

The Job Acquisition Skills Handbook

**The Résumé
The Cover Letter
References
The Job Application
Interview Techniques and Questions
The Thank-you Letter**



**Camas High School
2009-10**

Your Perfect Résumé

FORMAT:

- Your résumé should be one full page long, even if you have to make your fonts and spaces larger
- Use a 10-12 font unless you are emphasizing your name and contact information, or the headings. Fonts (not necessarily font sizes) and paper should match for your references, résumé and cover letter.
- The layout should be balanced and symmetrical and font changes and dashes should be consistent.
- Use bullets instead of asterisks.
- Use WA or Washington, not both. Use commas after cities.
- Phone numbers are (360) space 834-0000 or 360.834.0000
- Delete headings if you don't have anything to put under them, *e.g.* "Special Honors."
- Use periods or no periods after lines and lists, but be consistent.
- Done? Center your résumé vertically on the page & proofread.

CONTENT:

- Write your objective for both short-term and long-term employment goals. The short-term goal should be possible now and lead to the long-term goal, *e.g.* "To obtain a job as a computer design assistant, with the goal of becoming a graphics designer."
- Write in incomplete sentences by leaving the subject out. Never use "I," "me," or "my"—begin with an action verb, *e.g.* "cashiered during busy times" or "supervised two-year-old child . . ."
- Required headings are: "Objective" and "Education." Other headings are "Experience," "Honors and Activities," "Personal," "Volunteer Experiences," etc.
- Put the most impressive heading first.
- Order all experience, education, and activities by the most current first.
- Under the headings "Education" and "Experience," give the name and address of the school/place of business, and dates attended/worked. List your most recent entries first.

CONTENT: (continued)

- Under “Experience,” include any and all accomplishments that show you are responsible and dependable: candy sales, all work (yes, even babysitting and lawn mowing) and family duties. Give the addresses of your employers/supervisors and months and years you began and stopped working.
- Worked over the summer? Use "seasonal" or "summer job." Still working? Use “present.”
- Use action verbs: not “worked” or “got,” but “managed,” “organized,” “planned,” etc.
- Use the correct tense for past and current jobs and activities.
- Add specialized classes, GPA and class standing (only if they’re worth bragging about), sports, clubs, church activities, volunteer events, hobbies, talents, awards . . .

STYLE:

- Design your own distinctive heading that you use on your reference sheet, your résumé, and your cover letter. Be sure it is easy to read.
- Choose colored paper, unusual designs or graphics to make your résumé and other documents stand out from the crowd.

Letters of Recommendation

A letter of recommendation is written by a teacher, counselor, youth leader, coach, friend’s parent, or someone who knows you and who can say good things about you.

- Ask the writer for a letter as soon as you know you need one. Most people are really busy and they will appreciate having enough time to do a good job. It usually takes from half an hour to an hour to craft a good letter of recommendation.
- Give the writer this information **in writing**:
 - when the letter needs to be done
 - who to address the letter to
 - what skills, abilities and traits you would like emphasized
 - a specific example the writer knows about that demonstrates those qualities
 - what to do with the letter when it’s done. Usually either the writer gives it to you or mails it directly to the addressee. If the writer needs to mail it, provide a stamped, addressed envelope.
- Check back with the writer a few days before the letter should be done.
- After the letter is done, show your gratitude by giving the writer a thank-you note or a treat.

Joe Papermaker

222 Any Street
Camas, WA 98607
(360) 817-4441
joepapermaker@camas.org

OBJECTIVE

To obtain a part-time position in customer service while in high school with the long-term goal of a career in business management.

EDUCATION

Camas High School

Camas, WA 98607

Will graduate in June 2008

Cumulative GPA 3.4

Specialized courses: Spanish (2 years), Intro. to Marketing, Keyboarding, Honors Journeys.

WORK EXPERIENCE

The Liberty Theater

Camas, WA 98607

(360) 555-1111

June 2006 – Present

Customer Service/Film Operator

Supervisor: Steven Spielberg

Work weekends. Maintain snack bar and prepare customer food orders. Sell tickets and operate cash register.

Operate projector, splice film reels, and prepare required paperwork.

Top Burger

Camas, WA 98607

(360) 555-1112

April 2005 – June 2006

Counter Server

Supervisor: Emeril Legasse

Worked part-time during junior year of high school. Received and delivered orders, assured good customer service, operated cash register and balanced sales at the end of each shift.

John & Sarah Smith

Camas, WA 98607

(360) 555-1113

March 2003 – April 2005

Childcare Provider

Provided care for a two-year-old child and an infant on an occasional basis. Prepared meals, cleaned house, and entertained.

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Key Club

Camas, WA 98607

(360) 817-44000

September 2005- June 2007

Club Member

Volunteered in various events such as Santa workshop, tutoring, concessions and other events as needed.

HONORS & AWARDS

- Member of National Junior Honor Society 2005 – 2007
- Team Captain Camas High School Football Team 2007
- Most Improved Soccer Player 2003 – 2006 Season

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REFERENCES

Mr. Thomas Wyatt
Hilltop Market, Manager
1436 NE Everett
Camas, WA 98607
(360) 222-1111
Family Friend

The Reverend Terry Dallas
Holy Family Church
415 Fourth Street
Camas, WA 98607
(360) 321-2345
Youth Minister

Ms. Donna Cooper
Camas High School
26900 SE 15th Street
Camas, WA 98607
(360) 817-4441
High School Counselor

For Your Information Only
Do not add this to your reference sheet

- There should be at least three references on your reference sheet
- Each person should be 18 years old or older
- Each person should NOT be related to you
- Complete contact information should be included
- Tell people you list on this sheet that you are using them as references

Your Perfect Cover Letter

Your cover letter goes with your résumé. Your letter should be at least three paragraphs long.

1st paragraph: indicate why you are writing, identify the job (college or scholarship) you're interested in, and explain how you heard about the position.

2nd paragraph: tell the reader why you are qualified. Sell yourself! Itemize the strengths and skills that are specific to the position and "prove" you have those abilities by giving an example of each ability. Refer the reader to your résumé.

3rd paragraph: thank the reader for his/her consideration. Ask for an interview or give a date when you'll call to schedule one. Give the reader contact numbers and times.

FORMAT:

- Use block format since it is the most formal. Begin each line on the 1" left margin. Note there are no indentations for new paragraphs; you just skip a line.
- Use the same 12-inch font as most of your résumé.
- Use a colon after the salutation, like "Dear Mr. Smith:" A colon is formal and indicates you don't know the person.
- You MAY use "I" in the cover letter, but not in your résumé.
- Add the accent marks over both "e's" in résumé; otherwise it's "resume," which means "to start again." Hit CTRL + ' (apostrophe) then type an "e" in Word. If that fails, go to INSERT, SYMBOLS, NORMAL TEXT, and find the é. If all else fails, use a black pen to ink it in.
- p.m. or P.M., not pm or PM
- Turn off your hyperlink if you give your e-mail address in the last paragraph. CTRL + Z.

CONTENT:

- Start with your return address and the date. If you are using your own personalized heading, start with the date.
- Try to get the name of the person who is doing the hiring and be sure to spell it correctly. Otherwise, use the title of the person, *e.g.* "Personnel Director," or "Human Resources Manager," "Dear Sir or Madam," or the name of the company.
- Use your short-term objective on your résumé as the job you are applying for.

- State where and when you heard about the job. If it is a newspaper, name the newspaper and underline the title, e.g. The Columbian.
- Add interesting adjectives, verbs and nouns to help you stand out from the crowd.
- No more than two sentences in a row should begin with “I.”

DONE?

- Center the letter vertically: FILE, PAGE SETUP, LAYOUT, VERTICAL A., hit “center”
- Proofread.
- Print on the same paper you use for your résumé, double-check, and sign it in ink.
(a vertically centered letter without a personalized heading)

Sender's Address
City, State Zip
Phone

Today's Date

Recipient's Name
His/her Job Title if you know it
Company Name
Street address
City, State Zip

Dear Mr./Ms. _____:

Opening: State the job title you are interested in, how you heard about it, and make some general statement about your qualifications and/or your enthusiasm for the position.

Body: Describe why you are interested in this job and any background experience you have that makes you the perfect person for this job. Give concrete examples of ways in which your education, experience, and accomplishments match this particular job. If it applies, explain your interest in this career field. Refer the reader to your attached résumé for additional information about you. Don't forget the accent marks on "résumé."

Closing: Ask for an interview and give your complete contact information, including times you'll be available. Thank the recipient for taking time out of his/her day to read your letter.

Sincerely,

Sign your name in blue or black ink

Type your name

Enclosure (indicates you have enclosed your résumé, letters of recommendation, etc.)

Joe Papermaker

222 Any Street
Camas, WA 98607
(360) 817-4441
joepapermaker@camas.org

March 1, 2007

Ms. Marcia Wilson
Hiring Manager
Quickie Burger
1234 First Street
Camas, WA 98607

Dear Ms. Wilson:

I am writing about the opening for a customer service person at your quick service restaurant. This position was advertised in the February 27th edition of the Camas-Washougal Post Record. I am very interested in this job and I with my strong people skills I would be a great candidate for this position.

I know how to be an excellent customer service representative, as proven by my success at work and in the classroom. My experience working in the student store at school has given me hands-on experience in dealing with real life situations. My leadership and dedication in this position has earned me the role of Shift Manager. A history of exceptional attendance demonstrates my strong work ethic. Attached is my résumé with the details of my education and experience.

I look forward to meeting with you to discuss my future position with your company. Please contact me to schedule an interview at (360) 817-4441 or joepapermaker@camas.org. Thank you for considering me for this position.

Sincerely,

Joe Papermaker

Joe Papermaker

Enclosure

Your Perfect Job Application

- Photocopy the application before you fill it out so you can practice on the copy.
- Read the fine print. Your possible future employer can fire you if you omit information or add information that isn't true.
- Use a pen with blue or black ink.
- Print neatly.
- Conventions must be perfect.
- Fill in all the blanks and boxes. Use "N/A" or line through parts that don't apply to you.
- Social Security number—use 000-00-0000 on practice documents. Beware of ID theft!
- Use area codes for phone numbers and complete addresses. Everyone doesn't live in Camas.
- Use standard answers:
 - Position:* actual job title or "Open"
 - Salary desired:* actual amount you want or "scale" or "prevailing wage"
 - May we ask previous and/or present employers about you?*
 - Check "yes,"
 - and tell your current employer you are looking for another job. Once in awhile this may lead to a confrontation with your current employer, but if you're a good employee, it will more often lead to a raise.
 - and when you are interviewing, explain the issues you had with your previous employer. If you check "no," you will very likely not even get an interview.
 - Bottom line: Don't burn your bridges. Try to be as honest and fair to your employer as you want him or her to be to you.
 - May we send to your high school for your transcript, and attendance and discipline records?* Check "yes."
 - Reason for leaving previous employment?* Try for positive reasons, such as "Needed more hours" or "School started." Be sure to tell the truth.
 - When could you start work?* "Any time" or "To be arranged at interview."
 - Service record:* This asks whether you have been in the armed forces. Put "N/A"
- Sign and date it.
- Always check it over when you're done!
- This is where the job application is to go.

APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

We consider applicants for all positions without regard to race, color, religion, creed, gender, national origin, age, disability, marital or veteran status, or any other legally protected status.

(PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY)

Positions(s) Applied For		Date of Application ____/____/____	
How Did You Learn About Us?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Advertisement	<input type="checkbox"/> Friend	<input type="checkbox"/> Inquiry	
<input type="checkbox"/> Employment Agency	<input type="checkbox"/> Relative	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
Last Name	First Name	Middle Initial	
Address	City	State	Zip
Telephone Number	Alternate Phone Number	Social Security # ____/____/____	

Best time to contact you at home is _____ : _____ / _____ : _____

If you are under 18 years of age, can you provide required proof of your eligibility to work? Yes No

Have you ever filed an application with us before? Yes No
If Yes, give date _____

Have you ever been employed with us before? Yes No
If Yes, give date _____

Do any of your friends or relatives, other than spouse, work here? Yes No
If Yes, state name, relationship and location _____

Are you currently employed? Yes No

May we contact your present employer? N/A Yes No

Are you prevented from lawfully becoming employed in this country because of Visa or Immigration Status? Yes No
Proof of citizenship or immigration status will be required upon employment.

Date available for work ____/____/____ What is your desired hourly salary range? _____

Are you available to work: Full Time - please indicate Mornings Afternoons Evenings
 Part Time - please indicate Mornings Afternoons Evenings
 Temporary - please indicate dates available from ____/____ to ____/____

Are you currently of "lay-off" status and subject to recall? Yes No

Can you travel if a job requires it? Yes No

WE ARE AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

EDUCATION

School	Name and Address of School	Course of Study	Years Completed	Diploma/ Degree
High School				
Undergraduate College				
Graduate/ Professional				
Other (Specify)				

WORK EXPERIENCE

Start with your present or last job. Include any job-related military service assignments and volunteer activities. You may exclude organizations which indicate race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disabilities or other protected status.

Employer:	Dates Employed		Work/Duties Performed
Address:	From	To	
Telephone Number(s):			
Starting/Present Job Title:	Hourly Rate/Salary		
Supervisor:	Starting	Final	
Reason for Leaving:			

Employer:	Dates Employed		Work/Duties Performed
Address:	From	To	
Telephone Number(s):			
Starting/Present Job Title:	Hourly Rate/Salary		
Supervisor:	Starting	Final	
Reason for Leaving:			

Employer:	Dates Employed		Work/Duties Performed
Address:	From	To	
Telephone Number(s):			
Starting/Present Job Title:	Hourly Rate/Salary		
Supervisor:	Starting	Final	
Reason for Leaving:			

PERSONAL/PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES *Do not include family members or past supervisors.*

Name	Phone Number	Occupation	Relationship to Applicant
1.			
2.			
3.			

Signature of Applicant

Date

Tips for Dynamite Interviews!

1. Always be on time! It is best to be at least 10 minutes early.
2. If you can't make it, call to reschedule. This shows responsibility.
3. Dress neatly and conservatively; your first impression is very important.
4. Be organized! Bring your résumé, cover letter, references, and anything else that would prove you are worthy of employment.
5. Be relaxed, polite, confident, and enthusiastic; after all, they wouldn't have scheduled you if they weren't interested. Be prepared to talk about your strengths.
6. Walk in with a smile, make eye contact, and offer a firm handshake.
7. When sitting in your interview, do not slump or recline, and try to avoid nervous habits (such as touching your hair).
8. When asked a question, answer it clearly and concisely. It is *not* a good idea to pour out your life history.
9. You do not need to volunteer information about why you left a former job, but if asked, reply truthfully. Do not say anything derogatory about your former company.
10. Avoid giving the impression that you are a job hopper or a disgruntled employee.
11. Be prepared to explain any gaps in employment, and if your experience is limited, express your desire to learn.
12. Always ask questions about the company or the position for which you are applying. You will appear more involved and interested.
13. Always shake hands, look the interviewer(s) in the eye and thank the interviewer for his/her time as you leave.
14. Follow up with a written thank-you note within 24 hours. This shows good manners and it will remind the interviewer of you.

The Six Most Common Mistakes Applicants Make

1. limp or bruising handshake or no eye contact
2. careless language—bad grammar, slang
3. blaming others, including current employers, co-workers, or teachers
4. being too aggressive and demanding, too timid or too casual
5. talking too much
6. poor grooming



Be Ready for These Questions!

~Answer the question briefly but fully. Always provide a specific example.~

1. Please describe what you are doing to prepare yourself for your career as a _____.
2. How would you handle a new project that I might give you? (Use examples from school or work and explain how you organized the project).
3. What does responsibility mean to you? Give an example of when you showed responsibility.
4. In one or two words, how would your boss or a teacher describe you?
5. What do you consider your strengths? Your weaknesses?
6. Describe a personal accomplishment you are proud of.
7. Describe your problem-solving skills and give an example.
8. What does teamwork mean to you? Give an example of a successful team experience.
9. If you could pick your perfect job, what would it be?
10. Why are you interested in this career?
11. What strengths or skills do you have that would benefit you in this career choice?
12. What are your favorite and least favorite classes in school? Why?
13. What are your educational goals after high school?
14. What do you do in your spare time?
15. Give an example of a project on the job or in school in which you were highly motivated.
16. Describe a situation at work or school when you needed to make a decision.
17. What goals have you set in the past, and how successful have you been in accomplishing them?
18. Everyone makes a mistake. What was the most significant mistake you made on the job or in school? How did you handle the situation and what did you learn from it?
19. Tell me about a time you had to cope with strict deadlines or time demands.
20. Describe your creativity and tell about a time when you were pleased with something you created.
21. What would you like to improve about yourself in order to be more effective?
22. What is the one thing you would like me to know about you that would give me a good indication of your character?
23. If you could describe yourself in one word, what would that word be?
24. Who is your hero and why?
25. What does success mean to you?
26. What would you do if you knew a co-worker was taking supplies, food or other items that they didn't pay for?
27. How would you handle a situation where you and your co-worker had a personal conflict? Would you go to your supervisor or would you go to your co-worker?

For the Real Thing

~Before a real interview, research the company and the type of business.~

1. Why do you want to work for this company?
2. What do you know about our company?
3. What do you know about this industry?
4. Why did you leave your last job?
5. What qualifications do you have that will help you succeed in this job?
6. How will hiring you benefit this company?

Your **Perfect** Thank-you Letter

- Write the first draft immediately after your interview.
- Even if you don't think you did well, or you didn't enjoy the experience, be nice.
- You may use your own personalized heading or begin with your address and the date.
- Carefully edit the first draft, or have someone else edit it. Conventions must be perfect.
- Write draft 2 and proofread it carefully. You may need to write a draft 3.
- Center your letter vertically on the page and use full block format, as shown below.
- Be sure to spell the interviewer's name correctly.
- Give your teacher your thank-you letter or mail it out ASAP.

FORMAT FOR THE TYPED THANK-YOU LETTER

Your street address
Your city, state and zip
Today's date

The interviewer's full name with Mr. or Ms.
c/o Camas High School (for on-campus interviews)
26900 SE 15th Street
Camas, WA 98607

Dear (Mr./Ms.) Interviewer's last name:

Thank the person for the interview and mention the date of the interview. Write about a specific part of the interview that made it memorable or meaningful. Did you receive feedback on your interview techniques, professionalism, or job acquisition documents? If so, include what you learned. If you received information on your future career, or tips on how to locate a job or be a good employee, comment on them. No more than two sentences in a row should begin with "I."

Tell the person you appreciate his/her participation in the Job Acquisition Skills program at Camas High School, and explain why you think this is a valuable program. If your interview included a possible job lead, ask him/her to contact you at your phone number if s/he wishes to, and specify the time(s) you are available, or tell the interviewer when you'll contact him/her. Thank the person again.

Sincerely,

Your signature in blue or black ink

Your name typed

Joe Papermaker

222 Any Street
Camas, WA 98607
(360) 817-4441
joepapermaker@camas.org

March 7, 2007

Ms. Marcia Wilson
Personnel Director
ABC Company
1234 First Street
Camas, WA 98607

Dear Ms. Wilson:

Thank you for taking the time to interview me yesterday, March 6, for the position of customer service representative. I enjoyed the opportunity to meet with you and appreciate your comments and suggestions, especially your observations on the most important characteristics of a good customer service representative. Your thoughts on how to make my résumé longer were also very helpful.

I hope you continue to participate in the Job Acquisition Skills Program at Camas High School because it is a great contribution to both the students and the future work force. When we spoke, you mentioned summer openings so I will contact you in May to see what is available. I am a very conscientious worker and I know I would do a fine job for you. If you need additional information, you may contact me at (360) 817-4441 between the hours of 5:00 and 9:00 p.m., or at joepapermaker@camas.org. I appreciate your time.

Sincerely,

Joe Papermaker

Joe Papermaker