

THE RESUME & COVER LETTER GUIDE



SEARCH FOR & APPLY TO INTERNSHIPS & JOBS

Sign into your MyVCCCD Student Portal & click on 'Job Board - Career Center' under Student QuickLinks

VC Career Center

venturacollege.edu/career

805-289-6473

How to Write a Résumé

WHAT IS A RESUME?

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

- Emphasize relevant accomplishments and potential contributions to an organization
- Focus on the skills and requirements necessary for a specific job
- Are concise, well-organized, and error free
- Are easy to read and grab the reader's attention in 30-seconds

KEY TIPS

► Format

- Appropriate length is 1-page, with 1-inch margins. Margins can be made narrow, to 0.5, if needed.
- 11-12 point font with an easy to read font style, such as Times New Roman, Calibri, Arial, or Garamond.

► Write a targeted resume

- Use your target job description to uncover specific needs and industry buzzwords. If your resume includes language and skills from the job description it is more likely to be selected.
- Targeting your resume with keywords from the job description is especially important as employers often use Applicant Tracking Systems to first scan your resume and filter job applicants.

► Organization

- Key sections to include: Education, Experience, Skills, Leadership or Involvement (see examples on reverse).
- Include name and contact info at the top of the resume, typically followed by Objective or Education section.
- List experiences in reverse chronological order within each section (i.e. most recent experience first).

► Write accomplishment statements (bullet form is recommended)

- In Experience section(s), statements should focus on accomplishments. Avoid generic, vague statements.
- Do not use first-person pronouns (I, me, my) or articles (a, an, the). See the Writing Accomplishment Statements Worksheet:

GET STARTED

1. **Self-evaluation.** Self-evaluate and identify what you should include and what you can omit in your resume. Use the Self-Evaluation Worksheet to brainstorm and match your experiences to a particular job description.
2. **Write your first draft, revise, then get feedback.** Use the examples (*see reverse*) to guide your first draft. Read each section over carefully and be sure you have effectively conveyed the skills you wish to emphasize. Proofread for spelling, capitalization or punctuation errors. Have your resume critiqued at the Career Center.
3. **Create multiple versions.** You may need to have multiple versions of your resume for different industries or positions. Keep an updated master document with all your experiences so that you can pull from it as needed.
4. **Save in multiple formats.** When submitting as an email attachment or uploading through an online application, send the resume as a PDF to avoid formatting issues and save the file as `yourname.pdf`. You may also wish to convert the document to a text-only/non-formatted version suitable for copying into applications.

Self-Evaluation Worksheet: Complete Example

Responsibilities, Duties, Required Skills and Experience (taken from a job posting description for a Medical Assistant position)	Your Related Experience (taken from work experience, internships, class projects, student organizations, skills, etc.)
Affinity for people; can establish rapport with patients	3 years customer service experience Volunteer greeter at hospital
Commitment to team and strong work ethic	2 years on leadership team for Holistic Health Club as Treasurer Team presentations for classes
Schedule patient appointments	Training in computerized appointment books and patient management systems
Experience with common insurance inquiries	Basic knowledge of the three government insurance cards gained through VC courses
Develop and create flyers, order forms, and brochures	Created flyers to advertise annual events for club using Publisher Assisted in creating order forms using Google forms through internship
Excellent interpersonal and communication skills (written and verbal)	Experience at VC giving oral presentations using PowerPoint Experience creating written reports for technical writing class and capstone course
Strong analytical and organizational skills	Analyzed patient data and health trends for market research project and made recommendations Use project management apps to organize class projects and team responsibilities for student org
Familiarity with computer applications including MS Word/Excel/PowerPoint, PhotoShop	Experience using MS office suite for work and school assignments Experience using similar design platform (Publisher) through leadership role
Preferred bilingual in Spanish	Fluent in Spanish
Required enrollment in a AA/AS, BA/BS, or certification program	Enrolled in Associate of Science in Medical Assisting – Administrative at VC; expected to be completed in May 2019

Writing Accomplishment Statements Worksheet

The point of the resume is to showcase your brand. Your brand is used to demonstrate who you are and what matters most to you.

By showcasing your accomplishments on a resume, you can help the prospective employer assess your ability to do the job. Use “Accomplishment Statements” to describe your achievements in the experience section. Quantify your work whenever possible. Avoid generic and vague statements.

EXAMPLE

Generic, vague statement:

Local Philanthropy Society

Event Coordinator

- Planned charity events

Strong, descriptive, quantified statement:

Local Philanthropy Society

Event Coordinator

- Coordinated three fundraising events for local shelters which raised over \$8,000 (20% over goal) and greatly improved community awareness

A ction verb	+	P roject	+	R esult	=	A ccomplishment
<i>Coordinated</i>		<i>three fundraising events for local shelters</i>		<i>which raised over \$8,000 (20% over goal) and greatly improved community awareness</i>		<i>Coordinated three fundraising events for local shelters which raised over \$8,000 (20% over goal) and greatly improved community awareness</i>

Try It Yourself!

Write an example of an accomplishment statement that showcases the above:

Action verb: _____

+

Project: _____

+

Result: _____

=

Accomplishment: _____

ACTION VERBS

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

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

Top Skills Employers Want

1. Communication skills
2. Strong work ethic
3. Teamwork skills/Collaboration
4. Initiative/Entrepreneurial Mindset
5. Analytical skills/Problem Solving Skills
6. Computer skills/Digital Fluency/Technical Skills
7. Flexibility/Adaptability/Resilience
8. Interpersonal skills /Empathy
9. Resilience/Self-Awareness
10. Social/Diversity Awareness

FirstName LastName

(805) 555-5555

FirstNameLastName@gmail.com

Include your phone number and an appropriate email address (ideally an email with your first and last name). Your physical/ mailing address is optional.

OBJECTIVE

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

EDUCATION

Associate of Science, Business Management
Ventura College - Ventura, CA

Expected graduation date: May 20xx

EXPERIENCE

Position Title, Company Name
City, State

Month/Year – Month/Year

- Add bullet points that summarize accomplishments and skills related to the job/position for which you are applying, not simply duties of position.
- Bullet points do not need to be full sentences but should have enough detail to get the point across; include numbers, percentages, and dollar amounts where applicable.
- Start bullet point with an action verb using the proper tense.
- Periods are an optional punctuation on a resume, but if you are going to use them be consistent throughout your resume.
- Within a category (i.e. Experience) show most recent activity first, and then go back in time.

Supervisor and Server, El Tecolote Restaurant
Camarillo, CA

April 20xx – January 20xx

- Promoted to supervisor after six months due to excellent performance and customer reviews
- Managed frequent changes to staff scheduling for team of 10 and trained new employees
- Ensured adherence to Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards and policies

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Vice President, Associated Student Body
Adolfo Camarillo High School, Camarillo, CA

September 20xx – June 20xx

- Organized monthly social events and a fundraiser that raised over \$800 for an animal shelter
- Attended weekly cabinet meetings and collaborated with team to conduct student outreach
- Reported monthly to President and staff supervisor on funds, objectives, and event planning

Camp Tutor, STEM Summer Program
Camarillo, CA

June 20xx – August 20xx

- Provided one-on-one and small group tutoring to sixth grade students in Math and Biology
- Created study guides for students which improved test scores by 5% in three months

SKILLS

Computer: Proficient in Adobe Creative Suite, Excel, and Google Analytics

Languages: Fluent in Spanish and English

As you move forward in your career, remove older or less relevant experience (i.e. high school experience) and replace with more recent experience and skills related to your field.

Display language skills and technical skills, specifically those important in your industry. Be sure to indicate level of proficiency/fluency.

Do you have a LinkedIn profile or professional website/portfolio? Share the public URL.

Michelle Mills

(805) 555-5555 · FirstNameLastName@gmail.com · www.linkedin.com/in/firstnamelastname

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

California Certified Medical Assistant 2018 – Present
The California Certifying Board for Medical Assistants

Associate of Science in Medical Assisting – Administrative 05/2017
Ventura College – Ventura, CA

Relevant Coursework: Medical Coding, Electronic Health Records, Medical Insurance

SPECIAL SKILLS

- Medical screening
- Patient charts
- Medical record management
- Administrative support

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Medical Assistant, Corner Health Clinic – Ventura, CA 02/20xx – Present

- Answer office phones and schedule appointments
- Greet patients and prepare them for examinations
- Obtain patient medical history and vital signs
- Assist physician during patient examinations
- Perform routine laboratory tests and administer injections

Notice how the first job lists generic, vague tasks. Now, notice how the second job elaborates on accomplishments and strengths using action-oriented accomplishment statements. Your goal is to write statements like the second job.

Front Office Assistant, Optometry Office – Santa Paula, CA 09/20xx - 08/20xx

- Answered patient inquiries and resolved complaints on the telephone and in person
- Coordinated appointment scheduling and handled patient fees and transactions
- Retained accurate office records with correct filing, ensured patient confidentiality, and administered patient pre-tests and exams
- Assisted with new employee training and educated coworkers on office procedures
- Supported diverse clientele with eyeglasses selection, creating a welcoming environment

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Assistant Coach, AYSO – Camarillo, CA 07/20xx – 9/20xx

- Helped coordinate three regional tournaments annually and organized travel schedules
- Initiated and implemented text messaging tree to improve communication among players, families, and coaching staff

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE & ACTIVITIES

Member, Alpha delta Nu (Nursing) – Ventura College 09/20xx – Present

Member, Holistic Health Club – Ventura College 03/20xx – Present

Volunteer, American Heart Association – Ventura, CA 05/20xx – 11/20xx

You can create multiple “experience” categories and organize them to highlight more relevant experience higher on your resume.

CHARLIE FUJIMOTO

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

OBJECTIVE

To utilize my leadership, military, and criminal justice experience as full-time employee with the Ventura County Sherriff's Office.

EDUCATION

Certificate of Achievement in Criminal Justice

Expected May 20xx

Ventura College – Ventura, CA

Relevant coursework:

- Legal Aspects of Evidence
- Criminal Investigation
- Juvenile Law and Procedures in CA

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Intern, Ventura County Probation Office – Ventura, CA

March 20xx – Present

- Conduct initial interviews of individuals to obtain personal history for court records
- Provide referrals to counseling groups for drug and alcohol treatment
- Identify community service sites and monitor service hours of 10 individuals on probation

Team Leader, United States Army National Guard – San Diego CA

May 20xx – 20xx

- Served two combat tours of active duty service overseas and managed 5 employees
- Provided ongoing training and evaluations for employees regarding performance
- Managed United States Army equipment worth over \$1,000,000
- Possess current Department of Defense Secret Clearance

WORK EXPERIENCE

Student Assistant, Veteran Resource Center, Ventura College – Ventura, CA

April 20xx – Present

- Provide a welcoming environment to incoming veteran students and lead campus tours
- Assist with office tasks and direct students to resources such as V.A. educational benefits

Research Analyst, ABC Company – Ventura, CA

June 20xx – August 20xx

- Maintained and entered data from customer satisfaction surveys and ran reports using Excel
- Created web-based tutorials and handouts to support staff training on database usage
- Designed flyers to promote research and community outreach using Adobe Photoshop

Office Assistant, Neighborhood Nonprofit – Ventura, CA

February 20xx – May 20xx

- Entered relevant data into organization's online database to prepare for quarterly reports
- Created and maintained monthly schedule of up to 100 volunteer for 10 community events

INVOLVEMENT

Member, Pre-Law Club – Ventura College

September 20xx – Present

SKILLS

Computer: Basic knowledge of Data Visualization Software and creating charts and graphs

Languages: Fluent in English and intermediate fluency in Spanish

If you include an objective, specify what you will contribute to the company.

Your name should be at the top, 2 points larger than the rest of resume.

Within each section, list experiences in reverse chronological order, starting with the most recent first.

Resume Review Checklist

Layout & Appearance	Yes	No	Comments/Notes
Is my name at the top of the page, 2 points larger than rest of resume and in bold?			
Are my address, phone number and email easy to read and accurate?			
Do you have an appropriate email address and have you changed your cell phone message to be professional?			
Is my resume an appropriate length?			
Is formatting (e.g. bold, font, bullet sizes, heading styles) consistent throughout the resume? 11-12 point font			
Are the headings and statements evenly spaced?			
Are verb tenses in the present tense for current jobs?			
Are verb tenses in the past tense for previous jobs?			
Do I have approximately 2-6 statements per job? (Bullet form is recommended.)			

Content	Yes	No	Comments/Notes
Did I include the following content: Highlights, Education, Experience, Related Activities, Accomplishments and Skills?			
Does my education section state my degree and expected graduation date? Did I include a highlight about my education?			
Is my education section in the best location on my resume?			
Do my statements demonstrate major accomplishments rather than routine tasks/duties? Did I DESCRIBE what I did rather than just LIST or TELL? (See list of Adjectives)			
Did you include relevant courses that you took in school to show your skills and abilities or a Technical Skills section?			
Do my accomplishment statements start with action verbs? (See list of Verbs)			
Do my accomplishment statements demonstrate the use of key skills? (See top skills employers seek on the next page and review job title and industry for key words.)			
General Comments and Suggestions or Questions			

How to Write a Cover Letter

WHAT IS A COVER LETTER?

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

- Explain why you are sending the resume and how you heard about the position
- Link your skills, experience, and education to the requirements of the position
- Focus on your interest in the organization and what you can contribute to the team
- Convince the reader to look at your resume

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

KEY TIPS

► Format

- Cover letters are often submitted as an email attachment or uploaded as part of an online application. Just like with your resume, send the cover letter as a PDF to avoid formatting issues.
- Always include a personalized introduction in the body of an email in addition to attaching a formal letter.

► Target to the particular organization and position

- Tailor each letter to show the connection between your qualifications and the employer's requirements. Use the Self-Evaluation Worksheet to help you prepare.
- Demonstrate your knowledge about the organization and your passion for the industry.

► Appropriately address your letter

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

► Mention referrals

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

GET STARTED

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

Jaime Castillo

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

April 30, 2018

Jane Smith
ABC Hospital
1234 Ventura Road, Ventura CA 93003

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

Dear Jane Smith:

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

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

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

Sincerely,

Jaime Castillo

Jaime Castillo

If you are submitting a hard copy cover letter in person, include a signature before your printed name. When submitting a cover letter electronically, omit the signature and conclude your letter with your printed name.

Michelle Mills

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

October 2, 2017

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

Your cover letter header should match your resume header. Think of this as part of demonstrating your brand and attention to detail.

Dear Selection Committee:

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

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

- **I have 3+ years of experience within child development and early education.** Through my positions as an aid for toddlers and as an after school tutor for elementary students, I excelled in providing support to professional staff. I also have experience integrating developmentally appropriate teaching methods into the classroom.
- **I consistently demonstrate professionalism and I am a strong communicator.** My previous employers and professors can attest that I demonstrate professionalism when collaborating with colleagues and administrators. Further, I take pride in ensuring effective communication with parents in both English and Spanish, and I have volunteered to translate for parents on several occasions.
- **Early childhood education is my passion and I am involved in the field.** I enjoy researching the latest trends in the field and I am knowledgeable about curriculum planning consistent with California Early Learning System for Infants-Toddlers and Preschool. Additionally, I am involved in National Association for the Education of Young Children and co-presented at a regional event for new professionals.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope to speak with you further about how I can contribute my skills and prior experience to support the Family Care Center.

Sincerely,

Michelle Mills

When sending a cover letter and resume by email, attach the files as PDFs. In the body of the email, write a basic introduction and include your contact information. For example:

*“Dear Jane Smith:
I am excited to apply for the part-time Medical Assistant position with ABC Hospital. Please see my attached resume and cover letter.*

*Thank you,
Michelle Mills
805-555-5555
FirstNameLastName@gmail.com”*

Cover Letter Review Checklist

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

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