

# The New Resume Project

DEVELOPED BY STUDENT LEADERS AT BERKELEY READS  
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## Why we are doing this project

- The way people get hired these days makes it more important than ever to have a good resume and a confident attitude.
- You have more skills and strengths than you may realize. We want to help you put your best foot forward in your job search.
- You may not have a college degree. But you have earned a lot of “Life Certificates” that give you valuable experience whatever job you choose.

## About our team

- We’ve had office jobs, construction jobs, health care, retail, and service jobs.
- Some of us like to learn in a classroom and are working on college coursework. Some of us are hands-on learners and have had apprenticeships and on-the-job training.
- We each have overcome adversity and have learned from that.
- We want to help you get a job that is a good fit for you.

*Back row:* Terrance Franklin,  
Alma Rosa Miller,  
Ray Jackson.

*Front row:* Raenelle Reed,  
Tony Casillas.



# Finding a Job that Fits

These worksheets will help you create resume and cover letter that show what makes you special and a valuable employee. You can go through them with a friend, tutor, or by yourself.

Even if you are not looking for work right now, you can use this workbook to help you think about your strengths and experience in new ways. You have a lot to offer any situation, maybe more than you give yourself credit for.

# 1

## Getting Started

*Pages 3-7*

- What are my goals?
- What are my strengths?

# 2

## Basic Resume

*Pages 7-10*

- Use all of my experience
- Build a basic resume
- Resume outline

# 3

## Apply for a Job

*Pages 11-13*

- How do my qualifications fit?
- Adapt my resume
- Custom cover letter

# 4

## Interview & Follow Up

*Pages 14-17*

- Practice my answers
- My own questions
- Active thank you letter



*Alma says:* "Finding a job that is a good fit lets you bring your best self to work."

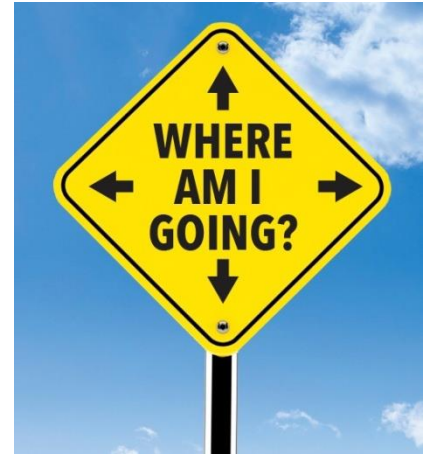
# 1 | Getting Started

## My Goals

### Where am I going?

Which one of these best describes me right now:

- I haven't been working for a while and could use a volunteer job to build skills and references
- I need a job right away to pay the bills
- I have a job but it is not on a career path; I want a path to better paying work in the future.
- I have a side business I am trying to grow
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_



### What do I have?

When it comes to resumes, people start from different places. Where am I starting from?

- I have a resume I like.
- I have a resume that needs to be updated.
- I do not have a resume.

### My current goal

Based on my answers above, what is my goal for creating a resume right now?

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*Terrance says: "You need to trust yourself so you can get your mind set for success."*

## Resume Sections

These are the main parts of a resume. When you are putting together your resume, include each of these sections. But, first, we want you to help think about the strengths and qualities that will help you put your best foot forward.

**Name**

**Contact Information**

**Summary of Qualifications**

**Work Experience or Other Relevant Experiences**

**Education and Training**

**Other Skills or Recognition**

## Your Life Certificates

Each of us has been through a lot, faced tough situations and made a difference in people's lives. Through all of that, we have developed life skills. We may not have gotten a degree, but the experience we have gained can be valuable on the job.

Think about these questions. Take this opportunity to give yourself credit for what you have accomplished.



**1. Have you ever set a goal for yourself and met it? What was it and how did you do it?**

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**2. Have you come up against an obstacle and gotten around it? What did you do?**

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**3. Have you worked with people very different than you are? How did you make that work?**

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**4. Have you had a major setback and been able to bounce back?**

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**5. Is there something else you are proud of?**

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# My Strengths

## What have I learned about myself?

When planning for success, it helps to be aware of your strengths. Think about your answers to the “Life Certificate” questions on page 4. Which of your strengths helped in these situations?

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## How do other people see my strengths?

Sometimes it’s hard to see all of your own strengths. Other people can see things you can’t. You might ask other people to share with you what they see as your strengths. Ask three to five people who know you well to describe a time when you were at your best.

People you could ask: family member, friend, past co-worker, teacher, tutor, neighbor, someone from your church or faith group or a club. Here is a sample letter you can use.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_, Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I have an assignment for a workshop. Could I ask you to share a story about me where you saw my best qualities shine? Thank you for coming up with a specific situation that would help me with this project.

**When/where did it take place?**

**What did I do?**

**What were the good qualities you saw?**

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Thank You,  
Your name

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You can also think about other times people have told you positive things. Believe them!



Ray says: "Don't cheat yourself. Treat yourself to a good resume."

## Use All of Your Experience

When we are asked to fill out a job application, the questions usually do not draw out important things that would be good to mention on our resume and in our interviews. Be sure to fill in the yellow parts of this table and see what else you have to include.

RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE	QUALITIES & CREDENTIALS
<p><b>Paid Work</b></p>	<p><b>Your Strengths</b> – <i>The ones you know about</i></p> <p><b>DON'T LEAVE OUT</b> <i>What do other people say are your strengths?</i></p>
<p><b>DON'T LEAVE OUT</b> <b>Personal/Volunteer</b> – <i>Other kinds of work experience as a volunteer, at church, for your family or community.</i></p>	<p><b>Your Education</b></p> <p><b>DON'T LEAVE OUT</b> <i>Classes you have taken, on-the-job training, educational programs.</i></p>

# 2 | Basic Resume

## Building a basic resume

Now you are ready to start to build your resume. You can also use a “fill-in the blanks” website like [jobstar.org](http://jobstar.org). This will help you make a basic resume that you can adapt for specific jobs.

### 1. General tips

- Keep your resume to one page. Make the font large enough to read easily but not too large. Many people like to use Times New Roman 12 point for the main text.
- Make sure everything lines up neatly and it is easy for the reader to skim.
- Have someone proofread your resume VERY carefully. Typos and spelling mistakes will count against you.

### 2. Your contact information

- You must have an email that you check regularly. Make sure it is not too personal. For example, use [suejones@gmail.com](mailto:suejones@gmail.com) instead of [yourhotmama@aol.com](mailto:yourhotmama@aol.com).
- List a phone number that you can answer regularly and can take messages.
- Make sure the voice mail greeting on your phone sounds professional.
- You can choose whether to put a specific street address or just your town and state.

Name:

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Address:

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City:

State:

Zip Code:

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Email:

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Phone: ( )

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## Career Objective/Summary of Qualifications

This is usually a 2 or 3 sentence summary that defines what you can provide to the employer. It includes what you are qualified to do and what kind of person you are. Examples:

*Janitor with 8+ years experience in schools and offices. Have led teams to achieve greater efficiency in operations and materials cost savings. Dedicated work ethic with strong interpersonal skills.*

*Customer service specialist with skills developed in hospitality and human service settings. Able to work with all kinds of people while meeting or exceeding performance goals. Prompt and courteous, quick learner.*


## Work, Personal, and Volunteer Experience

- Briefly describe your main responsibilities and what you accomplished.
- Use bullet points to make it easy to skim.
- Use action verbs like Managed, Assisted, Coordinated, etc.
- If you can, include short descriptions of ways you made things better, saving your employer time or money or improving performance or safety.

### 1. Job Title:

Employer:	City:	State:
Date Started:	Date Ended:	or <input type="checkbox"/> Current
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•		
•		
•		

**2. Job Title:**

Employer:	City:	State:
Date Started:	Date Ended:	or <input type="checkbox"/> Current
•		
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•		

**3. Job Title:**

Employer:	City:	State:
Date Started:	Date Ended:	or <input type="checkbox"/> Current
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**Education**

- List your most recent education first.
- Include certificates and any formal on the job training.
- List courses you have taken at community college or other places even if you do not have a degree.

Degrees, diplomas, HS Diploma/ HS Equivalency/ GED; Certificates and other training

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**Other things to include:**

Language skills besides English; Awards and commendations

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# 3 | Apply for a job

## I hear about a job. Should I apply?

Job announcements usually explain what you will be expected to do (Responsibilities) and what skills and experience you need (Qualifications). These questions can help you decide if you should take the time to apply for a job.

**1. Do I have most or all of the skills required for this job?**

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**2. If I do not have all of the skills, does the job provide training?**

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**3. Do the hours and location work for me?**

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**4. Is this work that I enjoy doing?**

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**5. How much past experience do I have with this kind of job?**

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Our team has different suggestions for deciding whether to apply to a job:



*Alma says:* "Be sure you match the qualifications before you apply or you may be wasting your time."



*Terrance says:* "Even if you do not match all of the skills, go for it and see if you can sell yourself in the interview."



*Tony says:* "If you think it's about an 80% fit, give it a try."

## Adapting Your Resume

A lot of people use the same resume every time they apply for a job. This can be a mistake.

It is important that your resume matches the requirements listed for the job. You may not get past a computer doing initial screening if you are not an exact “match.” Also, a person reading your cover letter and resume will appreciate that you made the effort to customize what you sent in.

### Understand “Key Words”

The job description will have phrases that clue you into what the employer is specifically looking for. Here is an example with key words underlined:

Receptionist Job Duties:

Greets visitors and callers in person or on the telephone; answers or refers inquiries.

- Directs visitors by maintaining employee and department directories; gives instructions.
- Maintains security by following procedures; monitors logbook; issues visitor badges.
- Maintains telecommunication system by following manufacturer's instructions.

Receptionist Skills and Qualifications:

- Customer Focus, Telephone Skills, Verbal Communication, Microsoft Office Skills, Listening, Professionalism, Organization, Informing Others, Handles Pressure, Supply Management

You may be well-qualified for the job, but it helps if many of the words match exactly. If your resume states that you are “good with people” and they are looking for “customer focus,” you may not get any follow up.

### Finding the Key Words

Take an announcement for a job you are interested in and go through it with a highlighter to mark phrases that will be “key words.” Then take some of those phrases and put them in your resume where they fit.

Or, if you do not have a specific job announcement, you can go to [Monster.com](http://Monster.com) and look at the job announcements for the kinds of jobs you are seeking. What key words keep coming up?



*Tony says:* “I really wanted to work in a hospital. I kept submitting my resume and it kept getting rejected. I had the right experience but I was not getting through. Finally, after a year, a friend told me to match the key words in the job description. I did and got a job right away. I have never had a problem getting a job since.”

## Custom Cover Letter

A quality cover letter tailored to the job you are seeking can increase your odds of getting invited to an interview. A form letter will not help you stand out from other applicants. Here is a sample format that you can adjust to match your style:

Date

Person's Name at the Company

Title

Company / Organization

Street Address

Town, State Zip

Re: Name of Job (reference # \_\_\_\_\_)

Dear Mr. / or Ms. Name,

I was excited to see your announcement for the position of \_\_\_\_\_ and would like to be invited for an interview. I have the skills and experience that would be a good fit for what you are seeking:

- Example #1
- Example #2

In addition to this experience, I \_\_\_\_\_  
(You can mention some of your related skills and experiences.)

I admire the work your organization does. In particular, \_\_\_\_\_  
(Share something that shows you know something about the company.)

Thank you for this opportunity to present my resume. Please contact me at (xxx) xxx-xxxx. I look forward to speaking with you then or next week when I will reach out to follow up.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Street Address

City, State Zip

Email

Phone

**Make sure that your contact information matches what is on your resume.**



*Alma says:* "Take the time to make the cover letter show that you are really interested in that job and that organization. And have someone else proofread it for you. A typo or misspelling can move you to the bottom of the pile."

# 4 | Interview and Follow Up

## Practice Your Answers

Most job interviews have some common questions. It helps to prepare and practice some short stories about yourself and things you have accomplished. The interview may only last 20 or 30 minutes, so go in with some points you want to make instead of rambling on the spot.

1. Tell me a little about yourself (*Hint: Talk about what kind of worker you are and your strengths. Explain how the job is a good fit with your experience and is what you like to do.*)

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2. Why are you interested in this job? (*Hint: Focus on what you can do for them, not what they can do for you.*)

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3. What is your relevant experience? (*Hint: Include a story or two about how you made a positive difference.*)

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4. How do you handle challenges? (*Hint: Include a story about how you solved a problem.*)

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5. How would your boss and co-workers describe you? (*Hint: Stay honest while emphasizing the positive.*)

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6. Why are you leaving your current job? Or, why did you stop working, if there is a gap on your resume. (*Hint: Focus on your goals rather than say negative things about your past.*)

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## Tips for the Day of the Interview



*Alma says:* "Wear clothing that is neat and professional. No logos, sneakers, caps. And no gum! You will feel better if you are looking good."



*Terrance says:* "Remember that they are people just like you. Relax and talk to them like a friend. You will feel more confident."



*Tony says:* "Make sure your transportation is set up so that you can get there early."



*Raenelle says:* "Stand up straight, look them in the eye, shake their hand and smile."



*Ray says:* "Turn off your phone and listen very carefully to what they are saying. It helps to use their words and phrases in your answers and thank you letter."

## Your Questions About the Job

At the end of most job interviews, you will be asked if you have questions. Show that you have done some research and are curious to know more. Sample questions you can ask:

- What kind of person will succeed in this position? What are you looking for?
- Can you describe a typical day on this job?
- What kinds of training will be required?
- Will I be working with a team? Can you describe that group of people to me?
- How will performance be evaluated?
- What do you like best about working here? What do you like least?
- Where do you see this organization in 5 years?
- Other questions you have:

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*Tony says:* "I get very nervous in interviews. I just hold a pencil really tight except one time it broke! I still got the job."

An "Active" Thank You

Within a day of the interview, prepare and send a thank you letter or email to the person you interviewed with. An “active” thank you picks up on key points from the interview and is another opportunity to show you are a strong candidate for the job. Here is an example to get you started:

Date  
Person’s Name at the Company  
Title  
Company / Organization  
Street Address  
Town, State Zip  
Re: Name of Job (reference # \_\_\_\_\_)

Dear Mr. / or Ms. Last Name (*or you can use their first name if they asked you to during the interview*)

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the position of \_\_\_\_\_. I enjoyed our conversation, and I am very excited about the possibility of joining your team.

After speaking with you, I feel strongly that I would be an asset to [*name of employer*]. My experience doing \_\_\_\_\_ could help you achieve some of the goals you mentioned, such as \_\_\_\_\_. [*Provide an additional example if you can.*]

Please feel free to call me if you need additional information or have any questions. Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you.

Your Name/Address/Email/Phone

### Now what?

If you got the job, congratulations! If you did not get the job, you are not alone. Many job seekers have to go on several interviews before they land a job.

After the interview, you can “send” yourself a letter saying what you did well and what you might want to do differently next time.

What went well in the interview?

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Is there anything I want to change for the next time?

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*Raenelle says: "Looking for a job is a journey. Be patient with yourself as you keep learning along the way."*



# Our Final Advice



*Terrance says:* "Your resume is your stepping stone to success in the future. The time you put into it is time you are putting into your goals."



*Tony says:* "Use everything you have to find a job. Don't give up! A good job is waiting for you."



*Raenelle says:* "Never be afraid to do your resume. Take that step to try something new because life gets boring when you stay within the limits of what you already know."



*Alma says:* "Life can teach you so much so take what you have learned as you create your resume. Set your standards high and know that all you do in life is learn. Keep learning and growing. Your knowledge is the key to opening new doors."



*Ray says:* "Good things come to those who wait, but better things come to people who go out and get what they want. So get your resume together. That job is waiting for you!"



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