



YOUR CAREER TOOLBOX

BEST PRACTICES FOR RESUMES, COVER LETTERS & INTERVIEWS

**Developed for VCH Employees
September 2013**

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INTRODUCTION

YOUR CAREER TOOLBOX: Resumes, Cover Letters & Interviews

The *Career Toolbox: Resumes, Cover Letters & Interviews* has been developed as a practical, self-directed workbook designed to help you apply for jobs in the most effective way. The aim of the *Career Toolbox: Resumes, Cover Letters & Interviews* is to guide you in developing a job application that will demonstrate to a potential employer or hiring manager/leader the benefits of hiring you, and result in an interview invitation to discuss the vacancy and opportunity.

This workbook outlines current information (as of the time of publication) on job search tools, techniques and skills that applicants need to know in today's job market. It provides important details and examples of how to construct or refresh your resume. It also shows how to create an essential part of your application—a well-constructed cover letter—and explains how to apply online and complete online profiles.

Appreciating that individuals don't interview every day, the section on interviews is loaded with excellent examples of commonly asked interview questions which, if practiced, will boost your confidence in preparation for your next interview. This section also describes the different types of interviews and covers the most important part . . . interview etiquette.

Recognizing that job changes can be challenging and that you may experience mixed feelings, it is important to understand that it is your beliefs that pave the way to your success or block you on your career search journey. It is vitally important to recognize that change is a new beginning!

We hope that *Career Toolbox: Resumes, Cover Letters & Interviews* is a useful resource as you embark upon your job search.



MANAGING YOUR CAREER

People who manage their careers:

- know themselves well and continue to learn more about themselves. Knowing who you are and what you want helps you set the criteria for your career decision.
- investigate new options while employed. Research the world of work to keep aware of current work trends to help you identify opportunities.
- stay open to new possibilities.
- assess opportunities against their goals and needs.
- embrace continuous learning.

Before you begin writing your resume, determine the overall objective of your job search. Try the self-assessment questions below to help you with this. Next, choose a resume style that fits your objective and begin building your resume.

Remember: An up-to-date resume is vital if you want to land that job or seize an unexpected opportunity. You should review it at least every 12 months to ensure it stays fresh and current.

Self Assessment:

What is your job search objective?

Before you begin writing your resume, determine the overall objective of your job search. To assist you with this, ask the following questions:

1. What kind of job do I want?
2. What are my reasons for changing or looking for a new job?
3. Do I like to work alone or in a team?
4. Am I creative or do I prefer to be directed at my job?
5. What skills and experience do I need to do well in that job?
6. What education does the job I want require?
7. What did I like about my previous job? What would I prefer to avoid in my next job?
8. What kind of contributions do I want to make at my job?

RESUMES

THE EFFECTIVE RESUME

Resume Components

According to research, resumes are scanned for less than a minute before the reader decides to keep it or move on. Many organizations also use on-line tools where your resume is scanned electronically for specific key words. It is crucial that your resume is eye-catching, well-written, and that you use key words consistent with your job search. The standard resume is 2 to 3 pages long; avoid exceeding this number!

What is the purpose of a resume?

- It is a self-marketing tool
- It creates a first impression
- It provides an accurate picture of you and your skills
- It proves why an employer would want to invest in hiring you
- It serves as a means to obtain an interview

RESUME STYLES

There are three main resume styles: **Chronological**, **Functional** and **Combination**

Chronological: Information is listed in reverse chronological order starting with your most recent job, and is generally two pages long. *This is the most common format and **our recommended resume style**.*

The chronological form is useful when:

- Your work and volunteer history show stability.
- You have been working in one field for a period of time and are seeking another position in that area.
- You have had steady progression with increasing responsibility.
- You have worked full-time for at least one year for all your employers.

If you have gaps in time between jobs or in your education, be prepared to account for any gaps during the interview.

Functional: Functional resumes focus on specific skills and experience. They are organized by functions, skills or duties, utilizing descriptions of accomplishments which outline definitive and measurable outcomes.

Functional resumes may work well for new graduates or for those who have gaps in their work history or are making a career change, and are an excellent way of highlighting how you would fit with the potential employee. You could use this style as an opportunity to tailor certain paragraphs to specific employers.

The functional resume format does not provide the employer with specific details regarding your employment history and for this reason many employer's may prefer the chronological format over the

functional format.

Combination:

The combination resume has the advantages of both the chronological and functional formats. One way to do this is to create a career profile (the functional section) that is placed before your work experiences (the chronological section).

All Resume Styles:

Whichever style of resume you feel is best suited for your situation, adding a section labeled “Professional” or “Career Profile”, or simply “Profile” gives you an opportunity to convey more detail and will contain selected highlights from your work, education and volunteer experience. You should place it directly underneath your Objective or Summary, and before the education section.

This section tells the employer about your best accomplishments and the benefits you offer an employer. You do not need to list the companies you worked for or the dates (though for emphasis you may wish to); these details should be in your Work Experience section. Generally speaking, listing more than six items may be excessive.

Your Profile, in combination with your work experience, is the most important part of your resume, so tell the employer the best things about yourself here. Whenever describing accomplishments, be precise. If possible, quantify your results. This is becoming the most popular style of resume and favoured by most employers.

Whichever style you choose, ensure your name, address, phone number and email are on each page!

PARTS OF A RESUME

Main Components

Hiring Managers expect to find the following main components in your resume:

- Personal Data
- Career Objective
- Career Summary (if applicable)
- Employment Experience
- Education
- Additional Information
- References

Personal Data

- **Name:** Your name should be in capitals or boldface. If you use a different first name, put it in quotation marks after your official first name, i.e. Robert “Bob” Smith.
- **Address:** Street, City, Province, Postal Code
- **Contact:** Phone/ Cell/ E-Mail

E-mail: Your e-mail address should convey a professional image. You may want to consider creating an e-mail address to be used exclusively for your job search. JennyGood@gmail.com sounds professional, while pookybear@gmail.com does not.

Career Objective (optional, or address this information in your cover letter)

A clear and concisely-stated objective makes it easy for the audience to determine *why* they should consider you. It also helps you define the type of position you really want. The objective should be a statement about your employment goals that is 1 to 2 sentences long. Managers and Human Resources professionals need to know to whom to forward your resume. If your objective is too vague, they won't refer it.

Remember:

Be specific about your current goal and try to relate it to the position you are applying for.

Career Summary (most important)

This optional, but vital, section provides a concise snapshot of the experiences and skills you bring to an employer. Similar to your career objective, this section should be brief but specific, consisting of 3 to 5 bullet points or brief sentences. May also be referred to as "Summary of Qualifications".

Employment Experience (or Employment History, Background, Professional Work Experience)

This is one of the most critical areas of your resume. The Hiring Manager is examining whether your experience and skills are a good fit, and they need to relate the experience you have had to the position. Don't just list your duties or a job description. Be specific and describe your accomplishments in detail, but describe only parts of the job that help sell you and showcase your value.

Remember: Use **action verbs** (in the past tense) to start each phrase and also use key words consistent with your job search. List your experience in reverse chronological order, starting with the most recent. Each item in this section should include:

- Position Title
- Name of Employer, City, Province
- Dates of Employment; state the months and years. If there are gaps in your employment history, be prepared to address them at an interview.
- List key responsibilities and accomplishments in bullet form, in order of importance.
- **If you are a recent graduate:** include part-time and summer employment. If applicable, highlight experiences related to the position you are targeting.
- **If you are in a career change:** translate your previous accomplishments into the skill sets needed for the position you are targeting.

Education

List your education in chronological order, with the most recent appearing first. Do not use abbreviations and list out *all* appropriate information. For example:

Bachelor of Nursing, University of Victoria, Victoria, BC Graduated: September 2008.

Be sure to include:

- Credential acquired (i.e. degree)
- Name and location of school
- Completion date
- Whether you have graduated with honors

Additional Information (as applicable)

- **Continuing Education:** Include relevant courses, conferences or presentations in chronological order (e.g., nursing, medical, leadership).
- **Certifications:** Highlight recent and relevant certifications (e.g., ACLS, PALS).
- **Volunteer Work:** Highlight additional employable skills. For example, your volunteer work can be assessed for your leadership, problem-solving abilities and your capacity to work as a team player.
- **Memberships in Professional Associations, Clubs, etc.:** Include any position titles and what you did in these associations related to leadership roles or contributions.
- **Personal Interests:** This gives an employer an indication of what you are like as a person and the skills you have developed outside work. These also serve to assist the employer in determining whether you are well-suited for the community you are targeting.
- **Activities:** Discuss any activities that demonstrate your expertise in communication, leadership and self-discipline.
- **Team Sports:** Participation in team sports shows many things about you, including discipline, reliability and, of course, your demonstrable strength as a team player.
- **Awards and Published Material:** Be sure to list all significant awards that showcase your desirability as an employee along with any published material you've written or co-written.

References

Most employers will request references following an interview: References should only be provided when requested.

When references are requested:

- Always seek the approval of your references before providing their name and contact information.
- Provide a minimum of 3 to 4 professional and/or academic references on a page separate from your resume. This should fit on one page.
- Include your name, address and contact information at the top.
- List your references in order of calling preference.
- Provide the person's name, title, company name, work relationship, phone number, email and, if possible, the best method and time to reach them.
- Always provide your references with a copy of your resume.
- If possible, alert your reference when you anticipate an employer calling and give them some

background information on the job. You might also prompt them about points to focus on.

RESUME TEMPLATE LINKS AND RESOURCES

<http://www.resume-resource.com/>

Great examples of management and executive level resumes, with a variety of formatting choices.

<http://www.instantresumetemplates.com/>

Helpful resource that focuses on resume style and layout.

RESUME TEMPLATE

What should your resume look like?

While there is always room for creativity, there are some basic rules-of-thumb to follow:

- **Easy-to-read:** Not too wordy, no long paragraphs or narrative.
- Leave plenty of **white space:** You don't want it to look too 'busy'. Use one side of the paper only.
- **Accurate and error-free:** Make sure you double-check it thoroughly and have someone else proofread it as well.
- **Action-oriented:** Using action words makes a strong impression on the reader.
- **Reverse chronological order:** This method presents your most recent and therefore most impressive career accomplishments.
- **Truthful:** Your resume should be a truthful synopsis of yourself and you should be prepared to back up or prove all statements.
- **White or neutral-coloured paper:** Bright colours send the wrong message to an employer.
- **Do not use abbreviations or acronyms:** You can't assume the reader will know what they mean.
- **Don't use slang or jargon:** It's okay to use language relevant to that profession.
- **Clear and concise:** Two pages or less (in most instances).

Resume Critique

- ✓ Create your resume specifically with the target unit, department or organization in mind
- ✓ Convey a unified message to the reader
 - Overall Appearance: *Do you want to read it?*
 - Layout: *Does it look professional?*
 - Length: *Is it 1 to 2 pages?*
 - Relevance: *Is it tailored to the job you're applying for?*
 - Action-Oriented: *Do your sentences begin with action verbs?*
 - Specific: *Is it clear and concise?*
 - Emphasize accomplishments: *Are you highlighting your successes and assets?*
 - Be Complete
- ✓ Bottom Line: *Will it get an invitation to an interview?*

SAMPLE RESUME TEMPLATE

First Name Initial Last Name

Apt Number, House Number, Street Name

City, Province

Postal Code

Telephone Number

Email Address

Job Objective

Enter your objective here.

Highlights of Qualifications (most recent listed first)

List relevant education, training and accomplishments.

Relevant Skills

List 3 to 4 headings with bullet points under each example:

Computer Skills:

- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Excel
- PeopleSoft

Additional Information (most recent first) list if applicable:

Employment Experience (most recent first)

Month, Year to Current	Agency/Organization, city, province Job title, Department Job functions Measurable examples of how you stood out in your role
Month, Year to Current	Agency/Organization, city, province Job title, Department Job functions Measurable examples of how you stood out in your role

Registrations Professional Affiliations & Licenses, Clubs, etc.

Volunteer Work	Year to Year: Position Title, Program
	Year to Year: Position Title, Program

Interests: (list here) E.g., Cooking, travel, soft ball, classical guitar

RESUME MAKEOVER: Chronological – Before



no design: this resume has no hierarchy, so important information gets lost.

J. Kendall

123 Elm Street, Coquitlam BC A1B 2C3

Phone: 604-555-5555

Email: jkendall(a)notmail.com

Experience

20xx-20xx ABC Health Services, Vancouver, BC

Health Care Manager

Progressed steadily through the health care system, supporting the top physician and his 250-member staff. Directed all administrative, HR, and liaison functions. Managed all contract negotiations and liaised between the Danish health care facility and 500 employees. Developed and administered operational budgets for a 105-bed hospital (\$6.2 million) and two outpatient clinics (\$2.4 million and \$700,000). Managed accounts receivable and insurance claims processing. Developed and implemented emergency preparedness plans for a 1,000-bed hospital. Defined and planned the implementation criteria to reorganize the 20xx worldwide medical treatment centres.

19xx-20xx BCD Medical Center, Coquitlam

Airlift Services/Health Care Manager.

Coordinated airlift services to remote locations. Provided computer support and training. Supervised up to eight employees. Sought by students to provide guidance on their military careers and on the seniors' four field exercises. Developed criteria and processes to rectify problems with payroll accuracy after resolving a 12-year-old pay issue.

19xx – 20xx BCD Medical Center, Coquitlam, BC

Home Health Aide

Provided assistance and supervision to elderly residents in a full-service assisted-living facility. Assisted nursing staff in administering medications and procedures along with monitoring vital signs to assess residents' health. Trained new staff on daily procedures and best practices. Cared for patients by assisting with personal hygiene, preparing meals.

19xx 19xx Wellness Medical Office, Surrey, BC

Medical Office Assistant

Performed general administrative duties such as booking patients, updating charts, dealing with cancellations and submitting MSP claims. Answered phones and took messages. Also responsible for office management of stationery, printer operation and paper. Assisted with some staff scheduling in absence.

Skills

MS Word, MS Excel, MS PowerPoint, Blackbaud Raiser's Edge, Financial Edge, Medical Terminology

no objective: without an objective, an employer may not see how you will fit.



long paragraphs: writing paragraphs instead of using point form may cause important information to get lost.

too short: resumes should be at least 2 pages; you can include your community and volunteer involvement too.



RESUME MAKEOVER: Chronological - After

clean design:

this resume has a clean, modern design, using bold fonts and shading to draw attention to important information



JESSE KENDALL

123 Elm Street, Coquitlam BC A1B 2C3
T: 604-555-5555 / jkendall@notmail.com

EXPERIENCED HEALTH CARE MANAGER

Highly organized, resourceful, and accomplished administrative professional with extensive experience in directing business and health care operations. Adept at assessing organizational challenges and creating solutions. Record of delivering projects on time and under budget.

highlighted qualifications:

clearly communicating who you are - shows the employer you know what they're looking for and that you can deliver!

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Office Administration
- Purchasing/Negotiations
- Accounts Payable/Accounts Receivable
- Business Improvement Processes
- Problem Identification and Resolution
- Customer Service
- Event Planning
- Project Management
- Staff Training and Development
- Budget Development and Administration

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

ABC Health Services, Vancouver, BC

Health Care Manager, 20xx-20xx

Progressed steadily through the health care system, supporting the top physician and his 250-member staff. Directed all administrative, HR, and liaison functions. Managed all contract negotiations and liaised between the Danish health facility and 500 employees.

Overview: Managed multiple operations

- Developed and administered over 100 patient clinics (\$2.4 million and \$700,000). Managed
- Developed and implemented
- Defined and planned the medical treatment facilities.

BCD Medical C

Airlift Services /

Coordinated airlift employees.

bullet points:

short paragraphs and point form emphasize the most relevant experiences you bring to the position.

Overview: Acted as

- Sought by staff and solved payroll issues for approximately 800
- Developed
- Sought by staff and solved payroll issues for approximately 800

• **MBA, S**

• **Profess**

• **Grad**

EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

• **MP**

• **P**

• **M**

• **M**

PERSONAL INTEREST & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Level, Languages, Hockey, Animal Rescue

Volunteered with YMCA Mentorship Program (20xx - 20xx), SPCA Foster Program

right length:

this resume is two pages and includes education, professional development and community work.



RESUME DO'S AND DON'TS

DO:

- ✓ Keep your resume clear and concise; avoid repetition.
- ✓ Customize; keep it specific to the job you're applying for.
- ✓ State your accomplishments.
- ✓ Focus on the job and what you can bring to the position.
- ✓ Proofread your resume.
- ✓ Use action verbs and key words throughout.
- ✓ Include page numbers. Begin numbering on page 2.
- ✓ Use high-quality, neutral-toned paper, and use the same for your cover letter.

DON'T:

- ✗ Lie on your resume.
- ✗ List Personal Information such as:
 - ✗ Marital Status
 - ✗ Birth date
 - ✗ Age
 - ✗ Social Insurance Number
 - ✗ Height/Weight
 - ✗ Ethnicity/Race
 - ✗ Religious/Political Views
- ✗ List references on your resume (references would be requested at a later stage; *do* be sure to contact your references before providing them to a potential employer).
- ✗ Make your resume longer than 2 pages in length, 3 at the very most

ACTION VERBS FOR YOUR RESUME

Accomplished	Edited	Observed
Achieved	Empathized	Orchestrated
Actioned	Encouraged	Organized
Adapted	Enhanced	Originated
Administered	Established	Oversaw
Analyzed	Evaluated	
Applied	Executed	Participated
Assessed	Expanded	Planned
Attained	Expedited	Prepared
Authorized		Produced
	Facilitated	Promoted
Balanced	Formulated	Provided
Built	Fostered	
		Recognized
Cared for	Generated	Researched
Collaborated		Resolved
Collected	Implemented	Reviewed
Communicated	Improved	Revised
Compiled	Increased	
Completed	Initiated	Screened
Composed	Instructed	Solved
Conducted	Integrated	Streamlined
Consoled	Interviewed	Strengthened
Consulted	Introduced	Succeeded
Contributed	Investigated	Supervised
Coordinated		Supported
Created	Launched	
	Listened	Taught
Decreased		Tended
Delegated	Maintained	Told
Delivered	Managed	Tracked
Demonstrated	Maximized	Trained
Designed	Monitored	Transferred
Detailed	Motivated	Transformed
Developed		Troubleshooter
Devised	Negotiated	
Directed	Nursed	Utilized
Discovered		
Distributed		Verified

SAMPLE RESUME: Chronological

JESSE KENDALL

123 Elm Street
Boise, ID 83702

jkendall@notmail.com

Cell: 208-444-4444
Home: 208-555-5555

HEALTHCARE MANAGER: Highly organized, resourceful, and accomplished administrative professional with extensive experience in directing business and health care operations. Adept at assessing organizational challenges and creating solutions. Record of delivering projects on time and under budget.

KEY SKILLS

- | | |
|--|---|
| ▪ Office Administration | ▪ Event Planning |
| ▪ Purchasing / Negotiations | ▪ Project Management |
| ▪ Accounts Payable / Accounts Receivable | ▪ Staff Training and Development |
| ▪ Business Improvement Processes | ▪ Problem Identification and Resolution |
| ▪ Customer Service | ▪ Budget Development and Administration |

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

ABC HEALTH SERVICES, Boise, ID

20xx to 20xx

Health Care Manager

Progressed steadily through the health care system, supporting the top physician and his 250-member staff. Directed all administrative, HR, and liaison functions. Managed all contract negotiations and liaised between the Danish health care facility and 500 enrollees.

Key Accomplishments:

- Developed and administered operational budgets for a 105-bed hospital (\$6.2 million) and two outpatient clinics (\$2.4 million and \$700,000). Managed accounts receivable and insurance claims processing.
- Developed and implemented emergency preparedness plans for a 1,000-bed hospital.
- Defined and planned the implementation criteria to reorganize the 20xx worldwide medical treatment facilities.

BCD Medical Center, Boise, ID

20xx to 20xx

Airlift Services / Healthcare Manager

Coordinated airlift services to remote locations. Provided computer support and training. Supervised up to eight employees.

Key Accomplishments:

- Sought by students to provide guidance on their military careers and on the seniors' four field exercises.
- Developed criteria and processes to rectify problems with payroll accuracy after resolving a 12-year-old pay issue.

COMPUTER SKILLS

MS Word • MS Excel • MS PowerPoint • Blackbaud Raiser's Edge • Financial Edge

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

XYZ TECHNICAL COLLEGE

- Basic Leadership and Management Training
- Intermediate Leadership and Management Training
- Graduate-Level Management Training – *Distinguished Honor Graduate* (1 of 30 from class of 315)

SAMPLE RESUMES: Combination

JESSE KENDALL, RN

123 Elm St. ▼ Bloomington, IN 47405 ▼ Home: 812-555-5555 ▼ Cell: 812-444-4444 ▼ jkendall@nctmail.com

CONSCIENTIOUS HOME HEALTH CARE

Dedicated to teaching patients and being an integral part of their own recovery process.

Highly skilled in patient care and personal nursing. Demonstrated perseverance, compassion, and attention to detail. Outstanding interpersonal skills and bedside manner with proven ability to quickly establish rapport with patients, caregivers, physicians, and medical staff. Unrivaled work ethic. Proficient in Windows XP and WordPerfect. Fluent in English and French.

- **Homecare:** Provided live-in 24/7 private care for terminal patient. Administered medications, served as point of contact for treatment regimen, and assisted with daily living. Performed daily tracheal and suctioning treatments for muscular dystrophy (MD) patient requiring ventilator. Scheduled multiple care providers to ensure continual coverage. Maintained and updated all medical records and all treatments logs.
- **Assisted Living:** Monitored patient vital signs, and maintained treatment documentation. Changed dressings, colostomies, and monitored open wound progress.
- **Nutrition:** Directed Meals on Wheels program. Supervised volunteer staff of 10, obtained new physician certification for eligibility, processed daily records, managed program budget, and handled monthly billing.
- **Extended Care:** Coordinated admissions for 34 bed facility. Evaluated in-house and at-home care options. Managed home emergency response system for elderly patients.

HOME HEALTH CARE EXPERIENCE

Home Health Aide / RN

ABC ASSISTED LIVING, Bloomington, IN ▼ 20xx – Present

Provide supervision and assistance to elderly residents in a full service assisted living facility. Assist nursing staff in administering medications and procedures along with monitoring vital signs to assess residents' health. Train new staff on daily procedures and best practices. Cared for patients by assisting with personal-hygiene, preparing meals, and escorting to daily activities. Collaborated with coworkers to ensure the safe care of all residents.

Home Health Aide / RN

ABC REGIONAL VNA, Bloomington, IN ▼ 20xx – Present

Cared for up to ten elderly and hospice patients per day, providing showers, sponge baths, or regular baths as well as skin assessments, medical record charting, vital signs, and general physical assessments. Provided reports to the RN staff.

Home Health Care Staff / RN

BCD HOME CARE, Bloomington, IN ▼ 20xx – Present

Assessed and evaluated health status of homebound patients. Educated and instructed patients and caregivers on care plans. Coordinated home care with interdisciplinary team.

LICENSURE

RN Registration, MA ▼ 20xx / CPR Certification, MA ▼ 20xx / CPI Certification, MA ▼ 20xx

COVER LETTERS

BUILD YOUR COVER LETTER

Always Send a Customized Cover Letter

The cover letter is an essential part of your job application: it creates the first impression of you.

There are several types of cover letters that can be sent to employers. Be sure to choose a type of cover letter that reflects how you are applying for the job or the type of job search assistance you are requesting. Your cover letter should be designed specifically for the purpose you are writing and customized for each position you seek.

Customizing a cover letter specifically to a company or to a recruiter is the best first step you can take in making sure your resume gets read.

COVER LETTER COMPONENTS

- **Date**
- **Contact Name and Title**
- **Agency Address:** Name of Agency, Address, City, Province, Postal Code
- **Salutation:** Use the name of the contact if you have this information. If you do not have a contact name, avoid using generic salutations such as “To Whom it May Concern” or “Dear Sir/Madam”. Instead, address the letter with “Dear Hiring Manager”.
- **Body of the Letter:** This part of the cover letter highlights how your qualifications match the job you are seeking. The body of your letter should be articulate and well-written. The *Action Verbs* (on page 13) gives you a list of verbs to help you highlight relevant information in this portion of your cover letter.

Paragraph 1: About the Job

State the position you are applying for and how you found out about the position. Briefly describe how you would fit the position.

Sample: “I am pleased to respond to your advertisement for a Medical Secretary as advertised on the VCH Website (www.vch.ca) on February 26, 2013. My qualifications very closely meet your needs as outlined in the job posting.”

Paragraph 2: Your Qualifications and Skills

List one or two of your most relevant qualifications/skills. List two or three accomplishments that demonstrate your experience. Be specific, and refer the reader to your resume for additional details. Focus on what makes you different from other job-seekers.

Sample: *“As you will see in the attached resume, I have worked as an Administrative Assistant at ABC Enterprises for six years where I have handled incoming calls, mail and courier services. During my time there, I have also assisted with the selection of the newly-installed Signex 320 telephone system and trained others in its use.”*

Paragraph 3: About the Organization

Show that you’ve researched the organization. Demonstrate why you want to work for this particular organization.

Sample: *“I have read about Vancouver Coastal Health in the local paper and have reviewed your website. I am familiar with your services and would be very interested in working for an organization that is keen on supporting a safer, more healthful environment and has an excellent reputation as an employer in our community.”*

Paragraph 4: The Conclusion

Reaffirm your interest in the position. Include a request for an interview.

Sample: *“Thank you in advance for reviewing my letter and resume. I would be pleased to review my qualifications in more detail during an interview with you, and would be honored if I were given the opportunity to become member of the Home Care team as the Administrative Assistant to the Home Care Services Manager.”*

SAMPLE COVER LETTERS

ADDISON JOYCE, RN

963 East 27th Street, Vancouver, BC V5V 1X1
604-555-5220 • add.joy@gmail.com

February 22, 20xx

Fariba Mohammadi
Human Resources Manager
Clipper Emergency Center
420 Broadway
Vancouver, BC V5C 2K2

Dear Ms. Mohammadi:

I was pleased to learn of your need for a dedicated ICU Staff Nurse. With solid experience and education in prevailing ICU practices, acute patient care, family relations, and staff development, I am prepared to become an immediate contributor to your team.

The following are highlights of my qualifications and accomplishments:

- Extensive experience in ICU, CCU, Emergency, and Medical/Surgical environments.
- In-depth knowledge of administration that includes admissions, assessments, treatment, referral and education.
- Frequent commendations by patients and families for providing exceptional care.
- Employee awards for dedication, performance, leadership and patient advocacy.

My strong initiative and exceptional organizational skills, combined with my ability to work well under pressure, allow me to play a crucial role in fast-paced, patient-centered environments. Furthermore, with a history of successful contributions to the healthcare community, patients and their families, I will immediately impact operations at Clipper Emergency Centre.

Enclosed is my full resume for your review. I welcome the opportunity to discuss with you personally how my skills and strengths can best serve your hospital.

Sincerely,

Addison Joyce

Encl: Addison Joyce Resume

Beverly M. Jones, RN
123 Valley Road, Port Moody, BC V8N B1M
C: 604-604-6044 BJRN@mail.com

April 29, 20XX

Gurdeep Sandhu
Human Resources Manager
Mountainview Hospital
789 Main Street
Burnaby, BC V6B H0S

Dear Ms. Sandhu:

I was pleased to learn of your need for an ICU Staff Nurse, as my career goals and expertise are directly in line with this opportunity. My experience and education have provided me with excellent knowledge of ICU practices, acute patient care, family relations, staff development and other relevant skills required of an effective team member.

The following are highlights of my qualifications and accomplishments:

- Extensive patient care experience in ICU, CCU, Emergency and Medical Surgical environments.
- In-depth knowledge of administration that includes admissions, assessments, treatment, referrals and education for a wide range of patients.
- Frequent commendations by patients and families for providing exceptional care.
- Employee awards for dedication, excellent performance, leadership and patient advocacy.

My strong initiative and exceptional organizational skills, combined with my ability to work well under pressure, will enable me to make a substantial contribution to Mountainview Hospital. I believe that a challenging environment such as yours will provide an excellent opportunity for me to best utilize my skills while contributing to the healthcare community, patients and their families.

Enclosed is my resume for your review. I welcome the opportunity to discuss with your personally how my skills and strengths can best serve your hospital.

Sincerely,

Beverly M. Jones
Enclosure

SAMPLE 'T' COVER LETTER

Colin Chang

67 Compu Street, Vancouver, BC V5N 5H6

Phone: (604) 555-0355 email: TJ@hotmail.com

Dear Hiring Manager:

IMITS is a very dynamic department and you are offering an exciting opportunity very much in keeping with my career and personal experience, as well as future career objectives. Your requirements appear to be an excellent match with my personal profile, as outlined below:

Your Requirements	My Qualificaitons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor's degree in Computer Science or equivalent experience • Sales or Technical Repair experience • Ability to build effective customer relationships • Proven presentation skills as well as excellent verbal and written communication skills • Strong organizational and problem-solving skills as well as strong work ethic and accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor of Technology and four years of computer experience • Over three years of experience in managing computer networks • Prospected new clients through cold-calling and created strong partnerships that increased customer base • Developed and delivered persuasive presentations providing detailed information, product suggestions and costs • Gained reputation with customers for being an innovative and patient problem-solver; known for going the extra mile to ensure satisfaction

Additionally, I bring a strong sense of commitment to my work. Having run my own sales territory for two years, I have excellent organizational and problem-solving skills coupled with an entrepreneurial spirit that makes me always strive to achieve greater results.

My knowledge of working with people, coupled with my sales skills, strongly suggests that I can make a significant contribution to IMITS. Words on paper do not replace face-to-face conversation; I would welcome a personal interview to discuss in greater detail how I can contribute to the success of IMITS. I can be reached at 604-555-0355.

Sincerely,

Colin Chang

COVER LETTER DO'S AND DON'TS

DO:

- ✓ Create a cover letter for each job position and tailor it to the specific job you are applying for
- ✓ Proofread your cover letter: ensure there are no grammatical or spelling errors
- ✓ Personalize your cover letter; if you know the person's name and title, address it to the named individual.
- ✓ Make your cover letter stand out. You want to convey to an employer why they should be choosing you over other candidates.
- ✓ Edit your letter so that you are clear and concise; eliminate unnecessary words.
- ✓ Sign your letter in ink.
- ✓ Use high-quality, neutral-toned paper. Ensure that the paper your resume is printed on is the same as your cover letter.
- ✓ Save a copy of your letter so you can refer to it when you're called for an interview.

DON'T:

- ✗ Send a cover letter that has mistakes/errors.
- ✗ Write a cover letter that is over a page long.
- ✗ Forget to sign your cover letter.
- ✗ Send a "blanket/generic" cover letter.

ONLINE APPLICATIONS

In today's marketplace, online applications are a standard part of the job search process. There are thousands of websites where you can post your resume online and complete an online job application. Applicants either apply online via a job board, like Monster.com, or apply directly at the company's website.

In some cases, job-seekers are required to register and build an employment profile. Once you've built your profile, you can apply for jobs online and set up search agents to email you when new jobs are added to the system.

Applicants can then apply online for specific positions at any time that is convenient for them. With larger employers, and on many job sites, job-seekers can keep track of the positions for which they have applied.

How Online Job Application Systems Work

Some sites let you upload an existing resume with the click of a button. On other sites, you copy and paste from your resume or use the resume builder incorporated into the application system. Once you have completed your online resume, you will be able to search for jobs that interest you and submit your application or resume with just a click.

Applying For Jobs on Company Websites

Career information is usually listed on a company's "Careers" or "About us" section. Follow the instructions for searching for and applying to jobs online. Company websites are among the best sources of job listings, especially if you know what companies you are interested in working for. On most company websites, you can apply for all positions, from part-time hourly jobs to top management positions. Just about every company has detailed employment information including job openings, an employment application, instructions on how to apply online, company locations and even benefits, on their websites.

Getting to the Company Website

There are several ways to find company websites:

- **Google the company name and 'jobs':** Type the company name plus jobs, such as Walmart jobs, in a search engine, and the jobs section of the website should be among the first results.
- **Check Company Profiles:** Many employers have company profiles with career and employment information.
- **Use the Company Name:** Many large companies' URLs are *companyname.com* so you can simply type this into the search bar.
- **Check '.jobs' extension:** Companies are using the .jobs extension to direct job-seekers straight to their company information. Enter or search for '*companyname.jobs*' to see if the company you're interested in is using it.

Careers Section

The following information from company websites is typically available for job seekers:

- Career options and career paths
- Current job openings
- Job search system
- Job application forms
- Benefits information
- Diversity information
- College recruiting information

About Us

The About Us section of employer websites is useful for finding out about the company history, financial stability, products and services and management, as well as information about the company culture and how you would fit in.

How to Apply for Jobs

When the company lists jobs on its website, you'll find instructions for how to apply for open positions. The job application system will guide you step-by-step through the process of applying online.

What You Need to Apply Online

Online application systems typically ask for your contact information, educational background and employment history. You will need to know when you worked and what you were paid at your previous jobs. You may also be asked what days and hours you are available to work.

Check Your Application

Before you click the Submit button, it's important to double-check your application to ensure there are no typos and grammatical errors. If you're not sure your spelling is correct, use Microsoft Word and spell/grammar check and then copy and paste your information into the application form.

INTERVIEWING

Interviewing often makes people anxious. You know for certain you're being evaluated on your experience and skills and that may make you feel uncomfortable. Hiring Managers use interviews to learn as much as they can about you, with the goal of answering the following general questions:

1. Can you do the job?

Every part of the interview is aimed at discovering who you are and what you have to offer: Are you a promising potential employee? Do you have the knowledge, skills and experience to complete the job? The interviewer will ask you about your abilities as a worker and want you to back your statements up with specific examples.

2. Will you do the job?

A Hiring Manager wants to be reassured that you are reliable, enthusiastic and an ethical worker. You will want to convey that you can be depended upon, show initiative, and be an asset to the team. Let them see that you are a dedicated, engaged and loyal employee.

3. Will you fit?

The interviewer will be observing your general behaviour, your communication skills and your body language to assess whether you will fit in with the departments/organizations culture and style. "Studies have shown that the single greatest contributor to performance failure and job dissatisfaction has to do with a lack of fit with organizational culture. If you don't align well with the boss's core beliefs and values, it will be very difficult to develop an effective working relationship." - *Toronto Star*

When setting up the interview, ask:

- If you will be required to do any tests (i.e., written or computer)
- If you need to bring anything to the interview (i.e., portfolio of previous work examples)
- What is the type of interview structure (i.e., one-to-one, panel or group interview)
- Who will be in attendance (names, titles)

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

The One-on-One Interview:

- One-on-one interviews are the most common type of interview.
- Interviews can be done by phone, email, video call or in person; the latter is the most common.
- Answer questions clearly and concisely. Keep your attention focused on what the interviewer is saying.
- Body language is important; don't fidget, cross your arms, frown, etc. Appear relaxed and confident and maintain appropriate eye contact.

Panel Group Interview:

- A Panel interview is where you would be interviewed individually by a panel of two or more people, often sitting opposite you at a long table, taking turns to ask you questions.
- When you enter the panel interview, make a good impression by taking a little time to engage with each interviewer. As you are introduced, make eye contact with each panel member, shake hands firmly and greet them using their names.
- These interviews tend to be formal and organized with a standard set of questions. Each panelist may have a different role to play during the interview.
- Behavioural questions are commonly used in panel interviews. Develop relevant examples that demonstrate what you are able to bring to the position.
- Make initial eye contact with the person who asked the question and include the other panel members in your answer. Focus on speaking to each individual and then, as you finish your answer, return your focus to the person who asked the interview question.
- Panel members are likely to take notes during your interview answer; don't be intimidated by this. Use it as a reminder that you need to speak clearly and concisely.
- Bring a list of prepared questions to the panel interview. There should be questions that you can address to different members of the panel relevant to their different organizational roles.

PREPARE FOR THE INTERVIEW

Find out everything you can about the specific position

The better you understand the position, the more effectively you can show how you'll benefit the team. When you've thought through how you can add value to a specific employer, you'll be able to easily add examples of how, in the answers you provide.

Practice introductions

The decision to hire is often made in the first thirty seconds or even less. Make a good first impression: Practice opening a door, coming into a room, offering your hand confidently, smiling and introducing yourself. Use your left hand for carrying, leaving your right hand free for the handshake.

THE INTERVIEW

Prepare 5 key examples about your previous experiences to which you can refer throughout the interview.

Practice responses to potential interview questions, but don't try to memorize them. Being yourself is essential to interview success. Responses need to feel and sound natural.

To give a top-notch interview, you need to know the answers to three critical questions:

- **Why do I want this job?**
- **What do I have to offer?**
- **What else do I need to know?**

Why do I want this job?

Hiring Managers want people who can bring something new and valuable to their business. The best way you can prove to an interviewer that you've got what it takes is to show that you know exactly what the organization does.

When you really know the answer to "Why do I want this job?" you'll be able to answer some important interview questions such as:

- How did you become interested in this field?
- Why did you submit your application to the department?
- What are your general career interests?
- What do you see yourself doing in five years?

What do I have to offer?

Hiring Managers want to know why they should hire you. To find out, they ask a variety of questions to help them find out who you are and what you can do. To be prepared, review your experiences at work, at school and in volunteer activities.

- Keep a mental list of your accomplishments.
- Think about challenges you've faced and how you dealt with them.
- Remember times that you've been a problem-solver.
- Consider mistakes that you've made as learning experiences.

What else do I need to know?

One of the final questions you'll be asked in an interview is: "Is there anything you would like to know about the organization or the job?"

Answering "No" sends a signal that you're not really interested in the organization, don't know what's important to you in an employee/employer relationship, or lack confidence and assertiveness. Here are some questions you should be prepared to ask.

About the job:

- What is the size of the organization/department?
- Do you have a training program? Could you please describe it?
- What are my opportunities for advancement?
- What is the salary range for this position?
- Could you describe the organization's/department's culture?

About the person you would be working for:

- To whom would I directly report?
- How long has he/she been with the company?
- What is their background?
- How would you describe your management style?

TALKING ABOUT YOURSELF WITH CONFIDENCE

Describe your personal traits for your interview. Recognize your strengths so you can describe yourself effectively to employers both verbally and on paper.

For example:

Accountable	Ethical	Perfectionist
Accurate	Flexible	Persistent
Adventurous	Fun	Personable
Analytical	Generous	Persuasive
Artistic	Harmonious	Physically fit
Assertive	Hard-working	Practical
Committed	Imaginative	Productive
Confident	Independent	Punctual
Community-minded	Intuitive	Rational
Competitive	Intelligent	Reasonable
Cooperative	Interested	Responsible
Creative	Inventive	Responsive
Curious	Involved	Precise
Dedicated	Kind	Self-controlled
Dependable	Level-headed	Sensitive
Efficient	Logical	Self-starting
Energetic	Loyal	Stable
Entertaining	Original	Sociable
Enthusiastic	Outgoing	Strong
Expressive	People-oriented	Team-oriented

KNOWLEDGE, ABILITY & SKILLS QUESTIONS

The Interviewer may ask:

"Tell me about yourself."

Purpose:

- To put you at ease.
- To learn from you why they should or should not hire you.
- To find out if your mind is on what you can offer an employer; or if it is on personal concerns that may interfere with your work performance.
- To learn a little bit about your background.
- To assess your ability to communicate orally.

Suggestions:

- Demonstrate your ability to communicate information clearly and concisely.
- Demonstrate your ability to prioritize and your understanding of the department/organization needs by selecting the information about you of the greatest relevance and interest to them.

Briefly touch on the following:

- Your experience related to the job.
- Your attributes, including your ability to get along with others and appropriate personal information to show stability and a well-rounded character.

Sample response: "In my work experience, I have a good background in scheduling and timekeeping. This includes preparing rotations and daily schedules and maintaining timekeeping records for staff. I am also hard working, dedicated and personable. During my spare time, I take part in several sports such as volleyball and enjoy hiking."

"Tell me about your experience with this type of work."

Purpose:

- To find out whether or not you can do the job.

Suggestions:

- If you have done this work, state where and give examples of your achievements.
- If you have done related work, state your transferable skills. Show your interest in the position and your willingness to learn.
- If you have not done this work, mention other work-related attributes and skills.
- Quickly show your interest in on-the-job training.

Sample response: "I was a Community Health Worker when I lived in Squamish, BC from 1999 until just recently. Before that, I worked as a Care Aide for ten years from 1988-1998. At these jobs, I was responsible for providing personal care to clients and observing and monitoring client progress. This included bathing, grooming, dressing, and assisting clients with oral hygiene. I recently completed a diploma in early childhood education and have been working as a Child Care Worker on casual basis for the past six months. My plan is to work as a Child Care Worker in a full-time capacity and eventually work my way up to a management role. I am excited about learning and developing myself and becoming a valuable member of any team."

“What kind of machines/software can you operate?”

- Purpose:**
- This question indicates that skills in this area are very important. Express your experience and capability.
- Suggestions:**
- Be as specific as possible about your expertise.
 - If you haven't had experience with the equipment required, describe similar machines/software you've worked with.
- Sample response:** “I utilized the MedTrain programming software on a daily basis for over 10 years while IT Manager at Grand River Hospital in Saskatchewan. In fact, I designed and conducted training seminars for both beginner and advanced users that boosted organization-wide productivity by a significant amount.”

“What are your greatest strengths?”

- Purpose:**
- To discover reasons for hiring you.
 - To find out how well you know yourself.
 - To find out if you believe in yourself and if you are the right person for the position.
- Suggestions:**
- Mention that, besides the work skills, training and experience you offer, you also offer job-related qualities such as reliability, enthusiasm, dependability, flexibility and efficiency.
 - If time permits, back up these qualities with examples.
- Sample response:** “My strengths are inspecting equipment, analyzing problems, then making repairs. Trouble-shooting is a regular part of the job. If I become puzzled with a particular problem, I consult my supervisor and manufacturers’ manuals, diagrams or schematic drawings. I am also dependable, knowledgeable and do not mind working long hours to meet a deadline.”

“What are your weaknesses?”

- Purpose:**
- To discover if you are wrong for the job due to a lack of experience or training, poor people skills, refusal to follow orders, poor attitude, laziness, etc.
- Suggestions:**
- Describe a positive attribute, then continue with a statement of reassurance. For example, “I feel that it is very important to meet deadlines and satisfy the customer; I have to really make myself be patient, diplomatic, firm, when I see that this is not happening.”
 - Honestly describe an obvious weakness, then describe factors that make up for it.
- Sample response:** “I don’t like to be over-supervised because I have a lot of initiative, and I like to foresee problems before they even arise.”

“What kind of salary are you expecting?”

- Purpose:**
- The interviewer wants to determine whether you have realistic salary expectations.
- Suggestions:**
- Ask them the salary range.
 - Stating an exact figure may harm your chances.
 - Research salary ranges for this type of position in the region you would be working.
 - Say “I am open to offers.” or “I would accept the industry standard.”
- Sample responses:**
- “I understand the usual rate is between x and y. That would be acceptable.”
- “I am open to any fair offer that is in line with my experience.”

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: Open-Ended Questions

Questions that start with:

WHO

1. Who are your references?

WHAT

1. What factors influenced your decision to work with your present employer?
2. What do you believe are your strengths and weaknesses?
3. What do you like most and least about your present or past positions?
4. What are your accomplishments (personal/professional/educational)?
5. What is the greatest obstacle you have overcome? How did you do it?
6. What does dedication to a company mean to you?
7. What specific things did you do in your last job to improve your effectiveness?
8. What plans do you have for your future?
9. What are your long-term and short-term goals and objectives?
10. What do you see yourself doing five years from now, ten years from now, and before you retire?
11. What have you learned or gained from your work experience?
12. What major problems have you encountered on the job and how did you deal with them?
13. What are your functional responsibilities and key objectives?

WHEN

1. When you are under pressure to get something done, how do you get the people around you to help?
2. When are you happier, when you have too much to do or too little?

WHERE

1. Where do you see yourself in a year from now?
2. Where do you see yourself five years from now?
3. Where are you happier, in a team environment or individual?

HOW

1. How do you set priorities?
2. How would other people describe you?
3. How did you hear about this job?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: Topic-Related

In a traditional interview you may be asked a series of topic-related questions that have straightforward answers, such as:

WORK EXPERIENCE

1. What have you learned or gained from your work experience?
2. What major problems have you encountered on the job and how did you deal with them?
3. Of the employers for whom you have worked, which did you enjoy the most/least?
4. Of the various environments in which you have worked, in which were you most productive?
5. Give an example of how you handled a stressful situation at work.
6. Describe a time when you successfully balanced several competing priorities.

GENERAL

1. What do you believe are your strengths and weaknesses?
2. Describe how other people would characterize you.
3. What is your definition of success?
4. What have you learned from your mistakes?
5. Can you tell me how you make important decisions?
6. When you are under a deadline and need help, how do you get co-workers to assist?
7. Tell me about a learning experience you found challenging. How did you cope or respond?
8. What kinds of decisions are difficult for you?

LIFE GOALS

1. What plans do you have for your future?
2. What are your long-term and short-term goals and objectives?
3. Who are your role models?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: Behavioral

Behaviour-based interviews are designed to elicit information about how you have performed in the past. Interviewers develop their questions around the traits and skills they consider necessary for succeeding in a position or organization. These questions usually begin with phrases such as the following:

- Tell me about a time...
- Describe a situation in which...
- Recall an instance when...
- Give me an example of...

These kinds of questions can be difficult to understand and you may have trouble responding to them. However, if you have done your research and prepared for the interview, you will have work, academic and life experiences ready to share.

Prepare for behaviour-based questions by thinking of specific actions that demonstrate your accomplishments, abilities, and suitability for the position. Tell the truth, get to the point, stay focused, turn negatives into positives, and be consistent with your responses. Common behaviour-based interview themes include the following:

- Working effectively under pressure
- Handling and adapting to a difficult situation
- Applying good judgment and logic in solving a problem
- Thinking creatively
- Completing a project on time
- Persuading team members to do things your way
- Writing a report or proposal that was well received
- Anticipating potential problems and developing preventative measures
- Making an important decision with limited facts and information, in the absence of a supervisor, that were unpopular, etc.
- Being tolerant of a different opinion
- Dealing with an upset client
- Delegating a project effectively
- Explaining complex information to a client, colleague, or peer
- Surmounting a major obstacle
- Prioritizing the elements of a complicated project

By analyzing the questions asked of you, you will discover further details about the position. What emphasis does the interviewer seem to be placing on which skills, knowledge, personality traits and attitudes? That insight can help you tailor your answers more easily to the employer's position.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS *YOU COULD ASK:*

Not only is it important for you to answer questions well and provide proof whenever possible in interviews, it is also important for you to ask pertinent questions. It is crucial you probe until you get answers to questions that will assist you in making sound employment decisions. One of the best ways to learn as much as you can about a company, position or circumstance is to ask questions that are designed specifically to get the information you need to make a sound and informed choice.

General questions are asked to gain useful information for later decision-making. Samples are:

1. If I am hired, will there be a formal training program or on-the-job training?
2. What are the expectations for new employees?
3. Is there a probationary period? How long is it?
4. What are the opportunities for personal growth in your company?
5. Is any/how much travel is normally expected with this position?
6. What characteristics does a successful person have in your company?
7. What is the atmosphere, philosophy, technology and protocol of the office?

Defining questions are asked to ascertain hiring criteria, allow interviewers the opportunity to brag about their company, and afford opportunities for you to share stories of your relevant accomplishments. Samples are:

1. What would you like to see accomplished by the person filling this position?
2. How does this position fit into the overall objectives and goals of your company?
3. What skills are you looking for in the person selected for this position?

When and How to Talk Compensation

With any luck, salary will be brought up at some point during your interview. This is a sure sign of an employer's interest in you and your skills. But you should not push the issue. Never bring up the subject of compensation until the prospective employer broaches it first. Otherwise, you risk sending the wrong message that you're more interested in money than in what you can do for the company. This might cause an employer to think twice about your candidacy.

Worst-Case Scenario: The Salary Discussion is a Screening Device. If the subject of pay comes up early in the interview, you should understand that this is probably a screening question. The wrong answer here could take you out of further consideration for the position. Thus, your best strategy at this point is to avoid directly and specifically answering any questions related to money. If you must respond to such questions, you should ask the interviewer to first tell you what their compensatory range is for the job. For better results, try to focus on the job, what it requires and what it should pay instead of your own economic needs or salary expectations. This will help keep you calm and collected. You don't want to let emotions guide your salary negotiations.

INTERVIEW ETIQUETTE:

Appearance

- Remember that first impressions are important; pay attention to your appearance and look professional, clean, neat and well-groomed.
- If in doubt, dress conservatively.
- It is advisable to minimize fashion accessories and strong scents.

General Manners

- Arrive approximately 10 minutes ahead of time.
- Greet the interviewer(s) with a firm handshake and make eye contact. Be friendly and professional with everyone.
- Articulate your words. Monitor your speed. Don't mumble. Maintain eye contact throughout.

Listening & Speaking

- Focus on listening carefully. Don't take notes during the interview. Write down things immediately following the interview if you need to remember something.
- Verbal and non-verbal communication both matter: Smile when appropriate during the interview. Be enthusiastic and responsive with your words and your body language. Examples: Lean forward when speaking, nod your head in agreement, maintain eye contact. Do not slouch.
- Listen carefully to each question. If in doubt about whether you understand a question, don't be afraid to ask for clarification.
- Don't embellish, be positive and confident about what you can offer to the agency.
- Feeling nervous? Don't worry; the feeling is normal and also expected. Just show a positive attitude and affirm your interest in the position.

Ending the Interview

- Briefly summarize how your skills and experience match the agency.
- Re-state your interest in the position.
- Ask about the hiring process and the time frame for filling the position.
- Thank the interviewer(s).
- Ask how you can follow up.
- Ask for a business card or contact information.