

Converting a CV to a Resume

Why Would I Convert My CV to a Resume?

While a CV (curriculum vitae) is necessary for an academic job search, a resume is appropriate for most other career paths. A resume focuses on your experience, skills, and accomplishments in a concise, clear manner, whereas a CV is much more detailed and focused on academic achievements.

How Do I Do It?

A good resume requires preparation. Research the fields, employers, and jobs you are targeting and address your resume to the specific skills and experience that they seek. Often your resume is your first introduction to a prospective employer, so it should be persuasive and compelling. Find out what particular skills, qualifications and personal qualities employers want. Once you have this information, you will be able to determine what material from your CV you should use for your resume. Remember: a good resume emphasizes those qualifications, skills, and accomplishments that are relevant to a given position.

Do I Have Any Transferable Skills?

Many of the things you do every day demonstrate transferable skills. To begin thinking about what skills you can offer a new employer, make an inclusive list of characteristics and abilities that are important to you as a student/scholar. Some examples include your ability to:

- Collect and analyze data
- Solve problems
- Persuade people
- Cope with uncertainty
- Pay close attention to details
- Synthesize information
- Explain complex concepts to a range of audiences

These skills are useful outside the lab, library, and classroom; you simply need to clearly articulate how your skills can be valuable to an employer.

Transforming Your CV Into a Resume in a Few Simple Steps

- Research and identify skills and qualifications sought by your prospective employers.
- Generate a list of your transferable skills, jobs, and other relevant experience.
- Choose headings and organize your information to present your most relevant experience first.
- Use action-oriented verbs when you describe your skills, achievements, and experiences.
- Make sure your formatting is clear, your content concise, and your usage consistent.
- Proofread, proofread, proofread.

Books Available in the Career Resource Center

- *“So What Are You Going To Do with That?”: Finding Careers Outside Academia* by Susan Basalla and Maggie Debelius
- *Guide to Nontraditional Careers in Science* by Karen Young Kreeger

Additional Online Resources

- “From CV to Resume,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Search the online advice section for this article, which includes useful advice and a sample resume.

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EDUCATION

Columbia University, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, New York, NY
Ph.D. American History, Expected May 2014

M.Phil. American History, May 2011

M.A. in American History, May 2010

University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA

B.A. History *summa cum laude*, May 2007

EXPERIENCE

Columbia University, New York, NY

Predoctoral Fellow (2013–Present)

- Wrote successful grants to design and implement independent project documenting the history of the working class in the United States from 1900 to 1940.
- Supervised staff of five student researchers.
- Published research findings in three articles in academic journals and one trade publication

Instructor (2010–2013)

- Created and taught two courses on American history
- Planned and led tours of historical sites and research collections in New York City
- Delivered lectures and gave presentations to groups of 50 plus
- Evaluated and provided feedback on student performance throughout academic year

Teaching Assistant (2009–2010)

- Interacted with faculty to develop content and design for course on U.S. History
- Set criteria for evaluations and assessed students' written work
- Facilitated group discussions, encouraging students to identify and analyze key historical issues

New York Historical Society, New York, NY

Researcher (2009–2011)

- Developed general three-year plan for research on New York City
- Defined specific historical issues to be treated in exhibitions and publications in collaboration with curators
- Selected and assigned writers for exhibition catalogs and labels, as well as topical brochures

Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, MA

Writer (2007–2008)

- Under direction of editorial staff, worked independently to research and write articles on various topics in American history for a biographical dictionary and college textbooks

ABC News, Los Angeles, CA

Researcher (2005–2007)

- Cooperated with team of fact-checkers to ensure the accuracy of media programming on American history

SKILLS

Computer: Proficient in MS Word, Excel, Access, and PowerPoint; QuarkXpress and PageMaker, EndNote

Languages: Advanced French and Spanish

JOHN P. SMITH

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EXPERIENCE

Columbia University, New York, NY

Research Assistant, January 2010–Present

- Collaborate with several postdoctoral researchers and graduate students to ensure successful and timely completion of projects
- Manage and mentor two undergraduate researchers
- Design synthetic schemes and revise approaches in the course of research
- Published research on formal synthesis of ET-743 in two peer-reviewed scholarly journal articles
- Presented research at symposium with over three-hundred attendees
- Projects included a variety of complex natural products with biological activity; each compound has potential in the treatment of either Alzheimer's Disease, heart disease, or cancer

Teaching Assistant, September 2009–May 2011

- Designed and taught several full lectures in absence of professors
- Taught tri-weekly recitations to supplement lecture courses in organic chemistry for two years

- Evaluated students' ability to solve problems in synthesis

- Organized a team of eight fellow TAs as Preceptor/Head TA (Fall 2009)

Instructor, September–December 2011

- Designed and presented a weekend introductory synthesis course to NYC area high school students through the Columbia Science Honors Program

Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA

Researcher, June 2007–May 2009

- Collaborated with two postdoctoral researchers toward the synthesis of a natural product, kaikitoxin A
- Presented achievements at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research (April 2007) and at the Regional Murdock Conference (October 2007)

EDUCATION

Columbia University, Graduate School of Arts and Science, New York, NY

Ph.D., Chemistry, Expected May 2014; M.Phil., May 2013; M.A., May 2011, G.P.A.: 3.9/4.0

- Selected Honors/Awards: National Science Foundation (NSF) Pre-Doctoral Fellowship

- Coursework at Columbia Business School: Foundations of Strategy; Management and Leadership

Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA

B.A., Chemistry, May 2009, G.P.A.: 3.7/4.0, with Honors

- Selected Honors/Awards: Rhodes Scholarship finalist; Presidential Senior Scholarship; Delta Sigma Chi International Balfour Finalist

LEADERSHIP

Columbia University, 2011–2013

- *Co-Founder* – Columbia University Consulting Club
- *Class Representative* – Graduate Student Council

Swarthmore College, 2006–2009

- *Founder* – Swarthmore Men Against Violence
- *President* – Delta Sigma Chi Fraternity (2006–2007)
- *Captain* – Varsity Wrestling Team (2006–2008); Northeast Conference Champion (2006, 2007)

Cover Letter Overview

What Is a Cover Letter? Why Is It Important?

A cover letter accompanies your resume, introduces you as an applicant, and highlights your qualifications. Cover letters also enable employers to get a sense of your writing skills and style. Not only do they serve to give your resume focus and accentuate relevant information, but they also give you a chance to make a positive impression and express your enthusiasm for the position or organization. The cover letter should be interesting, compelling, unique, and genuine. Cover letters should always accompany resumes (with the exception of On-Campus Recruiting when the employer may choose not to receive them). Do not write one general (form) letter to use for all of your applications; you should uniquely tailor your letter for each organization and for the specific position.

How Is a Cover Letter Structured?

A cover letter is structured like a business letter, as shown in the samples on the next three pages. Keep cover letters short—three or four paragraphs—and do not exceed one page. When sending your resume and cover letter by email, you may include your cover letter in the body of your email or attach it along with your resume with a short email stating what position you are applying to and that your materials are attached.

How Do I Write the Letter? What Should It Include?

Before You Begin Writing the Letter, You Should Do Three Things:

- **Research the employer:** Learn enough about the organization so you can articulate in your letter why you are a strong fit for their firm. Review the website, speak with current or previous employees, and read articles. Use social media sites like LinkedIn and Twitter and set up Google Alerts to read about the latest trends and news at the company.
- **Analyze the job description:** Look for skills, duties, and qualifications for the job so you can design your letter to prove that you match these requirements as much as possible.
- **Analyze your background:** Ask yourself what you have done that is similar to the duties required of the job, including classes, projects, work experience, internships, volunteer experience, activities, and travel.

Structure the Letter as Follows:

- **Introduction:** State why you are writing, the position for which you are applying, where you found out about the job, and who you are. It is also helpful to include here whether you have been referred by a connection to apply for the position (be sure to first ask the individual if you can include his/her name) and why you are interested in this job and company in particular. Consider what is unique about each company. Many employers want to see this emphasis in this first paragraph. Note that you may also reiterate your strong interest in the position and the company in the last paragraph.
- **Body:** Highlight your qualifications relevant to the position and to the organization. Market yourself and your abilities, communicating how your skills and experience can be valuable to the employer. Do not discuss or apologize if you feel you lack experience or accomplishments. Emphasize your strengths with examples, but avoid simply restating your resume. Describe the skills gained through your experience and how these skills prepare you for this job. The body of the cover letter may be one or two paragraphs and should be specific and relevant to the industry, organization, and position. Let the employer know why you are interested in working for them by demonstrating that you have done your research.
- **Conclusion:** Thank the reader and reaffirm your interest in the position. Reemphasize why you want to work for their organization, demonstrating that you've researched their firm and can explain why you would be a good fit to work there. Avoid endings that lack confidence, and be sure to sign the letter if you are mailing it to the employer.