

How to write a resume that is informative, attractive and easy to read:

Please review this information *thoroughly* and prepare your resume draft *before* bringing your resume to be reviewed by a career counselor. Look at resume samples, even those in other fields. Start with a blank Word document – NEVER use a template!

The resume should be a brief but informative summary of your education, employment or volunteer experience, and any specialized skills. The layout should be attractive and easy to read or scan. It should generate the kinds of questions you want to answer during an interview.

RESUME FORMATS

Chronological: The most accepted format, it lists education history and work experience in *reverse chronological order*, *i.e.*, with the most recent items first. This format is **best for most candidates**, especially those entering the job market or changing jobs within a career field. Career Services recommends the chronological format, since it is more straightforward.

Functional: This format organizes your experience into *skill areas*, regardless of the specific job in which the skill was demonstrated. Employment history is then briefly summarized in reverse chronological order. Functional resumes are occasionally helpful for candidates with complex work histories or for those who are changing careers or re-entering the job market. Most employers regard functional resumes as hard to decipher, and they suspect the writer is hiding or exaggerating things.

OUR MOST FREQUENTLY-ASKED RESUME QUESTIONS:

- | | | |
|----------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Length? | 5. Objective? | 9. Scanning? |
| 2. Content? | 6. Features? | 10. Internet? |
| 3. Sections? | 7. Typing? | 11. Critiques? |
| 4. Appearance? | 8. Paper? | 12. Curriculum Vitae? |

1) How long should my resume be?

Most recent graduates should confine their resumes to one page. If your resume goes to a second page, make sure your margins are not too wide (no more than 1” left and right and as little as ½” top and bottom). If the headings are on the left, stack the words (*e.g.* “TEACHING” with “EXPERIENCE” under it, rather than next to it). If your resume runs over a little bit, don’t worry – a counselor will be able to help you reduce it to one page without losing anything important.

“ . . .make sure your margins are not too wide (no wider than 1” left / right and as narrow as ½” top / bottom)...”

2) What should I include?

- 1. Name:** Start with your **NAME** (we suggest upper case bold for name only), and complete contact information (address, phone and email address).
- 2. Certifications:** List professional certifications or licenses with dates received.
- 3. Education:** Summarize your education in reverse order, starting with your last degree or the one you are working on now. Include school name, city, state, degree, major, date degree was - or will be - conferred and honors. Include GPA only if 3.0 or higher.
- 4. Courses:** To tailor your resume to a specific job, you may include a list of “relevant courses.” This also fills space if you have little experience.
- 5. Honors/Awards/Activities:** Use one or more categories as appropriate, highlighting achievements such as scholarships, Dean’s List, leadership roles in clubs, campus/community organizations, sports or other accomplishments.
- 6. Research:** If applicable, you may include special projects or research, highlighting significant relevant classroom learning experiences such as research projects, independent study, special presentations, major papers.
- 7. Experience:** Your experience, regardless of how you acquired it (full time or part time jobs, internships, community or college service) is usually of chief interest to the reader. For each position, include: Job Title (followed by dates of employment), Employer, City, State. Emphasize (put first) either employers or job titles, but be consistent! Describe responsibilities, duties and accomplishments, preferably using list format with bullets.
- 8. Skills:** Of great interest to employers! Indicate computer hardware and software knowledge, fluency in foreign languages, or other technical skills. If you have several of each, use separate categories.
- 9. Interests:** List interests only if you are really knowledgeable about something or very good at it.
- 10. Affiliations:** List professional or volunteer affiliations/memberships (if applicable). Include any offices held.

“The headings on your resume function like headlines in a newspaper.”

3) How do I name the sections?

The headings on your resume function like headlines in the newspaper. They can show the reader where certain information is located, give a summary of content, and catch the reader’s interest. If you glance at a resume with a section heading *Honors and Awards*, you will reasonably assume this candidate has received honors and awards and that may motivate you to read this resume. Since almost every employer wants people with computer skills, some may scan a pile of resumes for those with *Computer Skills* in bold headline type.

The exact heading you choose is important and allows you to tailor your resume and place the most important experiences first. If you have worked in your field, name the field in your heading (e.g., *Social Work Experience*, or *Marketing Experience*). Work in related fields can be headed *Related Experience*. If the work is not related to your objective but you want to include it, call it *Other Experience* or use the name of the field. *Fieldwork*, *Volunteer Activities*, *Summer Employment*, or *Internships* are other possible headings. If you include only some of your jobs, you can call it *Selected Experience*. Select and order the major categories so that the most relevant information is placed early on the resume (top 2/3 of the first page).

**“Avoid using ‘assisted.’
Say what YOU did.”**

4) How do I make my resume look professional?

- ❑ Include **no** personal information: age, health, marital status, height, weight, religion.
- ❑ Never use the first person "I." Do not use full sentences. Eliminate all unnecessary words (a, the).
- ❑ Never lie or exaggerate.
- ❑ Add to the eye appeal of your resume by varying the typeface for emphasis: **bold**, underline, *italic*, UPPER CASE, etc. (Use italics for emphasis only - perhaps your job title - never for the entire resume.) Use an attractive legible typeface such as Times or Arial, not an old-fashioned font such as Courier.
- ❑ Use "bullets" (•, ♦, *, –) for listing items under a heading description, such as experience.
- ❑ Proofread carefully. Grammatical, content and typographical errors may eliminate you immediately from consideration for an interview. Ask others to proofread the resume as well.
- ❑ The successful resume is one that results in interviews. *Does yours present you as an accomplished person? Is it easy to read, pleasing to the eye, devoid of all errors, current, honest?*

**“Use an objective *only* if it is
very specific, unique or necessary to
clarify your job target.”**

5) Do I need an objective?

Most recent graduates don't need one. Include an objective **only** if it is very specific, unique, or necessary to clarify your job target. The objective is already clear with certifications (*e.g.*, teachers) or majors (*e.g.*, nursing). Some candidates may want to tailor the job objective for a specific job application. ***Be sure your objective addresses what you can do for the employer, not what the employer can do for you.*** Most employers do not care that you want a “challenging” position or one that “provides career growth.” They do care about additional skills or experience beyond the basic qualifications. Remember that your job target will be addressed very specifically in your cover letter. Candidates with several years of professional experience and skills related to the job may prefer to use a *Summary* or *Profile* in place of an objective.

6) What is the most important feature of a successful resume?

Most applicants for a particular job often have similar degrees and work histories. People who get interviews are perhaps those who convey on their resumes that they have personally done many of the things that need to be done, and have demonstrated the needed skills. *Claiming* that you have a skill is not as convincing as *demonstrating* how you have used the skill. Here are some pointers:

- ⇒ Use **action verbs** to describe your duties and accomplishments, depicting yourself as someone who gets the job done: one who "created . . . published . . . solved" – not one who merely "participated in" or was "responsible for." Avoid using “assisted” – say **what you did**. Vary the vocabulary. (See list of action verbs on *page 6 of this guide*.) For present jobs, use present tense verbs and for past jobs, use past tense.
- ⇒ Emphasize skills and **experience related to the job** you want and to the employer's needs.
- ⇒ When describing your experience, use **detailed descriptions** that give the reader a picture of you as an individual (“Adapted lesson on dinosaurs to learning styles of autistic children”) rather than vague descriptions that make you sound like everyone else (“Followed the curriculum of cooperating teacher”).
- ⇒ Avoid self-serving and subjective descriptions. Do include **occupation-specific words** related to the job, especially if resume will be scanned for an electronic resume bank.
- ⇒ **Quantify** accomplishments by citing numbers, dollars, percentages, etc., where appropriate.
- ⇒ Put the most related and impressive accomplishments **first** within each job description.

7) Can you type this for me?

ABSOLUTELY NOT. We believe that you should do your own resume on a word processing program, so that you can make frequent updates and tailor it to specific jobs. We do not advocate having anyone else do it for you, and you should not waste your money on a “professional” resume typing service. Also **avoid using a resume template** – they usually look awful and limit the ways you can lay out your resume. Using a standard word processing program will give you the greatest flexibility and usefulness.

“Most job searches today include applying for a job online.”

8) What color paper should I use?

Using a laser or printer of similar quality, print your resume on 8.5" x 11" heavy (22-25lb) white, light gray or ivory paper with some cotton content. Purchase extra paper for cover letters and thank you letters and don't forget matching envelopes. Avoid very heavy papers that jam in the printer and marbled papers that don't look clear when photocopied. Plain paper is more professional than paper with cute borders.

“Use detailed descriptions that give the reader a picture of you as an individual, rather than vague descriptions that make you sound like everyone else.”

9) What if my resume is scanned by a computer?

An increasing number of employers now scan resumes into their databases so they can search for candidates with the right skills and experience. **For resumes that may be scanned by computers, do not use hollow bullets, columns, italics, borders, shading or underlining.** Use standard fonts, plain white paper and laser printers. Be sure to use key words related to the field. To maximize “hits” (*i.e.*, matches of your resume to job vacancies) in cases where the employer scans all resumes, we suggest that you describe your experience in very concrete, rather than vague, terms; be concise; use more than one page if needed; use terms and acronyms specific to your field (but spell out acronyms too); be specific with software and programs.

“Is your resume easy to read, pleasing to the eye, devoid of all errors, current, honest?”

10) How do I use the Internet to send out my resume?

Most job searches today will include applying for a job online.

- Prepare your resume using a word processing program (we suggest Microsoft Word). Send an email with the cover letter and resume as separate attachments. Employers may also provide special instructions on their sites for sending your resume in response to an ad.
- Another method used by some organizations is an online application, which may be called a “resume,” but bears little resemblance to the professional resume we have described, and will not substitute for a professional resume for other uses. These are generally “read” by computers to select candidates based on their ‘key words’, so their appearance is not important. You will probably have to cut and paste all needed information each time you respond to one of these applications.
- There are also resume databases on the Internet where you can upload your resume for employers to review.

“Like your resume, your CV is a work in progress. Instead of merely keeping it current, delete things that no longer relate to your objective, create new categories to show achievements, and reorganize sections to emphasize strengths related to the job you seek.”

11) Got a minute to look over my resume?

After you complete your resume according to guidelines in this *Resume Guide*, you may make an appointment with a counselor for a review, OR you may email it to us as a Word attachment to Career Services.

“You should do your own resume on Word or WordPerfect so that you can make frequent updates and tailor it to specific jobs.”

12) What’s the difference between a resume and a curriculum vitae?

A curriculum vitae (often called a ‘CV’) is a special type of resume traditionally used within the academic community, and sometimes in the medical and legal communities. It is useful not only for a job search, but also for tenure review, grant applications, fellowships or consulting. Academic hiring is frequently a long process done by a committee. Thus, the CV may be reviewed by many individuals.

The CV need not be confined to one page, like the typical business resume, nor does it have to be any longer than necessary to highlight your strengths and achievements. It generally includes degrees, teaching and research experience, publications, presentations and related activities. When applying for positions outside of academia, a resume will represent you better than a CV. The details of your teaching and research will probably be of less interest to the reader. Converting your CV to a resume will usually require major revisions.

Like your resume, your CV is a work in progress. Instead of merely keeping your CV current, you should delete items that no longer relate to your objective, create new categories to show your achievements, and reorganize sections to emphasize strengths related to the job you seek.

Never use a resume template!

Some Action Verbs

Begin each description of your activities and accomplishments *using an action verb*. There are many other “occupation-specific” verbs not mentioned here, but this list should help you vary your vocabulary. Remember that present jobs will use present tense. Past jobs use past tense.

<i>accelerated</i>	<i>coordinated</i>	<i>improvised</i>	<i>projected</i>
<i>accomplished</i>	<i>counseled</i>	<i>incorporated</i>	<i>promoted</i>
<i>achieved</i>	<i>created</i>	<i>increased</i>	<i>proposed</i>
<i>adapted</i>	<i>cut</i>	<i>influenced</i>	<i>proved</i>
<i>administered</i>	<i>decreased</i>	<i>informed</i>	<i>provided</i>
<i>advanced</i>	<i>delegated</i>	<i>initiated</i>	<i>published</i>
<i>advised</i>	<i>demonstrated</i>	<i>innovated</i>	<i>received</i>
<i>aided</i>	<i>designed</i>	<i>installed</i>	<i>recommended</i>
<i>allocated</i>	<i>determined</i>	<i>instituted</i>	<i>recorded</i>
<i>amplified</i>	<i>developed</i>	<i>instructed</i>	<i>recruited</i>
<i>analyzed</i>	<i>devised</i>	<i>interpreted</i>	<i>rectified</i>
<i>answered</i>	<i>devoted</i>	<i>interviewed</i>	<i>reduced</i>
<i>approved</i>	<i>diagrammed</i>	<i>introduced</i>	<i>re-established</i>
<i>arbitrated</i>	<i>directed</i>	<i>investigated</i>	<i>referred</i>
<i>arranged</i>	<i>displayed</i>	<i>involved</i>	<i>regulated</i>
<i>assessed</i>	<i>distributed</i>	<i>launched</i>	<i>reinforced</i>
<i>assisted</i>	<i>drafted</i>	<i>led</i>	<i>reorganized</i>
<i>assumed</i>	<i>edited</i>	<i>lectured</i>	<i>represented</i>
<i>augmented</i>	<i>effected</i>	<i>listed</i>	<i>researched</i>
<i>authored</i>	<i>eliminated</i>	<i>maintained</i>	<i>reshaped</i>
<i>automated</i>	<i>employed</i>	<i>managed</i>	<i>restored</i>
<i>awarded</i>	<i>established</i>	<i>mediated</i>	<i>restructured</i>
<i>began</i>	<i>estimated</i>	<i>modified</i>	<i>revamped</i>
<i>broadened</i>	<i>evaluated</i>	<i>monitored</i>	<i>reviewed</i>
<i>built</i>	<i>examined</i>	<i>motivated</i>	<i>revised</i>
<i>calculated</i>	<i>exhibited</i>	<i>negotiated</i>	<i>scheduled</i>
<i>catalogued</i>	<i>expanded</i>	<i>observed</i>	<i>structured</i>
<i>chaired</i>	<i>expedited</i>	<i>operated</i>	<i>studied</i>
<i>classified</i>	<i>explored</i>	<i>ordered</i>	<i>substituted</i>
<i>coached</i>	<i>extended</i>	<i>organized</i>	<i>suggested</i>
<i>compiled</i>	<i>fabricated</i>	<i>oriented</i>	<i>supervised</i>
<i>completed</i>	<i>facilitated</i>	<i>originated</i>	<i>supported</i>
<i>computed</i>	<i>focused</i>	<i>overhauled</i>	<i>systematized</i>
<i>conceived</i>	<i>formulated</i>	<i>participated</i>	<i>taught</i>
<i>conceptualized</i>	<i>fortified</i>	<i>performed</i>	<i>trained</i>
<i>condensed</i>	<i>founded</i>	<i>planned</i>	<i>trimmed</i>
<i>conducted</i>	<i>generated</i>	<i>pinpointed</i>	<i>tutored</i>
<i>constructed</i>	<i>guided</i>	<i>prepared</i>	<i>unified</i>
<i>consulted</i>	<i>handled</i>	<i>presented</i>	<i>used</i>
<i>contained</i>	<i>harmonized</i>	<i>preserved</i>	<i>utilized</i>
<i>contracted</i>	<i>headed</i>	<i>presided</i>	<i>volunteered</i>
<i>contrived</i>	<i>identified</i>	<i>processed</i>	<i>widened</i>
<i>controlled</i>	<i>implemented</i>	<i>produced</i>	<i>worked</i>
<i>cooperated</i>	<i>improved</i>	<i>programmed</i>	<i>wrote</i>

References

It is no longer necessary to state on the bottom of one's resume that "References are available upon request" since it is understood that employers will ask for references if they are interested in you, whether or not you state this. Use the limited space on your resume to provide *essential* information. Job seekers should, however, *prepare* a typed list of references like the one below:

<p style="text-align: center;">Your Name Street Address City, State Zip Code Phone Number Email Address</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>REFERENCES:</u></p> <p>Dr. John Jones, Professor Vaughn College Flushing, NY 11369 Bus. Tel. (516) 877-0000 Email: John.Jones@Vaughn.edu</p> <p>Mr. Robert Lehman, Branch Manager Nickel Savings Bank 1234 Steward Avenue Franklin Circle, NY 11000 Bus. Tel. (516) 222-0987; Fax (516) 222-1987 Email: lehmanrobert@nickelbank.org</p> <p>Ms. Frances Storm, Principal Tip Top Day School 77 Jericho Turnpike Jericho, NY 11555 Bus. Tel. (516) 555-1999; Home Tel. (631) 999-1043 Email: fstorm@mailbox.net</p>
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PHONE / EMAIL REFERENCES: Many employers want to be able to check your references by phone and, increasingly these days, by email. Ask three or four people who know your work – professors, supervisors, officials, coaches, advisors, etc. Include their full name, their title, organization, address, phone numbers and email addresses. ***Always get permission from these individuals before putting them on the list*** and prepare them for potential calls from employers. (Send them a thank-you letter for being a reference, update them on how your job search is progressing and enclose a resume.)

WRITTEN REFERENCES: In addition to asking for permission to list someone as a professional reference, you may ask for a written recommendation letter from the individual.

When you are asked for references, you can use the list and/or any letters you believe are relevant. Offer them at an interview or - IF references are requested in the job posting - you may include them with your resume. This is what we mean by ***References furnished upon request.*** ← As mentioned, *including this phrase on your resume is not necessary and*, since space is at a premium, you can use that space for something much more informative.

The Cover Letter

A cover letter is really a form of *business letter*. Each resume you mail, email or fax must be accompanied by a well-written cover letter. When responding to posted vacancies, each cover letter should show how your background meets the employer's needs (as stated in their job description), as well as why you want to work for that organization, in that position or with that situation. When sending a resume to an organization for which you have *not* seen posted vacancies, write a *letter of inquiry*, in which you ask about current or potential vacancies, state why you are interested and what makes you a good candidate.

THE LETTER SHOULD . . .

- Ensure that your resume gets to **the right person** in the organization.
- Make clear the **position** for which you are applying.
- State **how** you found out about the organization or the vacancy.
- (If appropriate) mention the name of the person who suggested you send the resume.
- Emphasize **specific skills** you have which are required for this particular job.
- Say **why** you are interested in this job and/or want to work for this organization.
- Demonstrate your writing abilities, attention to detail and research.
- Include relevant **motivation** (why you have chosen this field), **attitudes** (how you view your long-term goals) or personal **traits** (your unique qualities) - all of which don't belong on a resume.
- Make mention of any future communication.

RESEARCHING the ORGANIZATION

The best cover letter is one that results from thorough research and is tailored very specifically to the organization. If you can send the same letter content to two employers, it is probably *not* a great letter. Your letter should show that you know about that particular organization and are interested in working for them.

Sending dozens or hundreds of unsolicited resumes with the same cover letter usually nets a very poor response. Instead, target your inquiries to a carefully chosen, select group of employers that you have thoroughly researched and identified as those who might need your skills, education and background.

The Internet: It is not unreasonable for any employer to assume that you have at least visited their web site! Try the name of the school or organization (or its initials) followed by *.edu*, *.org*, or *.com*. Use a search engine (Yahoo, Google, AltaVista, About, etc.) to locate a company's website. Find industry profiles on such sites as www.associatedpress.com, www.wetfeet.com or www.hoovers.com to keep you informed about your field and specific organizations. For employment outlook and trends, try www.bls.gov/oco.

Periodicals: Use library research to locate any recent articles about the organization. You should be aware of any recent mergers, acquisitions, leadership changes, advances in the industry or problems.

Information Interviews: Identify people who can give you information about the organization before you call, write or visit. These people can be considered part of your "network" and they may lead you to additional contacts.

Request Information: Call for brochures, newsletters, reports.

Visit: If it's a store or service operation, visit them in person. Find out what people think about the organization. See what people who work there are like.

Cover Letter Format

~~Your name:~~ at bottom of letter only

Your Address
City, State, ZIP Code
Phone and Email address
Date

Mr./Ms./Dr. First and Last Name
Title
Employer Organization
Street Address
City, State, ZIP Code

A career counselor will review your cover letter if it is to a real person at a real organization for a real job. Letters written to imaginary employers or to "whom it may concern" are not advisable.

Dear Mr. Last Name: <Do not include their first name in the salutation. If you have tried and you cannot find out a specific name, use a title, such as Director of..., or Recruiter. Never send your resume to "whom it may concern" or to "Dear Sir or Madam.">

First paragraph: Note *the name of the position you are applying for* and tell *when and where you heard about it*. If you don't know of a specific opening, ask if there are any available openings as a _____, or if there are any entry-level positions available in the area of _____. *Summarize the primary accomplishments that qualify you for the position* such as: your degree, major, years of related experience. Note somewhere in the letter that you have enclosed a resume. Don't start too many sentences with the word "I."

Middle paragraph(s): State *why you are interested in the position and/or their organization*. Explain how your academic and/or experiential background qualifies you for the position/organization. Point out any related experience or special training. Show how your skills fit the job description or how they relate to the organization's needs, based on your research. *Do not just repeat or summarize what is in your resume*.

Concluding paragraph: Express *your appreciation for their consideration* and request the opportunity to meet. Provide specific information about how you may be reached. (Be sure your voicemail greeting sounds professional.) You may state that you will contact the person in a week to ten days to discuss the possibility of an interview. (In either case, *follow up to confirm receipt of your correspondence* - as well as to promote yourself for the job.)

Sincerely,

Your Signature

Your First and Last Name <goes here **only**, unless you use personal letterhead with your pre-printed name at the top of page.>

Enclosure

Some cover letter writing basics:

Content

- Good cover letters are **brief** and to the point. (For example, a phrase such as “I would like to take this opportunity to inform you that . . .” does not say anything.)
- Make it clear that the letter is addressed to a **specific person** at a **specific place** for a **specific job**. Do not use generic “one-size-fits-all” ideas such as, “I can make a valuable contribution to your organization.” What *specific* contributions? How are these important to *this* organization? Show how your skills meet the requirements of this employer (as learned from your research, or from the job descriptions, or from an information interview).
- Be sure to say why you want to work for *that* organization and be sure you say why you feel qualified to perform the functions of *that* job. (Make sure you change any named organization or job title from a previous cover letter.)
- You should not put “My name is ___” in your letter.
- Do not start every sentence with the word “I.” (Instead of “I received my Bachelor of Avionics degree in May. . .” – say “In May, I received . . .”)
- The letter should sound like *you*, not like you have lifted the verbiage from a cover letter manual. The tone should be professional without sounding overly formal. Imagine what you would *say* when asked about what you do, rather than what you think “sounds good.”
- Relate your specific experience to the job, but do not restate each item from your resume.
- Use industry “jargon” sparingly, especially when changing fields. Many initial screeners won’t be able to interpret obscure-sounding statements. Your aim is to get this letter past the initial contact – directly to the person who will be making hiring decisions.
- Read your letter aloud. Does each sentence make sense? Do all the sentences in a paragraph share related ideas? (Most paragraphs should be more than one sentence.)

Format

Use standard business format:

- All text is usually left-justified for this type of letter.
- Do not indent the first sentence in a paragraph (all text aligned with left margin).
- Use single space within paragraphs and double space between sections and paragraphs.
- Put your address and phone on top with date immediately below.
- Put the name, title of the person to whom you are writing. Under that, put the organization name, then the street address followed by the City, State and Zip.
- Write “Dear LAST name” followed by a colon (never a comma for a business letter).
- If there is no possible way to identify the individual, address the letter “Dear Recruiter” (or Manager, Director, or whatever seems most appropriate.)

Grammar

- Apostrophes indicate possession, contraction or pluralized letters and numbers. It's easy to confuse *it's* (*it is*) with *its* (possessive of *it*). Generally when nouns are possessive, the placement of the apostrophe indicates whether or not the noun is also plural. (*Student's* indicates that something belongs to one student, while *students'* indicates something belongs to more than one student.)
- A verb must "agree with" its subject: *Marie supervises*, not *Marie supervise*. *He does*, but *they do*. These rules apply even when subject and verb are separated by other words and phrases. Pronouns must agree with the nouns to which they refer: "A student must type their own resume" does not make sense because only one student is represented by *their* in this case. The correct sentence would be, "A student must type his or her own resume."
- Are any of your sentences overly long or overly short? Some short sentences can be combined with other sentences that have related ideas. Some, but not all, overly-long sentences are "run-on," which means that two independent clauses (a group of words containing a subject and predicate that can stand alone as a sentence) are fused together.

INCORRECT "Run-on sentences"

The sentences were too short I combined them.

The sentences were too short however I combined them.

GRAMMATICALLY CORRECT SENTENCES

The sentences were too short. I combined them.

The sentences were too short; I combined them.

The sentences were too short and I combined them.

Because the sentences were too short, I combined them.

The sentences were too short; however I combined them.

Proofreading

- ✓ Does your computer screen have green squiggles under words which *may* indicate grammatical errors? (Sometimes the squiggles are indicating spacing errors.)
- ✓ Are there red squiggles under any words which *may* indicate spelling errors? Remember that 'spell check' will not catch every error. As long as the letters make up a real English word, it is okay with 'spell check.' This does not mean it will be okay with the reader! We see letters that contain grate ideas. Such writers may not get two far with there poor writing skills. (*Note that my computer spell check totally misses **the three outstanding spelling errors** in the last two sentences.*)
- ✓ Proofread. *Does each sentence have a clear message? Is this exactly the message you want to convey? Are the related ideas grouped together?* Proofread again. Ask a friend to proofread it too.

Cover Letter Critique

A counselor at Career Services will review one of your cover letters AFTER you:

- Follow the guidelines on these pages.
- Research the position (perhaps on O*Netcenter.org) to know the skills that you should write about.
- Research the organization (via internet and/or information interviews) to know very specifically how you and your specific experience and skills will contribute.
- Address the letter to a real person, with a title, if this information is available.

Make an appointment with a counselor at Career Services.