# Ventura COLLEGE CAREER CENTER

# RESUME & COVER LETTER GUIDE

## SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT THROUGH STARFISH

## SEARCH & APPLY FOR JOBS & INTERNSHIPS ON HANDSHAKE

### VCCCD.JOINHANDSHAKE.COM

WWW.VENTURACOLLEGE.EDU/CAREER | VCCAREER@VCCCD.EDU | 805-289-6473

4667 TELEGRAPH RD (SSC BUILDING), VENTURA, CA 93003

Updated January 2023

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> **Creating a resume and cover letter can be overwhelming, but don't worry - we're here to help!**
> Visit the Ventura College Career Center at any point in the process to receive assistance. We are located on-campus in the Student Services Center (SSC) and available via Zoom.

Ventura COLLEGE

# RYsumY Brainstorming Worksheet

This worksheet is intended to help you gather information about your education, experiences, and skills to assist you in formulating your résumé. Use an additional piece of paper if needed.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name

Phone                                        Email

LinkedIn/Portfolio URL

OBJECTIVE

A brief statement of the position you are applying for and/or your relevant skills.

EDUCATION

List all colleges and universities. No need to include high school. Do not abbreviate.

School                                                        City, State

Degree                                                        Graduation Date

Major(s)/Minor(s)                                                    GPA

CERTIFICATIONS & LICENSES

Examples include:  CPR/First Aid, EMT, Teaching, etc.

Certificate/License                                            Dates            -

Certificate/License                                            Dates            -

HONORS & AWARDS

Include name of honor/award, date received & name of organization giving award.

Honor/Award                                                Date Received

Honor/Award                                                Date Received

<u>SKILLS</u>

Include languages, computer programs, research/lab techniques, etc.

_____          _____

_____          _____

_____          _____

<u>EXPERIENCE</u>

Describe all experiences including: full-time and part-time jobs, internships, volunteer work, leadership roles, class/ personal projects, research, etc. When writing your accomplishment statements, use action verbs to describe your skills and activities; quantify when possible. See the Career Manual for a list of action verbs/skill sets.

Position/Title_____Dates_____-_____

Employer/Company_____City, State _____

Accomplishments & Skills

- _____

- _____

- _____

- _____

Position/Title_____Dates_____-_____

Employer/Company_____City, State _____

Accomplishments & Skills

- _____

- _____

- _____

- _____

<u>PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS/EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES</u>

May include sports, clubs, student organizations, and professional associations. Include length of membership.

Organization_____Dates_____- _____

Organization_____Dates_____- _____

# How to Write a Resume

A resume is a summary of your experience and skills as they pertain to employment goals. Effective resumes:

- ➥ Emphasize relevant accomplishments and potential contributions to an organization
- ➥ Focus on the skills and requirements necessary for a specific job
- ➥ Are concise, well-organized, and error free

- ➥ Are easy to read and grab the reader's attention in less than one minute

## KEY TIPS FOR A QUALITY RESUME

- ➥ Format - appropriate length is 1-page, with a 1-inch margins. 11-12 point font with an easy to read font style (i.e. Calibri, Arial, etc.).
- ➥ Target Your Audience - Relate your experience to required skills and qualifications. Use language from job description.
- ➥ Organization - Resume must have Heading, Education, Experience, and Summary of Skills/Qualifications.

## STEP 1: IDENTIFY ORGANIZATIONS

Make a list of companies and job titles or occupations you are interested in. This will help create a targeted resume to the position you seek by identifying what skills and experience to include or omit in your resume as it relates to the position.

## STEP 2: WRITE YOUR FIRST DRAFT, REVISE, THEN GET FEEDBACK

Use the examples (see reverse) to guide your first draft. Read each section over carefully and be sure you have effectively conveyed the skills you wish to emphasize. Proofread for spelling, capitalization or punctuation errors. Have your resume critiqued at the Career Center!

## STEP 3: CREATE A FOUNDATIONAL VERSION

You may need to have multiple versions of your resume for different industries or positions. Rarely is one standard resume created for all positions. Keep an updated master document with all your experiences listed so that you can pull from it as needed.

## STEP 4: USE ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENTS

The purpose of a resume is to showcase your brand. Your brand is used to demonstrate who you are and what matters most to you. By showcasing your accomplishments on a resume, you can help the prospective employer assess your ability to do the job. By using Accomplishment Statements to describe your achievements in the experience section, you quantify your work and provide context to work you preformed, providing the employer a full picture of your responsibilities and your accomplishments.

*Action Verb + Project + Result = Accomplishment*

*Ex. Coordinated + three fundraising events for local shelters + which raised over $8,000 and improved community awareness*

*Coordinated three fundraising events for local shelters, which raised over $8,000 and improved community awareness.*

## STEP 5: SAVE IN MULTIPLE FORMATS

When saving your resume, save as both a PDF document and a word processing document. Title the file using this format: *yourname.positiontitle.pdf*. When submitting as an email attachment, send the resume as a PDF document to avoid formatting issues. For job search websites such as Handshake, it is best to use a word processing document to ensure maximum readability and Applicant Tracking System (ATS) combatibility.

*Visit our website, www.venturacollege.edu/career for a free resume template to create your first draft.

EXAMPLE RESUME

# FirstName LastName

(805) 555-5555

FirstNameLastName@gmail.com

## OBJECTIVE

Seeking (insert position here) at (insert company or industry) utilizing (insert skills you will contribute to the company).

## EDUCATION

Associate of Science, Business Management          Expected graduation date: May 20xx
Ventura College - Ventura, CA

## EXPERIENCE

**Position Title**, Company Name          Month/Year – Month/Year
City, State
- Add bullet points that summarize accomplishments and skills related to the job/position for which you are applying, not simply duties of position.
- Bullet points do no need to be full sentences but should have enough detail to get the point across; include numbers, percentages, and dollar amounts where applicable.
- Start bullet point with an action verb using the proper tense.
- Periods are an optional punctuation on a resume, but if you are going to use them be consistent throughout your resume.
- Within a category (i.e. Experience) show most recent activity first, and then go back in time.

**Supervisor and Server**, El Tecolote Restaurant          April 20xx – January 20xx
Camarillo, CA
- Promoted to supervisor after six months due to excellent performance and customer reviews
- Managed frequent changes to staff scheduling for team of 10 and trained new employees
- Ensured adherence to Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards and policies

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

**Vice President**, Associated Student Body          September 20xx – June 20xx
Adolfo Camarillo High School, Camarillo, CA
- Organized monthly social events and a fundraiser that raised over $800 for an animal shelter
- Attended weekly cabinet meetings and collaborated with team to conduct student outreach
- Reported monthly to President and staff supervisor on funds, objectives, and event planning

**Camp Tutor**, STEM Summer Program          June 20xx – August 20xx
Camarillo, CA
- Provided one-on-one and small group tutoring to sixth grade students in Math and Biology
- Created study guides for students which improved test scores by 5% in three months

## SKILLS

*Computer:* Proficient in Adobe Creative Suite, Excel, and Google Analytics
*Languages:* Fluent in Spanish and English

**\*Visit our website, www.venturacollege.edu/career to view more example resumes.**

# Top Skills

As you carefully craft a resume, knowing the way to showcase your skills for a specific position can determine how far you advance in the hiring process. The skills on your resume can differentiate you from your competition and a hiring panel can decide the salary you will receive based on your resume skills section.

## JOB SKILLS ON A RESUME

Employers are typically seeking both hard *and* soft skills. These skills and attributes are essential for today's workplace.

Hard skills are the technical skills required to accomplish the tasks and responsibilities associated with the job. They're acquired through training, education, and practice. They are measurable and easy to advertise. Your work history and certifications will speak to them.

Soft skills, or interpersonal skills, reflect an applicant's personality and personal attributes. They can relate to an ability to fit into a company's work culture, handle stress, communicate clearly or work well with others, for example. Soft skills are important as they may be used to tip the scales when two candidates with the same technical skills and experience levels are being compared.

Remember, every job application should get a tailored resume. Review the duties of each position that you're applying for then determine which technical skills and personal strengths would help you be a success at the job and in the work environment.

*Stay current on trending skills recruiters are seeking in your specific industry by searching career websites and articles related to top skills of the specific industry in the current year.*

### 10 Soft Skills/Personal Attributes

1. Adaptability/Flexibility
2. Efficiency/Attention to Detail
3. Organizational Skills/Thinking
4. Social Intelligence/Awareness
5. Professionalism/Emotional Intelligence
6. Team Spirit/Solidarity
7. Initiative/Self-Motivation
8. Creativity/Inventiveness
9. Leadership/Decision-Making
10. Versatility/Willingness to Learn

### 10 Most In-Demand Hard Skills

1. Software Proficiency i.e., Microsoft 365
2. Marketing Skills/Graphic Design
3. Data Analysis/Data Privacy
4. Multilingualism/Foreign Languages
5. Project/Account Management
6. Program Development/Languages
7. Cloud Computing
8. Video Editing
9. Research Skills
10. Search Engine Optimization

# Action Verbs

Each accomplishment statement on your resume should start with an action verb.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Accelerated | Doubled | Integrated | Published | Honor | |
| Accompanied | Drafted | Intensified | Recommended | Imagination | |
| Achieved | Earned | Interpreted | Reconciled | Ingenuity | |
| Acquired | Edited | Interviewed | Recruited | Judgment | |
| Adapted | Educated | Invented | Reduced | Merit | |
| Addressed | Effected | Justified | Reinforced | Prestige | |
| Administered | Eliminated | Keyed | Related | Progress | |
| Advised | Enacted | Keynoted | Reorganized | Recognition | |
| Analyzed | Encouraged | Launched | Reported | Stability | |
| Anticipated | Enforced | Led | Researched | Success | |
| Appreciated | Engineered | Licensed | Resolved | | |
| Arranged | Enhanced | Located | Reviewed | **ADJECTIVES** | |
| Aspired | Established | Maintained | Revised | | |
| Assembled | Evaluated | Managed | Scheduled | Accelerated | |
| Assisted | Exceeded | Manufactured | Secured | Active | |
| Audited | Executed | Marketed | Selected | Capable | |
| Budgeted | Exhibited | Mastered | Separated | Comprehensive | |
| Built | Expanded | Minimized | Served | Conscientious | |
| Calculated | Explained | Monitored | Serviced | Detailed | |
| Centralized | Facilitated | Motivated | Set up | Determine | |
| Changed | Finalized | Negotiated | Simplified | Distinctive | |
| Clarified | Financed | Nominated | Solved | Educated | |
| Collaborated | Forecasted | Normalized | Sparked | Effective | |
| Commanded | Formalized | Obtained | Staffed | Efficient | |
| Completed | Formed | Officiated | Streamlined | Exceptional | |
| Composed | Formulated | Operated | Structured | Exclusive | |
| Conceived | Founded | Ordered | Succeeded | Goal Oriented | |
| Condensed | Generated | Organized | Supervised | Helpful | |
| Conducted | Governed | Originated | Supported | Honest | |
| Constructed | Graduated | Oversaw | Surveyed | Lasting | |
| Contracted | Guided | Participated | Taught | Loyal | |
| Controlled | Handled | Perceived | Tested | Mutual | |
| Converted | Headed | Perfected | Trained | Notable | |
| Cooperated | Hired | Performed | Transferred | Permanent | |
| Coordinated | Identified | Piloted | Transformed | Popular | |
| Correlated | Implemented | Pinpointed | Unified | Practical | |
| Created | Improved | Pioneered | Used | Proficient | |
| Cultivated | Improvised | Placed | Utilized | Punctual | |
| Decided | Increased | Planned | Verified | Reasonable | |
| Delegated | Induced | Prepared | | Reliable | |
| Demonstrated | Influenced | Presided | **NOUNS** | Responsible | |
| Designed | Informed | Prevented | | Revamped | |
| Determined | Initiated | Procured | Ability | Satisfied | |
| Developed | Innovated | Produced | Ambition | | |
| Devised | Inspired | Promoted | Confidence | | |
| Directed | Installed | Proposed | Diversity | | |
| Discovered | Instructed | Provided | Economy | | |
| Displayed | Insured | Publicized | Excellence | | |

# Self-Evaluation Worksheet

It is crucial to tailor your resume and cover letter to highlight your qualifications that are relevant for each position you apply for. This will increase your chances of getting an interview. Filling out this worksheet can help you self-evaluate, identify what you should include, and what you can omit. It will also help you improve your effectiveness at job fairs and during interviews by helping you anticipate questions to communicate your relevant background to employers. See completed example on next page.

| RESPONSIBILITIES, DUTIES, SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE (For the job you are applying for) | YOUR RELATED EXPERIENCE (Work experience, internships, class projects, student organizations, technical skills, etc.) |
|---|---|
| | |
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# Ex: Self-Evaluation Worksheet

Example of completed worksheet

| RESPONSIBILITIES, DUTIES, SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE (Taken from a job posting description for a Medical Assistant position) | YOUR RELATED EXPERIENCE (Taken from work experience, internships, class projects, student organizations, skills, etc.) |
|---|---|
| Affinity for people; can establish rapport with patients | 3 years customer service experience; Volunteer greeter at hospital |
| Commitment to team and strong worth ethic | 2 years on leadership team for Holistic Health Clubas Treasurer; Team presentations for classes |
| Schedule patient appointments | Training in computerized appointment books and patient management systems |
| Develop and create flyers, order forms, and brochures | Created flyers to advertise annual events for clubusing Publisher; Assisted in creating order forms using Google forms through internship |
| Excellent interpersonal and communication skills(written and verbal) | Experience at VC giving oral presentations using PowerPoint; Experience creating written reports for technicalwriting class and capstone course |
| Strong analytical and organizational skills | Analyzed patient data and health trends for market research project and made recommendations; Use project management apps to organize class projects and team responsibilities for student .org |
| Familiarity with computer applications including MS Word/Excel/PowerPoint, Photoshop | Experience using MS office suite for work andschool assignments; Experience using similar design platform (Publisher)through leadership role |
| Bilingual (Preferred) | Fluent in Spanish |
| Required enrollment in an AA/AS, BA/BS, or certification program | Enrolled in Associate of Science in Medical Assisting – Administrative at VC; expected to be completed in May 2019 |

# Resume Review Checklist

| Layout & Appearance | Yes | No | Comments/Notes |
|---|---|---|---|
| Is my name at the top of the page, 2 points larger than rest of resume and in bold? | | | |
| Are my address, phone number, and email easy to read and accurate? | | | |
| Do I have an appropriate email address and have I changed my cell phone message to be professional? | | | |
| Is my resume an appropriate length? | | | |
| Is formatting (e.g., bold, font, bullet sizes, heading styles) consistent throughout the resume? 11–12-point font | | | |
| Are the headings and statements evenly spaced? | | | |
| Are verb tenses in the present tense for current jobs? | | | |
| Are verb tenses in the past tense for previous jobs? | | | |
| Do I have approximately 2-5 statements per job? (Bullet form is recommended) | | | |

| Content | Yes | No | Comments/Notes |
|---|---|---|---|
| Did I include the following content: Objective, Education, Experience, Related Activities, Accomplishments and Skills? | | | |
| Does my education section state my degree and expected graduation date? Did I include a highlight about my education? | | | |
| Is my education section in the best location on my resume? (Top) | | | |
| Do my statements demonstrate major accomplishments rather than routine tasks/duties? Did I DESCRIBE what I did rather than just LIST or TELL? | | | |
| Did I include relevant courses to show my skills and abilities or a Technical Skills/Systems section? | | | |
| Do my accomplishment statements start with action verbs? (See list of Action Verbs) | | | |
| Do my accomplishment statements demonstrate the use of key skills? | | | |
| General Comments and Suggestions or Questions | | | |

# How to Write U Cover Letter

## WHAT IS A COVER LETTER?

A cover letter is your personalized, one-page sales pitch or introduction to an employer and should:

➥ Explain why you are sending the resume and how you heard about the position

➥ Link your skills, experience, and education to the requirements of the position

➥ Focus on your interest in the organization and what you can contribute to the team

➥ Convince the reader to look at your resume

Each resume you submit for a job opportunity should be accompanied by a cover letter, unless otherwise directed. Some industries and recruiters weigh cover letters heavily in the application review process. Do not submit a vague or general cover letter, be sure to tailor the letter to the job opportunity.

## KEY TIPS

*Format:*

➤ Cover letters are often submitted as an email attachment or uploaded as part of an online application. Just like with your resume, send the cover letter as a PDF to avoid formatting issues unless otherwise directed.

➤ Always include a personalized introduction in the body of an email, in addition to attaching a formal cover letter.

*Target the particular organization and position:*

➤ Tailor each letter to show the connection between your qualifications and the employer's requirements.

➤ Read the job description and highlight skills the employer is looking for. Link them to examples of how you have showcased those skills previously. Demonstrate your knowledge about the organization.

*Appropriately address your letter:*

➤ Target an individual whenever possible when addressing your letter. If a name is not available, use a professional greeting such as "Hiring Manager" or "Internship Coordinator."

*Mention referrals:*

➤ If someone has referred you to the position or organization (e.g. an alumni contact, faculty, etc.), mention this at the beginning of the letter.

## GET STARTED

1. *Begin your narrative.* Briefly share your major, degree anticipated and how you found the opportunity. You may choose to get creative to "hook" in the reader.
2. *Express your interest.* Demonstrate enthusiasm for the position and organization.
3. *Share your experience.* Use specific examples. Match your experience with the position requirements whenever possible.
4. *Convince the employer.* Show that you possess the skills and abilities they are looking for and that they should offer you an interview.
5. *Express gratitude.* End the letter by thanking the reader for their time and consideration. Be sure your contact information is included in two places: header of your letter, the last paragraph of your letter, or following your signature line.

**Michelle Mills**

(805) 555-5555 | FirstNameLastName@gmail.com | 1234 Street Address, Ventura, CA 93003

October 2, 2017

Human Resources Department
Family Care Center
4667 Telegraph Road, Ventura CA 93003

Dear Selection Committee:

I will be completing my Associate in Science in Child Development at Ventura College this semester, after which I will be available for full-time teaching assistant positions. I was referred to the Teaching Assistant position at Family Care Center by my professor, Jane Good, and I am excited to submit my application.

I am well qualified for the part-time Teaching Assistant position for several reasons:

- **I have 3+ years experience as an aid for toddlers and as an after school tutor for elementary students.** In these positions, I have excelled in providing excellent support to professional staff, supported classroom management, and supported individual's cognitive and psychosocial development.
- **I am a strong communicator and work well with various stakeholders.** My previous employers and professors can attest that I consistently demonstrate professionalism when collaborating with colleagues and administrators. Further, I take pride in ensuring effective communication with parents in both English and Spanish.
- **Early childhood education is my passion.** I stay abreast of trends in the field and I am knowledgeable about curriculum planning consistent with California Early Learning System for Infants-Toddlers and Preschool. Additionally, I am aware of developmentally appropriate teaching methods and have been trained to integrate a variety of appropriate teaching strategies as well as technology into the classroom.

I am confident my skills and prior experience make me an excellent candidate for this position. I would like very much to talk with you in the near future. I will contact you in the next couple weeks to discuss a convenient time to meet. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Michelle Mills

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**TIP:**
Your cover letter header should match your resume header - think of this as part of demonstrating your brand.

**TIP:**
This is an example of a traditional cover letter. Feel free to get more creative (as appropriate in your industry).

**TIP:**
If you are sending your cover letter in the body of an email, omit the information to the right and begin with salutation.

**TIP:**
Traditional format includes a signature before the printed name. If you're sending a cover letter electronically or writing an introduction in the body of an email, omit the signature and conclude your letter with your name and contact information.

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## Jaime Castillo

(805) 555-5555 | FirstNameLastName@gmail.com

April 30, 2018

Jane Smith
ABC Hospital
1234 Ventura Road, Ventura CA 93003

Dear Jane Smith:

I am excited to apply for the part-time Medical Assistant position with ABC Hospital. I recently completed the Medical Assisting program at Ventura College and have one year of internship experience in a medical setting. I am passionate about the medical field and eager to contribute my skills to the team at ABC Hospital.

Through my internship, I gained experience communicating with patients and reading patient records. I was also trained in electronic health records and utilized the Microsoft Office Suite daily to track office tasks and streamline communication. Through my coursework, I have strengthened my knowledge of insurance protocols, lab test requisitions, and medical terminology. Additionally, I have exceptional customer service skills which I developed through my 5+ years in retail and food service. My combination of patient and customer service experience along with my knowledge of the medical field will allow me to immediately contribute to your team.

I am confident my skills and prior experience make me an excellent candidate for this position. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to the opportunity to interview for the Medical Assistant position.

Sincerely,

Jaime Castillo

Jaime Castillo

# Cover Letter Review Checklist

| Layout & Appearance | Yes | No | Comments/Notes |
|---|---|---|---|
| Is my name at the top of the page, 2 points larger than rest of cover letter and in bold? | | | |
| Are my address, phone number, and email accurate and easy to read? Do I have an appropriate email address and have I changed my cell phone message to be professional? | | | |
| Is my cover letter an appropriate length, not exceeding one page? | | | |
| Is my format (e.g. font, size) consistent throughout?  11- 12 point font | | | |
| Is the contact information and address of the company I am applying to left-aligned at top of page after the date? | | | |
| Did I insert a space after company contact information then address the hiring manager by name (Dear __ )? | | | |
| Are the margins standardized, matching those of attached resume (e.g. 1-inch, no smaller than 0.5-inch)? | | | |
| Did I use appropriate line spacing, between single and 1.5? | | | |
| Is my document free of any pictures/graphics or colors? | | | |

| Content | Yes | No | Comments/Notes |
|---|---|---|---|
| Is my opening paragraph brief and direct? | | | |
| Did I identify the company name and position, include why I am applying to the position? | | | |
| Did I state where I discovered the position or who referred me, if applicable? | | | |
| Is the body of my cover letter brief, with two or three short paragraphs (or targeted bullet points)? | | | |
| Did I include keywords, skills, and requirements from the job description to describe my fit for the position? | | | |
| Is my closing send-off professional? | | | |
| Did I include a hand written signature in addition to my typed name in the closing (for cover letters that will be submitted hard copy)? | | | |