

## cover letter and resumé

- objectives** Resumé and cover letter are essential pieces to job acquisition. All designers must also be able to communicate with clients both in person and in writing. You have passed English Composition I and II, so I expect you to exhibit writing skills of a university student. Information to guide you will also be presented in class lectures. Your visual guidelines will also be put to their first use. You will present finished cover letter(s) and a resumé that live within your brand and display your visual identity (with adjustments for resumé content).
- restriction** **Both final files must be built in InDesign.**
- expectations** You will be graded on the following:
- Directions were followed accurately with absolutely no errors.
  - Writing skills displayed in order to persuade in an intelligent and compelling manner.
  - Grammar and spelling are correct.
    - > Choose whether or not to use an oxford comma, but be consistent.
    - > Misspelling on any round of either cover letter or resumé will reduce your grade.
    - > **Misspelling on final round of either = F.**
  - Efficient eloquence in wording.
  - Materials support brand positioning statement.
  - Visual identity used successfully.
  - Visual guidelines followed successfully.
  - Ambition - How much did you challenge yourself? Did you plan your time well?
  - Cleanliness and Presentation.
  - Participation in critique.
- schedule**
- WED Sept 30th: Resumé and Cover Letter lectures. Begin research including Pinterest pages. Be aware the not all examples are good resúmes or cover letters, but you may find inspiration that you fun through the “filter” of information in my lecture about what I expect. Also begin rough draft outlines of cover letter and resumé.
  - FRI Oct 2nd: Work day. *BFA Review begins at 9am.*
  - **DUE MON Oct 5th:** Cover Letter and Resumé *outlines*, typed and printed
  - WED Oct 7th: All outlines graded and returned. Work day. Begin first drafts (optional design placement).
  - **FRI Oct 9th: Guest speaker: Human Resources specialist, Kelly King (Memphis)** Bring sketchbooks to take notes and have questions ready for her! She will discuss benefits, insurance, legal issues, and how to interview with “non-creatives”.
  - **DUE MON Oct 12th, 8:10am:** First Drafts typed and printed
  - WED Oct 14th - MON Oct 19th: receive copy revisions, implement into design. **Must have printed work to mark up every day you come to class.** On days where you are caught up or waiting on revisions, you can work on your Job Hunt Journal (due week of November 2nd!) or begin to refine/start your website.
  - **DUE WED Oct 21st, 8:10am:** (1 hard/soft copy for cover letter, 1 hard/soft copy for resumé)  
**Hard copy:** Color on white paper with a paper sample. No mounting necessary.  
**Soft copy:** PDF. *Open it on another computer. Is it the same? Check it!*

## RESUMÉ

---

**objectives** “Simply sending out a resumé, no matter how perfect it is [and it should be perfect!], does not mean that you will be instantly hired...Expecting to land a position by sending out hundreds of resúmes in a random, shotgun effect is like expecting to win the lottery...Think of a resumé as an invitation. It’s meant to pique an employer’s interest so they will want to hire you. A resumé should tell an employer enough about you [and remember that this is visual design too] to make them interested, and to get you in the door, so you can sell yourself.”  
-Richardson, 90.

**problem** A designer’s resumé is different than the average, but it is not the place for kooky and conceptual. IF you can do this kooky and conceptual and it works, then it’s brilliant. But if it fails, it fails badly...usually becoming the laughing stock for an entire group of formerly possible employers. Therefore, we will go for the safe version in this course.

The order of the resumé fresh out of college:

- **Objective:** Optional, see Richardson, p. 93 (quote on FB) and google “Objectives”. You decide. If you do this, there are short paragraphs, single sentences, or bullet points.
- **Education** (*after college or after years of experience, Work Experience would precede Education*): After your first or second job, this will go after your Work Experience. If you have a large amount of relevant work experience, you may move Education down now.
- **Professional Experience:** For the first round of text for this project, list everything and we will edit. You should list relevant experience, regardless if it was a “Job” or not. This is more important than work experience at a retail store.
- **Awards** (*optional*): If you have them. If only scholarships, list with Education.
- **Skills** (*optional*): Language? Managing seminars you’ve attended? Financial something? If the only skill is software, it may be included under Education or Professional Experience.
- **References** (*optional*): “Available upon request” unless you have ample room. You still need to acquire at least three references.

- tips**
1. 1 page. No more, no less.
  2. Give a try at wording the explanations of your professional experience. Study good examples.
    - > *Attempt* to not use I or me.
    - > Try not to use past tense and instead a present tense.
    - > Full sentences are not necessary.
    - > Avoid the use of “and” in a list. Just use commas to separate.
  3. Use visual hierarchy and perfect typography.
  4. Follow Visual Guidelines and “voice” of your brand, which should tie it into your cover letter. And your future self-promotional piece. And website. And social media tone. And everything you do.
  5. PROOFREAD. Many many many times. And then a few more times. Have somebody else proofread it.
  6. Both “résumé” and “resumé” are correct, but “resume” is a verb and easily avoided. To create an é, first type option and e, then hit e again.

## COVER LETTER

---

**objectives** “A resumé alone doesn’t do it. Many employers automatically throw away resúmes that do not include a cover letter...A cover letter is more than a prelude to the resumé, and expresses your ultimate agenda. A resumé is looked at briefly and only has a limited amount of space to say what you want. The cover letter is the meat that lets you go in-depth to support what you have mentioned in the resumé...A target cover letter will show that you have done your research about the company, and allow your personality to show through.” -Richardson, 94-5.

**problem** There are many kinds of cover letters. There is an inquiry cover letter, but I will not handle this because the job market is so competitive that jobs do not stick around waiting for this. There is also the letter that answers a job posting directly, which will be an adaptation of your cover letter with specific points showcased. The cover letter we will cover is one that prospects for work and networking connections.

- tips**
1. No more than 1 page.
  2. 3-4 paragraphs. Think of the first and last paragraphs as your shortest.
  3. Have a specific target. For your rough draft have “**Mr. or Ms. X,**”. NOT MRS. or MISS. “Dear” is not necessary in a business letter. “To Whom It May Concern” or “Dear Sir or Madam” means you don’t know someone and they’re just getting a default cover letter begging for a job or something else. It’s not that you *can’t* use these phrases, but that you should try to be more direct so that the reader is immediately more engaged.
  4. Don’t ask for “an interview”. Instead, explain that you will be calling them at a certain time to set up a meeting or begin a dialogue. Even if eventually if your conversations, you actually ask for “an interview”.\*  
*\*Later we will discuss what happens when you finally talk to your contact and they explain there are no jobs. Suggest an informational interview. You can use your student power here. Regardless, BELIEVE you can do this. Get in the door. But don’t lay all your plans out in your cover letter. Think of this as a strategic attack you can take in steps.*
  5. Re-read your words. Reduce the time you use “my” or begin a sentence with “I”. Word things differently.
  6. What can you do for them. Not what they can do for you.
  7. Spelling and grammar. Efficient eloquence.
  8. PROOFREAD. Many many many times. And then a few more times. Have somebody else proofread it.
  9. Drop names and/or organizations if you can.
  10. Don’t be too personal. Don’t be too sterile. ...Figure it out.
  11. Follow Visual Guidelines and “voice” of your brand, which should tie it into your cover letter. And your future self-promotional piece. And website. And social media tone. And everything you do.