

# General Tips for Writing **Resumes & Cover Letters**



# Student Guide to BAYLOR CAREER SERVICES

**Mission:** *Inspiring Confidence through Competence!*

**Core Purpose:**

- **Empower** students by providing access to a variety of professional development opportunities (career fairs, interviews, workshops, etc.) that will enable them to develop the skills necessary to confidently pursue their careers of choice.
- **Introduce** a systematic and structured approach to the job search process thereby reducing and in many cases eliminating the confusion and frustration often associated with the process.
- **Partner** with employers, alumni, faculty, staff, parents and other entities to maximize opportunities for students.
- **Commit** to address student career-related needs with the utmost respect in a timely, courteous, and service-oriented manner.
- **Offer** our professional expertise and guidance in helping connect students with their vocational calling through the tools God has given us.

## Career Resources

- Career action plan
- Strategic job search process
- Employer recruiting literature
- Job bulletins
- Business journals
- Salary survey statistics

## Online

- Hire A Bear career management system
- Job search agents
- Internship and full-time job listings
- Vault career library
- WetFeet career resource
- GoinGlobal international employment
- InterviewStream practice interview tool
- Internships USA

## Job Search Assistance

- Walk-in hours
- Career coaching appointments
- Mock interview days
- Alumni network contacts

## Employment

- Online resume
- Resume referral service
- Resume/cover letter critiquing service
- On-campus interview program
- Employer information sessions
- Domestic and international internships

## Workshops

- Resume Writing
- Prepare for the Job Fair
- Job Search Strategies
- Interviewing Skills
- How to Find an International Internship

## Job Fairs

- Fall HireABear Career Fair
- Non-Profit Job Fair
- Spring Internship/Job Fair
- Teacher Job Fair
- Science/Technology/Engineering/Math (STEM) Job Fair
- Work in Waco Job Expo
- POST Game Student Athlete Job Fair

## Baylor University Career Services

*Paul L. Foster Success Center*  
Sid Richardson Building, Room 116  
254-710-3771 • [www.hireabear.com](http://www.hireabear.com)

# THE RESUME AND COVER LETTER

**Resumes and cover letters** are essential in establishing a professional image during the job search. Small mistakes on either of these documents can be the difference between receiving, or not receiving, an invitation for an interview. A carefully crafted resume and cover letter can demonstrate significant skill and experience to a potential employer and provide you the confidence necessary for the job search process.

## TOP 10 TIPS FOR WRITING RESUMES ---

- 1. Easy to Scan** – Recruiters do not have time to have to read your resume. Scanning is key. The bullet format (instead of paragraph) is an effective way to create a resume that is easy to scan.
- 2. Appealing** – Use boldface print and indentions strategically, reminding yourself the more you use them the less they stand out.
- 3. Concise** – Limit your resume to one page. If you do go onto a second page, either consider reducing the font size/margins or remove irrelevant information.
- 4. Relevant** – Include areas on your resume (education, work experience, activities, computer skills, etc.) that are relevant to the position you are applying for and that you have strengths in. You should also only include information beginning with college.
- 5. Proofread** – When you finish, proofread it again. Have other people proofread it too, because it is difficult for you to catch your own errors.
- 6. Professional** – Use a professional looking word software program. Avoid using resume templates.
- 7. Employer-Centered** – Not self-centered. Tailor your resume to the specific position you're applying for. Include specific skills, abilities, experience, etc. mentioned in the job advertisement.
- 8. Key Vocabulary** – The key words are the relevant skills required by the position you are applying for. It is a good idea to use these key words when creating your resume.
- 9. Lawful** – It is important to avoid any unlawful data on your resume (i.e. age, gender, race, religion, national origin, marital status, health, etc.) Only include information relevant to the position.
- 10. References** – NEVER include names, titles, addresses or phone numbers of references on your actual resume. You do not even need the line "References available upon request" either.

## COMMON RESUME STYLES

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There are two main types of resume styles used to structure the body of the resume: *Chronological* (see Figure 1) and *Functional* (see Figure 2). A third option, *Combination* (see Figure 3) integrates the first two styles.

### **Chronological**

The chronological resume presents your education, work experience, etc. in chronological order, beginning with your most recent experience.

### **Functional**

The Functional resume focuses on what skills you have, rather than where and when you used them. It organizes your qualifications based on the skills, abilities, qualities and achievements, focusing on the ones most desirable for the position you are seeking.

### **Combination**

The Combination resume balances the chronological and functional styles. This resume style usually leads with a chronological list of employers followed by a functional list of job skills.

## MAIN COMPONENTS OF A RESUME

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The following will provide information, tips, and examples of information you may want to include on the resume. While not a comprehensive guide, this will provide a framework for building a strong, professional resume.

### **OBJECTIVE**

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Your objective informs the recruiter of the position you are seeking and emphasizes your main qualifications that qualify you for the position and helps to establish your professional identity.

#### **EXAMPLE:**

#### **OBJECTIVE**

- [*General*]: An entry level position where superior communication skills and organization can help increase profitability
- [*Specific*]: A position in financial aid administration capitalizing on excellent management and organizational skills and in-depth knowledge of financial aid procedures

## SUMMARY STATEMENT

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If you are experiencing difficulty compiling an Objective Statement, you may want to consider a Summary Statement instead. A summary statement is a brief description (usually 3-5 sentences) that captures your strengths as they relate to the particular position you're applying for. Below are sample skills you may want to use in your statement.

### EXAMPLE:

#### SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- An excellent team player; skilled at supporting team members to achieve professional goals
- Strong skills in time management, meeting deadlines and prioritizing tasks
- Proficient in MS Word, PowerPoint, and Excel
- Expert knowledge and ability with written communication

## EDUCATION

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Only include colleges you received degrees from. If you have or are working on an advanced degree, lead with that. You can list a community college if you received an Associate's degree. Include the city and state after the university. List your major and minor (if you have one). Include your date of graduation rather than listing the years you attended college.

List your overall GPA if it is over a 3.00. You may also want to list your major GPA if it is over a 3.00. If your GPA is below a 3.00, you can list it, but a good percentage of recruiters use a 3.00 GPA as a minimum to be considered for the job.

### EXAMPLE:

#### EDUCATION

**Baylor University**, Waco, Texas

Bachelor of Science

Majors: English and Political Science

Minor: Spanish

Emphasis in Public Relations

Graduation Date: May 2010

GPA: 3.22/4.00 (Overall)

## WORK EXPERIENCE

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List your jobs (starting with college) in reverse chronological order starting with the most recent. If you worked while you attended college to help put yourself through school, include that on your resume with an emphasis on the percentage of college you paid for. Include the dates for each job you worked. Make sure you list the month and year you started and finished a job ("present" if it is a job you're still working in).

For each job you list, include your major responsibilities or duties. The focus, as it should be throughout the entire resume, is on responsibilities relevant to the job you are seeking. Begin each responsibility with an action verb, past tense if it is a past job and present tense if it is a job in which you are still working.

### EXAMPLE:

#### WORK EXPERIENCE

**Joe's Office**, Bellview, TX  
*Clerical Worker*

September 2009 – Present

- File purchase orders and answer phones
- Assist in the processing of customer orders
- Conduct equipment inventory weekly

**Top Consulting Firm**, Waco, TX  
*Marketing Intern*

May 2009 – August 2009

- Designed and directed an advertising campaign
- Coordinated the marketing strategy for all computer software
- Trained sales staff of 22 people on new marketing strategy

## ACTIVITIES

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List your activities during college. Any involvement in campus organizations is good to include. It's best to only include membership in a social organization (i.e. fraternity or sorority) if you emphasize a leadership position you held.

### EXAMPLE:

#### ACTIVITIES

Vice President, Business Student Association  
Standards Committee, Beta Theta Sigma Fraternity  
Treasurer, Kappa Beta Phi Business Fraternity

## HONORS/AWARDS

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List any honors and awards you have received since you started college. Membership in honor societies is also good to include. If you made the Deans' list, include that, along with the index (3.7/4.0) and number of semesters you have made it.

### EXAMPLE:

#### HONORS/AWARDS

Recipient, Baylor University Academic Scholarship  
Deans' List (3.7/4.0), 5 semesters  
Awarded "Top Business Student Award"  
Chosen from 75 students to represent Baylor in National Symposium

If you only have one or two activities AND one or two honors/awards, you can group them together. If you have three or more of each, group them separately.

#### ACTIVITIES/HONORS

Vice President, Business Student Association  
Treasurer, Kappa Beta Phi Business Fraternity  
Recipient, Baylor University Academic Scholarship  
Deans' List (3.7/4.0), 5 semesters

## SKILLS

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Including a skills section is a great way to ensure you are effectively displaying your skill set to a potential employer.

#### TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

A recent study by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) identified the top 10 transferable skills desired by employers. These include:

- Communication
- Computer
- Flexibility
- Organizational
- Problem-Solving
- Analytical
- Leadership
- Interpersonal
- Multicultural
- Teamwork

### EXAMPLE:

#### Communication Skills

Presented to a group of 30 people on the effects of global warming on sustainability practices.

## SKILLS (cont.)

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### COMPUTER SKILLS

List the computer software you have a good working knowledge of, and you can add *languages* if necessary for the position.

#### EXAMPLE:

##### Computer Skills

Software: MS Word, PowerPoint, Photoshop, SQL

Languages: HTML, Java, C++

### FOREIGN LANGUAGES

If the job you're applying for requires the ability to speak or write a foreign language, include that on your resume. Your two best choices for words to use when listing your languages are "Fluent" and "Conversational." Fluent implies that you converse, read, and write the particular language extremely well. If that's not the case, you're better off writing that you are *conversational* in the language.

#### EXAMPLE:

##### Foreign Languages

Conversational in Spanish

## VOLUNTEER WORK

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Any community service you perform during your college years is great to include on your resume because it shows prospective employers you have character. If a volunteer job was extensive enough to be listed under work experience, you can do that. If not, put all of your volunteer and community service under one heading.

#### EXAMPLE:

##### VOLUNTEER WORK

Habitat for Humanity

Waco Animal Shelter

Lakeshore Convalescent Hospital

Figure 1 - Chronological Resume

**KAYLEIGH K. FILLER**

1234 Toledo Avenue  
Waco, TX 76707  
(254) 938-2645  
Email: KKF@yahoo.com

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**SUMMARY**

- Hard-working dedicated professional
- Motivated team player
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills
- Excellent writing and editing skills

**EDUCATION**

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY, Waco, TX  
Bachelor of Arts, May 2010  
Major: Broadcast Journalism  
Minor: Public Relations  
GPA: 3.23/4.00 (Overall)

*(Financed 75% of college expenses)*

**RELEVANT COURSEWORK**

- Theories of Public Relations
- Marketing Principles
- Public Speaking
- News Reporting

**WORK EXPERIENCE**

**Public Relations Intern**

May 2009- Present  
KYEW RADIO - 1090 AM, Waco, TX

- Coordinate studio production and live radio broadcast
- Assist sales personnel in selling airtime to local businesses
- Promote radio station in community and at sporting events

**Reporting Intern**

August 2008 - May 2009  
KNSD-TV Channel 42, Waco, TX

- Gained experience in writing news stories
- Reported for a five minute news segment around the city
- Edited news packages
- Assisted in the production of educational game show "Double Trouble"

**COMPUTER SKILLS**

Windows 2000, NT, MS Excel, MS Word, PowerPoint

**ACTIVITIES/HONORS**

Public Relations Committee, Student Foundation  
Recipient, NCT Reporting Scholarship  
Deans' List (3.7/4.0), 3 semesters

Figure 2 - Functional Resume

**JORDAN C. KEMP**

jck@hotmail.com

Present Address  
746 Franklin Ave.  
Waco, TX 54642  
(254) 534-3546

Permanent Address  
425 Robinson St.  
Cincinnati, OH 54638  
(534) 824-2830

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**OBJECTIVE** To contribute communication, management and organizational skills in a position with a healthcare facility

**EDUCATION** BAYLOR UNIVERSITY, Waco, TX  
Bachelor of Science, *Health Sciences*  
Minor: Management  
Graduation: May 2010  
GPA: 3.08/4.00 (Overall), 3.31/4.00 (Major)

**PROFESSIONAL SKILLS**

**Communication:**

- Presented research at an international conference
- Fielded questions and made phone calls during a political campaign
- Drafted professional letters for the Health Science Society
- Conversational in Greek and Latin

**Management:**

- Delegated suggestions and tasks to other team members
- Coordinated efforts between faculty and Health Science majors
- Oversaw meetings and handled team member disputes

**Organization:**

- Designed and maintained laboratory documentation
- Prepared weekly homework assignments for a study group
- Organized a society of 42 undergraduate health science majors

**ACTIVITIES**

*Resident Assistant, Baylor University*  
*President, Health Science Society*  
*Science Tutor, Waco High School*

**SKILLS**

Microsoft Office, HTML/Web Publishing, PageMaker

**VOLUNTEER WORK**

Waco Parks Department  
Waco Animal Shelter

Figure 3 - Combination

**KEELY BROWNING**

5342 East Blvd.

Waco, TX 76715

(254) 947-3652

kbrowning@yahoo.com

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**EDUCATION**

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY, Waco, TX

Bachelor of Science, May 2010

Major: Engineering

Minor: Spanish

GPA: 3.02/4.00 (Overall), 3.45/4.00 (Major)

**PROFESSIONAL SKILLS**

**Leadership**

- Participated in Youth Leadership Waco
- Served as Vice-President of sorority
- Elected Secretary of Panhellenic Council

**Communication**

- Performed reading, writing and speaking activities in Spanish while participating in development program in Guatemala
- Wrote engineering news article for Waco Weekly
- Presented engineering plans to professors and students

**ACHIEVEMENTS**

- Selected Top Engineering Student at Baylor University, 2008-09
- Awarded Baylor University Alumni Scholarship
- Elected President of Tri Sigma Engineering Honor Society

**WORK EXPERIENCE**

May – August 2009

DYNAMIC ELECTRONICS, Waco, TX

*Engineer Assistant*

**VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE**

Waco Convalescent Hospital

Habitat for Humanity

Waco Marathon for Education

**ACTIVITIES**

Beta Theta Kappa Engineering Society

Member of Society of Professional Engineers (SPE)

**COMPUTER SKILLS**

Software: MS Word, WordPerfect, and PowerBuilder

Languages: C++, Visual C++, HTML, C, Java

## TOP 10 TIPS FOR WRITING COVER LETTERS

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- 1. One Page** – Don't make your cover letter longer than one page. Be concise.
- 2. Make the Match** – The job description normally includes a list of the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA's) needed in the job. Provide examples from your past when you demonstrated those skills. The examples can be taken from school, work, extracurricular activities, etc.
- 3. Proofread** – Proofread very carefully for typographical, grammatical and spelling errors. Even one tiny error can communicate to the employer that your attention to detail is lacking. Have someone else proofread it, too, since it's difficult for you to catch your own errors.
- 4. Unique** – Don't regurgitate information from your resume. It is, however, a good idea to talk ABOUT it. For example, if you listed relevant coursework on your resume, discuss in your cover letter any projects or presentations that were a part of the class that would demonstrate relevant KSA's.
- 5. Specific Person** – Address each cover letter to the specific person who will be reading it. If you don't know the specific person's name, call the company and find out. Never use "To Whom it May Concern" at the beginning of a cover letter.
- 6. Employer-Focused** – Focus on what you can do for the company, not what the company can do for you. It is a good idea to discuss facts about the company you learned through your research that you find impressive.
- 7. Original and Creative** – Send an original and creative cover letter with each resume. Don't try to create a universal cover letter. Give each company the impression that you wrote the cover letter just for them.
- 8. Confident** – Demonstrate confidence in your writing style. Don't write statements like "I feel I would be an excellent addition to XYZ Company." Instead write, "I would be an excellent addition to XYZ Company."
- 9. Resume Paper** – Print on bond paper (the same kind and color as your resume).
- 10. Follow-up** – Mention in the closing paragraph that you will contact the recruiter to follow up on your application. If you wait five to seven days, that should be plenty of time for the employer to have received and reviewed your application materials. Call the recruiter to verify if she received your application materials and offer to provide anything else she may need.

## OPENING PARAGRAPHS FOR COVER LETTERS ---

### Response to an Advertisement

You are sending a cover letter to a company in response to an advertisement listing an available position. With an advertised position, your chances improve considerably.

**EXAMPLE:**

I am writing to you about the Park Ranger position advertised in the Sunday, March 21<sup>st</sup> edition of the *Hickory Gazette*. I am very interested in the position and my knowledge, skills and experience would be invaluable to XYZ Company and the management of your forest.

### Using a Contact

You are sending a cover letter to a company hoping to be considered for an interview (for an advertised or unadvertised position). You are using the name of a connection that the company would recognize and make a positive association with.

**EXAMPLE:**

Betty Robinson, a close family friend, referred your name to me. I am graduating in December with a Master's Degree in Accounting. I am interested in pursuing a career in corporate accounting and would appreciate the opportunity to interview with ABC Accounting Firm for a full time position. *(If the position was advertised, refer to the specific position and source).*

### Prospecting

You are sending a cover letter to a company hoping it has an opening, but nothing is advertised. This is a very difficult way to get an interview.

**EXAMPLE:**

I am a senior in Human Resource Management graduating in May. I am interested in XYZ Company because of its emphasis on teamwork and commitment to excellence. My knowledge, experience and drive to succeed would make me an excellent addition to your company. I am looking to start in an entry-level position.

## Figure 4 – Standard Cover Letter Format

Your Street Address  
City, State, Zip Code  
Date

Name of the person to whom you are writing  
Title of the person  
Name of the organization for which he/she works  
Address of the company

Dear Dr./Mr./Mrs./Ms./Miss \_\_\_\_\_:

**First Paragraph:** State the specific purpose for writing. There are several possible reasons for writing (mentioned earlier) and the appropriate one should be brought to the recruiter's attention immediately. Also, mention the specific position for which you are applying, and how you found out about the opening (friend, Career Services, newspaper, etc.). This is the place to mention a connection. A connection can make a huge difference in whether or not you get an interview.

**Second Paragraph:** Discuss how your background (i.e. school, work, activities, etc.) qualifies you for the position you are applying for without restating what you wrote on your resume. This is your chance to go into more depth and provide the recruiter with examples and details of your experiences. You may want to discuss what knowledge and skills your classes, work experience or extracurricular activities taught you. Then, move into a discussion of how your past work experience qualifies you for the position. Mention how certain tasks from past jobs would be directly applicable to tasks in the job you are seeking. If you worked while going to college, mention this and what this taught you (i.e. time management, responsibility, etc.). If you have extensive work experience, divide the second paragraph into two separate, smaller paragraphs. Focus one paragraph on your academic experience and focus the other paragraph on your work experience.

**Final Paragraph:** Indicate your desire for an interview and let the individual know you are willing to meet on his or her terms (as far as the time and place). Close by restating your phone number and mention you will contact the recruiter. Do not rely on the recruiter to contact you. Show some initiative. The recruiter is far too busy to call back every applicant. You might be sitting by the phone for a long time if you wait for the recruiter to call.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

Name (Typed)

Enclosure: Resume and References (If you send references)

## Figure 5 – Sample Cover Letter

5684 West 32<sup>nd</sup> St. #243  
Chapel Hill, NC 87512  
June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009

Mr. James Riley  
Personnel Manager  
Top Automobile Manufacturer  
3040 Round Road  
Detroit, MI 48095

Dear Mr. Riley:

I am writing in response to your recent advertisement for the customer service manager position that was listed in the Sunday, June 24<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Detroit Press*. My strong people skills and determined work ethic would be invaluable to Top Automobile Manufacturer.

I admire your company's vision to be the worldwide leader in the automotive industry and to be committed to providing "total customer enthusiasm" through your employees. I have the ability to generate customer enthusiasm. I recently completed an extensive 40-hour mediation course. This training provided me with the skills necessary to analytically separate fact from emotion in order to manage disputes and resolve conflicts in the most effective, practical, and positive manner possible. These techniques are essential in satisfying the interests of the customer while still protecting the interests of Top Automobile Manufacturer.

My academic studies at The University of North Carolina in Communication and Organizational Management have given me a diverse curriculum that relates directly to your organizational culture. I am certain that, by incorporating my own knowledge and experience from these same areas, I can guide employees toward achieving common objectives.

The enclosed resume is a summary of my qualifications, training and experience. I will be in the Detroit Metroplex area the second week of July. I would be honored to interview with you while in Detroit. I will call you the first of next week to try to schedule an interview date. Please feel free to contact me at (815) 468-2534 if you have any questions or need any additional information. I look forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely,

Kayleigh P. Filler

Enclosure: Resume

Adapted from *Get a Job! Interview Survival Skills for College Students*,  
John R. Cunningham, Department of Communication Studies, Baylor University.

# Hire A Bear

## WHAT IS HIRE A BEAR

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**Hire A Bear** is your online connection to many resources, including:

### **My Account**

- Manage your career-related documents including resume, cover letter, and transcript.

### **Employer Directory**

- Identify contacts for over 2,500 potential employers nationally and internationally.

### **Job Search**

- Apply for jobs.
- Search for off-campus part-time, summer work, internship, and full-time employment job listings.
- Create job search agents if you would like to be emailed when a new job meets your search criteria.

### **On-Campus Interview Schedules**

- Submit resume for on-campus interviews for full-time jobs and internships.

### **Career Events**

- RSVP to employer presentations, workshops, career fairs, and information tables.

### **Mentor Search**

- Identify potential mentors in a variety of industries and positions.

### **Career Tools**

- Access premium resources, such as Vault, WetFeet, GoinGlobal, and InterviewStream.

## HOW DO I GET STARTED

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1. Go to the Career Services website at [www.hireabear.com](http://www.hireabear.com)
2. Click on the "HireABear" students link.
3. Enter your User Name and Password and login.
4. If you have never before logged onto Hire A Bear, your User Name is your full Baylor email address.
  - If you do not know your password, click "Forgot your password"
  - Enter your full Baylor email address as your User Name
  - The system will reset your password and email it to you
5. Be sure to add [Hireabear@baylor.edu](mailto:Hireabear@baylor.edu) to your contacts list in Outlook so email messages are successfully delivered to your inbox and not your Junk E-mail folder.
6. If you have any problems or have already graduated, contact Career Services at (254) 710-3771 for assistance.