



# Cover Letter and Resume Tips to Get an Interview

*Sharon Holderman, Coordinator of Public Services  
Tennessee Technological University*

## *your to-do list*

1. learn some basics
2. change your cover letter
3. change your resume
4. proofread and get feedback
5. apply

## 1. learn some basics

- your future employer's assumptions
- show and don't tell
- professional language

# your future employer's assumptions

- how they make assumptions
- you want to control what they are
- beyond your control
- online presence



graphic courtesy of  
Marc\_Smith

show

and

don't tell

- job duties
- awards
- projects

- list qualities
- give opinions
- course titles

## example: supervising

### SHOW

I currently supervise eight staff members, which enables me to foster teamwork and encourage professional development.

### DON'T TELL

I am a supervisor in my current position.

## example: supervising

### SHOW

- supervise librarians and student employees including hiring, training, and evaluating performances

### DON'T TELL

- supervisory experience

## example: initiative

### SHOW

I have implemented new ideas to improve service including self-checkout and chat reference.

### DON'T TELL

I am self-motivated and have a lot of initiative.



## example: initiative

### SHOW

- created an online shelving orientation to shorten training duration and appeal to multiple learning types

### DON'T TELL

#### Qualifications:

- initiative
- self-motivated

## professional language : resume example

Babysat students and  
bossed them around

Taught student workers  
front desk skills and  
gave them tasks

Trained student  
employees in customer  
service and circulation  
functions and assigned  
them special projects

## 2. change your cover letter

### DON'T

- go over one page
- rehash entire resume
- make it generic
- forget to change recipient's info

### DO

- be passionate
- tailor it to each job
- address red flags or shortcomings
- highlight 2-3 things

## common cover letter tips / questions

- remember the purpose
- should match resume
- what to highlight
- detail a desired quality

## cover letters: first paragraph examples

I am interested in your Librarian position and feel my experience and education would be a good fit for your institution.

I am very interested in the Reference/Instruction Librarian position at Kent State University because I have a strong desire to teach and empower students. My experience and education have helped prepare me for this exciting opportunity.

### 3. change your resume

#### DON'T

- lie!
- make spelling mistakes or typos
- use an unchanged Word template

#### DO

- design it
- tailor it to each job
- rank by importance
- be consistent

## common resume tips / questions

- the meat of your resume
- number of pages
- empty space
- tiny fonts
- bullets or paragraphs
- including references
- listing GPA
- order of resume
- listing qualifications
- purpose/objective

# designing a resume

## Work Experience

2004-2005 IRC-KSU Kent, OH

### Technology Director

Educated faculty on classroom equipment.

Trained Lab Assistance on lab equipment and library procedures.

Developed customer service skills with students.

2005-2008 OSU Columbus, GA

### Instruction Coordinator

Developed instruction sessions for faculty inclusion.

Wrote student handbook for graduate assistants.

Solicited feedback on instruction sessions for improvements.

## EDUCATION

2007-2008 Medix School Symrna, GA

### Diploma in Emergency Medical Technician

2005-2005 FAKS Allied Health Atlanta, GA

### Certificate in Medical Billing and Coding

2006-2006 Cornerstone Christian School Townsend, GA

### Diploma

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#### TRAINING INSTRUCTION

Instructional Resource Center Kent State University 10/04-12/05

- Educated faculty on classroom equipment
- Trained Lab Assistants on lab equipment and library procedures

School of Technology Kent State University 7/02-10/04

- Taught School of Technology policies to regional campus advisors
- Educated School of Technology faculty and staff on university procedures and policies

Learning Center Mercer University 9/95-5/98; 6/00-4/01

- Taught computer troubleshooting and ACT database operators to Lab Assistants
- Trained Individual Tutors, Supplemental Instructors, and Writing/Math Lab Tutors

#### VISUAL INSTRUCTION

Instructional Resource Center Kent State University 10/04-12/05

- Created office handbook to explain office procedures and duties
- Developed [equipment handbook](#) with instructions for technology operations

School of Technology Kent State University 7/02-10/04

- Developed [student handbook](#) explaining policies and curriculum
- Created [adviser handbook](#) explaining policies and procedures of Technology advising

IAKM Kent State University 4/01-7/02

- Created student handbook to explain program requirements and policies
- Developed thesis handbook to guide students in writing their program thesis

Learning Center Mercer University 5/00-4/01

- Developed lab assistant manual explaining office policies and job duties
- Created [ACT database reference guide](#) to teach database procedures to employees

#### COMPUTER SKILLS

Adobe (Photoshop, PageMaker, Acrobat Professional), Macromedia (Dreamweaver, Fireworks, Captivate, Contribute), Camtasia Studio, Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Power Point, Access, Publisher, Front Page), Millenium, Winnebago, HTML, WordPerfect, QuarkXPress, Lumeniac, ACT, AdviserTrac, SIS, DARS, KAPS, Payroll

#### OTHER EXPERIENCE

Molecular Pathology—University California, San Diego La Jolla, CA

- **Graduate Coordinator** 1/06-3/06
- Maintained program website
- Administered payroll and fee payment for 51 fully-funded students
- Coordinated prospective students' recruitment, admissions, and campus visits

School of Technology—Kent State University Kent, OH

- **Student Services Coordinator** 7/00-10/04
- Presented Learning Success course at KASADA Advising Forum
- Monitored and advised Technology students at eight university campuses
- Managed Student Services Office including public relations, staff, and website
- Developed and enforced new School of Technology [probation-dismissal policy](#)
- Created ["student" chapters](#) of NAAC accreditation self-study and edited all chapters
- Received [high student evaluations](#); 95% had questions answered; 100% would return



# electronic & digital resumes: PDF

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## **Agricultural Technical Institute – Ohio State University**

Wooster, OH

*Library Director*

*2/07–present*

- Managed library facilities, collection, budget, employees, and all library elements
- Implemented technology initiatives: eReserves, electronic ILL, chat reference, blogs
- Created online information literacy tutorials with short- and long-term assessments
- Developed archives collection, physical and digital, including ATI History collection

## **Instructional Resource Center – Kent State University**

Kent, OH

*Graduate Assistant*

*8/06–12/07*

- Became electronic reserves liaison for the College of Education
- Assisted students with locating information using library materials
- Created new classification system to promote browsing and material circulation
- Cataloged various media, software, books, serials, and equipment in Winnebago

# electronic & digital resumes: Word

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## 4. proofread and get feedback

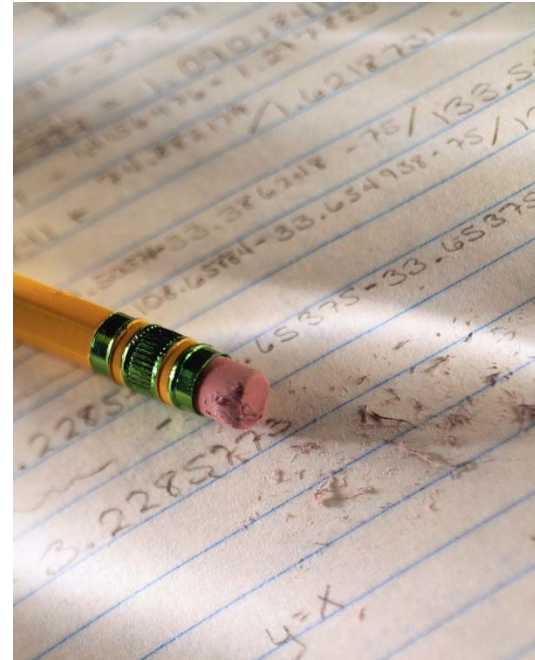
IMPORTANT

IMPORTANT

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## proofread carefully

- spelling and typos
- extra / missing words
- confusion or awkwardness
- consistency



## get feedback on resumes / cover letters

- ask everyone who is willing
- consider all feedback
- ask for specifics
- ask one more person

the ultimate feedback

ask the person who  
didn't hire you!

## 5. apply

- application systems
- status update
- asking about salary



Now....

go forth

and apply!



Questions?

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