it's completely appropriate to send a reminder letter to the employer or hiring representative. If two weeks pass after you've written this letter and you still haven't heard from the employer, contact the Career Center for additional suggestions.

## **Letters to Accept or Decline Job Offers**

Once you've received an offer of employment, you'll need to carefully evaluate the offer, and then make the decision to accept or decline. If you accept an offer, communicate your enthusiasm and enumerate the steps you'll take before you begin work. Be sure to specify important details such as your position, salary, and starting date.

If you choose to decline a job offer, indicate that you've considered the offer, but have decided to decline. If possible, give your reason or reasons for rejecting the offer. Be gracious, and express your sincere appreciation for the opportunity and the employer's interest in you.

## **Rejection Follow-Up Letters**

Frequently, an employer will appreciate your skills but hire another candidate. You might not want to write off the employer altogether, however, because future positions may become available. If, after the interview, you think you'd be interested in working for the employer in a different position—or even in the same position if it becomes available again—send a letter to politely indicate your continued interest in the organization, and request that the employer keep you in mind for future openings.

## COVER LETTER OUTLINE

Your Street Address  
City, State, Zip  
Month, Day, Year

Mr. Percy Nell  
Human Resources Manager  
Most Desirable Organization  
1500 Shangri La  
Anytown, IN 88888

Dear Mr. Nell:

**FIRST PARAGRAPH:** State why you are writing, the name of the position or the type of work you seek, and mention how you heard of the opening.

**SECOND PARAGRAPH:** Explain why you're interested in working for this employer, then demonstrate a correlation between the job's requirements and your qualifications. Be as specific as possible, and think of a cover letter as a service for employers. Your letter provides vital information about your qualifications, so employers have to do less interpreting, or reading between the lines, of your resume. Remember to incorporate company jargon or terminology into your letter. Also keep in mind that your letter may be scanned, instead of read by a person. If this is the case, be sure to include essential vocabulary and keywords in both your letter and your resume. Be careful not to restate information included on your resume, unless you summarize it simply and clearly (e.g., "As noted on my resume, I have significant experience working with children from my summers as a camp counselor.")

**THIRD or FINAL PARAGRAPH:** Mention that you have included your resume and your application, and that your references are available upon request. Close the letter in a way that indicates your desire for an interview. For example, you might suggest convenient dates, an expected response, or what your follow-up will entail. Your goal, of course, is to encourage a prompt and favorable reply.

Sincerely,

(sign your name here)

(type your name here)

## INTERNSHIP COVER LETTER

Your Street Address  
City, State, Zip  
Month, Day, Year

Mr. Percy Nell  
Human Resources Manager  
Most Desirable Organization  
1500 Shangri La  
Anytown, IN 88888

Dear Mr. Nell:

I am writing to express my interest in a summer internship with Most Desirable Organization. Currently I am a sophomore at Valparaiso University majoring in (your major), and I would greatly appreciate an opportunity to further my skills in (your area of interest). Most Desirable Organization has an excellent reputation for its work in (area of specialization), and I am confident that my academic background, combined with my personal experience, will be beneficial to your work environment.

As the editor of *The Hoosier*, the student newspaper at Indiana High School, I gained valuable experience working with a variety of people from diverse backgrounds. I also learned to work efficiently under pressure and successfully meet tight deadlines. These skills will undoubtedly help me work well with others in your organization, as well as provide excellent service for your customers. In addition, from being involved with many extracurricular groups during both high school and college, and maintaining high grades at the same time, I have demonstrated that I am able to quickly learn new tasks and handle multiple responsibilities.

My background and experience, combined with my eagerness to learn more about (area of interest), make me ideally suited for an internship with your organization. I would very much appreciate an opportunity to meet you in person to discuss internship opportunities. Please feel free to call me at (your phone number) or email me at (your email address).

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

Sincerely,

(sign your name here)

(type your name here)

## SAMPLE JOB POSTING

<b>Title:</b>	<b>IT JUNIOR UNIX SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATOR</b>
<b>Status:</b>	Salaried/RFT
<b>Hours:</b>	Monday-Friday 8:00 am-5:00 pm (Need to be available for maintenance: Wed. & Sat. 3:00 am-7:00 am. Will carry cell phone.)
<b>Proposed salary:</b>	Commensurate with experience

### ***Requirements:***

<b>Education:</b>	Bachelor's degree in computer science, computer engineering, or related field.
<b>Experience:</b>	Minimum 1 year UNIX administration, TCP/IP routing in a multi-protocol Ethernet environment; Internet experience; C/C++, Java, Allaire Cold Fusion, or PHP programming experience.
<b>Job Summary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist with UNIX systems administration including system software installation and upgrades; applications software installation and upgrades including but not limited to News server, e-mail server, web server, system performance monitoring; system tuning; hardware and software maintenance; and network connections.</li> <li>• Assist with the support and maintenance of Internet connections and Internet services such as News, electronic mail, web access, and TCP/IP suite.</li> <li>• Individually, or part of a team, create custom solutions designed to meet the needs of the campus community utilizing standard programming principles.</li> </ul>

## COVER LETTER RESPONDING TO THE SAMPLE JOB POSTING

12 Union Street  
Valparaiso, IN 46383  
November 28, 2006

Dr. Michael Maroon  
Valparaiso University  
Executive Director  
Information Technology  
Kretzmann 134

Dear Dr. Maroon,

My name is John Student, and I am writing to apply for the Junior Unix Systems Administrator opening within IT. After reading the job description I noticed that you are looking for someone with experience in the following areas: Unix Administration, Java, software and hardware installation, and teamwork. I feel certain that I am an excellent fit for this position.

During the past year I have worked with John Summer in Gellerson; this work has given me experience with Unix administration as well as with software and hardware installation, computer setups, computer configurations, printer installations, and computer backups. In addition, the past two summers I worked as a Network Systems Intern for Mr. Summer. In this position, I assisted with the upgrade of the server from Samba 2.2.8a to Samba 3, apache configuration (for send mail), web page editing, user management with NIS+, security updates, troubleshooting, and other network administrator-related tasks. I also have experience with Java and C/C++ through my coursework here at Valparaiso University.

In addition to my technical skills, I am an excellent team player and experienced leader. Currently I am the captain of the Valparaiso University Men's Varsity Soccer Team, and I have participated in team environments for most of my life. Last year, I also participated in a senior design project, where ME and EE engineering seniors collaborated as a team to accomplish a demanding project under a strict deadline. My time at Valparaiso has also taught me the importance of service to students and faculty members, as well as what it takes to meet the needs of our campus community.

Thank you very much for your consideration. Please feel free to contact me either by phone (510-111-2345) or email (johnstudent@yahoo.com). I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

(Sign your name here)

(Type your name here)

## COVER LETTER RESPONDING TO A JOB POSTED ON A WEBSITE OR IN A NEWSPAPER

Your Street Address  
City, State, Zip  
Month, Day, Year

Mr. Percy Nell  
Human Resources Manager  
Most Desirable Organization  
1500 Shangri La  
Anytown, IN 88888

Dear Mr. Nell:

I recently noticed a position posted on your website. As a (month, year) graduate of Valparaiso University with a degree in (major), I am very interested in pursuing (type of job) with a company like Most Desirable Organization.

Your organization is a leader in (industry), and I am eager for an opportunity to contribute to its success. As I mentioned on my resume, I have both academic training and workplace experience in (area). Specifically, my internship experience includes (list job duties that match the requirements stated in the job posting). In addition, while at Valpo I was involved in a variety of extracurricular activities that have taught me to successfully juggle multiple duties and responsibilities.

I would greatly appreciate an opportunity to meet with you in person to discuss how I might contribute my skills and abilities to your organization. Please feel free to contact me by phone (list the number you use most frequently) or email (type your email address).

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

Sincerely,

(sign your name here)

(type your name here)

## NETWORKING LETTER TO VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY ALUMNI

Your Street Address  
City, State, Zip  
Month, Day, Year

Mr. George Crusader  
123 Main Street  
Valparaiso, IN 46383

Dear Mr. Crusader:

**FIRST PARAGRAPH:** Introduce yourself and indicate how you received contact information for the alum. (For example, “I learned of your work in Public Relations through the Valparaiso University Career Center” or “Susie Smith from the Valparaiso University Office of Alumni Relations suggested I contact you.”) Then mention your common Valpo experience, and state your reason for writing. (For example, “I am interested in learning more about a career in Public Relations, and would greatly appreciate any advice and information you could provide.”)

**SECOND PARAGRAPH:** Share your interests, skills, and experiences with the alum. Let him or her know what you’ve been doing during summers, and what activities you’ve been involved with on campus. Inform him or her of your work experience in the field, and be sure to highlight your educational background, including relevant courses or research projects. Discuss your intended career goals and interests.

**NOTE:** In this type of letter, don’t worry about marketing yourself as you would in a cover letter. You’re just sharing information so the alum can learn more about you.

**THIRD PARAGRAPH:** Thank the alum in advance for any assistance, and reiterate your interest in learning more about his or her work. Remember: you’re responsible for following up, so be sure to indicate how and when you intend to do this. You might indicate that you’ve enclosed a resume so the alum can learn even more about you. Include your phone number and email, just in case the alum wants to contact you. Express your appreciation and close the letter.

Sincerely,

(sign your name here)

(type your name here)

## THANK YOU LETTER

Your Street Address  
City, State, Zip  
Month, Day, Year

Mr. Percy Nell  
Human Resources Manager  
Most Desirable Organization  
1500 Shangri La  
Anytown, IN 88888

Dear Mr. Nell:

**FIRST PARAGRAPH:** Express your gratitude for the interview. Be sure to identify the position you interviewed for, and include the interview date.

**SECOND PARAGRAPH:** Reiterate your qualifications and emphasize your suitability for the position. Mention pertinent information you discussed during your interview, or refer to new information you gained during the interview. Highlight significant accomplishments and how they will benefit the organization. Most important, express your eagerness to work for the employer.

**CLOSING PARAGRAPH:** Restate your interest in the position and thank the employer once more. Indicate that you hope to hear from him or her soon.

Sincerely,

(sign your name here)

(type your name here)

## LETTER TO ACCEPT A JOB OFFER

Your Street Address  
City, State, Zip  
Month, Day, Year

Mr. Percy Nell  
Human Resources Manager  
Most Desirable Organization  
1500 Shangri La  
Anytown, IN 88888

Dear Mr. Nell:

Many thanks to you and Ms. Peterson for your offer to work for Most Desirable Organization. I am very pleased to accept the Management Trainee position with your Anytown office at a salary of (state the agreed-upon amount). This position offers excellent opportunities to perform the sort of work that most compels me, and I know that I will do a good job for you.

As we discussed, I will begin work on June 10, 2007. In the meantime, I will complete the necessary employment forms, obtain the required physical examination, and secure housing. I plan to be in Anytown within the next two weeks, and will deliver the paperwork to you in person. At that time, we can handle any remaining items pertinent to my employment. I will call next week to schedule an appointment.

I very much enjoyed my interviews with you and Ms. Peterson, and look forward to beginning my career with your management team.

Sincerely,

(sign your name here)

(type your name here)

## LETTER TO DECLINE A JOB OFFER

Your Street Address  
City, State, Zip  
Month, Day, Year

Mr. Percy Nell  
Human Resources Manager  
Most Desirable Organization  
1500 Shangri La  
Anytown, IN 88888

Dear Mr. Nell:

My interviews with Most Desirable Organization over the past several weeks have been both interesting and informative. However, I have concluded that another employment opportunity will better fit my interests and goals at the present time. Therefore, I have decided to decline your offer of employment.

Thank you very much for the time and interest you have invested in me during the interview process with Most Desirable Organization.

Sincerely,

(sign your name here)

(type your name here)

## REJECTION FOLLOW-UP LETTER or “PLEASE KEEP ME IN MIND”

Your Street Address  
City, State, Zip  
Month, Day, Year

Mr. Percy Nell  
Human Resources Manager  
Most Desirable Organization  
1500 Shangri La  
Anytown, IN 88888

Dear Mr. Nell:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to interview for the Management Trainee position with Most Desirable Organization. I very much appreciate your consideration and interest.

Though I am disappointed by not being selected for the position, please know that I am grateful for the courtesy and professionalism you showed me during the entire selection process. I enjoyed meeting you and other members of the management staff, and these meetings confirmed my impression that Most Desirable Organization would be an excellent place to work and build a career.

I would like to reiterate my strong interest in working for Most Desirable Organization. Please keep me in mind if another position becomes available in the near future.

Again, many thanks for the opportunity to interview, and best wishes to you and your staff.

Sincerely,

(sign your name here)

(type your name here)



