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# PORTFOLIO PROJECT

for high school students

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The **not-so-scary** approach  
to learning about cover  
letters, resumes, interview  
questions, collecting  
artifacts, and researching  
scholarships for college!

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## Portfolio Project Instructions

Prepare a portfolio that includes the following items in the following order. This portfolio should be professional, typed, reflect your personality, free of grammar and spelling errors, and could be presented to a potential employer, college recruitment officer, or internship coordinator.

**Project due date:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Cover Letter (see attached for help)
2. Resume (see attached for help)
3. Answers to Interview Questions (attached)
4. Two teacher recommendation letters addressed *To Whom It May Concern*
5. **Five** samples of your best work
6. Essay for college application. Topic: *Indicate a person who has had a significant influence in you, and describe that influence.*
7. List of scholarship opportunities. Use the internet to find at least 5 scholarship opportunities that are available to you. State the name of the scholarship, website, amount of award, requirements, deadline, and how to apply (paper, online, school counselor, etc.)



## So how do you write a cover letter? (and what is it exactly?)

### **WHAT IS IT?**

Usually the cover letter is what you'd like the person who is handling your portfolio to look at first. It provides information on why you are qualified for that particular job, scholarship, admission, or internship. It should be written clearly, and in a concise manner. It should be error-free and professional. The layout should be in the form of a formal business letter.

**START WITH YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION:** This includes your first and last name, address including city, state, and zip code, phone number and email address.

After your contact info, leave a space, then write today's date, another space, followed by the employer's contact information including the name and title of the person you expect to read this (if it is known), company name, address including city, state, and zip code. Then comes the salutation. Here's a sample of **possible salutations:**

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name,  
Dear Hiring Manager,  
Dear University of City Admissions Officer,  
Dear Internship Coordinator,  
Dear Sales Manager,  
Dear Name of Scholarship Committee Member,

**The body of the letter** could easily be summarized in 3 paragraphs:

**Paragraph #1:** State the position you are applying for and where you found out about it.

**Paragraph #2:** Here is where you state what you have to offer. Start by writing about your qualifications and explain how they match the job or position you're applying for. Don't insult your reader by repeating what's in your resume. Instead, interpret your resume.



**Paragraph #3:** in this final paragraph thank the employer/committee member for considering you for this position/scholarship/etc. Also, include how you will follow-up.

For your **closing**, you can simply write Respectfully yours, sign your name (handwritten and in INK) followed by your typed name.

*Your cover letter should all fit on one page.*

Once you've written your letter, read it aloud to yourself.

- ☐ Does it flow?
- ☐ Did you omit any words?
- ☐ Are you rambling?
- ☐ Remember you're not texting so spell out words (*don't put BTW, write it out: by the way*)
- ☐ Is there a shorter way of saying what you're trying to say?
- ☐ Avoid passive voice (*I was walking to class, versus I walked to class*).
- ☐ Avoid run-on sentences (*I feel that I'm qualified for the position because of my extensive background in sales and because of my current experience serving as a cashier at my local grocery store where I've been working for over two years and am now in charge of training two other cashiers.*)
- ☐ Please spell-check
- ☐ NO LOWERCASE i's!!!
- ☐ Have someone else read it.



## Preparing your resume

**Choose a design that is professional but at the same time shows your personality.** Look online at different resume templates and find one that matches you and the purpose this resume serves.

At the top **you are to write your contact information**: Your first and last name (should be in a 16 pt font size and bold so that it stands out from the rest of the information on your resume) followed by your address, city, state, and zip code. Also include your phone number and email address.

Then you should state your **objective**. What's the purpose of your resume:  
*To obtain an internship in the medical field where I can use my knowledge of science to enhance the medical program.*  
*To obtain summer employment in retail to enhance my business skills while using my people skills and ability to multitask.*

Now state your **education**. If you have a grade point average of 3.5 or higher, include it in your resume. State the name of the school you attend, city, state, and degree you expect to receive.

Example:

*Any High School, City, State*

*High School Diploma expected graduation June 20—*

*GPA: 4.5*

After your education, state your **employment history**. If you don't work, write down any **Volunteer and Community Service**, internships, extracurricular activities you belong to like clubs and sports and positions held, and remember to state the most RECENT first. So if you were captain of the JV football team last year and quarterback this year, state this year's title first and then last year's.



You can add a separate section on **Awards/Achievements** and list any awards or achievements you have received. Then add a **Skills** section where you list the skills that make you a great candidate for this position or job. Also include the languages you speak if you're multilingual, as well as proficient or basic understanding of Microsoft Word, Publisher, PowerPoint, Excel, Photoshop, etc.

**References** section: you can either list two or three references with their contact information or just write, Available upon request.

Note: There are plenty of resume samples and templates available to you for free on the internet. Find one that suits your style and personality but keep it professional. Make sure that you are keeping everything CONCISE, use bullets instead of paragraph format, make it really easy for a potential employer to find out the most about you by just looking at a list. Try to keep it all to a page. There are some employers that will really only look at your first page.



## Interview Questions

Pretend that you are at your interview. These are the questions that you are being asked. Answer these top interview questions in a clear, succinct way.

1. Tell me more about yourself. (This is an open ended question. You should talk about characteristics that make you the best candidate for this job/position/scholarship/etc.)
2. What are your strengths?
3. What are your weaknesses?
4. If you were an animal, which one would it be?
5. How do you handle stress/working under pressure?
6. What are your goals?
7. Why do you want to work here? Why do you want to go to school here?  
Why do you want this internship?



8. What makes you the best person for this job over the rest of the candidates?

9. Where do you see yourself in five years?

10. Do you have any questions?