

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).

expectations *You will be graded on the following:*

- Directions were followed accurately with absolutely no errors.
- All previous rounds included **each time** work is turned in to be graded.
- Writing skills displayed in order to persuade in an intelligent and compelling manner.
- Key words used in resumé relevant to job objectives.
- Comprehension of how/why to adjust resumé and cover letters to fit job objectives.
- Comprehension of how/why to adjust resumé and cover letters to bypass filters.
- 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 heavily reduce your final project grade.*
 - > *Misspelling on final round of either = F.*
 - > *Bad grammar on any round of either cover letter or resumé will heavily reduce your final project grade.*
 - > *Bad grammar on final round of either = F.*
- Efficient eloquence in wording.
- Materials support brand positioning statement.
- Cover Letter and Resumé built in InDesign.
- 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.

*There are three rounds to bring the cover letter and resumé to final. Only the first round does not involve design. The fourth time (after three rounds) a student turns in the cover letter and resumé is the final. **If there are still problems after this, the letter grade for this project will drop by one for each additional round.** This project makes up a large portion of Section 2, so all of Section 2 grade will be greatly affected.

- schedule**
- **Fri Sept 21st:** **Lists** assigned in class for students to complete. These lists include: Non-Design Jobs, Design Jobs (paid, unpaid, student projects with clients, and internships), Volunteer (Service) Work, Organizations, Education, and Awards.
 - **Wed Sept 26th:** *Weekly Notes DUE.* **Lists DUE.**
Begin Cover Letters and Resumés. Lectures.
Create Pinterest page (not all examples out there are good) and other research.
Lists edited in class and students begin to complete **Round 1**.
 - **Fri Sept 28th:** **Round 1 DUE. Include initial List.** *Though this will be checked by Prof. Nikki, students should begin putting this first round of information into designs using InDesign. For the Cover Letter, that is just your letterhead. For the Resumé, that could be the letterhead or a similar layout that still follows visual guidelines.*
BFA Review this day.

schedule
(cont.)

- **Wed Oct 3rd: Weekly Notes DUE.**
Section 1 DUE - this includes Brand, Logo, Visual Identity, Visual Guidelines, and Budget 1. *Groups review instead of full critiques, as there have been multiple critiques throughout the semester.*
Begin Website, Budget 2, and Brand Board projects.
- **Fri Oct 5th: Round 1** returned to students. *Students should put work into InDesign (Illustrator not accepted) from this point forward.*
Lecture: Plan of Action, Finding Jobs, Getting in the Door
- **Wed Oct 10th: Round 2 DUE. Include Round 1 and initial List.**
Job Hunt Journal progress DUE (at least 2/3 finished).
- **Fri Oct 12th: MIDTERM** over textbook readings. No notes allowed.
Website wireframe and Budget 2 progress DUE
- *Week of Oct 15th: Prof. Nikki at SECAC conference. Work days. Class attendance not required.*
- **Wed Oct 24th: Weekly Notes DUE.**
Round 2 returned.
Website DUE
Budget 2 DUE
Brand Board DUE
- **Fri Oct 26th: Round 3 DUE. Include Round 2, Round 1, and initial List.**
Begin Section 3 with Social Media Plan Project. Lecture: Social Media.
- **Wed Oct 31st: Weekly Notes DUE.**
Round 3 returned.
Job Hunt Journal DUE
Begin Contract and Business Plan projects.
- *Fri Nov 2nd: AIGA-Memphis Student Day, Panel Talk, and Exhibition Opening. Students should do everything in their power to attend as much of this day's events as possible! No class.*
- **Wed Nov 7th: Weekly Notes DUE.**
Final Round DUE. Include Round 3, Round 2, Round 1, and initial List.
See next page "what is due." All fixes from this point forward will cause the final project grade to drop one letter for each round of fixes.
Lecture: How/why to bypass search filters.
Lecture: Taxes and other legal information
- **Fri Nov 9th: Resumes due in Word and JPEG formats. References due in PDF format.**
Guest Speaker: Prof. Parker, speaking about entrepreneurship and successful freelancing.

what is due

- *All rounds of cover letter and resumé.*
- 1 hard* copy for **Cover Letter**
- 1 hard* copy for **Resumé**
- 1 hard copy of 3 **references** on letterhead. Explain how long you have known this person and how you know this person. Only one professor of art/design allowed. No more than two professors in total. Find other references. Immediate family members are not allowed.

*Hard copy means tangible vs. a digital “soft copy.”

Color on white paper with a paper sample. No mounting necessary.

All of the below files should be placed in your shared Google Drive folder for this class.

- Packaged InDesign file of Cover Letter (named **YOUR LAST NAME_CoverLetter.INDD**), including PDF, Links, and Fonts.
- Packaged InDesign file of Cover Letter (named **YOUR LAST NAME_Resume.INDD**), including PDF, Links, and Fonts.
- Resumé in JPEG format.
- Resumé in Word format with adjustable Objectives statement.
- 3 references (see directions on previous page) in PDF format, file titled **YOUR LAST NAME_References.PDF**.

RESUMÉ

- Both “résumé” and “resumé” are correct, but “**resume**” is a verb and should be avoided if possible. To create an é, first type Command and e, then hit e again.
Note: Spell check will not catch “resume,” so I suggest you Command + F (Find) “resume” and make sure any time it is written that you are using it correctly as a verb.

- 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, impeccably designed version in this course.
- required information** The order of the resumé fresh out of college:
- **Objective or Professional Profile:**
 - > This is a suprisingly controversial subject. Objectives used to be required, then they fell out of favor. Then thanks to filtering software, they became popular again. It seems most designers reading resúmes don’t mind one way or the other. Recruiters I’ve asked recently say objective statements don’t matter (again) because key words used in the resumé answer the needs of filtering software.
 - > Most recruiters agree a Professional Profile is just filler text, so avoid.
 - > I will still have you write an objectives statement. Contained within your statements and throughout your resumé should be powerful key words that respond to specific job objectives and industry terms. You may list your objectives as bullet points or as a brief sentence. An objectives statement should usually change out on resúmes if the target job is different. Google “Objective Statements, Resume” and see information provided in class.
 - **Education:**
 - > After your first or second job, this will go after your Work Experience. Only if you have a significant amount of relevant work experience may you choose to move Education down now.
 - > *When listing has been decided, this is the required information:*
 - Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic Design (*with Digital Design Emphasis if that’s you; also this can be stacked if desired*)
 - International Communications Minor (*or whatever minor you have if you do*)
 - Arkansas State University, (*adding Jonesboro, AR is optional. Required if you are sending the resumé out of the States.*)
- Bachelor of Fine Arts**
Graphic Design
Arkansas State University
- > If you have certificates or similar proof of knowledge, include in first rounds. If you did any study abroad – for one week or a full semester – it should be included. If significant, these should stay with your education section through the years.
 - > List in reverse chronological order- most recent first.
 - > Use “Arkansas State University” this time. Then say A-State, not ASU. ASU is the larger Arizona State University, which is why A-State Creative Services made it mandatory (as mandatory as they could) to refer to ourselves as A-State.
 - > If you graduated from the ESL Program, then say so under Education. Be sure to say “ESL (English as a Second Language) Program.” It’s a big deal and implies that not only do you know English, but that you are fluent in something else too. (This other language will be listed under Skills.)

required
information
(cont.)

- **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.
This is the required information for each:
Dates (Month and Year is fine, “present” is used if still working), **Name of Company**, **Location** (city, state...country if not USA), **Your Title** (Freelance Designer, Graphic Design Intern, Design Consultant, Art Director, Designer, Volunteer, etc.), **What you did and for what clients** > see the writing style! You could stack these or list like this is written, but use consistent visual hierarchy. Also list in reverse chronological order. See below example.

dec 2001 – dec 2002

- **Designer Freelance**, San Diego County, CA. Design and production of print advertisements, direct mail, POS, and collateral for *Pacific Track Time*, *Aprilia-Ducati of Oceanside*, *La Jolla Golf Co.*, *Lisa Peirce Photographic Arts*, *Warrior Quest West Coast*, *Hardwick & Hardwick Advertising*, and *Synergy Printing*.

dec 1998 – nov 2001

- **Art Director, The Integer Group**, Lakewood, CO. *Coors* regional and national promotions. Full POS, print, and radio campaigns for on- and off-premise accounts. Structural design for *Coors* “The Frost Brewery” in Coors Amphitheater, California and Colorado Sports Hall of Fame for Invesco Field, Denver. *Coca-Cola* regional POS. *Denver Art Museum* – television and radio commercials, print, outdoor, and promotional material. Direct mail packages and trade ad for *Polk/Equifax*.

- **Service:** If you have completed any kind of volunteer service – especially philanthropic community-building – include in initial lists. Thanks to Millennials changing the workplace, service is increasingly important to show on resumés. The (non-design) recruiters I know claim it’s required nowadays. Military service should be included too.
- **Organizations:** Are you a member of anything, especially things like AIGA or AAF? When you list these, define the acronym only the first time on the resumé. However, you must define it because many outside of design will be reading your resumé. AIGA is “the professional association for design” and AAF is “American Advertising Federation.” None of you serve as AIGA board members, though some of you may serve as A-State AIGA board members. You may have served on the board of the local chapter of AAF, but that means you served on the AAF-NEA board.
- **Awards:** If you have them. Scholarships can be listed with Education. If you have won an Addy, then you must call it a Student Addy (assuming it was). You should also explain if it’s a chapter, regional, or national Addy. Be sure to define AAF-NEA (American Advertising Federation - Northeast Arkansas) the first time you list it unless it’s under Organizations and that’s listed earlier on your resumé. Then call it AAF-NEA thereafter.
- **Skills:** Do you speak a foreign language? Have you attended management seminars or national AIGA events? If the only skill to list is software, it may be included under Education or its own “Software Skills.” For the first rounds, list it under Skills and we’ll see what we have to work with.
Also for software, Adobe Creative Suite usually covers it, but you may want to be more specific. Microsoft Office isn’t important to a design job, but it might be if the job announcement asks for it (be careful of said “design job”). Excel is the exception - that’s a big deal to know well. Brackets is not important, but list all coding languages - you ALL know HTML and CSS.
- **References:** You may list three on the resumé or simply have “Available upon request.” **But you MUST turn at least three references in for this project.** If I check and the person has no idea or gives you a bad reference, then this will greatly affect your project grade. Do not assume I will be your reference. I may be, but I might also suggest you find somebody else. Asking somebody to be your reference *should* be a daunting task because being somebody’s reference is a responsibility.

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- tips
- **One full page. No more, no less.**
 - Use at least 2 columns.
 - Study good examples. Resumé wording is an odd thing.
 - *Attempt* to not use “I” or “me.”
 - Try to not to use past tense. Instead, use present tense if you can. Be consistent.
 - Full sentences are not necessary.
 - Avoid the use of “and” in a list. Just commas to separate.
 - Use **VISUAL**
hierarchy
 - and perfect **typography**
 - that follows *your visual guidelines*.
 - Follow Visual Guidelines and the “voice” of you brand. Do this on EVERYTHING.
 - When you list your education, the DEGREE you achieved is ALWAYS more important than the institution. I don’t care if it’s Harvard - it doesn’t matter as much as the line of study. So when you’re figuring out your visual hierarchy, remember that. THE DEGREE.
 - You are acquiring a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic Design or a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic Design with a Digital Design Emphasis.
Avoid using Bachelor’s. Not a Bachelors. Not a Bachelor of Art. Not a Bachelor in Fine Arts. Not a BFA (unless you’ve already defined the acronym). Et cetera. You get my point.
 - Add Graduation Date only if you are graduating *next* semester. Then remove it as soon as you graduate.
 - Give no hints to your age. Ever.
 - Nothing from high school unless truly significant.
 - Consider including your GPA if it’s above a 3.5.
 - Definitely include that you are in the Honors program if you are. Likewise, if you are going to graduate with some honors significance, list this.
 - List relevant classes, which does not mean listing every class you’ve ever taken. That does not mean you should list every single class you’ve taken at college. I suggest (not required) listing graphic design classes. There are reasons why we name our classes now vs. the old Graphic Design I-IV that said nothing about what was learned. Also add any other classes from your studies that add to your applicable expertise.
 - Work Experience: The more you explain, the more somebody understands. Avoid just listing “logo”. EXPLAIN (in the wording style explained in lecture). Also list results for the client *if* you know them.
 - Remember your downloadable PDF resumé will likely be printed by someone. Therefore, do NOT put a color background on it. You will use up somebody’s ink. Nobody likes that. Find another solution.
 - PROOFREAD. Your final grade is discounted every round that I find a grammatical or spelling error. **I should only be checking content and design.**
 - Use [Grammarly.com](https://www.grammarly.com) or similar to help you if you’re not good with grammar. It is much better than Microsoft Word or InDesign. The full version costs \$30/month. There is a free version available too, though it will not give you as exact reasons when it checks the work.
 - The Writing Center on campus is also helpful to you, but they are not there to just double-check your work. They are there to help you be a better writer, which is extremely valuable! Stop by and become a better writer!
 - Avoid information graphics, even though there are plenty of examples out there. They were trendy for two seconds and now they’re not. So don’t.
 - DO NOT PUT YOUR PICTURE ON YOUR RESUMÉ. EVER.
 - In the future (or now if you’re about to graduate), see if places you want to apply have an Applicant Tracking System. Understand it and its filters. Upload your information. This will likely only be for large corporations.
 - REMEMBER THAT YOU WILL NEED TO UPDATE YOUR RESUMÉ AT LEAST EVERY SIX MONTHS. NOW UNTIL YOU RETIRE.

COVER LETTER

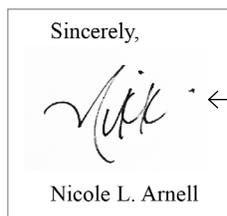
objectives “A resumé alone doesn’t do it. Many employers automatically throw away resúmes that do not include a cover letter...A cover letter is more than a prelude to the resumé, and expresses your ultimate agenda. A resumé is looked at briefly and only has a limited amount of space to say what you 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 create is one that prospects for work and networking connections. However, consider what general job for which you are searching. For example, a cover letter for an advertising art director is different than a person specializing in UX design.

- tips**
- **No more than 1 page.**
 - Use your letterhead, as letters are the purpose of letterhead.
 - “Cover letters give you a chance to sell yourself to a specific job and show how you are a good fit for the position. Your ultimate goal is to convey this simple point: “You need it, I have it.” Showing overall passion for the company is important too, but job specifics are crucial.” - <https://bit.ly/2MWsbjD>
 - “Cover letters give you a chance to speak on behalf of your resume and experiences, since the things that you’ve done might not speak for themselves or be an exact fit. Your job is to show the employer why your past experience is transferable and relevant to the job you’re applying for. Tell them why your experience should matter to them.” - *Ibid.*
 - Three to four paragraphs. Think of the first and last paragraphs as your shortest.
 - Don’t be too personal. Don’t be too sterile. ...Figure it out.
 - Follow Visual Guidelines and the “voice” of your brand. Do this on EVERYTHING
 - Include the address of the person at the top of the letter in the same text. Do not worry about your street address.
 - “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 do be more direct so that the reader is immediately more engaged.
 - Have a specific target. For your rough draft have “Mr. X” or “Ms. X,” assuming you would have an actual name. You may also use “Dear Hiring Director,” but that is very close to “To Whom It May Concern...in the hiring department.”
 - Do not use “Mrs.” or “Miss” ever in any professional communication. A woman’s marital status is not of your concern. (*And welcome to the 21st century.*) Likewise, be positive a woman has not earned a doctorate, as she should then be referred to as Dr.
 - **YOU ARE NOT APPLYING TO A POSTED JOB OPENING IN THIS PROJECT.** Those are easy to write if you can compose this more difficult cover letter.
 - **Do not ask for an interview.** Instead, explain that you will be calling them at a certain time. Even if eventually you will 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 or use your student power here. Regardless, BELIEVE you can do this. But don’t lay all your plans out in your cover letter. Think of this as a strategic attack you can take in steps.*

tips (cont.)

- Decide what you want with this letter. Even though you eventually want a job, you need to NETWORK. Become more than your digital portfolio and instead a real person. Impress them with your work so that when a job opens at their shop – or at the shop where a friend works – you come to mind.
 - > You can't just ask for a job interview (on this version of a cover letter) because the answer is an easy "yes" or "no," probably "no" if there is no job presently available.
 - > Usually a safe bet is to ask to meet the person and introduce yourself. If you're new to a city, that's an especially safe excuse. (Don't use it if you're not new.)
 - > You could be a bit more forward and explain you will have your portfolio and would appreciate her/his opinion. However, don't phrase it like you want a portfolio review because nobody's got time for that. Don't assume people want to help you, though many in the creative field do want to do so as long as their time is valued.
 - > Asking for an "informational interview" is old school now.
 - > "Drop names" and/or organizations if you can. In other words, mention people you both know or groups in which you are both involved. This is why networking helps you. But like references, don't offer this name if you haven't told this person you are doing so. They might not think you're as great as you assume they do.
- On that note ^, this name dropping may be of one of your references, but certainly does not need to be. References are a whole other special category of person.
- Include how the person may contact you directly, which should be your phone number and/or email address.
- Re-read your words. Reduce the time you use "my" or begin a sentence with "I". Word things differently. **What can you do for them. Not what they can do for you.**
- Use correct spelling and grammar. Espouse efficient eloquence.
- PROOFREAD. Many many many times. And then a few more times. Have somebody else proofread it. Your final grade is discounted every round that I find a grammatical error.
- Don't repeat words. For example, "I am compelled by your agency's compelling work.." Use another word instead of compelling the second time. USE A THESAURUS.
- Instead of using "have been designing," you should say "I continue to design." Verb tenses are important and they are hard to catch due to a continuous misuse in the common vernacular. <https://bit.ly/2nSQ2D2>
- How many times did you start a sentence with "I". Can you rearrange the words so it says the same thing but with a different flow?
- Use [Grammarly.com](https://www.grammarly.com) or similar to help you if you're not good with grammar. It is much better than Microsoft Word or InDesign. To use the full version, it will cost you \$30/month. There is a free version available too, though it will not give you as exact reasons when it checks the work.
- The Writing Center on campus is also helpful to you, but they are not there to just double-check your work. They are there to help you be a better writer, which is extremely valuable! So stop by and become a better writer!
- When closing the letter, print and sign your name. These may be the exact same or some slightly more informal version. For example, I will often end my professional letters in the design world with the example to the left. However, I sign my full name on professional academic letters because it's more formal.
- Also as I explained last year to my students when they weren't giving me what I expected in the last paragraph of their cover letters:



"WHEN. YOU. WILL. CONTACT. THEM. That's WHY you have your Job Hunt Journal. You must track them down and be slightly aggressive about this. (Not creepy-like, but not just 'ya know....maybe....if you feel like talking to me...I'm really neat....') Go after this or you will get nothing. THE CREATIVITY-FOR-HIRE JOB MARKET IS RIDICULOUSLY COMPETITIVE (for the good stuff)."
(See "Paragraph #3" on next page.)

structure Please see the following guidelines, paraphrased from <https://bit.ly/2MWsbfD>.

Paragraph #1: Introduction (Tell the employer why you are writing and interested in the job)

- Who are you? (Not your name!)
- What are you studying (or what have you studied for the first couple years after you graduate)? You may mention that you will be graduating soon, but be careful with this. It's honest, but it also implies you aren't experienced. (Of course, it also implies you're affordable.)
- Why are you writing/what position are you applying for? You can include how you found the posting and if you were personally referred or have a contact, drop the name here.
- Why are you interested in the position? This is so important, companies want to talk to people that really want to talk to them. Be genuine. As this most difficult cover letter doesn't answer an exact job opening, assume you are expressing interest in a specific genre of job. Is it an art director? Is it a designer? Etc. Decide and write the letter this way.
- Show your industry/company knowledge and excitement to be a part of it. Compliment them. Did the company recently win some awards? Did they just release a new campaign for a well-known client?

Paragraph #2 (and maybe #3, but no more) - **Sales Pitch** (Show the employer you are a good fit for the position and get an interview)

- This is the happy marriage paragraph. It should mention both you and the employer.
- A paragraph full of "I's" is a one-sided relationship.
- Choose 3 skills/traits the employer is requiring and show how you meet these requirements. Use the job description and qualifications of this kind of job to help you. You only need to address 3 and show how these experiences will be helpful to them. This is essentially a 6 sentence paragraph. A sentence about your qualification and one about how it relates to them. Do this 3 times.
- DO NOT restate everything that is on your resumé. They can read. Instead think about why these experiences make you a good fit for this position and then make a connection to what they need and what you have.

Paragraph #3 (or #4) – **Conclusion**

- Restate in one sentence how you can add value to their firm.
- Show your interest in the company and thank them for their consideration.
- Assuming you have a contact name and can follow up, let them know you will and then DO IT! (about 1 week is a good timeframe.) Relative to your Job Hunt Journal, this is for a Tier 1 or Tier 2 cover letter.
If there is not a contact or an email and you have applied through a website, there's not a lot you can do. You can try to find an alum (that you know) that works there to use as a connection, but if they don't know you, they won't vouch for you.

one more thing **Q:**

It's understandable that cover letters (in email or on paper) are required when looking for a job with a business, whether that be to fill a position or to work contract/freelance. However, are they necessary when you're looking to freelance on your own?

A:

When hustling for yourself, it is true that cover letters are not quite as "required." You will find work in other ways, often by meeting people at events, through your friends and coworkers, and/or your social media presence, all of which lead to your website. ALWAYS HAVE A WEBSITE and always have an up-to-date resumé and portfolio on the site. In this case, a person is looking for you. However, you should always be able to write professionally to somebody communicating with you. Do not take this skill to be unimportant.