

Level One Homepage

Hello! The Work Readiness Resource **For Participant** Section **Level 1** has been created as a tool for you to explore the world of work. In this level, you will:

- Learn how to write a [resume](#),
- Learn about writing [cover letters](#),
- Explore all the things you need to do to get ready for an [interview](#),
- Create a [career portfolio](#), and
- Learn about what employers are looking for in their employees!

Let's get started!



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Writing a Resume

A well written resume is a great tool for you to let potential employers know **who you are** and **what skills and experience** you have. A resume is often the only information employers have to make decisions about who to interview or hire.



What information should I put on my resume? What should it look like?

Format

There are many different resume formats you can choose from. Some examples of various formats are on the next few pages.

Personal Data

Your name, complete mailing address, telephone number(s) and email (if you have one) are all information you should put on your resume.

Employment or Career Objective

Include an objective if you have a specific job or career goal in mind, or you know the title of the job for which you are applying. You can also put your objective on a Cover Letter (you will explore this in the next section!)

Education and work Experience

The middle sections of your resume should include all of your education and training. It should also list all of your jobs and work history (any type of work or volunteer experience) beginning with your current or most recent job!

Other Activities

List only activities that relate to your job or career goals. Example: You belong to an association such as the American Nurses Association.

References

References are sometimes requested from your previous employers. You can either list these on a separate sheet of paper, or write *References available Upon Request*.

Make sure to include if you were in the military in your *Work History* section or your *Other Activities* section!

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Dos and Don'ts of Writing a Resume

A well written resume is a great tool for you to let potential employers know

- 1) **WHO YOU ARE** and
- 2) **WHAT SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE** you have.

A resume is often the only information employers have to make decisions about who to interview or hire.

Below are some tips to remember when thinking about writing your resume!

Are you ready to see some examples of resumes? The next three pages will give you examples of some resumes!

Resumé Tips

Do...

...Include an objective if you have a specific job or career goal in mind, or you know the title of the job for which you are applying.

...List your key strengths and skills early in your resume to improve your chances for consideration.

...Use black ink.

...Use 8.5 inch by 11 inch white or off-white paper.

Don't...

...List activities that do not relate to your specific job or career goals, such as your involvement in religious or political organizations.

...Let your key strengths and skills get lost in your resume.

...Use graphics or exotic colors.

...Use more than 1-2 pages.

...Use colored paper.

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Takeaway #1: Resume: Putting Your Jobs in Order by Year (Chronological)

Jamie Applicant
101 Applicant Way
Warren, OH 44481
(555) 555-5555
japplicant@yahoo.com

OBJECTIVE: Administrative Assistant

EXPERIENCE:

Receptionist 1998-2009
Good Industries, Warren, OH

- Greeted visitors professionally
- Managed busy front desk
- Took notes for executive meetings

File Clerk 1995-1998
Community Service Consultants, Columbus, OH

- Implemented new filing system
- Maintained accurate client files
- Provided occasional phone coverage

Waitress 1991-1995
Main Street Diner, Cincinnati, OH

- Took customer orders and delivered food
- Assisted with restocking supplies
- Voted employee of the month by peers and customers

EDUCATION:

Cincinnati Community College 1991

Course Work: Practical Word Processing
Accounting 101
Business 101

High School Diploma 1986-1990
Cincinnati High School, Cincinnati, OH

Takeaway #2: Resume: Putting Your Jobs in Order by Type of Work Experience (Functional)

Jamie Applicant

101 Applicant Way
Warren, OH 44481
Home: (555) 555-555
japplicant@yahoo.com

OBJECTIVE

To obtain an administrative support position in a growing company; to use and develop my clerical, organizational, and planning experience.

EXPERIENCE

- Maintained accurate, confidential client files.
- Developed and kept current a 5,000 member database of contacts.
- Handled over 120 phone calls a day and ensured all messages were delivered.

ORGANIZATIONAL

- Implemented a new filing system which created greater efficiency in office paperwork.
- Managed busy front desk and interacted with executive professionals on a daily basis.

PLANNING

- Managed twice monthly mailings to over 5,000 customers.
- Coordinated mailings with post office.

EMPLOYMENT

- 1998-Present – **Good Industries**, *Receptionist*
- 1995-1998 – **Helpful Products**, *Mailing Specialist*
- 1990-1995 – **Community Service Consultants**, *File Clerk*

SKILLS

Microsoft Word 2007. Use Windows PC, Macintosh, Lotus, and other specialized programs. Learn quickly. Solve problems efficiently.

EDUCATION

Cincinnati Community College, Business Coursework, 1991.
Cincinnati High School, Diploma, 1986-1990.

Takeaway #3: Resume: Combining Chronological and Functional

Jamie Applicant

101 Applicant Way
Warren, OH 44481
Home: (555) 555-555
japplicant@yahoo.com

OBJECTIVE

Seeking an administrative support position in a growing company to use and develop my clerical, organizational, and planning experience.

EDUCATION

Cincinnati Community College, Business Coursework, 1991.
Cincinnati High School, Diploma, 1986-1990.

ORGANIZATIONAL Skills

- Implemented a new filing system which created greater efficiency in office paperwork.
- Managed busy front desk and interacted with executive professionals on a daily basis.
- Maintained accurate, confidential client files.

PLANNING Skills

- Managed twice monthly mailings to over 5,000 customers and coordinated with post office.
- Developed and kept current a 5,000 member database of contacts.
- Handled over 120 phone calls a day and ensured all messages were delivered.

OTHER SKILLS

- Proficient with Microsoft Office applications. Type 100 words per minute. Learn quickly. Solve problems efficiently.

WORK EXPERIENCE

- **Good Industries**, Warren, OH 1998-Present
Receptionist
- **Helpful Products**, Columbus, OH 1995-1998
Mailing Specialist
- **Community Service Consultants**, Cincinnati, OH 1990-1995
File Clerk

Writing a Cover Letter

If you are sending a resume to an employer, you ALSO need to write a cover letter!

A cover letter is your opportunity to explain why you are a good fit for the job you are applying to.

The typical structure of a standard cover letter is laid out below.

Greeting

Address the cover letter to a specific person by name and title. If you do not know the name of the person, you can address it to the supervisor of the department. For example: Dear Maintenance Supervisor. Never use the phrase "To Whom it May Concern."

*Dear Mr. Jones,
OR
Dear Maintenance Supervisor,*

First Paragraph

Name the specific position or type of work for which you are applying. Be sure to mention how you learned of the job and the company.

Second Paragraph

Explain why you are interested in this position and employer. Do not repeat the information on your resume. Include something special or unique about yourself that will benefit the employer.

Third Paragraph

- State that your resume is enclosed and indicate your desire to meet with the employer.
- Include your day and evening contact information and email.
- Include a statement or question that will encourage the employer to respond.
- Be sure to communicate your plan to follow-up with the employer. Thank the employer for his/her time.

Closing

Close the letter with a simple "sincerely" followed by your full name.

You can find [an example of a cover letter on the next page!](#)

Remember!

- *A Cover Letter is a Great Example of Your Writing Skills!*

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Takeaway #4: Cover Letter Example

Jamie Applicant
101 Applicant Way
Warren, OH 44481
555-555-5555

August 1, 2010

Jennifer Jones
Office Manager
XYZ Company
105 Main Street
Warren, OH 44481

Dear Mr. Jones:

I am writing to apply for the position of secretary at ABC Company. I learned of this opening on your company's Web site.

I believe my skills would be a perfect fit for your company's needs. I have four years of office work experience and am proficient in all Microsoft Office applications. I am very task oriented and have trained other administrative staff at my current job. I am particularly interested in this position as I know XYZ Company is looking for someone who has strong communication and verbal skills to work with clients.

My resume is enclosed and I look forward to an opportunity to meet with you at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jamie Applicant
Jamie Applicant

Enclosure

Interviews

Level One

Now that you have explored writing a resume and cover letter what is next?

YOUR INTERVIEW!

The Interview section of the Career Navigator will provide you with valuable information on:

- **What is an interview?;**
- **Appearance (Clothing and Personal Hygiene);**
- **Preparing for the Interview;**
- **The Interview; and**
- **Follow-up After an Interview.**



Go to the Next Step to start learning about interviews!

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What is an Interview?

An interview is a meeting between you and a potential employer to discuss your qualifications and see if there is a "fit" for the job.

The employer wants to:

- Verify what they know about you,
- Talk about your skills and work experience, and
- Discuss the job that you are interviewing for.

If you have been called for an interview, you can assume that the employer is interested in you. An interview generally lasts from 30 to 60 minutes.



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Appearance

Your appearance is a statement of who you are. Your clothing and personal hygiene should create the image that will help you get the job!



Clothing

Your clothing choices will vary based on the job, location and your personal preference. **For example: A business suit for a construction job or overalls for an office job are examples of dress that are probably not appropriate.**

A conservative suit would be the recommended style for professional and managerial jobs

Common sense and good taste are the best guides in selecting clothing for the interview. *A basic rule is to dress one step above what you would wear on the job.* You want the employer to focus on your skills, not your clothes. The clothes you wear affect all your attitude and confidence levels. When people take the time to dress for success, they tend to feel good about themselves.

Personal Hygiene

Personal grooming is just as important as what you wear.

It is important to have your hair and nails trimmed and clean, and men should have their facial hair freshly shaven or neatly trimmed.

*Your Goal: To Dress and Look Like You
Would If You Had the Job!*

Fashion and Hygiene Don'ts!

Trendy clothes!

Loud colors!

Tight clothing!

Perfumes or cologne that are too strong!

Too much jewelry!

Dirty or untrimmed hair and nails!

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Preparation

A key to success is preparing for your interview! A few things you need to do include:

- **Gather** all the information and documents you may need for the interview.
- **Research** the company (visit their Web site or talk to others who may know about the company).
- **Practice** explaining how your education, training, or work experience fit the job description.
- Think through common interview questions and how you might respond.
- Think about how you may answer questions that focus on your lack of skills or experience.
- **Print extra copies of your resume** to bring with you to the interview!
- Get a good night's sleep before your interview!



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The Interview



You should plan on arriving early for your interview.

Some things to remember during the interview:

- **Listen** carefully to each question asked in the interview.
- **Take** your time in responding and make sure your answers are positive.
- **Express** a good attitude and show that you are willing to work, eager to learn and are flexible.
- **Ask** someone to clarify what they are asking if you do not understand.

- **Provide** specific examples from your work related experiences.
- **Avoid** saying only "yes" or "no" to questions.
- **Prepare** and **Ask** specific questions that show your knowledge and interest in the job!

Ending the Interview

Make sure you end the interview with a friendly, positive manner. If you want the job—say so! When the interview is over, leave promptly.

Interview Tips

Do...

- ...Dress one step above what you would wear on the job for which you are interviewing.
- ...Prepare in advance for each and every interview.
- ...Maintain eye contact.
- ...Be aware of nonverbal body language.
- ...Focus on your strengths, skills, and interests, and look for opportunities to personalize the interview.

Don't...

- ...Dress in faddish styles or loud colors.
- ...Forget to make and bring extra copies of your resumé to each and every interview.
- ...Watch the clock.
- ...Discuss "hot" topics such as race and religion.
- ...Have too much personal discussion that has nothing to do with the job!

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Follow-Up After the Interview

101 Applicant Way
Warren, OH 44481
555-555-5555

August 2, 2010

John Jones
Office Manager
XYZ Company
105 Main Street
Warren, OH 44481

Dear Mr. Jones:

Thank you for meeting with me this morning to discuss the secretary opening. It provided me with a better understanding of XYZ Company and what skills are necessary for the job.

My strong computer and communication skills will definitely make a contribution to your company. I have the experience working with all the computer software packages you use, and I feel that my customer service experience will meet your needs.

I enjoyed learning more about XYZ's emphasis on teamwork and customer satisfaction. I would be delighted to join your team and will contact you next week to inquire about the hiring decision.

Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jamie Applicant
Jamie Applicant

Following your interview, you need to send a thank you letter, note, or email to the person(s) who interviewed you.

The basics of a **thank you letter or note** are that it should:

- Say **thank you** for the interview.
- Express your **interest** in the job.
- **Restate** (briefly) your skills and experience.
- Say **"Thank You" one more time**.
- State the **date and time** you plan on following up with the employer.
- Be mailed or emailed within **1-2 days** after the interview.

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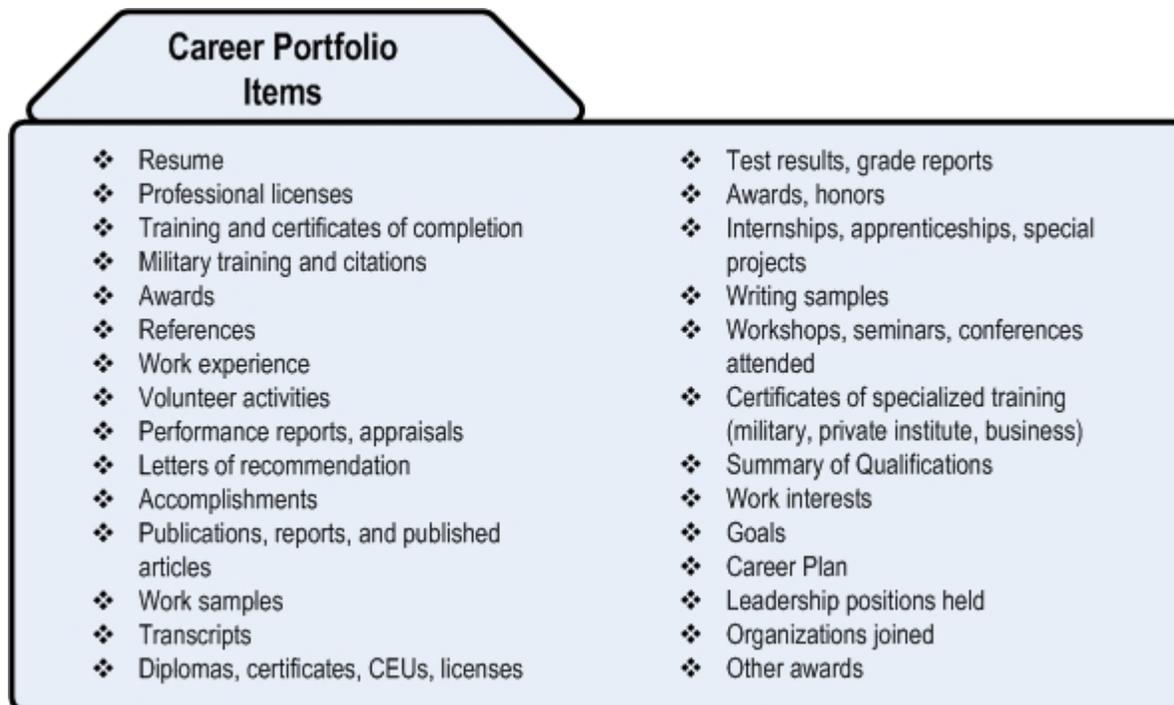
[Career Portfolio](#)

Congratulations! You now know how to:

- *Write Your Resume*
- *Write a Cover Letter*
- *Prepare for an Interview*
- *Follow-Up After an Interview*

Now it is time for you to put together a Career Portfolio. A Career Portfolio combines all the different information that you have about yourself. This can include any information that you want.

An example of what can be in a Career Portfolio is outlined in the box below. You can simply choose what works best for you to include in your Career Portfolio!



Where do I Store My Career Portfolio?

You can print out copies of items in your Career Portfolio and put them physically in a file folder. You can also store everything online in electronic format if you want to be able to modify items (example: your resume or cover letters). If you want to store your Career Portfolio online there are many sites that you may or may not need to pay for! Check with your caseworker or local One-Stop Center to find out if they can help you!

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Understanding What Employers Want

So far in this level, you have looked at your interests, abilities, and wants and needs. How about your current or future employer? Do you know what they want?

Do you know what skills employers want?

Do you have the critical skills employers want in their employees?

What are employers looking for? Employers want employees with:

- *Reading, writing, and math skills;*
- *Professional skills* (see box to right);
- *Oral and written communication skills:* Good grammar, listening, etc.;
- *Teamwork and collaboration skills;*
- *Critical thinking or problem-solving skills:* Using knowledge, facts, and data to effectively solve workplace problems; and
- *Soft skills:* Networking with colleagues, and enthusiasm.

Professional Skills include:

- *Timeliness*
- *Honesty*
- *Politeness*
- *Appropriate dress for work*
- *Staying on task*
- *Not talking or texting on cell phone*
- *Using computers only for work-related tasks*
- *Speaking in a respectful manner with supervisors, coworkers, and clients*

You have now finished Level 1! Go to Level 2!