

Writing for Employment

Section 22.1

Résumés, Cover Letters, and Applications



What can a person's résumé reveal about his or her potential career success?

Objectives

After completing this section, you will be able to:

- **Describe** a résumé.
- **Explain** how to submit a résumé.
- **Describe** how to write a persuasive cover message to accompany a résumé.
- **Explain** how to apply for a job in person and online.

Section 22.1 Review

Check Your Understanding

1. What is the purpose of a résumé?

Answer: The chief purpose of a résumé is to prove to a potential employer that your experiences and skills match the qualifications of the job you are seeking.

2. List the standard sections of a résumé.

Answer: Contact information; experience; education; honors, awards, and publications; and special skills or additional training. Optional sections include summary, objective, memberships, and professional affiliations.

3. Explain the purpose of a cover message.

Answer: It is a sales message written to persuade the reader to grant you an interview. It provides an opportunity to focus a potential employer's attention on your background, skills, and work experience that match the job you are seeking.

4. Name two ways to apply for a job.

Answer: When applying for a job, an applicant can submit their résumé and cover message either in person or online.

5. What information is needed to complete a job application?

Answer: When you fill in an application form, you will need all of your personal data on hand, including information about your citizenship status and locations and names of past employers.

Build Your Vocabulary

As you progress through this course, develop a personal glossary of key terms. This will help you build your vocabulary and prepare you for a career. Write a definition for each of the following terms and add it to your personal glossary.

résumé

Answer: Document that profiles a person's career goals, education, and work history.

career objective

Answer: Summary of the type of job for which the applicant is looking.

chronological résumé

Answer: Résumé that lists information in reverse chronological order, with the most recent employer listed first.

reference

Answer: Person who can comment on the qualifications, work ethic, personal qualities, and work-related aspects of another person's character.

keyword

Answer: Word or term that specifically relates to the functions of the position for which an employer is hiring

cover message

Answer: Letter or e-mail sent with a résumé to introduce an applicant and summarize his or her reasons for applying for a job.

portfolio

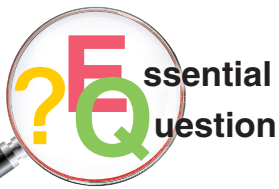
Answer: Selection of related materials that an individual collects and organizes to show qualifications, skills, and talents to support a career or personal goal.

job application

Answer: Form with spaces for contact information, education, and work experience.

Section 22.2

Job Interviews and the Employment Process



Which job interview questions are the most important to be prepared to answer?

Objectives

After completing this section, you will be able to:

- Discuss how to prepare for a job interview.
- Describe the employment process.

Section 22.2 Review

Check Your Understanding

1. Explain the purpose of a job interview for both the employer and the applicant.

Answer: A job interview is the employer's opportunity to review your résumé and ask questions to see if you are qualified for the position. This is your opportunity to sell yourself in person. Your answers to interview questions are important in the employer's decision-making process.

2. How can a job seeker prepare for questions that an interviewer might ask?

Answer: Before the interview, try to anticipate questions the interviewer is likely to ask you. Write down your answers to these questions and practice them in front of a mirror or with a friend or relative. Practice until you can give your planned responses naturally and without reading them off the page.

3. What is the easiest rule to follow when dressing for an interview? Explain.

Answer: The easiest rule to follow is to dress in a way that shows you understand the work environment and know the appropriate attire. It is better to dress more conservatively than to dress in trendy clothing. Employers understand that interviewees want to put their best foot forward. Dressing more conservatively than needed is not likely to be viewed as a disadvantage. However, dressing too casual, too trendy, or wearing inappropriate clothing is likely to cost you the job.

4. What should be included in a follow-up message after an interview?

Answer: Thank the interviewer for taking the time to talk with you about the job and your career interests. Restate any important points that were made, and reinforce your strong interest in the job, if you are still interested.

5. List the forms that must be completed by a newly hired employee.

Answer: Form I-9, Form W-4, and benefits forms.

Build Your Vocabulary

As you progress through this course, develop a personal glossary of key terms. This will help you build your vocabulary and prepare you for a career. Write a definition for each of the following terms and add it to your personal glossary.

job interview

Answer: Employer's opportunity to review a candidate's résumé and ask questions to see if he or she is qualified for the position.

verbal communication

Answer: Speaking words to communicate; also known as *oral communication*.

mock interview

Answer: Practice interview conducted with another person.

hypothetical question

Answer: Questions that require a candidate to imagine a situation and describe how he or she would act.

behavioral question

Answer: Questions that draw on an individual's previous experiences and decisions.

employment verification

Answer: Process through which the information provided on an applicant's résumé is checked to verify that it is correct.

background check

Answer: Investigation into personal data about a job applicant.

Chapter Summary

Section 22.1 Résumés, Cover Messages, and Applications

- A résumé is a document that provides potential employers with a profile of a person's career goals, work history, and job qualifications. The most important part of a résumé is the listing of work experience and achievements. Other parts of the résumé, however, are essential to presenting a complete profile for the employer.
- After writing a résumé, the next step is to submit it. A resume may be mailed or submitted on line.
- A cover message is a selling or persuasive message. A cover message provides an introduction to who you are and why you are the right person for the position you are seeking. Writing a cover message provides an opportunity to focus a potential employer's attention on the fact that you are the best candidate for the job.
- Most job applicants apply for a job either in person or online. The traditional way to apply for employment is in person by hand delivering a printed version of a résumé, cover message, and portfolio. Applying online can vary by employer, but it typically includes uploading documents and completing forms on a company website.

Section 22.2 Job Interviews and the Employment Process

- The job interview is your opportunity to sell yourself. To prepare for the interview, rehearse answers to questions likely to be asked during the interview. The *About Us* section of the company website is also a good source of information to use in preparing for the interview. At the interview, it is important to dress appropriately and professionally. Immediately after your interview, follow up with a thank-you letter or e-mail to the person who interviewed you.

- The employment process can take a substantial amount of time. Employers must conduct employment verification and a background check to make sure the candidate is qualified for the position. In addition, employment forms must be completed by an employee when beginning a new job.

Review Your Knowledge

1. What should be included in the name and personal information section of a résumé?
Answer: The contact information section of a résumé should include your name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address.
2. How is a résumé submitted?
Answer: A résumé can be submitted electronically through an online application or e-mail. Hard copy résumés can be submitted through the mail or in person.
3. Explain keywords and the role they play in writing the experience section of a résumé.
Answer: Employers often scan résumés for keywords. Keywords are words that specifically relate to the functions of the position for which the employer is hiring. Keywords are typically nouns rather than verbs. Review the job advertisement, and underline the keywords. If you have the relevant experience, use the same words to describe it. Remember, do not stretch the truth. Only use the keywords if they fit your background.
4. Why is the cover message important?
Answer: Writing a cover message is an important part of applying for a job. It sets the tone for the résumé that follows. A cover message should focus on your qualifications without being boastful. It does not repeat the details in the résumé. Rather, it highlights your key qualifications that are specific to the job for which you are applying. The message also explains how you heard about the position.
5. Describe the purposes of a conclusion to a cover message.
Answer: The conclusion has two purposes: to request an interview and to make it easy for the reader to grant that interview. Leave no doubt in the reader's mind about your desire to be contacted for an interview. State how and when you can be reached or indicate how and when you will make follow-up contact. Supply the employer with the information necessary to arrange an interview.
6. Describe ways a person can learn about a company when preparing for a job interview.
Answer: The first step in preparing for a job interview is to learn as much as you can about the job and the company. If the company has a website, thoroughly study the site. Look for press releases, annual reports, and information on products or services offered by the company. Use your network of friends and relatives to find people who are familiar with the employer. Call the company's human resources department. Indicate that you are interested in employment opportunities at the company and would like to know more about working for the company.
7. Why is it beneficial to ask questions during an interview?
Answer: Asking questions can make a good impression. Questions show that you are interested and aware.
8. What should an applicant do to evaluate his or her performance after a job interview?
Answer: Make a list of the things you feel you did right and things you would do differently next time. Asking yourself questions can help in evaluating your performance.

9. What steps should be taken by an applicant after a job interview?

Answer: Immediately after your interview, it is important to follow up with a thank-you letter or e-mail to the person who interviewed you. It is also important to evaluate your performance after the interview to decide what you need to improve for future interviews.

10. Describe what happens during employment verification.

Answer: Employment verification is a process through which the information you provided about your employment history is checked to verify that it is correct. Employers typically verify only the dates of employment, position title, and other objective data. A background check is a look into personal data about you. This information is available from government records and other sources, including public information on the Internet. The employer should disclose to you that a background check will be conducted and may ask for your permission. Sometimes employers also run a check of your credit.

Apply Your Knowledge

Prepare to write a personal résumé for a business position of your choice. Make a list of all your past work experiences. Write a brief description of your job responsibilities to demonstrate your positive work behaviors and qualities that make you employable. Use appropriate keywords. If you have any special licenses or certifications, note these also. Next, list your educational background and any other information you think should be included on your résumé.

Answer: Student answers will vary. Evaluate each response individually.

2. Create a draft of your résumé. After your draft is complete, format the document. Using Figure 22-1 as an example, create your final résumé. Demonstrate use of appropriate content, concepts, and vocabulary. Check the final document for grammar.

Answer: Student answers will vary. Evaluate each response individually.

3. A résumé may be required during the application process for college or a community service position for which you are applying. How would you modify your résumé for a college application? For a volunteer position?

Answer: Student answers will vary. Evaluate each response individually.

4. Write a cover message that you would attach with your résumé if applying for a business position. Use the example as shown in Figure 22-2. Explain how your positive work behaviors and other qualities make you employable. Demonstrate use of appropriate content, concepts, and vocabulary. Check the final document for grammar and formatting.

Answer: Student answers will vary. Evaluate each response individually.

5. Write an answer for each of the following potential interview questions.

- What makes you a good employee?
- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses?

Answer: Student answers will vary. Evaluate each response individually.

6. Create a list of five questions you might ask during the interview. Be aware of how you word questions to make the best impression.

Answer: Student answers will vary. Evaluate each response individually.

7. Ask a friend, teacher, or family member to conduct a mock interview with you. Dress as you would for an actual job interview. Before the interview begins, give your résumé to the interviewer. As you answer questions for the interviewer, demonstrate your professionalism by applying appropriate oral skills and conducting yourself in a manner that is acceptable in the workplace.

Answer: Student answers will vary. Evaluate each response individually.

8. You have recently been interviewed for the position of assistant manager at a local business. Write a thank-you message to the interviewer.

Answer: Student answers will vary. Evaluate each response individually.



You Do the Math

Probabilistic Reasoning

Probability is the likelihood of an event occurring. In general, probability is stated as the number of ways an event can happen over the total number of outcomes. Flipping a coin, for example, can result in either heads or tails. The probability of the result being heads is one in two ($1/2$). There is only one side of the coin with heads, and there are two total possible outcomes. Probability can be expressed as a percentage. In the case of a flipped coin: $1/2 = .5 \times 100 = 50\%$ chance of being heads.

Solve the following problems.

1. A local office supply store offers a random discount to its regular customers. The discount may be 2 percent, 4 percent, 6 percent, or 25 percent. The discount is randomly selected by the cash register computer. What is the probability that a customer will receive the 25 percent discount?

Answer: 1 discount / 4 possible discounts

The probability of receiving a 25 percent discount is one in four ($1/4$), or 25%.

2. The manager in a shoe store has observed that of 100 pair sold, 42 were blue. What is the probability percentage that the next customer will buy shoes in a color other than blue?

Answer: 42 blue pairs / 100 pairs sold

$$100 - 42 = 58$$

The probability of a customer buying shoes in a color other than blue is 58 in 100 ($58/100$), or 58%.

3. At a combination supermarket and retail store, 47 customers purchased only groceries, 13 customers purchased groceries and items from the retail area, and 62 customers purchased items only from the retail area. What is the probability that a customer will purchase groceries?

Answer: $47 + 13 + 62 = 122$

$$47 + 13 = 60$$

The probability that a customer will purchase groceries is 60 in 122 ($60/122$), or 49.2%.