

# ENGL 2311 Project 1: Résumé and Cover Letter

## Résumé and Cover Letter: Assignment Overview

### Overview

In this assignment you will write a résumé and cover letter for a specific job posting. A big part of this assignment is conducting a thorough audience analysis, so that your application materials and the vocabulary that you use are appropriate for the hiring team that you're writing for. **You will complete a five-part assignment sequence, for a score of up to 30 points = 30/30 = 100%.**

### Learning Goals

**After completing this assignment, you will have gained the following skills:**

- Research and understand different types of audiences, including their needs and motivations.
- Understand how to write for a specific purpose.
- Write a cover letter that addresses a specific job posting and hiring team.
- Optimize your résumé for a specific job posting, including using appropriate vocabulary.
- Organize a résumé to align your experience with a specific job posting.

### Job Posting

You can choose any job posting. For example, you might choose a job posting for an internship or campus job that you want to apply for right now. Or you might choose a job posting that is representative of the type of job that you would like to get when you graduate. You can search for job postings on [Dallas College's Handshake](#) or other popular job sites like [Indeed](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Monster](#), [CareerBuilder](#), [ZipRecruiter](#), etc.

### Format

The final draft of this assignment will consist of two documents: a résumé and a cover letter. You can submit them as PDFs or DOCXs. If you use Google Docs, download a copy as a PDF or DOCX file.

The **résumé** should:

- Be formatted to fit on 1 or 2 pages. More than 2 pages is too long.
- Use any template or formatting that you like. Feedback and grading will focus on the writing, not the visual design.
- Make use of headings to organize your résumé.
- Omit or use fake contact information if you prefer not to share it with your peer reviewers or instructor.

The **cover letter** should:

- Be addressed to the hiring manager or hiring department.
- Directly address how your experience and skills match the job requirements and preferred experience.
- Highlight your skills and experiences that are particularly good matches for the job requirements.
- Fit on 1 page and be formatted like the exemplary cover letters that are your models.

# I. Résumé: First Draft

For this first draft assignment in the **Project 1 assignment sequence**, you will:

1. Find a job posting of your choosing. The job posting can be for an internship, campus job, or other job that you want to apply for now -- or for the type of job that you would like to apply for when you graduate. You can search for job postings on [Dallas College's Handshake](#) or other popular job sites like [Indeed](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Monster](#), [CareerBuilder](#), [ZipRecruiter](#), etc.
2. Analyze the audience that the job posting indicates. (See Purdue OWL's "[Audience Analysis: The Development Stage](#)" and "[Rhetorical Awareness and User-Centered Design](#).") What vocabulary do they use? What do they value? What do they want to see in a job candidate? What aspects of your skills and experience might require extra explanation for this audience? Download a copy of the job posting (a printscreen/ screenshot is fine) and annotate (that is, write notes on) the job posting as you do your analysis.
3. Write a rough draft of your résumé. (See Purdue OWL's "[Tone in Business Writing](#)," "[Categorized List of Action Verbs](#)," and "[Sample Résumés](#)," as well as this [sample functional resume](#).) Customize your vocabulary and messaging for your audience and emphasize your skills and experience that match the job posting. You can use a template or format it yourself. At this stage, we'll emphasize the words and headings more than the formatting.
4. Submit your rough draft résumé and an annotated copy of the job posting in this course's Blackboard "Lessons/Assignments" menu link.

## Grading Rubric: First Draft of Résumé

| Criteria                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Points |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| <b>Job Posting:</b> You turned in a job posting that is annotated with comments that analyze the audience.                                                                                                                                                 | 1 pt   |
| <b>Résumé:</b> You turned in a 1-2 page rough draft résumé that: A) is organized into appropriate sections such as Education, Experience, Skills, etc. and B) uses vocabulary, messaging, and emphasis to match the audience indicated by the job posting. | 3 pts  |

**Total: 4 Points**

## II. Cover Letter: First Draft

This assignment assumes that you have already done the following tasks for your first draft résumé:

1. Found a job posting of your choosing. The job posting can be for an internship, campus job, or other job that you want to apply for now -- or for the type of job that you would like to apply for when you graduate. You can search for job postings on [Dallas College's Handshake](#) or other popular job sites like [Indeed](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Monster](#), [CareerBuilder](#), [ZipRecruiter](#), etc.
2. Analyzed the audience that the job posting indicates. (Review Purdue OWL's "[Audience Analysis: The Development Stage](#)" and "[Rhetorical Awareness and User-Centered Design](#).") What vocabulary do they use? What do they value? What do they want to see in a job candidate? What aspects of your skills and experience might require extra explanation for this audience? Annotate the job posting as you do your analysis.
3. **THEN** -- Write a rough draft of your cover letter. (See Purdue OWL's "[Cover Letter Workshop – Formatting and Organization](#)" as a guide, as well as [this sample cover letter](#).) Customize your vocabulary and messaging for your audience and emphasize your skills and experience that match the job posting.
4. Turn in your rough draft cover letter in this course's Blackboard "Lessons/Assignments" page.

### Grading Rubric: First Draft of Cover Letter

| Criteria                                                                                                                                                                               | Points |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| <b>Addressee and Formatting:</b> Your cover letter is addressed to an appropriate person or team. The cover letter is formatted like the examples shown in class.                      | 1 pt   |
| <b>Match to the Job Posting:</b> Your cover letter uses keywords or references to the hiring company or team's work to emphasize how your skills and experience match the job posting. | 2 pts  |
| <b>Highlight Your Best Qualifications:</b> Your cover letter works as an introduction to your résumé, highlighting your best qualifications.                                           | 2 pts  |

**Total: 5 Points**

### III. Résumé and Cover Letter: Peer Reviews

For this assignment, you will:

1. Actively participate in the peer review sessions for the first draft résumé and first draft cover letter.
2. Using the “**Grading Rubric: First Draft of Resume**” and “**Grading Rubric: First Draft of Cover Letter**,” provide feedback to your peers -- orally (if done in person) but ESPECIALLY as a written “Reply” to at least one classmate (your peer). You will share your feedback notes with your peers and also submit the feedback for this assignment (in the “Discussion Board”).
3. After both peer review sessions are complete, reflect on the peer review process by answering the following “**Post-Review Questions**”:
  - A. What was the most useful feedback that you received during the peer review process? How will you change your résumé or cover letter based on that feedback?
  - B. What did you learn by interacting with your peers about your first drafts?
  - C. What did you do or say during the peer review process that you think helped your peers the most?
  - D. What will you change about how you give or receive feedback during the next peer review?

#### What to turn in:

- Your peer review feedback for your peer’s first drafts of BOTH his/her résumé AND cover letter in the “Discussion Board.”
- Your answers to the “Post Review Questions” in the “Discussion Board.”

#### Grading Rubric: Peer Review

| Criteria                                                                                                 | Points |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| <b>Active participation:</b> You actively participate in the peer review session(s).                     | 1 pt   |
| <b>Feedback:</b> You submitted written record of the feedback that you provided.                         | 2 pts  |
| <b>Post-Review Questions:</b> You responded thoughtfully to the questions about the peer review process. | 2 pts  |

**Total: 5 Points**

## IV. Résumé and Cover Letter: Final Draft

For this final draft assignment, you will:

1. Address feedback from your peer reviewer about your first draft and make meaningful improvements based on the feedback.
2. Polish your résumé and cover letter. Proofread carefully to ensure that they make a good impression with your audience.
3. Consider using templates to optimize the layout and formatting, but don't go too wild. The words are still the most important part.
4. Turn in your final draft résumé and your final draft cover letter in the course's Blackboard "Lessons/Assignments" page.

### Grading Rubric: Final Drafts of Résumé and Cover Letter

| Criteria                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Points |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| <b>Improvement:</b> You addressed peer review comments and made significant improvements from your first draft to your final draft.                                                                                                                                    | 2 pts  |
| <b>Audience Analysis:</b> Your resumé and cover letter are written specifically for the audience indicated by the job posting. Your vocabulary, messaging, and points of emphasis are customized for this audience.                                                    | 2 pts  |
| <b>Résumé:</b> Your resumé: A) contains the sections and content necessary to be a complete summary of your qualifications for the job, B) is organized in a manner that flows logically and matches the priorities of the job posting, and C) is only 1-2 pages long. | 3 pts  |
| <b>Cover Letter:</b> Your cover letter: A) addresses the specific job qualifications in the job posting, B) is written for the audience indicated by the job posting, and C) is only 1 page long.                                                                      | 3 pts  |
| <b>Organization and Design:</b> Your resumé and cover letter are well organized and use designs that clearly communicate their structure.                                                                                                                              | 2 pts  |

**Total: 12 Points**

## V. Résumé and Cover Letter: Reflection

This is the last assignment in the **Project 1: Résumé and Cover Letter** assignment sequence.

Reflect on your experience drafting, reviewing, and revising your résumé and cover letter by answering the following questions:

- A. What aspect of your résumé and cover letter makes you the proudest, and why?
- B. What changed the most from your first draft to your final draft? How did peer reviews and influence that change?
- C. What is one aspect of your résumé and cover letter that you would still like to improve, and why? How would you go about doing that?
- D. What is one writing skill that you learned or improved while working on this assignment? What do you want to learn or improve next?

Copy and paste the preceding questions into a document and write **at least 300 words** total for your responses to all four questions. Submit the document in “Lessons/Assignments”.

### Grading Rubric: Reflection

| Criteria                                                                                                                               | Pts   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| <b>Answering Questions:</b> You answered all of the questions thoughtfully and explained how you grew as a writer, at least 300 words. | 4 pts |

**Total: 4 Points**