

Instructor's Guide
for
GETTING THE JOB YOU REALLY WANT VIDEO SERIES

**Getting and Using Your Resume, Cover Letter,
Portfolio, and JIST Card[®]**

Overview

In this video students learn about several important tools for their job search: resumes, cover letters, portfolios, JIST Cards, and phone scripts. The video introduces students to the four general formats for resumes—chronological, skills, combination, and electronic—and offers several tips for writing them effectively. While some examples are shown in the video, you are encouraged to provide hard copies of additional sample resumes for students to evaluate or draw inspiration from. In addition, students should be encouraged to bring their own resumes to class so that they can compare what they've done to the strategies outlined in the video.

The same is true for cover letters, portfolios, and JIST Cards: While the video discusses the process for creating these documents, it will help your students to have concrete examples they can get their hands on and to create some of their own. If you don't have examples at hand, consider using some of the print resources discussed in the video.

This topic often presents its own challenges and opportunities. For starters, be aware that many students may be uncomfortable with writing or uncertain of their abilities. For many, writing an effective resume and cover letter is the hardest part of the job search. These students might benefit from one-on-one instruction or review or at least could be pointed to resources for additional assistance. Also, most students would benefit from feedback, making peer editing an ideal in-class activity. Encourage your students to share their resumes and other job search documents with each other and provide formal guidelines for how peers should respond to each other's writing.

Finally, stress to students the need to put these tools together quickly but professionally. They can (and should) improve them over time. It is more important to have something functional now so that they can focus on getting interviews.

Presentation Suggestions

Bring in a copy of sample resume that has both strong and weak points and give one to each student. Ask them to review the resume, telling them they have only two minutes to decide whether or not they would interview this person. Divide the class into "woulds" and "would nots" and ask each group to justify their decision. Be sure to list the strengths and weaknesses of the resume as it is discussed. Then make a list of

possible improvements the writer could make to the resume. Stress to your students that they usually have *less* than two minutes to get an employer's attention with a resume, and that often they are just trying to get the attention of a computer that is scanning their resume for keywords.

When you feel the students have begun to think about the importance of resumes and how to write them well, give them the **Anticipation Quiz** to complete prior to viewing the video. If you wish, allow the students to state their answers and discuss them.

Show the video. Encourage students to make changes to the answers they put down for the Anticipation Quiz while watching the video. At the conclusion of the video, ask students to discuss any changes they made to their answers on the Anticipation Quiz.

Follow up the discussion with the **Activities**. Use the **Discussion Questions** to request oral or written responses from students, or assign the questions as homework essays. Give the **Quick Quiz** at the conclusion of class and correct the quizzes as a group. Finally, you can assign the **Homework Option**, if desired.

Anticipation Quiz

Directions: Answer these questions as completely as possible. You may revise your answers as you watch the video.

1. How long should a resume be?
2. What is the purpose of a cover letter?
3. What does a portfolio do?
4. How can you use your resume most effectively?

Answer Key

1. One or two pages.
2. To express interest in a position and show how you are uniquely qualified for it.
3. Provides documentation of your work and education history, accomplishments, and activities in a more dynamic visual format.
4. As follow-up after direct contact with an employer, as a networking tool, to apply for jobs online.

Activities

Activity #1: You've Got It Covered

Format: Small group

Time: 20–25 minutes

Materials: Paper, pencil or pen

Procedure:

1. Organize the class into groups of three. Hand out the following want ad to each group or write it on the board or overhead:

Receptionist: *Looking for a dynamic people-person with good organizational skills. Word-processing experience and basic computer skills a must. Should be able to juggle several phone calls at once, greet guests, provide online customer service, and keep track of managers' schedules. Other basic office procedures also required. Associate's degree preferred, but other experience could be substituted.*

2. Ask each person in the group to write a cover letter applying for this job, reminding students to tailor their letter to the specific requirements the employer is looking for. They should include a first paragraph introducing the applicant and reason for sending the letter; a paragraph describing the applicant's relevant background (let students use their actual background and mold it to the job skills); and a closing paragraph asking for an interview.
3. Ask students to exchange letters and edit them for spelling, grammar, clarity, wordiness, and overall effectiveness.
4. Ask each group to pick the best letter and share it with the rest of the class. Make a list of positive strategies for writing an effective cover letter on the board or overhead.

Activity #2: Quick JIST Card

Format: Individual or group

Time: 30–35 minutes

Materials: Index cards, pen

Procedure:

1. Using index cards and following the format outlined in the video, students should create their own JIST Cards. Be sure they include their name and contact information, a position or goal statement, an experience and education statement, some mention of their best skills, and a closing.
2. When the students have completed a first draft of their JIST Card, have students exchange their Cards for peer editing. Make sure students watch for spelling or grammar errors, words that could be removed, energetic verbs, and specific skills. If possible, have at least two students review each person's Card.
3. Now have students make corrections based on peer feedback. Then ask for volunteers to share their JIST Cards with the class. Emphasize that students should take these home, edit them one more time, and then find a way to get them printed and in circulation as soon as possible.

Discussion Questions

1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each type of resume? When should you use each? Make a list of seven or eight tips for creating an effective resume.
2. What is the value of a JIST Card? Who could you give your JIST Card to? Make a list.
3. What can a portfolio do that a resume can't? When is the best time to use a portfolio? What would you include in *your* portfolio?
4. Why is sending out lots of resumes or simply posting them online not an effective job search strategy?

Quick Quiz

Note: You may read these questions out loud, allowing time for students to respond, or copy and hand this out as a written exercise. If you read the quiz, be sure to list the words from the Word Bank on the board or overhead.

Directions: Answer each question using one of the terms from the Word Bank.

Word Bank

phone script	electronic resume
chronological resume	references
job objective	skills resume
cover letter	JIST Card
portfolio	Monster

1. A resume that focuses on work history showing a progression of your experience.
2. A written transcript of what you will say when contacting employers.
3. An example of a website where you can post your resume and apply for jobs.
4. One section you should leave *off* of your resume.
5. A resume that focuses on your best skills and abilities.
6. A short description of your skills and contact information designed for networking.
7. The part of a resume that describes the kind of position you are looking for.
8. A resume that can be easily sent in an e-mail or posted online.
9. Usually accompanies a resume and describes more specifically how you are right for the job.
10. A comprehensive collection of documents representing your career accomplishments.

Answer Key

1. chronological resume
2. phone script
3. Monster
4. references
5. skills resume
6. JIST Card
7. job objective
8. electronic resume
9. cover letter
10. portfolio

Homework Option

With the lessons of this video in mind, have students rewrite their resume, using the chronological format and keeping to a single page. Have them write a clear and concise job objective. They should emphasize accomplishments with specific numbers for the results they've achieved in previous jobs. They should also follow the advice in this video about whether to place work experience or education first. Be sure they review and edit their resume to remove spelling and grammatical errors. If possible, have them print the resume on good quality paper and bring it to the next class. Allow time next class to review or peer edit these resumes.