
BUILDING A RESUME

Finding a job begins with submitting a resume to an employer. A resume is similar to a curriculum vitae (CV), but is typically shorter than a CV. A resume lists a person's skills and experiences and is a required document when applying to jobs. In the United States, a resume is typically accompanied by a cover letter. A cover letter is a one-page letter to an employer that explains, in paragraph form, why a person is the best person for a job. In this week's Teacher's Corner, students will practice proofreading and editing a resume and cover letter before writing one of their own.

LEVEL

High-Intermediate to Advanced

LANGUAGE FOCUS

Reading, speaking (primary focus); writing (secondary focus)

GOALS

During this activity students will:

- practice editing in writing
- create a resume and cover letter

MATERIALS

- Teacher: whiteboard/chalkboard, markers or chalk, computer and printer
- Students: pencils or pens, notebooks, or writing paper

PREPARATION

1. Read through all the materials carefully.
2. Print out the Resume in Appendix 1. Make one copy of the Resume for each pair/small group.
3. Print out the Cover Letter in Appendix 2. Make one copy of the Cover Letter for each student.

ACTIVITY PART ONE: GROUP EDITING

This activity begins with a group editing activity. The idea in group editing is to have several students work together to correct errors in writing. By working together, students work more slowly, which allows them to find a few more errors. They can then discuss the errors with their partner or partners.

1. Begin the class activity by writing the following sentences on the board:
 - a. Studying English is a big thing in my life.
 - b. I have a lot of sports that I like to play.
 - c. In my spare time, I like to make artwork.
2. Have the students form pairs or small groups. In their pairs/small groups, have the students discuss the sentences on the board. Ask them to make corrections to the sentences so the sentences are stronger or clearer. Give the students 5-6 minutes to make the corrections.

3. Once time for the activity has been completed, have the pairs/small groups share their corrections with the class. While the pairs/small groups may have varying answers, they all should in some way address the following issues:
 - a. Studying English is a big thing in my life. The phrase “a big thing” is too vague. The sentence should be improved to something more specific such as “Studying English is important in my life.”
 - b. I have a lot of sports that I like to play. The phrase “a lot of” is too informal for academic or business writing and should be changed to more formal language. Some alternatives could be a word such as *many* or a specific number such as *three*: “I have three sports that I like to play.”
 - c. In my spare time, I like to make artwork. In this example, “make” is a weak verb. It should be replaced with a stronger verb such as *create* or *design*: “In my spare time I like to design artwork.”
4. Inform the class that in today’s activity they will practice avoiding vague words, informal words, and weak verbs by working on a resume and cover letter. Write the terms *resume* and *cover letter* on the board. Ask the class if anyone knows the meaning of these terms.
 - a. Note: If none of the students know these terms, it is not a problem. Tell the students that today they will learn the terms *resume* and *cover letter*.
5. Next, with students still in their pairs or small groups, pass out one copy of the resume in Appendix 1 and one copy of the cover letter in Appendix 2 to each pair/small group.
6. Have the pairs/small groups read through the resume and cover letter and look for words or phrases that are vague or too informal, or for weak verbs . Give the students 5-7 minutes – depending on level and ability – to complete the task.
 - a. Note: Monitor students during the task to ensure they circle or underline the vague words, informal phrases, or weak verb choices that they find.
7. Once the pairs/small groups have identified all of the vague words, informal phrases, or weak verb choices, have them replace these with words or phrases that are clearer or more direct.
 - a. Note: If students are unsure of what correction to make, encourage them to take a closer look at both the resume and the cover letter. Words in the resume can be used to make the cover letter stronger and the cover letter may contain words that can be used to make the resume stronger.
8. After the pairs/small groups have made their changes, have them form larger groups. For example, you could have two pairs join to make a team of four students. In these teams have students compare the changes made before reviewing the answers as a class.

ACTIVITY PART TWO: WRITING A RESUME AND COVER LETTER

1. As either a homework activity or an in-class activity, have the students write their own versions of the resume and cover letter.



2. Younger students can create imaginary resumes and cover letters for jobs/careers they would like to have in the future.
3. Older students could write about their actual experience and skillset.

For more on careers and talking about jobs check out [Role-Play Party: Talking about Jobs](#)

Appendix 1: Resume

Directions: Read Eddie’s resume and cover letter below and change the weak verbs, vague words, or informal language. There are 15 items to find. Can you find them all?

Eddie Fernandez

12 Overland Ave | New York, New York | 555-3432 | efernandez@greatplainsu.edu

Objective

Writer for Kirby Comics

Education

- Bachelor’s Degree (2016) Great Plains University
 - Major - Creative Writing
 - Minor – Graphic Design

Experience

March 2010 – Present

Writer and Artist | Self-Published Comic Books

- Creator of a monthly comic book series
- Wrote award-winning comic book story *The Trace Effect*
- Artist for a number of comics written

September 2013 – May 2014

Laboratory Assistant | Professor Peterson’s Lab | Great Plains University

- Assisted Professor Peterson in a bunch of science experiments
- Managed people in the science lab
- Organized work schedules and experiment calendar

June 2014 – September 2014

Delivery Person | Chef Mark’s Sandwich Shop | Great Plains University

- Took sandwiches to customers
- Made sandwiches for the new breakfast menu
- Ordered sandwich ingredients from local Farmers’ Market

Awards & Acknowledgements

2015 Winner “Best Science Fiction Story” in the Great Plains University Creative Writing contest for the story *The Trace Effect*



Appendix 2: Cover Letter

Eddie Fernandez
12 Overland Ave.
New York, New York
555-3432
efernandez@greatplainsu.edu

Dear Mr. Kirby,

I am excited to apply for the position of story writer at Kirby Comics. Kirby Comics makes incredible comics that are read by people all over the world. Your *Captain Alpha* comic is very popular. Besides *Captain Alpha*, Kirby Comics makes a lot of comics that are examples of exciting storytelling and incredible artwork. I'd love to bring my own creative talent and storytelling experience to Kirby Comics and continue this tradition of good comic creation.

I've written and drawn six of my own comic books over the last 8 years. This experience taught me the importance of deadlines and how to write fast. Also, my comic book story *The Trace Effect* was selected as best science fiction story at the 2015 Great Plains University Creative Writing Contest. Besides writing comics I have a lot of job skills that I can bring to Kirby Comics. I was a laboratory director and was a manager of the student workers. During my time as lab director I assisted in ten science experiments. In my work at Chef Mark's Sandwich Shop I created new sandwiches and ordered ingredients for each day's sandwiches. As an intern at Kirby Comics, I could use these skills to help the company work creatively and effectively on a limited deadline.

Again, Kirby Comics' focus on creative stories has made a big impression on me. I would be thrilled to work at an organization where everyone loves comic books as much as I do.

Thank you for your time,

Eddie Fernandez

Appendix 3: Resume Answer Key

Directions: Read Eddie’s resume and cover letter below and change the weak verbs, vague words, or informal language. There are 15 items to find. Can you find them all?

Eddie Fernandez

12 Overland Ave | New York, New York | 555-3432 | efernandez@greatplainsu.edu

Objective

Creative comic book fan determined to write for Kirby Comics.

Education

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 - Minor – Graphic Design

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New York, New York
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