

# Write a Winning Resume

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# Overview

Creating an effective resume will be a tool to help you distinguish yourself from the crowd and will help you get your foot in the door for an interview.



*Distinguish yourself from the crowd.*

# Resume Defined

***Resume:*** A brief, concise document that presents and effectively sells your most relevant and positive qualifications for employment. A marketing tool.

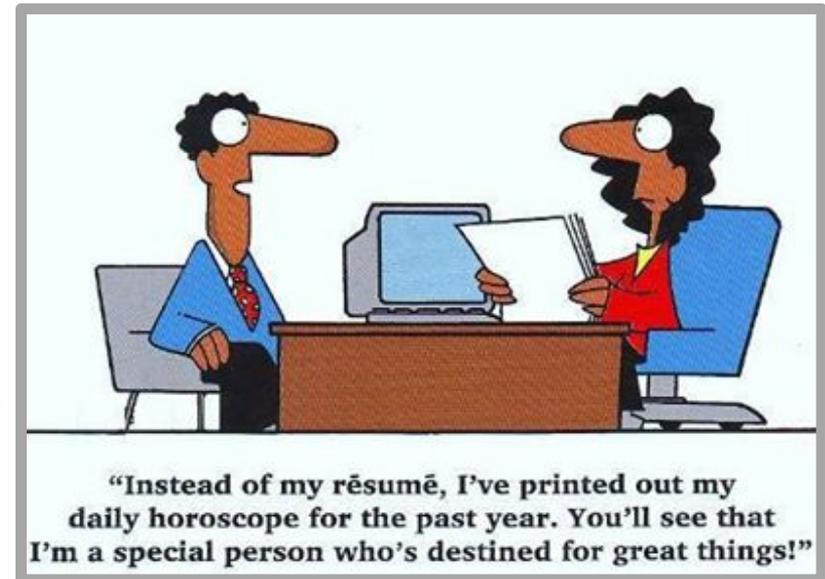
The purpose of a resume is . . . .  
***to get an interview!***

# First Impressions

An employer will spend *less than a minute* (usually 20-30 seconds) scanning your resume and *formulating a first impression of you*.

## Content must be:

- clear and concise
- targeted to the type of job and organization for which you are applying



# A Tale of “Three Piles”

Often times, employers will sort resumes into three basic piles:

1. The “*Yes*” Pile – resumes that demonstrate a direct connection to qualifications indicated in a job description.  
RESULT: “Definitely want to interview this candidate”.
2. The “*Maybe*” Pile - resumes that have some of the skills and qualifications needed.  
RESULT: “May issue interview invitation if scheduling allows”.
3. The “*No Way*” Pile – resumes that completely miss the mark of desired qualifications or those riddled with spelling and grammatical errors (show lack of attention to detail).  
RESULT: “File 13 . . . the waste basket”.

# Making the “Yes” (or “Maybe”) Pile

What can you do to insure your resume makes it in to the “Yes” or at least, the “*Maybe*” Pile?

1. Know your skills and what you have to offer the employer.
2. Carefully read the job description – If you can match at least 85% of the of the qualifications and job requirements, you should find yourself in the “Yes” pile. If you can match at least 65%-70% of the qualifications and job requirements, you should find yourself in the “Maybe” pile. Less than that, the application process for that job may be a waste of your time.
3. Carefully craft your resume to demonstrate your skills and qualifications for the job and the company’s mission, values, and culture.

# How can you make it past the 20-30 second scan?

Customize your resume for each position you are applying. You may want to highlight certain aspects of your experience for one employer and something else for another.

Thoroughly research the company, reviewing their mission, values, vision, and goal statements. Check additional sources so you understand the way they do business, the products and services they provide, and growth opportunities.

# How can you make it past the 20-30 second scan?

Create a high impact resume by *using action words and specific skill words* from your **profession** or education to address work tasks and skills desired as identified in the job ad.

# Keyword Match

Always remember to use keywords from the job description and company's profile.

If the applicant pool is large, employers try to find ways to reduce the number of candidates. They may use an electronic keyword bank to scan resumes – the most matches make it to the next round.

Misspelled words and poor layout may cause your resume to be eliminated from consideration.

# Key Takeaways

- A resume is a tool to convey experience and qualifications to an employer.
- Evaluate the job description and determine if you have enough qualifications to pursue the opportunity.
- Customize your resume for each application by tailoring it to the job description and company profile.



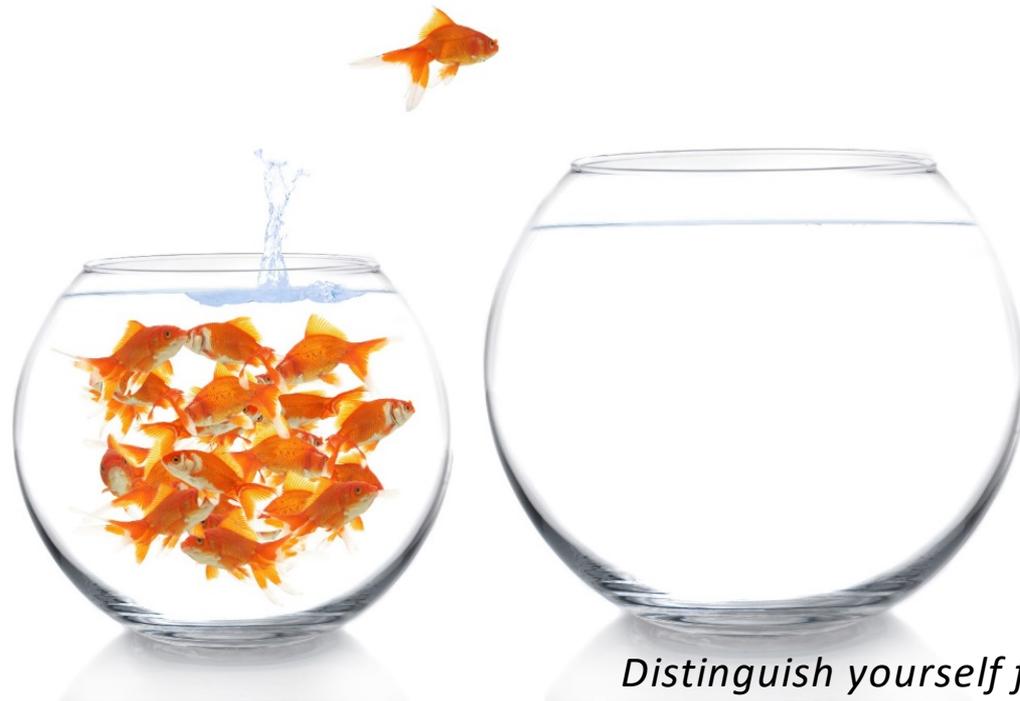
# Write a Winning Resume

*Develop a “Skills Language”*



# Overview

Connecting the dots for the employer is key. It is important to know what you have to offer and developing a “skills language” will help you to document your skills on paper!



*Distinguish yourself from the crowd.*

# What Are You “Good At”?

Employers want to know more than your past job titles. They want to know your talents and what you have done with them.

Many people have a hard time identifying their skills. Skills can be developed from your education, past employment, volunteering and special interests.

# Types of Skills

The *Skills Triad* identifies three types of skills – *Self-Management*, *Transferable* and *Job-Related*.



# Types of Skills

**Self-Management skills** describe basic personality and ability to adapt to new environments.

## *Examples:*

- Accepts supervision
- Get along with co-workers
- Get things done on time
- Good attendance
- Honest
- Positive attitude
- Productive
- Puts forth best effort
- Self confident

# Types of Skills

**Transferable skills** are skills that can transfer from job to job or into a new career.

***Example:***

Customer service skills learned by working in a restaurant could be used in a variety of jobs. The ability to provide good customer service are essential skills for success in certain occupations such as responding to patient's needs as a nurse or in answering user questions as an IT technician.

# Types of Skills

**Job-Related skills** are those needed for a particular occupation.

## *Examples:*

- A nurse needs to know how to perform a variety of medical procedures and operate specific equipment.
- A drafter must be proficient using Auto CADD software.

# Skills Highly Desired by Employers

*Ranked in order of importance (2015)*

1. Communication Skills (written)
2. Leadership
3. Analytical skills
4. Strong Work Ethic
5. Teamwork skills
6. Problem-solving skills
7. Communication Skills (verbal)
8. Initiative
9. Detail-oriented
10. Computer skills
11. Technical skills
12. Flexibility/adaptability
13. Interpersonal skills
14. Organizational skills
15. Strategic Planning Skills
16. Friendly/outgoing personality
17. Entrepreneurial skills/risk-taker
18. Tactfulness
19. Creativity

# Identifying Your Skills

What does it mean to be “qualified to do the work”? “Qualified” means you either have the skills to do the work or you are able to learn those skills without a lot of training or supervision. When employers scan through a stack of resumes, they will invite those who they think can do the work or can learn quickly.

# Identifying Your Skills

One of the key factors in securing a job is to identify your key skills and to develop a “skills language” to describe yourself. In one survey, employers reported that about 90% of people interviewed for a position did not present the skills they had to do the job they sought. They could not answer the basic question, “why should I hire you?”

# Identifying Your Skills

Knowing and describing your skills are essential for preparing resumes and doing well in interviews. Most people think of their “skills” as job-related skills, such as using a computer. But we all have other types of skills that are important for success on a job – and that are important to employers.

# Identifying Your Skills – 4 Steps

***Step 1:*** Write the title of an employment-related activity. Focus on those activities that potentially demonstrate skill and experience relative to employment. You may get these titles from skills you gained while working for community organizations, volunteer activities and employers or through campus or high school leadership experiences.

# Identifying Your Skills – 4 Steps

**Step 2:** List the tasks involved in performing this activity. Tasks are the basic functions of an activity.

**Step 3:** List the skills involved in accomplishing each task. Be sure to include job, self-management and transferable skills.

**Step 4:** Network with friends, associates and family. Ask them what skills they see that you have.

# Brainstorming

Now that you've thought about your skills and what employers are looking for, it's time to brainstorm all the experiences you have had so you can begin to begin building your resume.



# Start Collecting “Experiences”

## College experiences

Program: Bus, Mgmt, Mark, Sales  
GPA 3.5 - President's List  
BPA

## Work experiences

Bookstore

Best Buy

Jim's warehouse

Lawn mowing

Babysitting

Think about all the ways you have gained “experience” Write your ideas on a piece of paper:

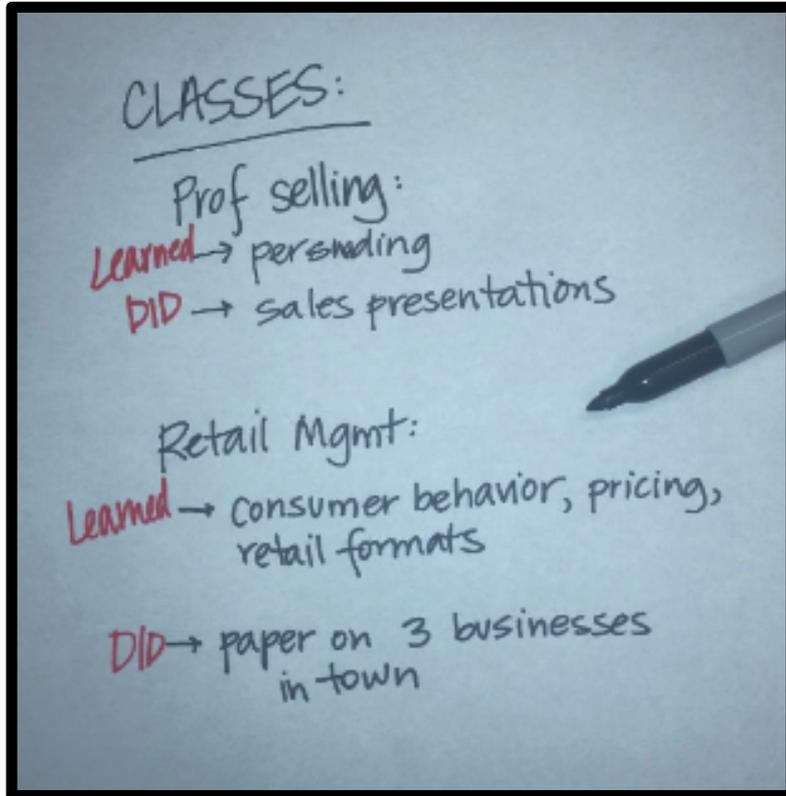
- Education-related accomplishments
- Work history
- Volunteer work
- Student organizations
- Any experience where you can talk about your skills

# Start Collecting “Experiences”

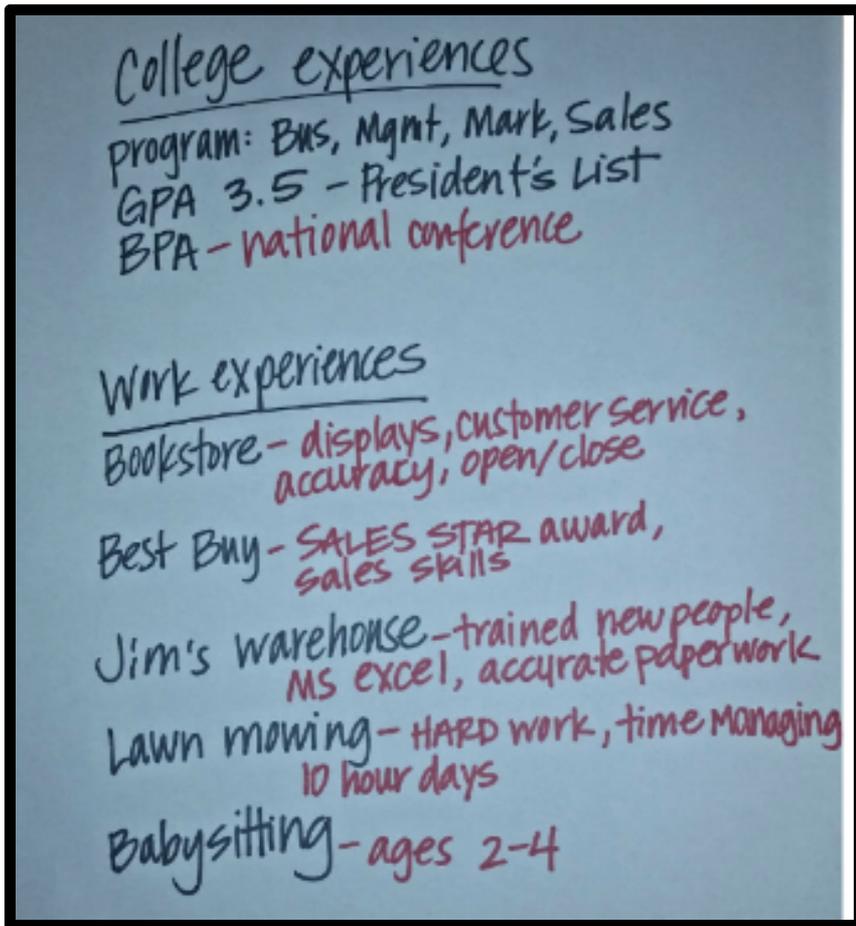
Next, get REALLY detailed. This will help you in future steps.

Choose 2-3 of your courses most relevant to the type of work you are seeking and explain them in detail.

What did you learn? What did you DO in the class to prove that you learned the required material.



# Start Collecting “Experiences”



Next, keep going with your work experiences and involvement. What did you LEARN or what SKILLS did you gain as a result of your work?

# Start Collecting “Experiences”



Now that you have completed your brainstorming list you are ready to start writing your resume.

# Key Takeaways

- Identifying your skills and understanding how and why they are important to employers will demonstrate how you are qualified for the job you are seeking.
- Developing a “skills language” will help you effectively document your skills on your resume (and help you prepare for an interview).
- Brainstorming your experiences and what you gained from them will help you to lay the foundation for writing a great resume.

# Write a Winning Resume

*Layout Tips*



# Overview

Learn how to create a resume that strategically markets your skills and qualifications and catches the attention of employers.



*Distinguish yourself from the crowd.*

# At a Glance

## Joe Spartan

1900 28<sup>th</sup> Ave S, Apt. 301, Moorhead, MN 56560  
Phone: (218) 299-6500 | [joe\\_spartan@my.minnesota.edu](mailto:joe_spartan@my.minnesota.edu)

### EDUCATION

Associate of Science – Criminal Justice Anticipated May 2017  
Minnesota State Community and Technical College (M State), Moorhead, MN

- GPA 3.5

### COURSE HIGHLIGHTS

Special Topics in Criminal Justice – M State Fall 2016

- Collaborated with a small group to create a crisis plan for the Moorhead Center Mall to respond to a tornado
- Met with Mall officials to tour the facilities and created a map with possible shelters
- Identified a line of communication with store managers to create exit plans for each retail space
- Created a plan to notify customers and store employees and usher them to safe places
- Developed a communication plan to connect to police and emergency services in the event of damage
- Presented plan to instructor, law enforcing representatives and class

#### Additional Coursework:

- |                                      |                                    |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ▪ Interpersonal Communication        | ▪ Criminal Law                     |
| ▪ Introduction to Criminal Justice   | ▪ Criminal Procedures              |
| ▪ Policing and Practices             | ▪ Police Report Writing            |
| ▪ Juvenile Justice and Delinquency   | ▪ Criminal Investigations          |
| ▪ Law Enforcement Behavioral Science | ▪ Professional & Technical Writing |

### RELATED EXPERIENCE

Asset Protection/Loss Prevention Associate – Macy's, Fargo, ND May 2016-Present

- Respond to customer and associate incidents to facilitate first aid
- Use camera and in-person surveillance to monitor cash register transactions, interactions between sales associates and customers, and customer behavior in order to prevent loss
- Recover stolen merchandise and apprehend shoplifters according to state law and company policy
- Respond to alarms found at store exits
- Prepare reports relative to all theft incidents, merchandise recoveries, accident investigations and audits

Direct Support Professional – CCR1, Moorhead, MN Sept. 2014 – April 2015

- Assisted individuals with regular daily living skills, role modeling, and community integration
- Accompanied clients to stores and social activities
- Redirected clients to practice appropriate behaviors to counteract verbal or physical aggression

### CERTIFICATIONS

- CPR & AED
- First Aid

### EMPLOYMENT

- Auto Detailer – Dor's Car Wash, Fargo, ND, Summer 2014
- Landscape/Snow Removal Assistant - Steve's Lawn Care, Moorhead, MN, 2012-2014

There is not one “right way” to write a resume. Think about how you can best convey your experience and qualifications to employers.

Your resume should be arranged in an easy-to-read format with section titles to organize information.

Think of your resume as a piece of “real estate”. Put the most important information at the top of the page to engage the reader.

# Layout Tips

***Avoid using a template*** – they are difficult to format and provide suggested phrases that make your resume seem generic instead of reflective of your experiences.

Choose a layout that is easy to read and clutter free that highlights your most important qualifications, transferable skills and experiences.

Prioritize the information on your resume. An experience should only appear once. Put the most relevant information first.

# Writing Tips

- Avoid personal pronouns - “I,” “me” and “my.”
- Begin with action verbs and use present tense for current experiences and past tense for previous experiences.
- Use bullets and phrases – periods are not needed.
- Avoid abbreviations and acronyms (exceptions: CPR, states, common terms to your profession)
- Resumes must be factual, no embellishment or fluff!

# Resume Length & References

- New grads should strive for a one page resume; however, your resume may be one or two pages if you have relevant experience and qualifications
- If you have two pages, the second page must contain relevant information and should be at least two-thirds full. You may put references on the bottom of a second page to fill it up.
- Otherwise, create a separate page for references - Omit heading “References Available Upon Request”.

# Design Your Resume

- Set margins between .5"-1"
- Use a professional looking, easy-to-read font such as Arial, Arial Narrow, Calibri, Times New Roman
- Select a font size between 11 or 12
- Use lines under heading or between sections
- Use all CAPS for section headings
- Double space between sections
- **Bold** and/or *italicize* important words to highlight
- **Color** may be used for name, sections headings, and lines – choose conservative colors

# Create a “Letterhead”

- Include your name and contact information.
- If applying directly to a company, include your mailing address. If posting to generic or public sites, omit your mailing address for your safety.
- Use an email address appropriate for communicating with employers.
- Add your LinkedIn and/or portfolio link.
- Use proper punctuation and abbreviations.

# Letterhead Style Examples

## **Joe Spartan**

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## ***Suzie Spartan***

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Phone:(218) 299-6500 | [suzie\\_spartan@my.minnesota.edu](mailto:suzie_spartan@my.minnesota.edu) | [www.linkedin.com/in/suziespartan](http://www.linkedin.com/in/suziespartan)

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# Congratulations!

You have just created your own personalized “letterhead”. You should use it for any documents and correspondence you send to employers such as:

- Cover Letters
- Resumes
- References
- Qualifications summary pages
- Acceptance or withdrawal letters

# Organizing Information

- Use section headings to organize your information.
- Typing section headings in **ALL CAPS** and making them **bold** helps the reader quickly identify qualifications.
- You may create your own section headings as long as they are brief and describe the information in the section.

# Sample Section Headings

- Activities
- Awards
- Certifications
- Clinical Experience
- Course Highlights
- Education
- Experience
- Highlights
- Internships
- Involvement
- Leadership
- Licenses
- Military Service
- Presentations
- Profile
- Qualifications
- References
- Related Experience
- Skills
- Summary
- Technology
- Volunteer Experience

# Preparing to Submit

- You may need 2-3 different versions of your resume. Create one that can be pasted into online applications.
- Print your resume on high quality resume paper.
- Save your resume as a PDF file when applying electronically.

# Key Takeaways

- There is not one “right way” to write a resume – tailor your resume to best describe your experience and qualifications.
- Resumes should be formatted in an organized, easy-to-read document.
- **AVOID templates!** You can still be creative and have a document that is attractive and easy to edit for future applications.
- Customize resumes for each application.

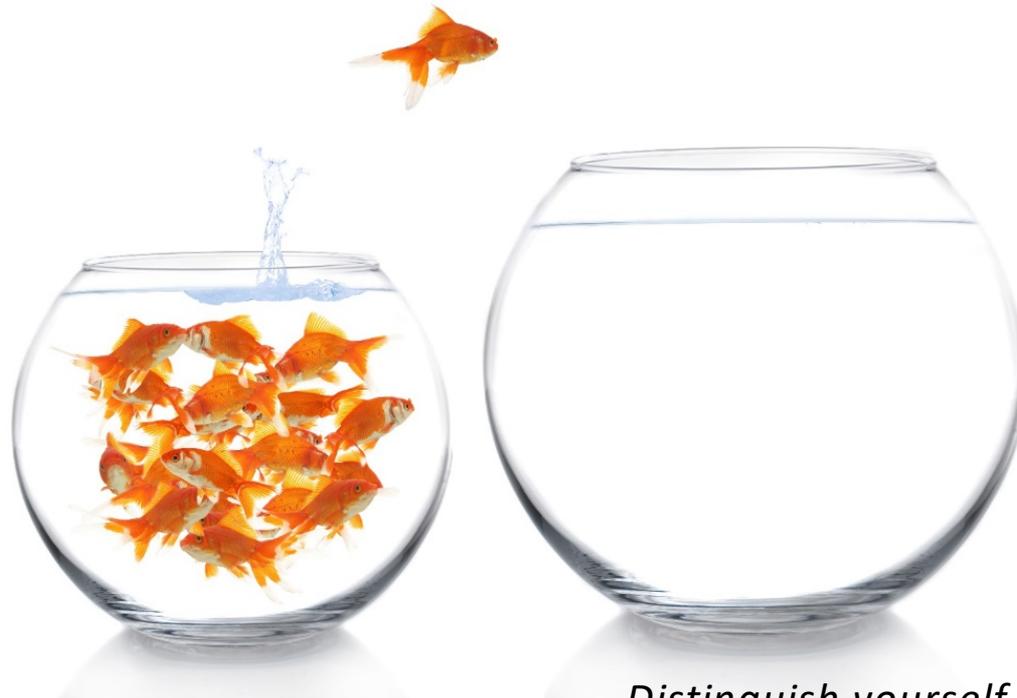
# Write a Winning Resume

*Highlighting Education*



# Overview

Through your studies, you have been applying concepts learned in your courses to solve real-world problems. Highlighting your education and coursework can demonstrate that you are ready and qualified to work as soon as you step foot off an M State campus.



*Distinguish yourself from the crowd.*

# At a Glance

The sample resume demonstrated in this workshop is a good starting point for new grads or students seeking an internship.

This module focuses on highlighting your education and courses.

Check out the last module in this series for other topics you may add to your resume depending on your major and life experiences.

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**EDUCATION**  
Associate of Science in Criminal Justice Anticipated May 2017  
Minnesota State University and Technical College (M State), Moorhead, MN  
• GPA 3.5

**COURSE HIGHLIGHTS**  
Special Topics in Criminal Justice – M State Fall 2016  
• Collaborated with a small group to develop a crisis plan for the Moorhead Center Mall to respond to a tornado  
• Met with Mall officials to tour the facilities and develop a map with police shelters  
• Identified a line of communication with store managers to develop plans to use retail space  
• Created a plan to notify customers and store employees and usher them to safety  
• Developed a communication plan to connect to police and emergency services in a timely manner  
• Presented plan to instructor, law enforcing representatives and class

**Additional Coursework:**

• Interpersonal Communication	• Criminal Law
• Introduction to Criminal Justice	• Criminal Procedures
• Policing and Practices	• Police Report Writing
• Juvenile Justice and Delinquency	• Criminal Investigations
• Law Enforcement Behavioral Science	• Professional & Technical Writing

**RELATED EXPERIENCE**  
**Asset Protection/Loss Prevention Associate** – Macy's, Fargo, ND May 2016-Present  
• Respond to customer and associate incidents to facilitate first aid  
• Use camera and in-person surveillance to monitor cash register transactions, interactions between sales associates and customers, and customer behavior in order to prevent loss  
• Recover stolen merchandise and apprehend shoplifters according to state law and company policy  
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• Assisted individuals with regular daily living skills, role modeling, and community integration  
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**CERTIFICATIONS**  
• CPR & AED  
• First Aid

**EMPLOYMENT**  
• Auto Detailer – Dorri's Car Wash, Fargo, ND, Summer 2014  
• Landscape/Snow Removal Assistant - Steve's Lawn Care, Moorhead, MN, 2012-2014

# Documenting Education

When writing about your education, always write about your current pursuit first, even if you have completed other degrees.

It is not necessary to document an attempt at another college if you didn't complete the degree.

- An exception may be if you want to highlight related coursework that may demonstrate an understanding of a skillset or background knowledge which will complement your education for the job or field of your application.

# Documenting Education

It is important to highlight other degrees you have completed prior to the current degree you are seeking.

You may include your high school education **ONLY IF** you are currently in high school and are a Post-Secondary Education Option student. Otherwise, the “high school ship” has sailed . . .

# 5 Facts to Document Education

EDUCATION	1	2	3
	Associate of Science – <b>Criminal Justice</b>		Anticipated May 2017
4	Minnesota State Community and Technical College (M State), Moorhead, MN		5
	▪ GPA 3.5		

1. The type of degree you are receiving – Associate, Diploma, Certificate
2. Name of major(s) – **BOLD** your **major** so it stands out - it's an important qualifier!
3. The month and year (no date) when you will receive your degree. Once you have graduated or are about to graduate, drop the word “Anticipated”, which allows employers to understand where you are in your educational journey.
4. The name of your college written in it's entirety – you can abbreviate the college name in parenthesis if you plan to shorten its name in later sections.
5. The city and state in which your campus is located.

You may add optional information such as your GPA (3.25 or higher), honors, involvement, etc.

# Sample Education Sections

*A double major completed at M State at the same time:*

## EDUCATION

Associate of Applied Science (Double Major)- **Medical Administrative Assistant and Medical Coding & Billing**  
Minnesota State Community and Technical College (M State), Moorhead, MN

Dec. 2016

- GPA 3.75, President's list

Opportunity to highlight  
GPA of 3.25 or higher.

*Two or more majors completed at M State at different times:*

## EDUCATION

Minnesota State Community and Technical College (M State)

Moorhead MN

- Associate of Applied Science - **Human Resources**, Anticipated December 2016
- Associate of Applied Science - **Construction Management** Degree, December 2015
- Diploma - **Refrigeration and Air Conditioning**, 2000

Always remember to begin  
with the most recent degree.

*Liberal Arts degree completed at M State:*

## EDUCATION

Associate in Arts - **Liberal Arts & Sciences**

May 2016

Minnesota State Community and Technical College (M State), Fergus Falls, MN

# Sample Education Sections

*Two or more degrees completed at M State and a different college:*

## EDUCATION

Diploma - Practical Nursing

May 2016

Minnesota State Community and Technical College (M State), Moorhead, MN

- Member of Nursing Club, 2015-2016

Associate of Applied Science – Occupational Therapy Assistant

May 2008

Northland Technical College, East Grand Forks, MN

- Member of Occupational Therapy Assistant Club, 2006-2008
- President's Honor Roll

Additional information about honors and involvement.

*PSEO students – high school information appropriate in this case:*

## EDUCATION

Post-Secondary Education Option Student

Sept. 2016 - Present

Minnesota State Community and Technical College (M State), Fergus Falls, MN

- Courses: College Writing I, Career & Life Planning, Sociology

Diploma

Fergus Falls High School, Fergus Falls, MN

Anticipated May 2017

An option to reference coursework instead of adding another section.

# Course Highlights

Creating an additional section to highlight your coursework can provide an opportunity to show where you are in your educational pursuit or demonstrate how you can apply what you have learned.

Think back to Module 2, slide 16, when you began to identify coursework you have taken that will show what you have learned and how you have applied your knowledge.

# How did you apply your knowledge?

Identify one or two courses that pertain to the job for which you are applying. Consider courses with assignments where you have applied multiple concepts to solve a real workplace problem.

Think about the following:

- What was the purpose or goal of the project?
- What steps did you take to accomplish the project?
- What tools, technology, procedures did you use?
- What content knowledge did you apply?
- What skills are employers seeking?

# Course Highlights - Example

*Architectural Drafting and Design example:*

Name the course and **bold** course title.

Include semester and year taken.

## COURSE HIGHLIGHTS

### **Residential Project II**

Spring 2016

- Designed a two-story twin home with modifications to accommodate handicapped accessibility in one unit
- Selected exterior finishes to represent urban style
- Calculated materials and costs to reflect base price and upgraded finishes
- Created 3-D renderings, including exterior elevations
- Presented project and portfolio to Home Builder's Association members

Identify the purpose of the project in the first line. Continue by writing about the steps, tools, technology and skills you applied. Add detail to demonstrate your application of knowledge.

Begin with a past tense action word. Periods are not needed as you are writing in phrases.

# Course Highlights Subsection

Including a subsection of the Course Highlights with additional coursework shows the employer the courses you have taken and where you are in your studies. Only include the course you have taken or which you are currently enrolled.

## *Architectural Drafting and Design example:*

### **Additional Coursework:**

- Computer Aided Drafting for Architecture
- Specification Writing for Construction
- Mechanical and Electrical Integration
- Civil and Structural Integration
- Architectural Presentation
- Commercial Projects
- CADD Alternatives
- Project Administration
- Blueprint Reading I
- Fundamentals of CADD
- Survey I: Fundamentals
- Building Systems
- Building Codes
- Principles of Estimating
- Engineering Graphics

Using two columns can save space. If you have taken more than one level of a course, you may put on the same line to save space using Roman numerals for each level – example: Blueprint Reading I & II .

# Key Takeaways

- Drawing attention to your major and coursework is a qualifier employers look for.
- Highlighting your education by selecting coursework that can demonstrate how you applied knowledge and skills to solve real-world problems is a great strategy for a new grad or student seeking an internship.



# Write a Winning Resume

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*“Experience” & “Employment”*

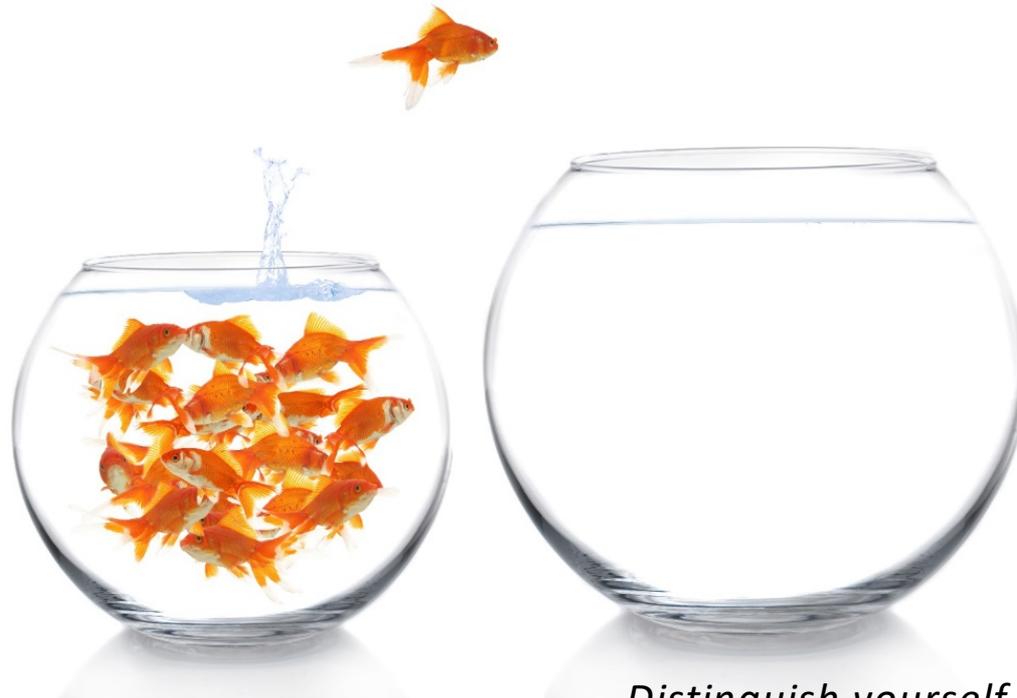
+ *Clinical Experiences for Health Majors*

+ *Documenting Military Experiences*



# Overview

Sifting and sorting through your experiences and organizing them into a “Related Experience” (or Clinical Experience) section will elevate qualifiers to a more prominent place on your resume while acknowledging the value of your previous life experiences.



*Distinguish yourself from the crowd.*

# At a Glance

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▪ Presented plan to instructor, law enforcing representatives and class

**Additional Coursework:**

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▪ Introduction to Criminal Justice	▪ Criminal Procedures
▪ Policing and Practices	▪ Police Report Writing
▪ Juvenile Justice and Delinquency	▪ Criminal Investigations
▪ Law Enforcement Behavior and Science	▪ Professional & Technical Writing

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**CERTIFICATIONS**  
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▪ First Aid

**EMPLOYMENT**  
▪ Auto Detailer – Dori's Car Wash, Fargo, ND, Summer 2014  
▪ Landscape/Snow Removal Assistant - Steve's Lawn Care, Moorhead, MN, 2012-2014

This module focuses on creating a “Related Experience” section as a strategy to highlight your other life experiences while acknowledging employment that may be unrelated to your current field of study but shows a pattern of engagement with work, life and education.

Documenting clinical experiences for healthcare majors and documenting military service will also be addressed.

# “Experience” vs “Employment”

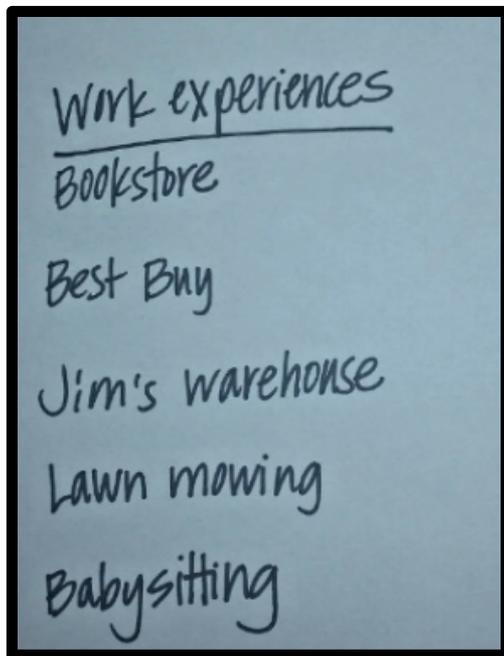
As you have identified in previous modules, you have skills that come from all types of sources – self-management skills, transferable skills, and job related skills.

A traditional chronological resume focuses on writing about your employment history in reverse order, starting with the most recent experience first.

Using a Related Experience section can help you to elevate the most important skills you have gained from experiences without locking yourself into writing only about paid experiences.

# Sifting and Sorting “Experiences”

In Module Two you brainstormed your work experiences. In addition to employment, consider all the other ways you gained experience – internships, volunteer work, student or civic organizations - any experience where you can talk about your skills.



Determine which of the experiences can demonstrate that you have skills that would be related and beneficial to your desired field of employment.

Begin to sort the experiences into categories such as “related experience”, “employment”, “involvement” or other categories descriptive of your career goals.

\*\*You may need to resort your experiences for each job application to highlight other examples.

# Sifting and Sorting

## *Criminal Justice example:*

### EDUCATION

Associate of Science – **Criminal Justice**

Minnesota State Community and Technical College (M State), Moorhead, MN

- GPA 3.5

Anticipated May 2017

Lets assume that Joe Spartan worked at the following places:

- An asset protection associate at Macy's
- A landscaper with Steve's Lawn Care
- A direct care support professional at CCRI
- An auto detailer at Don's Car Wash

Which of these experiences are most relevant to working in the criminal justice field??

# Sifting and Sorting

## *Criminal Justice example:*

When you think about skills need in the criminal justice field, the most important experiences to elevate would be ones in which Joe ***protected property*** and used ***“people skills”***. Therefore, his experiences could be sorted accordingly:

## **Related Experiences:**

- An asset protection associate at Macy's
- A direct care support professional at CCRI

## **Employment:**

- A landscaper with Steve's Lawn Care
- An auto detailer at Don's Car Wash

# Connect the Dots

Now that you have determined which of your experiences demonstrate important skills, it's time to write about them in a way to highlight skills and how they were applied so employers can see how each experience will potentially transfer to the job they are filling.

Put on your “brainstorming hat” again while you think of each related experience you have identified.

# Writing Bullet Points

## Step 1:

Name the job title, the employer (not supervisor), the city and state of the employer, and the months and years of your experience

## Step 2:

Create a “laundry list” of responsibilities and job duties. Pair together similar or complementary tasks.

## Step 3:

Attach skills, technology, procedures, and techniques used to accomplish each task. Use the “skills language” of your profession.

## Step 4:

Begin with an action word to document the job duty along with the skills you used. Add more details when possible – name technology, list numbers, add results.

# Sample Action Words

Here are some sample action words to use when writing bullet points. Refer to the handout that accompanies this workshop series and check pages 11 & 12 of the M State Job Search Guide for expanded lists.

## **Supervisory Skills**

- Administered
- Analyzed
- Assigned
- Attained
- Chaired
- Contracted
- Consolidated
- Coordinated
- Delegated

## **Research Skills**

- Clarified
- Collected
- Critiqued
- Diagnosed
- Evaluated

## **Accounting Skills**

- Administered
- Allocated
- Analyzed
- Appraised

## **People Skills**

- Adapted
- Advised
- Assessed
- Assisted
- Clarified
- Coached
- Communicated

## **Artistic Skills**

- Acted
- Conceptualized
- Created
- Designed
- Developed

## **Mechanical Skills**

- Assembled
- Built
- Calculated
- Computed
- Designed

## **Miscellaneous Skills**

- Accelerated
- Accomplished
- Conceived
- Conducted
- Demonstrated
- Eliminated
- Equipped

# 4 Facts to Document Experience

## RELATED EXPERIENCE

2

4

1

**Asset Protection/Loss Prevention Associate** – Macy's, Fargo, ND

3

May 2016-Present

1. ***The job title*** – Job titles provide a quick snapshot of your experience so put on the left side of the page because we read from left to right and we want to capture the employer's attention right away. **Bold the job title** so it stands out - it's an important qualifier! If you were an intern – name the type of internship you had to add detail – example: "Accounting Intern".
2. ***The name of the employer/company*** (not supervisor's name) - If you worked as a baby sitter for Mike and Mary Anderson, you would write "Anderson Family" as your employer.
3. ***The city and state*** abbreviation of the employer - Remember to separate city and state with an comma.
4. ***The time frame of the experience*** – Use month and year only. Abbreviate the month is space is a concern. Use seasons to indicate a short-term time frame such as "Summer 2014"

**NOTE:** These four facts can be formatted on two lines – just be consistent with whole document.

# Related Experience Example

## *Criminal Justice example:*

Use professional “skills language” and identify equipment, software, etc.

4 facts to identify experience (see previous slide)

### RELATED EXPERIENCE

**Asset Protection/Loss Prevention Associate** – Macy’s, Fargo, ND May 2016-Present

- Respond to customer and associate incidents to facilitate first aid
- Use camera and in-person surveillance to monitor cash register transactions, interactions between sales associates and customers, and customer behavior in order to prevent loss
- Recover stolen merchandise and apprehend shoplifters according to state law and company policy
- Respond to alarms found at store exits
- Prepare reports relative to all theft incidents, merchandise recoveries, accident investigations and audits

**Direct Support Professional** – CCRI, Moorhead, MN Sept. 2014 – April 2015

- Assisted individuals with regular daily living skills, role modeling, and community integration
- Accompanied clients to stores and social activities
- Redirected clients to practice appropriate behaviors to counteract verbal or physical aggression

Begin with action words to document experiences. Use present tense when writing about current experiences and past tense when writing about experiences that have ended.

No need to use periods as written in phrases.

# Documenting Employment

Employment not used in the Related Experience section can be documented in a separate section so it is acknowledged and so the most important qualifiers are found in a more prominent place on the resume. If space allows, you may document items in your Employment section in the same way as in the Related Experience section. Use the technique below to document your employment when space is at a tight.

## *Criminal Justice example:*

### **EMPLOYMENT**

- Auto Detailer – Don’s Car Wash, Fargo, ND, Summer 2014
- Landscape/Snow Removal Assistant - Steve’s Lawn Care, Moorhead, MN, 2012-2014

4 facts to identify experience (see previous slide). Trail all information with commas instead of separating between margins.

No need to bold job titles in this section. An exception would be to bold job titles when not using a Related Experience section and relying only on an Employment section.

# Sample Related Experience & Employment Sections

## *Automotive Technology Sample:*

### RELATED EXPERIENCE

**Automotive Service Assistant** – Gateway Chevrolet, Fargo, ND

May 2016-Present

- Repair, mount, and balance new and used tires
- Perform minor car services such as oil changes and battery replacement
- Lift vehicle onto hoists safely
- Clean and wash vehicles prior to customer pick-up
- Transport cars to 3rd party service shop
- Maintain workshop and supplies

**Lube Technician** – Jiffy Lube, Fargo, ND

Sept. 2014 – April 2015

- Checked and communicated oil level to other teammates
- Ensured tire pressure for proper inflation
- Completed vehicle inspection and refilled fluid levels as necessary
- Installed new oil drain plugs and new oil filters
- Cleaned and lubricated fittings as needed
- Ensured that the service center is clean and presentable

### EMPLOYMENT

- Auto Detailer – Don's Car Wash, Fargo, ND, Summer 2014
- Landscape/Snow Removal Assistant - Steve's Lawn Care, Moorhead, MN, 2012-2014

# Sample Related Experience & Employment Sections

## *Architectural Drafting and Design Sample:*

### RELATED EXPERIENCE

**Architectural Drafting Intern** – Eid-Co Homes, Fargo, ND

Fall 2016

- Produce residential floor plans under the direction of lead architect using AutoCAD
- Develop presentation and sales drawings based upon customer requests
- Assemble and coordinate architectural documents with sales administrators and Architect
- Create elevation plans
- Compute total area based from calculation of floor plans

**Laborer** - Northland Truss, Abercrombie, ND

May 2013 – Aug. 2015

- Created fixtures to build roof and floor truss's according to blueprints
- Supervised and trained others

### EMPLOYMENT

- Landscape/Snow Removal Assistant - Steve's Lawn Care, Moorhead, MN, July 2015 - Present
- Roofer – Anderson Roofing Company, Moorhead, MN, May 2011 - June 2013

The Roofer position could be considered as a related experience, depending on the work activities. Assume this experience only involved applying shingles, it is not as strong of an experience as the others listed in the Related Experience section where more professional skills were applied. If space is at a premium, this experience best fits in this section.

# Healthcare Clinical Experiences

For healthcare majors, experiences gained through clinical rotations provide great hands-on applications and opportunities to observe practice. While it is possible that you may have experiences that are related to caring for people and other unrelated work experiences, you should document your clinical experiences in addition to creating Related Experience and Employment sections as needed.

A “Clinical Experience” section would replace a Course Highlights and an Additional Coursework subsection.

# Healthcare Clinical Experience Examples

## *Nursing sample:*

### **CLINICAL EXPERIENCE**

**Medical-Surgical Clinical** - St. Mary's Hospital, Detroit Lakes, MN

Spring 2017

- Collaborated with nursing staff to provide safe and quality patient care in the areas of obstetric, pediatrics, geriatric, medical surgical, emergency, ambulatory, and pre- and post-operative
- Provided education and home care/discharge planning and instruction
- Strengthened hands-on experience with catheter, IV, suction and sterile field
- Observed surgical procedures including appendectomy, hernia repair, hysterectomy and tonsillectomy

**Emergency Room Clinical**, St. Mary's Hospital, Detroit Lakes, MN

Fall 2016

- Improved adaptability providing care for infants, children, adults and senior adults
- Gained experience with patients facing dual diagnosis with mental illness

In this example, the candidate wrote about Clinical Experiences as if they were Employment Experiences, highlighting what was learned and applied from education.

# Healthcare Clinical Experience Examples

## *Radiologic Technology sample:*

### CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

Essentia Health St. Mary's – Detroit Lakes, MN

- General Radiology, Summer & Fall 2016
- Magnetic Resonance Imaging, Computed Tomography, Ultrasound, Fall 2016

White Earth Health Center – White Earth, MN

- General Radiology, Summer & Fall 2016

Lakewood Health Systems – Staples, MN

- General Radiology, summer 2016

In this example, the candidate highlighted the host facilities and topics observed at each site.

# Healthcare Clinical and Related Experiences and Employment Sections Examples

## *Nursing sample:*

### CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

**Medical-Surgical Clinical** - St. Mary's Hospital, Detroit Lakes, MN Spring 2017

- Collaborated with nursing staff to provide safe and quality patient care in the areas of obstetric, pediatrics, geriatric, medical surgical, emergency, ambulatory, and pre- and post-operative
- Provided education and home care/discharge planning and instruction
- Strengthened hands-on experience with catheter, IV, suction and sterile field
- Observed surgical procedures including appendectomy, hernia repair, hysterectomy and tonsillectomy

**Emergency Room Clinical**, St. Mary's Hospital, Detroit Lakes, MN Fall 2016

- Improved adaptability providing care for infants, children, adults and senior adults
- Gained experience with patients facing dual diagnosis with mental illness

### RELATED EXPERIENCE

**Trained Medication Aid/ CNA** - Emmanuel Nursing Home, Detroit Lakes, MN Aug 2012-Present

- Collaborate with nurses to safely administer medication
- Document medication administration and patient activities in a timely and organized manner
- Provide daily cares, re-position residents to prevent bed sores and assist with fall prevention by safely transferring residents

**Math Tutor** - Spartan Center, M State Jan. 2016-Present

- Provide support to first year college students learning new concepts in algebra and calculus courses
- Demonstrate organizational skills updating the weekly tutoring schedule

**Dietary Aid** - St. Mary's Hospital, Detroit Lakes, MN Summer 2012

- Took food orders from patients and checked selections against dietary restrictions
- Served meals to patients and families

**Childcare Provider** – Anderson Family, Detroit Lakes, MN Summer 2011

- Provided care for two elementary age children, providing transportation to activities, making meals, doing light housekeeping, and shopping

### EMPLOYMENT

- Sandwich Artist – Subway, Detroit Lakes, MN, Oct. 2011-May 2011
- Landscape Assistant – Forrest Hills Golf Course, Detroit Lakes, MN, Summer 2011

# Military Experience

In this example, the candidate highlighted military service in a separate section. If duties from military service are related to the career goal, documenting this experience may fit better in the Related Experience section or in an Employment section. Determine importance and relevance when finding the best placement.

## **MILITARY EXPERIENCE**

**Administrative Medical Clerk/71 Lima** – US Army Reserves

April 2000-April 2010

- Assigned to various stations in the administrative, record keeping and facility operations, handling very highly classified confidential information

# Write a Winning Resume

*Additional Sections*



# Overview

Keep taking inventory of additional experiences and credentials beyond those directly related to your employment goals and find the best place to document them. Be strategic of where you place them because your goal to keep your resume to one page filled with relevant experience.



*Distinguish yourself from the crowd.*

# At a Glance

**Joe Spartan**  
900 Hwy 34 E. Apt. 3, Detroit Lakes, MN 56501  
Phone: (218) 299-6500 | joe\_spartan@my.mnstate.edu

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**EDUCATION**  
Associate of Applied Science – Architectural Drafting and Design Anticipated May 2017  
Minnesota State Community and Technical College (M State), Detroit Lakes, MN  
▪ GPA 3.5

**COURSE HIGHLIGHTS**  
**Residential Project II** Spring 2016  
▪ Designed a two-story twin home with modifications to accommodate handicapped accessibility in one unit  
▪ Selected exterior finishes to represent urban style  
▪ Calculated materials and costs to reflect base price and upgraded finishes  
▪ Created 3-D renderings, including exterior elevations  
▪ Presented project and portfolio to Home Builder's Association members

**Additional Coursework:**

▪ Computer Aided Drafting for Architecture	▪ Blueprint Reading I
▪ Specification Writing for Construction	▪ Fundamentals of CADD
▪ Mechanical and Electrical Integration	▪ Survey I: Fundamentals
▪ Civil and Structural Integration	▪ Building Systems
▪ Architectural Presentation	▪ Building Codes
▪ Commercial Projects	▪ Principles of Estimating
▪ CADD Alternatives	▪ Engineering Graphics
▪ Project Administration	

**RELATED EXPERIENCE**  
**Architectural Drafting Intern – Eid-Co Homes, Fargo, ND** Fall 2016  
▪ Produce residential floor plans under the direction of lead architect using AutoCAD  
▪ Develop presentation and sales drawings based upon customer requests  
▪ Assemble and coordinate architectural documents with sales administrators and Architect  
▪ Create elevation plans  
▪ Compute total area based from calculation of floor plans

**Laborer - Northland Truss, Abercrombie, ND** May 2013 – Aug. 2015  
▪ Created fixtures to build roof and floor truss's according to blueprints  
▪ Supervised and trained others

**SKILLS**  
▪ Software: AutoCAD, SolidWorks, CorelDraw, Microsoft Office Suite (Excel, Word, PowerPoint), Revit  
▪ Architectural Design Software  
▪ Power Tools: table saw, chop saw, band saw, wood lathe, drill press, sander, disc sander

**EMPLOYMENT**  
▪ Landscape/Snow Removal Assistant – Moorhead Lawn Care, Moorhead, MN, July 2015 - Present  
▪ Roofer – Anderson Roofing Company, Moorhead, MN, May 2011 - June 2013

**INVOLVEMENT**  
▪ American Legion Baseball, Moorhead, MN  
▪ T-ball Coach, Moorhead Parks & Rec

Additional sections can be created to highlight other qualifications.

Sometimes it may be necessary to determine if some of the experiences can fit into existing sections to record the experience and maximize space on your resume. Remember to find the best placement on your resume.

This module focuses on documenting skills, certifications and involvement.

If space allows, you may add a section to summarize qualifications.

# Skills/Technical Skills

## *Architectural Drafting and Design example:*

### SKILLS

- **Software:** AutoCAD, SolidWorks, CorelDraw, Microsoft Office Suite (Excel, Word, Outlook), Revit Architectural Design Software
- **Power Tools:** table saw, chop saw, band saw, wood lathe, drill press, router, disc sander

Categorize skills by type, using bold to set off the category. Use comma to separate each skills. This formatting technique is helpful when space is tight.

### TECHNICAL SKILLS

- AutoCAD
- SolidWorks
- Microsoft Office Suite (Excel, Word, Outlook)
- CorelDraw
- Revit Architectural Design Software

This sample features a formatting technique this makes skills quick and easy to read in a bulleted list. Two columns are used to use space more effeciently.

# Involvement

If you have room on your resume and have civic or leadership involvement that demonstrates how you contribute outside of the workplace, you may document these items. Typically this section is at the end of the resume and is the first thing to be eliminated when space is limited.

Avoid listing activities that may create a bias against you. For example, avoid naming specific political or religious affiliations unless applying for a job in one of those organizations. For example, you can write that you are a church volunteer, but do not list your church affiliation. Also avoid writing about your hobbies – especially video gaming, unless they directly relate to your career goal.

## INVOLVEMENT

- American Legion Baseball, Moorhead, MN
- T-ball Coach, Moorhead Parks & Rec

# Certifications

If you hold certifications or licenses, create a section to document that information. You may add dates to designate when the credential was obtained or when it expires. You may also name the agency who granted the credential, such as the American Red Cross.

In addition to the healthcare example shown below, you may include a CDL driver's license or certifications to operate equipment or handle materials.

The best placement for this section is near your Education or Related Experience sections.

## **CERTIFICATIONS**

- Health Care Provider's CPR
- Trained Medication Aid
- Certified Nursing Assistant

# Summarizing Qualifications

A “Summary of Qualifications” or “Qualifications” section is designed to give the employer an overview of your top qualifications for the job you are seeking. This type of section can be best used by candidates with previous experiences that are directly related to the career goal.

**Remember not to use personal pronouns - ~~I, ME, MY~~**

Place the Summary under your heading as the first section of the resume.

## Suzie Spartan

4201 Lilac Lane, Apt. 301, Detroit Lakes, MN 56501  
Phone: (218) 555-5500 | [suzie.spartan@my.minnesota.edu](mailto:suzie.spartan@my.minnesota.edu)

### SUMMARY

- Over 12 years of experience in the office setting both in team and independent environments.
- Strong planning and organization skills, attention to detail, efficiency, accuracy, positivity, and willingness to learn.
- Hands-on experience managing HR and student records
- Proficient in Microsoft Office including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Publisher; quick to learn new technology
- Advanced proficiency in database software: Microsoft Office Accounting, QuickBooks, Dynamics GP, CRM, and SharePoint
- ND Notary 2012-2018

# Summarizing Qualifications

Another strategy is to use branding statements that contains a one line phrase to describe your qualifications. You may also consider writing three to five skill words at the top of your resume to catch the employer's attention – think about the skill words contained in the job description. **Remember not to use personal pronouns - ~~I, ME, MY~~**

## **Suzie Spartan**

4201 Lilac Lane, Apt. 301, Detroit Lakes, MN 56501  
Phone: (218) 555-5500 | [suzie.spartan@my.minnesota.edu](mailto:suzie.spartan@my.minnesota.edu)

*Executive Administrative Assistant ~ Event Planning ~ Customer Service ~ IT Support ~ Marketing Support*

## **Suzie Spartan**

4201 Lilac Lane, Apt. 301, Detroit Lakes, MN 56501  
Phone: (218) 555-5500 | [suzie.spartan@my.minnesota.edu](mailto:suzie.spartan@my.minnesota.edu)

*Offering experience in event planning, customer service, IT and marketing support*

In both of these examples, place the branding statement under your heading. Applying bold and italics to words make these qualifications stand out.

# Summarizing Qualifications

Finally, consider pulling a quotation from a letter of recommendation or a written performance evaluation that speaks to your experience or potential. Cite the writer's name and job title to establish the context in which the statement was written. This is a powerful way of showing your qualifications as it is based on others' observation of you instead of you stating your potential.

## **Suzie Spartan**

4201 Lilac Lane, Apt. 301, Detroit Lakes, MN 56501  
Phone: (218) 555-5500 | [suzie.spartan@my.minnesota.edu](mailto:suzie.spartan@my.minnesota.edu)

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*“Suzie consistently demonstrates innovative thinking, an eye for detail and positivity to make every project a success.”*

Mary Boss, Executive Director – Area Foundation

Place the quotation under your heading. Use italics and a larger font to draw attention to the reader. Add the writer's name, title, and organization name under the quotation.

# Key Takeaways

- Take stock of all of your experiences and contributions, finding the best way to document your experiences by using special sections.
- Decide where information best fits to maximize the experience and to efficiently use space on your resume.
- A Qualifications Summary section or branding techniques will catch the employers' attention and immediately showcase your qualifications.

# Write a Winning Resume

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*Finishing Touches*

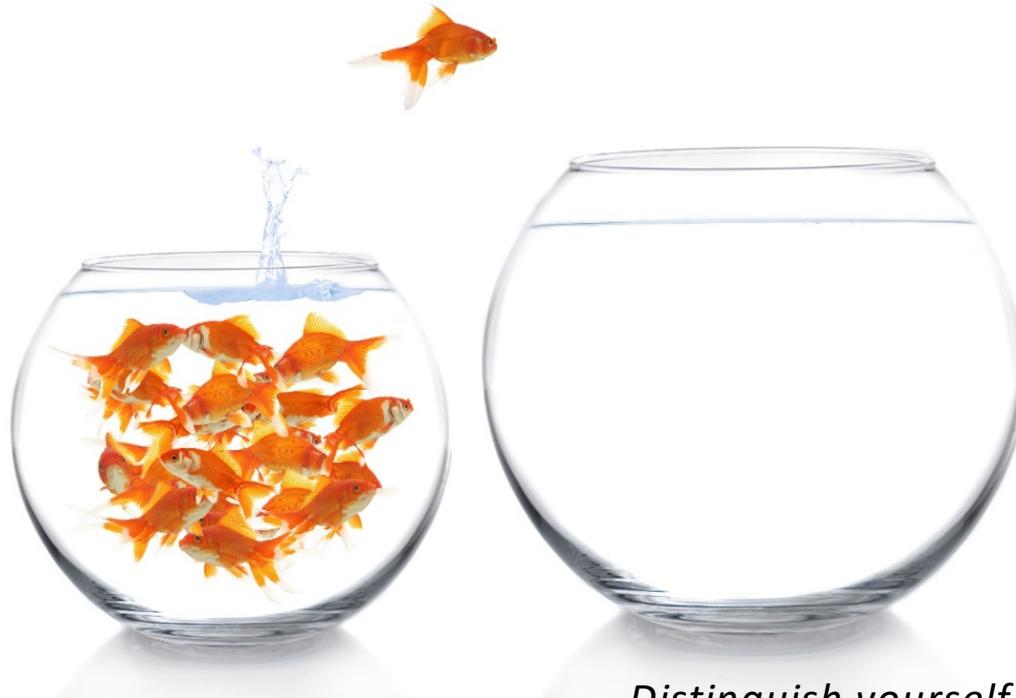
*+ Cover Letters and References*



# Overview

In addition to an effective resume, a well-written cover letter and a list of people who will provide a good reference for you are essential to market your connection to the job you are seeking.

Once your resume, references and cover letter are complete - **proof, review, revise . . . proof, review, revise . . . SUBMIT!**



*Distinguish yourself from the crowd.*

# At a Glance

**Joe Spartan**  
1900 28<sup>th</sup> Ave S, Apt. 301, Moorhead, MN 56560  
Phone: (218) 299-6500 | joe\_spartan@my.minnesota.edu

---

**REFERENCES**

John Smith, Criminal Justice Instructor  
Minnesota State Community and Technical College  
Moorhead, MN  
Phone: 218-299-5555  
Email: john.smith@minnesota.edu

Rita Book, Communications Instructor  
Minnesota State Community and Technical College  
Moorhead, MN  
Phone: 218-299-5555  
Email: rita.book@minnesota.edu

iboss, Manager  
Macy's  
Fargo, ND  
Phone: 701-292-5555  
Email: iboss@macys.com

Nita Hand, Service Manager  
CCRI  
Moorhead, MN  
Phone: 218-299-5555  
Email: nita.hand@ccri.org

**Suzie Spartan**  
1900 28<sup>th</sup> Ave S, Apt. 301, Moorhead, MN 56560  
Phone: (218) 299-6500 | suzie\_spartan@my.minnesota.edu | www.linkedin.com/in/suziespartan

---

Date

Employer Name, Title (*It is critical to address your letter to the appropriate person*)  
Department/Organization  
Address  
City, State Zip

Dear Ms./Mr. \_\_\_\_\_: (If asked to submit to a department rather than a person, use "To Whom It May Concern.")

**Opening Paragraph:** Your opening paragraph should be creative and catch the employer's attention. State why you are interested in the employer and the position for which you are applying. Indicate how you learned about the position. Demonstrate your knowledge of the employer – show the employer that you have done your homework! **Avoid beginning the first sentence of this paragraph with the word "I".**

**Middle Paragraph(s):** Stress what you can contribute to the organization. Highlight your particular experiences and abilities (not just responsibilities) that relate to the position for which you are applying. Do not duplicate the specific information already outlined in your resume. For a **letter of inquiry**, mention your interest in specific types of positions or discuss the skills that you possess that you would like to utilize within this organization. A **letter of application** should indicate your knowledge of the job description and illustrate that you meet the qualifications.

**Closing Paragraph:** This paragraph should serve as a summary of the letter, a call to action (i.e. a request for an interview), and a "thank you" to the employer. Inform the employer if you will be in the area on a certain date or if you will be away for an extended period of time and you will need to be contacted at a different location. (Always make it easy for an employer to contact you.) If appropriate, request the necessary application materials from the employer.

**Complimentary Close** (Sincerely, Sincerely yours, etc.)

*Your Signature* (use about 3-4 spaces to write your signature – use black ink)  
Your Name Typed

**Enclosure: 2** (indicate number of items enclosed including your resume)

A list of people willing to “go to bat” for you as references are essential for your resume package.

There are a few ways to format references and two of them are discussed in this module.

A well-written cover letter tailored to the job opening and company's profile round out the application package. A recipe for writing a letter will be discussed.

Finally, give your application package a thorough review! A checklist is provided in this module.

# References

- 3-5 reference providers are suggested. ***List only references who have given you their permission.***
- When requesting letters of reference, provide some guidance as to what areas you wish the writer to address.
- Keep your references up-to-date about your job search. Let them know when you are interviewing for a specific position. Send them a copy of the job ad and brief information about the company along with your resume for their reference.

# References

## **Create a separate reference list on another document:**

- Choose a format, margins and font that complements or matches your resume.
- Use the same heading you created for your resume as your letter head.
- In list form, include the reference's name, job title or relationship to you, address, phone number(s), and email address.
- Allow at least two or three spaces between reference information.
- Omit "References Available Upon Request" on the bottom of a resume.

# Reference Samples

## REFERENCES

- John Smith, Criminal Justice Instructor - M State, PH: 218-299-5555, Email: john.smith@minnesota.edu
- Rita Book, Communications Instructor - M State, PH: 218-299-5555, Email: rita.book@minnesota.edu
- Ima Boss, Manager - Macy's, PH: 701-282-5555, Email: iboss@macys.com
- Nita Hand, Service Manager – CCRI, PH: 218-299-5555, Email: nita.hand@ccri.org

This sample shows how references can be included at the bottom of a resume when there is room. Include the reference's name, job title, organization, phone number and email.

This sample shows how to create a separate reference page. Include the reference's name, job title, organization, city and state, phone number and email.

## Joe Spartan

1900 28<sup>th</sup> Ave S, Apt. 301, Moorhead, MN 56560  
Phone: (218) 299-6500 | joe\_spartan@my.minnesota.edu

## REFERENCES

John Smith, Criminal Justice Instructor  
Minnesota State Community and Technical College  
Moorhead, MN  
Phone: 218-299-5555  
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Email: rita.book@minnesota.edu

Ima Boss, Manager  
Macy's  
 Fargo, ND  
Phone: 701-282-5555  
Email: iboss@macys.com

Nita Hand, Service Manager  
CCRI  
Moorhead, MN  
Phone: 218-299-5555  
Email: nita.hand@ccri.org

# Cover Letters

## General Guidelines for Letters

- You are writing a business letter so use the rules that apply when formatting such documents.
- Use conventional business letterform on standard size (8.5"x11") and make sure that the paper matches your resume. Letters may also be sent as the body of an email message.
- Tailor your letter to the specific job and organization. Avoid using a non-personalized form letter.
- Always direct your letter to a specific person, preferably an individual with hiring authority. This information is often available through one call to the organization's receptionist. Be sure to spell his/her name correctly and use the proper title.

# Cover Letters, Continued

- Address specific qualifications the employer is looking for by connecting experiences from your resume to the job description and expand by giving details or examples to demonstrate your qualities. Include your objective in the letter.
- When answering an advertisement, cover all of the points requested in the exact order outlined.
- Convey enthusiasm for the position and set a positive tone.
- Use simple and direct language. Be as concise as possible. Refrain from using slang and abbreviations.

# Cover Letters, Continued

- Use self-descriptive action words that personalize your resume.
- Have several people proofread your letter for grammar, punctuation, spelling and typographical errors. One error could mean elimination.
- A common mistake is to spend a lot of time talking about yourself and your skills/qualifications. It is important to put the emphasis where it belongs – on the employer and his/her needs.

# A Cover Letter Recipe

*Suzie Spartan*

1900 28<sup>th</sup> Ave S, Apt. 301, Moorhead, MN 56560  
Phone (218) 299-6500 | [suzie\\_spartan@my.minnesota.edu](mailto:suzie_spartan@my.minnesota.edu) | [www.linkedin.com/in/suziespartan](http://www.linkedin.com/in/suziespartan)

---

Date

Employer Name, Title (*It is critical to address your letter to the appropriate person*)

Department/Organization

Address

City, State Zip

Dear Ms./Mr. \_\_\_\_\_: (If asked to submit to a department rather than a person, use "To Whom It May Concern:")

**Opening Paragraph:** Your opening paragraph should be creative and catch the employer's attention. State *why* you are interested in the employer and the position for which you are applying. Indicate how you learned about the position. Demonstrate your knowledge of the employer – show the employer that you have done your homework! ***Avoid beginning the first sentence of this paragraph with the word "I".***

**Middle Paragraph(s):** Stress what you can contribute to the organization. Highlight your particular experiences and abilities (not just responsibilities) that relate to the position for which you are applying. Do not duplicate the specific information already outlined in your resume. For a **letter of inquiry**, mention your interest in specific types of positions or discuss the skills that you possess that you would like to utilize within this organization. A **letter of application** should indicate your knowledge of the job description and illustrate that you meet the qualifications.

**Closing Paragraph:** This paragraph should serve as a summary of the letter, a call to action (i.e. a request for an interview), and a "thank you" to the employer. Inform the employer if you will be in the area on a certain date or if you will be away for an extended period of time and you will need to be contacted at a different location. (*Always make it easy for an employer to contact you.*) If appropriate, request the necessary application materials from the employer.

**Complimentary Close** (Sincerely, Sincerely yours, etc.)

*Your Signature* (use about 3-4 spaces to write your signature – use black ink)

Your Name Typed

**Enclosure: 2** (indicate number of items enclosed including your resume)

Check out page 4 in the resume guide from this series to better view this page.

# Proof, Review and Revise!

## 1. **APPEARANCE**

Does it look good without reading it?

## 2. **FORMAT**

Was the best format used to sell your strengths?

## 3. **OBJECTIVE**

Does the objective statement describe desired position or purpose of resume?

## 4. **SKILLS**

Does the resume reflect skills? Count the skills \_\_\_\_\_

## 5. **KEYWORDS**

Are keywords and phrases easy to identify? Are they descriptive?

# Proof, Review and Revise!

6. **FOCUS**  
Does the content point to your employment objective?
7. **PROOFING**  
Is it free from grammar, spelling, punctuation, or typing errors?
8. **LENGTH**  
Is it a reasonable length? (1 –2 pages)?
9. **INTEGRITY**  
Is it an *honest* presentation of your best?
10. **APPROPRIATE**  
Does the content capture an employer's interest?
11. **REFERENCES**  
Has a reference page been prepared? Does it complement the resume?

# Key Takeaways

- Create a reference document with the contact information for people who know what you can do and who are willing to help market your qualifications to employers.
- A cover letter is another opportunity for you to discuss specific details from your work history. It is also a way to explain to the employer that your qualifications and goals for employment are complementary to the company's mission.
- Proof, review, revise – take care to make a great first impression on paper.

