

# Resume Writing

**12** Recommended  
12th grade

 Length  
95 minutes

## About this lesson

To identify different types of resumes and effectively communicate their skills, experience, and achievements in an appropriate form, students will explore resume formats, analyze a job ad to understand how to impress an employer, and draft their own resume and cover letter for an opportunity they're interested in.

## Learning objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will:

- explore different methods that applicants can use to present their qualifications (e.g. portfolios)
- link their skills, experiences, and achievements to the requirements outlined in a job posting
- compose their own resumes in a form of their choice
- draft a customized cover letter

## Driving question

How do I show I am a good fit for an open opportunity?

## Future-ready skills

Evaluating analyzing Communication

## Lesson breakdown

- 15** minutes  
**Activity 1: Showcasing Yourself**  
In this activity, students will be introduced to resumes, learn about alternative options, and identify which options may be preferred for a saved career.
- 20** minutes  
**Activity 2: Job Ad Analysis**  
In this activity, students will learn how to analyze a job ad to understand how to optimize their resume to show they are a good fit for the job opening.
- 40** minutes  
**Activity 3: Resume Starter**  
In this activity, students will use Xello's **Resume Builder** to write a high school student resume that highlights their skills, experiences, and achievements.
- 20** minutes  
**Activity 4: Crafting a Cover Letter**  
In this activity, students will draft a customized cover letter that highlights relevant skills by expanding on experiences in their resume.

## Xello entry point

It is recommended students complete the Xello lesson **Jobs and Employers** prior to this lesson.

## Vocabulary

- Resume
- Cover letter
- Applicant Tracking Systems
- Transferable skills
- Hard and soft skills
- Resume Alternative
- Professional Online Profile
- Artistic Portfolio
- Personal Brand
- Technical Portfolio
- Demo Reel
- Writing Samples

# Activity 1: Showcasing Yourself

12

Recommended  
12th grade



Length  
15 minutes

## Inquiry prompts

- Are resumes the only option when applying for a job?

## Teaching strategies

In this activity, students will be introduced to resumes, learn about alternative options, and identify which options may be preferred for a saved career. They will be provided sample resumes, including examples for alternative resume options, to help them understand the content, style, and format of each.

- 1 Provide the [instructions](#) on the next page to your students.

## Materials required

- [Student instructions](#)
- Computer or laptop with internet access

## Artifacts

Students will add a link to a sample resume alternative in the **My Notes** card for one saved career, and explain why it's a successful sample.

# Showcasing Yourself

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## Student instructions

A **Resume** is a brief summary of a person's skills, education, and work experience. It is often required to apply for a job. It shows potential employers why the applicant may be a good fit. Check out this article on to learn about 3 common formats and see examples.

Resumes are a great way to show potential employers what you would bring to a job. But for certain careers, a resume isn't the only option! Many career paths now require applicants to include non-resume options to showcase their skills and experience in a particular field.

- 1 In addition to a strong resume, sometimes it's required or makes sense to have a resume alternative to present alongside your traditional resume. Check out the 6 different [resume alternatives](#) on the following page.
- 2 Now that you have a general understanding of resumes and alternative options, select one of your saved careers that you think would likely require an alternative option in addition to a strong resume.
- 3 For this career, find a sample resume alternative online that you think successfully illustrates the skills and experience needed in the profession. Add this sample in the **My Notes** card under **Explore This Career** at the top of the career profile on Xello. Explain why you think this is an effective alternative resume option for the selected career.

# Showcasing Yourself

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In addition to a strong resume, sometimes it makes sense to have a:

## Professional Online Profile

- This is a current summary of your experience, education, and skills. It may help you find job ads, network, and connect with recruiters.
- An online profile may benefit applicants in many career fields. Check out these [profile quick tips from LinkedIn](#) to help you get started.

## Artistic Portfolio

- This is a collection of your best work samples that shows your personal style and creative ideas.
- Careers that often require an Artistic Portfolio include photographer, graphic designer, and medical illustrator. Check out [Behance](#), a platform that allows people with web design careers to showcase their portfolios of visual work.

## Personal Brand

- This is a strategy to package and sell your unique skills and abilities to employers. It often includes your online presence, like social media or a website.
- A personal brand may benefit applicants in many career fields. Check out a rising star you've been following on social media, and see how they have packaged their brand over their various platforms.

## Technical Portfolio

- This is a work sample, often called a “repository”, that shows your clean and efficient code for past web projects.
- Careers that often require a Technical Portfolio include programmer, web developer, and software engineer. Explore [Github.com](#), an online platform that brings together the world's largest community of developers to discover, share, and build better software.

## Demo Reel

- This is a short collection of video or audio clips that shows your skills and range for a visual or creative job.
- Careers that often require applicants to submit demo reels include actor, digital animator, motion graphic designer, dancer, and musician. Check out [Vimeo.com](#) to see a community of creative professionals sharing video based works.

## Writing Samples

- This is a collection of your best (often published) written work that shows your style, tone, and areas of specialty.
- Careers that often require writing samples include print journalist, technical writer, and marketing specialist. Check out [clippings.me](#) to discover writing samples from top freelance journalists.

## Activity 2: Job Ad Analysis

12

Recommended  
12th grade



Length  
20 minutes

### Inquiry prompts

- How do I know I am a good fit for a job opening?

### Teaching strategies

In this activity, students will learn how to analyze a job ad to understand how to optimize their resume to show they are a good fit for a job opening. You may need to remind students of job posting sites to help them get started on this activity.

- 1 Create an **Assignment** in Xello with the [instructions](#) provided on the next page to your students.
- 2 After students submit the **Assignment** on Xello, check their marked-up job ad and refer to their Xello student profile **Overview** tab to review their updated **Experiences Timeline**.

### Materials required

- [Student instructions](#)
- Computer or laptop with internet access
- Job board websites

### Artifacts

Students will markup a job ad they think they are qualified to apply to today, and explain the value they would provide the employer through the skills they have applied in past experiences, then upload this work to **Assignments** in Xello.

# Job Ad Analysis

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## Student instructions

So, you've found a great job opening. You want to impress the employer with your resume. But how do you know what to include?

**Pro tip:** check out the job ad! The employer wants to see that you have the skills to do the job.

Steps to success include:

- Read the job ad to see what the employer is looking for
- Reflect on how your skills match the employer's needs
- Include the relevant skills in your resume

Ready to get some practice analyzing a job ad? In this activity you will decode a job ad and then identify the skills you have.

- 1 Find a job posting for a position you think you are qualified to apply to now.
- 2 Read the job ad to see what the employer is looking for. Mark up the job posting (print it off or use a digital markup tool, such as [www.diigo.com](http://www.diigo.com)) by circling the following key qualifications and requirements:
  - Identify 3 job responsibilities
  - Identify 4 skills the employer is looking for
- 3 Identify how your skills match the employer's needs:
  - Which of these skills do you have listed on your Xello **About Me** profile? If necessary, add those skills you know you have demonstrated in the past or are still working at.
  - Where do you practise or demonstrate these skills? Refer to your Xello **Experience Timeline**. If necessary, add the experiences to your timeline.
- 4 Explain the value you provided in these past/current experiences, by highlighting your skills that match the job ad within the **What I Learned** text field in the Xello **Experiences Timeline**. For example:

Work Experience: Cashier and Schedule Manager at Metro Grocery Store

- Accurately entered data and checked for errors on 500 client accounts
- Handled up to 10 customer complaints a day in a friendly, efficient way
- Managed shift schedules for 10 other cashiers on a weekly basis
- Consistently provided a friendly and personable customer experience

**Pro tips:** Stick to past tense if the position is complete. Craft points that highlight your skills. Add numbers to quantify your value if possible

- 5 Upload your marked-up job ad and identify the experiences you added or updated on your Xello **Experiences Timeline** to the **Job Ad Xello Assignment**.

# Activity 3: Resume Starter

**12** Recommended  
12th grade

 Length  
40 minutes

## Inquiry prompts

- What should I include on my resume?
- How should I format my resume so it stands out?

## Teaching strategies

In this activity, students will learn how to write a high school student resume that highlights their skills, experiences, and achievements.

- 1 Create an **Assignment** in Xello as a place for them to upload their first draft for feedback. Make sure to select the **Resume Builder** prerequisite when creating the **Assignment**.
- 2 Copy and paste these details (and modify if needed) into the Xello **Assignment, Instructions for Students** field:

In this task you will use Xello's **Resume Builder** to draft a resume and upload it for teacher feedback. Use the attached instructions to help you create a strong resume!

As part of the activity you'll need to check out these 2 articles for some great resume writing tips:

- [How to Write a High School Student Resume](#), written by Susan Shor, Content Writer & Editor
- [Resume Formats](#), written by Rolf Bax, Content Specialist

Before jumping into writing your resume, you might want to check out this [Building a resume with Xello](#) video.

Once you've updated your resume in Xello, you can choose to download it as a formatted PDF or the Rich Text option if you'd like to change section headings or design the layout yourself.

Finally, attach your resume here and keep an eye out for feedback from your teacher.

- 3 Included in the student instructions starting on the next page is Xello's Resume Builder video. You can share this directly with students and possibly watch it together as a class. Provide the [student instructions](#) as an attachment in the Xello **Assignment**.

## Materials required

- Computer with internet access
- [Student instructions](#)
- 2 articles on resume.io: [How to Write a High School Student Resume](#) and [Resume Formats](#)
- [Resume Dos and Don'ts Tips](#)
- [Building a resume with Xello](#)

## Artifacts

Students will use Xello's **Resume Builder** to draft their resume and upload it in Xello's **Assignments** for your feedback.

# Resume Starter

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## Student instructions

Have you created a resume before? If you don't have much (or any) formal work experience yet, it can be tough to know where to start. But you can still write a stand-out resume!

A high school student's resume tends to include these sections:

- Contact details
- Objective
- Education
- Skills
- Work and volunteer experiences
- Awards and achievements
- Activities and interests

How would you impress a potential employer?

- 1 Check out these 2 articles for great resume writing tips. After reading each article use the checklists to see if you're ready to draft or update your resume:

[How to Write a High School Student Resume](#), written by Susan Shor, Content Writer & Editor

I know...

- how an Application Tracking System works and what types of workplaces use them.
- how to use the first section of my resume (known as your objective) to exhibit my personality.
- an expert tip to ensure my resume is professional-sounding.
- what the most important skills for entry-level employees are.
- how to think creatively about the skills I've learned in school for my resume.
- how to expand the education section of my resume to include keywords.
- the right way to list my experiences on my resume.
- the experience section can include more than just jobs at this point in my life.
- what is in my best interest when formatting my resume.
- what the most common resume errors are.

[Resume Formats](#), written by Paul Drury, Content Specialist

I know...

- the difference between chronological, reverse chronological, functional, and hybrid resume formats.
- the basic information to include in all types of resumes.
- how to select the correct format for my own resume.

- 2 Now is your turn to showcase your aptitude for a job you're interested in applying to. This task might seem daunting, but one of the best ways to get started on your resume as a high school student is to use Xello's **Resume Builder** to help you develop and format it. Before jumping into writing your resume, you might want to check out [Building a resume with Xello](#).

- 3 Access **Resume Builder** from your **About Me** section in Xello and use the built in **Tips and Samples** along the way. You can also review the same resume dos and don'ts tips on this [handout](#):

Remember, a strong resume:

- make it easy for employers to get in touch with you.
- are clean and simple so employers can focus on the content.
- tend to be 1-2 pages, with a summary of only related work experience.

## Resume Starter

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- indicate why you'd be a good fit for the job opening.
  - are free of typos and errors, proving that you proofread carefully.
  - offer proof of how you contributed in previous experiences.
- 4 Once you've updated your resume in Xello, you can choose to download it as a formatted PDF or the Rich Text Option if you'd like to change section headings or design the layout yourself.
  - 5 Upload your resume to the **Assignment** in Xello and keep an eye out for feedback from your teacher.

# Resume Starter

Tips for each section of your resume:	
Do	Don't
Contact Details	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give an email and phone you check often.</li> <li>• Double check that everything is correct.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a silly or rude email address</li> </ul>
Objective	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highlight 2 or 3 of your top skills.</li> <li>• Consider tailoring the objective to the job you're applying for.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write more than 3 sentences.</li> <li>• Worry about being too specific if you don't have an exact job in mind.</li> </ul>
Education	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add the full name of your current school.</li> <li>• Include a good GPA or top course grade, if it applies.</li> <li>• Consider including electives without listing a grade.</li> <li>• Add other education experiences, such as dual credit or online courses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a nickname or short form for the school.</li> <li>• Include a lower GPA or course grade.</li> <li>• Add your elementary school.</li> </ul>
Skills	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think about the skills employers would value. Aim for 3-6.</li> <li>• Consider adding descriptive words, like "excellent", "strong", or "advanced".</li> <li>• Think about matching your skills to the job you're applying for.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add a long list of skills.</li> <li>• Include skills you're not strong in.</li> <li>• Worry if you haven't built skills through job experience. You've learned lots of skills in school!</li> </ul>
Work and Volunteer Experiences	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include any part-time or summer jobs, co-ops, or internships</li> <li>• Add informal work experiences, like cutting lawns, tutoring, babysitting, or tree planting.</li> <li>• Craft points that highlight your skills</li> <li>• Use active language when describing your experiences, like "performed", "built", or "organized".</li> <li>• List each position as a separate entry, even if it's with the same employer.</li> <li>• Think about any volunteer work you've done, no matter how informal.</li> <li>• Consider adding short-term experiences. Even a day of volunteering counts!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be modest. This is your chance to show how you shine!</li> <li>• Miss the chance to show how you added value to the organization. Use numbers to do this if possible.</li> <li>• Use present tense if the position is over.</li> <li>• Forget to capitalize job titles when appropriate.</li> </ul>
Awards and Achievements	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List academic or extracurricular awards.</li> <li>• Include leadership roles, sports trophies, or anything you are proud of.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add every award you've ever received. Stick to the highlights!</li> <li>• Include silly or joke awards.</li> </ul>

# Resume Starter

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- Consider adding the date or year you earned the award.

- Add really old achievements.

## Activities and Interests

- Add only your passions and top interests.
- Consider adding the hours you spend on it.
- Think about adding interests related to the job you're applying for.

- Include any more than 6 interests.
- Add common interests like hangout with friends. This is your chance to stand out!
- Forget to show a glimpse of your personality.

## Activity 4: Crafting a Cover Letter

**12** Recommended  
12th grade

 Length  
20 minutes

### Inquiry prompts

- What is a cover letter?
- Why should I submit a different cover letter for every job I apply for?

### Teaching strategies

In this activity, students will draft a customized cover letter that highlights relevant skills by expanding on experiences in their resume.

- 1 Create an **Assignment** in Xello with the [instructions](#) provided on the next page.
- 2 If your students completed the [Job Ad Analysis](#) assignment, you may want to recommend they use the sample job ad from that assignment for this cover letter.

### Materials required

- Computer with internet access
- [Student instructions](#)
- [Cover letter examples](#)

### Artifacts

Students will upload their customized cover letter to the Xello **Assignment**.

# Crafting a Cover Letter

## Student instructions

A **cover letter** is a short letter that goes along with your resume. It explains how your skills and experience make you the best person for the job. Your cover letter should:

- Be customized for the job you're applying for
- Highlight your relevant skills
- Expand on any relevant experience

Check out these [cover letter examples](#) and use the tips below to craft your cover letter and then upload your cover letter draft to your Xello **Assignment** for feedback:

Do	Don't
Introduction:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include the name of the hiring manager, if available</li> <li>• Mention the job and company name</li> <li>• Use a friendly but respectful tone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send every employer the same letter</li> <li>• Make your intro super long</li> <li>• Be overly formal</li> </ul>
Body:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk about how you can help the employer</li> <li>• Include keywords and skills from the job ad</li> <li>• Provide details about your skills and experience</li> <li>• Tips for including details about related skills or experience:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give details about what you did and the value you brought, expanding on what is in your resume</li> <li>• Discuss what you learned</li> <li>• Talk about the skills you used or developed that is relevant to the position you're applying for</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write about skills unrelated to the job</li> <li>• Include skills or experiences you don't have</li> <li>• Repeat your resume details without expanding on them</li> </ul>
Conclusion:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sell yourself</li> <li>• Be confident</li> <li>• Express an obvious interest in the job or company</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be vague or modest</li> <li>• Write a generic conclusion</li> <li>• Miss your chance to leave a strong final impression</li> </ul>