

Do not include author.

The abstract should be one paragraph, 150-200 words in length.

Key Words

On the same page as the abstract, include a list of three to five words that help to identify main themes in the manuscript.

Text Formatting

All text within the document should be in a 12-point font and double spaced (including footnotes), or as specified by journal or course instructor.

Margins

Margins should be at least 1 1/4 inches on all sides, or as specified by journal or course instructor.

First Page

The first page of the text should start with the title and be on a new page of text (after the title page and abstract).

Subheadings

Use subheadings to organize the body of the manuscript. Usually, three different levels of headings should be sufficient.

THIS IS A FIRST-LEVEL HEAD

- Place first-level heads in all caps and left-justify.
- Don't use a bold font.
- Don't begin the manuscript with a heading, such as *Introduction*.

This is a Second-Level Head

- Italicize and left-justify second-level heads.
- Don't use a bold font.
- Use title case.

This is a third-level head

- Italicize and left-justify third-level heads.
- Don't use a bold font.
- Capitalize only the first word of the head.

Footnotes and Endnotes

Footnotes and endnotes are used to cite materials of limited availability, expand upon the text, or to add information presented in a table.

Endnotes are used more frequently than footnotes, but both should be used sparingly. As a general rule, use one or the other throughout the manuscript but do not mix them. (The exception to this rule is to use a footnote on the Title page and for tables, but use endnotes throughout the rest of the document for manuscripts being submitted to a sociology journal.)

In the text, footnotes or endnotes, whichever are used, should be numbered consecutively throughout the essay with superscript Arabic numerals.

Footnotes are placed at the bottom of the page on which the material being referenced appears. If using endnotes, at the end of the paper in a separate section following the references, type the endnotes in numerical order, double-spaced, as a separate section with the title *Notes* or *Endnotes*.

Begin each note with the same superscripted number used in the text.

⁸See the new *ASA Style Guide* for more information.

Page Numbering

Pages should be numbered consecutively (1, 2, 3...) starting with the title page and including the references page(s), or as specified by journal or course instructor.

Tables and Figures

Number tables consecutively (Table 1, Table 2, Table 3).

Number figures consecutively (Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3).

Each table or figure should be placed on a separate page at the end of the manuscript, and should have a descriptive title that explains enough that the reader can understand it without having to refer to the text of the article.

In tables, give full headings for every column and row, avoiding the use of abbreviations whenever possible. Spell out the word *percent* in headings.

For more information, please consult the *ASA Style Guide*, Fifth Edition.

- [Chicago Manual Style Guides](#)

Chicago Manual of Style 17th Edition

Summary:

This section contains information on *The Chicago Manual of Style* method of document formatting and citation. These resources follow the seventeenth edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style*, which was issued in 2017.

Contributors: Jessica Clements, Elizabeth Angeli, Karen Schiller, S. C. Gooch, Laurie Pinkert, Allen Brizee, Ryan Murphy, Vanessa Iacocca, Ryan Schnurr

Last Edited: 2018-01-31 02:26:18

Please note that while these resources reflect the most recent updates in the 17th edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style* concerning documentation practices, you can review a full list of updates concerning usage, technology, professional practice, etc. at [The Chicago Manual of Style Online](#).

To see a side-by-side comparison of the three most widely used citation styles, including a chart of all CMOS citation guidelines, see the [Citation Style Chart](#).

Introduction

The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) covers a variety of topics from manuscript preparation and publication to grammar, usage, and documentation and has been lovingly called the “editors’ bible.” The material in this resource focuses primarily on one of the two CMOS documentation styles: the Notes-Bibliography System (NB), which is used by those in literature, history, and the arts. The other documentation style, the Author-Date System, is nearly identical in content but slightly different in form and is preferred in the social sciences.

In addition to consulting *The Chicago Manual of Style* (17th ed.) for more information, students may also find it useful to consult Kate L. Turabian's *Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (8th ed.). This manual, which presents what is commonly known as the “Turabian” citation style, follows the two CMOS patterns of documentation but offers slight modifications suited to student texts.

Notes and Bibliography (NB) in Chicago style

The Chicago NB system is often used in the humanities and provides writers with a system for referencing their sources through footnote or endnote citation in their writing and through bibliography pages. It also offers writers an outlet for commenting on those cited sources. The NB system is most commonly used in the discipline of history.

The proper use of the NB system can protect writers from accusations of plagiarism, which is the intentional or accidental uncredited use of source material created by others. Most importantly, properly using the NB system builds credibility by demonstrating accountability to source material.

If you are asked to use the Chicago NB format, be sure to consult *The Chicago Manual of Style* (17th ed.). Students should also refer to *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (8th ed.). Both are available in most writing centers and reference libraries and in bookstores.

Introduction to Notes

In the NB system, you should include a note (endnote or footnote) each time you use a source, whether through a direct quote or through a paraphrase or summary. Footnotes will be added at the end of the page on which the source is referenced, and endnotes will be compiled at the end of each chapter or at the end of the entire document.

In either case, a superscript number corresponding to a note with the bibliographic information for that source should be placed in the text following the end of the sentence or clause in which the source is referenced.

If a work includes a bibliography, then it is not necessary to provide full publication details in notes. However, if a bibliography is not included with a work, the first note for each source should include *all* relevant information about the source: author's full name, source title, and facts of publication. If you cite the same source again, or if a bibliography is included in the work, the note need only include the surname of the author, a shortened form of the title (if more than four words), and page number(s). However, in a work that does not include a bibliography, it is recommended that the full citation be repeated when it is first used in a new chapter.

In contrast to earlier editions of CMOS, if you cite the same source two or more times consecutively, CMOS recommends using shortened citations. In a work with a bibliography, the first reference should use a shortened citation which includes the author's name, the source title, and the page number(s), and consecutive references to the same work may omit the source title and simply include the author and page number. Although discouraged by CMOS, if you cite the same source and page number(s) from a single source two or more times consecutively, it is also possible to utilize the word "Ibid.," an

abbreviated form of the Latin *ibidem*, which means “in the same place,” as the corresponding note. If you use the same source but a different page number, the corresponding note should use “Ibid.” followed by a comma and the new page number(s).

In the NB system, the footnote or endnote itself begins with the appropriate full-sized number, followed by a period and then a space.

Introduction to Bibliographies

In the NB system, the bibliography provides an alphabetical list of all sources used in a given work. This page, most often titled Bibliography, is usually placed at the end of the work preceding the index. It should include all sources cited within the work and may sometimes include other relevant sources that were not cited but provide further reading.

Although bibliographic entries for various sources may be formatted differently, all included sources (books, articles, Web sites, etc.) are arranged alphabetically by author’s last name. If no author or editor is listed, the title or, as a last resort, a descriptive phrase may be used.

Though useful, a bibliography is not required in works that provide full bibliographic information in the notes.

Common Elements

All entries in the bibliography will include the author (or editor, compiler, translator), title, and publication information.

Author’s Names

The author’s name is inverted in the bibliography, placing the last name first and separating the last name and first name with a comma; for example, John Smith becomes Smith, John. (If an author is not listed first, this applies to compilers, translators, etc.)

Titles

Titles of books and journals are italicized. Titles of articles, chapters, poems, etc. are placed in quotation marks.

Publication Information

The year of publication is listed after the publisher or journal name.

Punctuation

In a bibliography, all major elements are separated by periods.

For more information and specific examples, see the sections on [Books](#) and [Periodicals](#).

Please note that this OWL resource provides basic information regarding the formatting of entries used in the bibliography. For more information about Selected Bibliographies, Annotated Bibliographies, and Bibliographic Essays, please consult Chapter 14.61 of *The Chicago Manual of Style (17th ed.)*.

- [Annotated Bibliographies](#)

Annotated Bibliographies

Summary:

This handout provides information about annotated bibliographies in MLA, APA, and CMS.

Contributors: Geoff Stacks, Erin Karper, Dana Bisignani, Allen Brizee

Last Edited: 2018-02-09 12:16:22

Definitions

A **bibliography** is a list of sources (books, journals, Web sites, periodicals, etc.) one has used for researching a topic. Bibliographies are sometimes called "References" or "Works Cited" depending on the style format you are using. A bibliography usually just includes the bibliographic information (i.e., the author, title, publisher, etc.).

An **annotation** is a summary and/or evaluation. Therefore, an **annotated bibliography** includes a summary and/or evaluation of each of the sources. Depending on your project or the assignment, your annotations may do one or more of the following.

- **Summarize:** Some annotations merely summarize the source. What are the main arguments? What is the point of this book or article? What topics are covered? If someone asked what this article/book is about, what would you say? The length of your annotations will determine how detailed your summary is.

For more help, see our handout on [paraphrasing](#) sources.

- **Assess:** After summarizing a source, it may be helpful to evaluate it. Is it a useful source? How does it compare with other sources in your bibliography? Is the information reliable? Is this source biased or objective? What is the goal of this source?

For more help, see our handouts on [evaluating resources](#).

- **Reflect:** Once you've summarized and assessed a source, you need to ask how it fits into your research. Was this source helpful to you? How does it help you shape your argument? How can you use this source in your research project? Has it changed how you think about your topic?

Your annotated bibliography may include some of these, all of these, or even others. If you're doing this for a class, you should get specific guidelines from your instructor.

Why should I write an annotated bibliography?

To learn about your topic: Writing an annotated bibliography is excellent preparation for a research project. Just collecting sources for a bibliography is useful, but when you have to write annotations for each source, you're forced to read each source more carefully. You begin to read more critically instead of just collecting information. At the professional level, annotated bibliographies allow you to see what has been done in the literature and where your own research or scholarship can fit. To help you formulate a thesis: Every good research paper is an argument. The purpose of research is to state and support a thesis. So, a very important part of research is developing a thesis that is debatable, interesting, and current. Writing an annotated bibliography can help you gain a good perspective on what is being said about your topic. By reading and responding to a variety of sources on a topic, you'll start to see what the issues are, what people are arguing about, and you'll then be able to develop your own point of view.

To help other researchers: Extensive and scholarly annotated bibliographies are sometimes published. They provide a comprehensive overview of everything important that has been and is being said about that topic. You may not ever get your annotated bibliography published, but as a researcher, you might want to look for one that has been published about your topic.

Format

The format of an annotated bibliography can vary, so if you're doing one for a class, it's important to ask for specific guidelines.

The bibliographic information: Generally, though, the bibliographic information of the source (the title, author, publisher, date, etc.) is written in either MLA or APA format. For more help with formatting, see our [MLA handout](#). For APA, go here: [APA handout](#).

The annotations: The annotations for each source are written in paragraph form. The lengths of the annotations can vary significantly from a couple of sentences to a couple of pages. The length will depend on the purpose. If you're just writing summaries of your

sources, the annotations may not be very long. However, if you are writing an extensive analysis of each source, you'll need more space.

You can focus your annotations for your own needs. A few sentences of general summary followed by several sentences of how you can fit the work into your larger paper or project can serve you well when you go to draft.

For an Argument or Position Paper:

- [Developing Strong Thesis Statements](#)

Developing Strong Thesis Statements

Summary:

These OWL resources will help you develop and refine the arguments in your writing.

Contributors: Stacy Weida, Karl Stolley

Last Edited: 2018-01-31 03:32:44

The thesis statement or main claim must be debatable

An argumentative or persuasive piece of writing must begin with a debatable thesis or claim. In other words, the thesis must be something that people could reasonably have differing opinions on. If your thesis is something that is generally agreed upon or accepted as fact then there is no reason to try to persuade people.

Example of a non-debatable thesis statement:

Pollution is bad for the environment.

This thesis statement is not debatable. First, the word *pollution* means that something is bad or negative in some way. Further, all studies agree that pollution is a problem; they simply disagree on the impact it will have or the scope of the problem. No one could reasonably argue that pollution is good.

Example of a debatable thesis statement:

At least 25 percent of the federal budget should be spent on limiting pollution.

This is an example of a debatable thesis because reasonable people could disagree with it. Some people might think that this is how we should spend the nation's money. Others

might feel that we should be spending more money on education. Still others could argue that corporations, not the government, should be paying to limit pollution.

Another example of a debatable thesis statement:

America's anti-pollution efforts should focus on privately owned cars.

In this example there is also room for disagreement between rational individuals. Some citizens might think focusing on recycling programs rather than private automobiles is the most effective strategy.

The thesis needs to be narrow

Although the scope of your paper might seem overwhelming at the start, generally the narrower the thesis the more effective your argument will be. Your thesis or claim must be supported by evidence. The broader your claim is, the more evidence you will need to convince readers that your position is right.

Example of a thesis that is too broad:

Drug use is detrimental to society.

There are several reasons this statement is too broad to argue. First, what is included in the category "drugs"? Is the author talking about illegal drug use, recreational drug use (which might include alcohol and cigarettes), or all uses of medication in general? Second, in what ways are drugs detrimental? Is drug use causing deaths (and is the author equating deaths from overdoses and deaths from drug related violence)? Is drug use changing the moral climate or causing the economy to decline? Finally, what does the author mean by "society"? Is the author referring only to America or to the global population? Does the author make any distinction between the effects on children and adults? There are just too many questions that the claim leaves open. The author could not cover all of the topics listed above, yet the generality of the claim leaves all of these possibilities open to debate.

Example of a narrow or focused thesis:

Illegal drug use is detrimental because it encourages gang violence.

In this example the topic of drugs has been narrowed down to illegal drugs and the detriment has been narrowed down to gang violence. This is a much more manageable topic.

We could narrow each debatable thesis from the previous examples in the following way:

Narrowed debatable thesis 1:

At least 25 percent of the federal budget should be spent on helping upgrade business to clean technologies, researching renewable energy sources, and planting more trees in order to control or eliminate pollution.

This thesis narrows the scope of the argument by specifying not just the amount of money used but also how the money could actually help to control pollution.

Narrowed debatable thesis 2:

America's anti-pollution efforts should focus on privately owned cars because it would allow most citizens to contribute to national efforts and care about the outcome.

This thesis narrows the scope of the argument by specifying not just what the focus of a national anti-pollution campaign should be but also why this is the appropriate focus.

Qualifiers such as "*typically*," "*generally*," "*usually*," or "*on average*" also help to limit the scope of your claim by allowing for the almost inevitable exception to the rule.

Types of claims

Claims typically fall into one of four categories. Thinking about how you want to approach your topic, in other words what type of claim you want to make, is one way to focus your thesis on one particular aspect of your broader topic.

Claims of fact or definition: These claims argue about what the definition of something is or whether something is a settled fact. Example:

What some people refer to as global warming is actually nothing more than normal, long-term cycles of climate change.

Claims of cause and effect: These claims argue that one person, thing, or event caused another thing or event to occur. Example:

The popularity of SUVs in America has caused pollution to increase.

Claims about value: These are claims made of what something is worth, whether we value it or not, how we would rate or categorize something. Example:

Global warming is the most pressing challenge facing the world today.

Claims about solutions or policies: These are claims that argue for or against a certain solution or policy approach to a problem. Example:

Instead of drilling for oil in Alaska we should be focusing on ways to reduce oil consumption, such as researching renewable energy sources.

Which type of claim is right for your argument? Which type of thesis or claim you use for your argument will depend on your position and knowledge of the topic, your audience, and the context of your paper. You might want to think about where you imagine your audience to be on this topic and pinpoint where you think the biggest difference in viewpoints might be. Even if you start with one type of claim you probably will be using several within the paper. Regardless of the type of claim you choose to utilize it is key to identify the controversy or debate you are addressing and to define your position early on in the paper.

- [Logic in Argumentative Writing](#)

Logic in Argumentative Writing

Summary:

This resource covers using logic within writing—logical vocabulary, logical fallacies, and other types of logos-based reasoning.

Contributors: Ryan Weber, Allen Brizee

Last Edited: 2018-02-09 12:53:15

This handout is designed to help writers develop and use logical arguments in writing. This handout helps writers analyze the arguments of others and generate their own arguments. However, it is important to remember that logic is only one aspect of a successful argument. *Non-logical arguments*, statements that cannot be logically proven or disproved, are important in argumentative writing—such as appeals to emotions or values. *Illogical arguments*, on the other hand, are false and must be avoided.

Logic is a formal system of analysis that helps writers invent, demonstrate, and prove arguments. It works by testing propositions against one another to determine their accuracy. People often think they are using logic when they avoid emotion or make arguments based on their common sense, such as "Everyone should look out for their own self-interests" or "People have the right to be free." However, unemotional or common sense statements are not always equivalent to logical statements. To be logical, a proposition must be tested within a logical sequence.

The most famous logical sequence, called **the syllogism**, was developed by the Greek philosopher Aristotle. His most famous syllogism is:

Premise 1: All men are mortal.

Premise 2: Socrates is a man.

Conclusion: Therefore, Socrates is mortal.

In this sequence, premise 2 is tested against premise 1 to reach the logical conclusion. Within this system, if both premises are considered valid, there is no other logical conclusion than determining that Socrates is a mortal.

This guide provides some vocabulary and strategies for determining logical conclusions.

- [Organizing Your Argument Presentation](#)
- **Organizing Your Argument Presentation**
- **Media File:** [Organizing Your Argument Presentation](#)
- This resource is enhanced by a PowerPoint file. [Download the free Microsoft PowerPoint Viewer](#)
- This presentation is designed to introduce your students to the elements of an organized essay, including the introduction, the thesis, body paragraphs, topic sentences, counterarguments, and the conclusion.

Document 1

- [Introductions, Body Paragraphs, and Conclusions for Argument Papers](#)

Introductions, Body Paragraphs, and Conclusions for an Argument Paper

Summary:

This resource outlines the generally accepted structure for introductions, body paragraphs, and conclusions in an academic argument paper. Keep in mind that this resource contains guidelines and not strict rules about organization. Your structure needs to be flexible enough to meet the requirements of your purpose and audience.

Contributors: Allen Brizee

Last Edited: 2018-02-09 01:03:40

The following sections outline the generally accepted structure for an academic argument paper. Keep in mind that these are guidelines and that your structure needs to be flexible enough to meet the requirements of your purpose and audience.

You may also use the following Purdue OWL resources to help you with your argument paper:

- [Creating a Thesis Statement](#)

Tips and Examples for Writing Thesis Statements

Summary:

This resource provides tips for creating a thesis statement and examples of different types of thesis statements.

Contributors: Elyssa Tardiff, Allen Brizee

Last Edited: 2018-01-24 02:29:37

Tips for Writing Your Thesis Statement

1. Determine what kind of paper you are writing:

- An **analytical** paper breaks down an issue or an idea into its component parts, evaluates the issue or idea, and presents this breakdown and evaluation to the audience.
- An **expository** (explanatory) paper explains something to the audience.
- An **argumentative** paper makes a claim about a topic and justifies this claim with specific evidence. The **claim** could be an opinion, a policy proposal, an evaluation, a cause-and-effect statement, or an interpretation. The goal of the argumentative paper is to convince the audience that the claim is true based on the evidence provided.

If you are writing a text that does not fall under these three categories (e.g., a narrative), a thesis statement somewhere in the first paragraph could still be helpful to your reader.

2. Your thesis statement should be specific—it should cover only what you will discuss in your paper and should be supported with specific evidence.

3. The thesis statement usually appears at the end of the first paragraph of a paper.

4. Your topic may change as you write, so you may need to revise your thesis statement to reflect exactly what you have discussed in the paper.

Thesis Statement Examples

Example of an analytical thesis statement:

An analysis of the college admission process reveals one challenge facing counselors: accepting students with high test scores or students with strong extracurricular backgrounds.

The paper that follows should:

- Explain the analysis of the college admission process
- Explain the challenge facing admissions counselors

Example of an expository (explanatory) thesis statement:

The life of the typical college student is characterized by time spent studying, attending class, and socializing with peers.

The paper that follows should:

- Explain how students spend their time studying, attending class, and socializing with peers

Example of an argumentative thesis statement:

High school graduates should be required to take a year off to pursue community service projects before entering college in order to increase their maturity and global awareness.

The paper that follows should:

- Present an argument and give evidence to support the claim that students should pursue community projects before entering college
- [Organizing Your Argument](#)

Organizing Your Argument

Summary:

These OWL resources will help you develop and refine the arguments in your writing.

Contributors: Stacy Weida, Karl Stolley

Last Edited: 2017-06-19 09:33:00

[How can I effectively present my argument?](#)

Use an organizational structure that arranges the argument in a way that will make sense to the reader. The **Toulmin Method** of logic is a common and easy to use formula for organizing an argument.

The basic format for the Toulmin Method is as follows.

Claim: The overall thesis the writer will argue for.

Data: Evidence gathered to support the claim.

Warrant (also referred to as a bridge): Explanation of why or how the data supports the claim, the underlying assumption that connects your data to your claim.

Backing (also referred to as the foundation): Additional logic or reasoning that may be necessary to support the warrant.

Counterclaim: A claim that negates or disagrees with the thesis/claim.

Rebuttal: Evidence that negates or disagrees with the counterclaim.

Including a well-thought-out warrant or bridge is essential to writing a good argumentative essay or paper. If you present data to your audience without explaining how it supports your thesis your readers may not make a connection between the two or they may draw different conclusions.

Don't avoid the opposing side of an argument. Instead, include the opposing side as a counterclaim. Find out what the other side is saying and respond to it within your own argument. This is important so that the audience is not swayed by weak, but unrefuted, arguments. Including counterclaims allows you to find common ground with more of your readers. It also makes you look more credible because you appear to be knowledgeable about the entirety of the debate rather than just being biased or uninformed. You may want to include several counterclaims to show that you have thoroughly researched the topic.

Example:

Claim: Hybrid cars are an effective strategy to fight pollution.

Data1: Driving a private car is a typical citizen's most air polluting activity.

Warrant 1: Because cars are the largest source of private, as opposed to industry produced, air pollution, switching to hybrid cars should have an impact on fighting pollution.

Data 2: Each vehicle produced is going to stay on the road for roughly 12 to 15 years.

Warrant 2: Cars generally have a long lifespan, meaning that a decision to switch to a hybrid car will make a long-term impact on pollution levels.

Data 3: Hybrid cars combine a gasoline engine with a battery-powered electric motor.

Warrant 3: This combination of technologies means that less pollution is produced. According to ineedtoknow.org "the hybrid engine of the Prius, made by Toyota, produces 90 percent fewer harmful emissions than a comparable gasoline engine."

Counterclaim: Instead of focusing on cars, which still encourages a culture of driving even if it cuts down on pollution, the nation should focus on building and encouraging use of mass transit systems.

Rebuttal: While mass transit is an environmentally sound idea that should be encouraged, it is not feasible in many rural and suburban areas, or for people who must commute to work; thus hybrid cars are a better solution for much of the nation's population.

- [Organizing Your Argument Slide Presentation](#)
- **Organizing Your Argument Presentation**
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Document2

- [Logic in Argumentative Writing](#)

Logic in Argumentative Writing

Summary:

This resource covers using logic within writing—logical vocabulary, logical fallacies, and other types of logos-based reasoning.

Contributors: Ryan Weber, Allen Brizee

Last Edited: 2018-02-09 12:53:15

This handout is designed to help writers develop and use logical arguments in writing. This handout helps writers analyze the arguments of others and generate their own arguments. However, it is important to remember that logic is only one aspect of a successful argument. *Non-logical arguments*, statements that cannot be logically proven or disproved, are important in argumentative writing—such as appeals to emotions or values. *Illogical arguments*, on the other hand, are false and must be avoided.

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"People have the right to be free." However, unemotional or common sense statements are not always equivalent to logical statements. To be logical, a proposition must be tested within a logical sequence.

The most famous logical sequence, called **the syllogism**, was developed by the Greek philosopher Aristotle. His most famous syllogism is:

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In this sequence, premise 2 is tested against premise 1 to reach the logical conclusion. Within this system, if both premises are considered valid, there is no other logical conclusion than determining that Socrates is a mortal.

This guide provides some vocabulary and strategies for determining logical conclusions.

- [Paragraphs and Paragraphing](#)

On Paragraphs

Summary:

The purpose of this handout is to give some basic instruction and advice regarding the creation of understandable and coherent paragraphs.

Contributors: Dana Lynn Driscoll, Allen Brizee

Last Edited: 2015-07-07 10:28:52

What is a paragraph?

A paragraph is a collection of related sentences dealing with a single topic. Learning to write good paragraphs will help you as a writer stay on track during your drafting and revision stages. Good paragraphing also greatly assists your readers in following a piece of writing. You can have fantastic ideas, but if those ideas aren't presented in an organized fashion, you will lose your readers (and fail to achieve your goals in writing).

The Basic Rule: Keep one idea to one paragraph

The basic rule of thumb with paragraphing is to keep one idea to one paragraph. If you begin to transition into a new idea, it belongs in a new paragraph. There are some simple ways to tell if you are on the same topic or a new one. You can have one idea and several

bits of supporting evidence within a single paragraph. You can also have several points in a single paragraph as long as they relate to the overall topic of the paragraph. If the single points start to get long, then perhaps elaborating on each of them and placing them in their own paragraphs is the route to go.

Elements of a paragraph

To be as effective as possible, a paragraph should contain each of the following: **Unity**, **Coherence**, **A Topic Sentence**, and **Adequate Development**. As you will see, all of these traits overlap. Using and adapting them to your individual purposes will help you construct effective paragraphs.

Unity

The entire paragraph should concern itself with a single focus. If it begins with one focus or major point of discussion, it should not end with another or wander within different ideas.

Coherence

Coherence is the trait that makes the paragraph easily understandable to a reader. You can help create coherence in your paragraphs by creating logical bridges and verbal bridges.

Logical bridges

- The same idea of a topic is carried over from sentence to sentence
- Successive sentences can be constructed in parallel form

Verbal bridges

- Key words can be repeated in several sentences
- Synonymous words can be repeated in several sentences
- Pronouns can refer to nouns in previous sentences
- Transition words can be used to link ideas from different sentences

A topic sentence

A topic sentence is a sentence that indicates in a general way what idea or thesis the paragraph is going to deal with. Although not all paragraphs have clear-cut topic sentences, and despite the fact that topic sentences can occur anywhere in the paragraph (as the first sentence, the last sentence, or somewhere in the middle), an easy way to make sure your reader understands the topic of the paragraph is to put your topic sentence near the beginning of the paragraph. (This is a good general rule for less experienced writers, although it is not the only way to do it). Regardless of whether you include an explicit topic sentence or not, you should be able to easily summarize what the paragraph is about.

Adequate development

The topic (which is introduced by the topic sentence) should be discussed fully and adequately. Again, this varies from paragraph to paragraph, depending on the author's purpose, but writers should be wary of paragraphs that only have two or three sentences. It's a pretty good bet that the paragraph is not fully developed if it is that short.

Some methods to make sure your paragraph is well-developed:

- Use examples and illustrations
- Cite data (facts, statistics, evidence, details, and others)
- Examine testimony (what other people say such as quotes and paraphrases)
- Use an anecdote or story
- Define terms in the paragraph
- Compare and contrast
- Evaluate causes and reasons
- Examine effects and consequences
- Analyze the topic
- Describe the topic
- Offer a chronology of an event (time segments)

How do I know when to start a new paragraph?

You should start a new paragraph when:

- **When you begin a new idea or point.** New ideas should always start in new paragraphs. If you have an extended idea that spans multiple paragraphs, each new point within that idea should have its own paragraph.
- **To contrast information or ideas.** Separate paragraphs can serve to contrast sides in a debate, different points in an argument, or any other difference.
- **When your readers need a pause.** Breaks between paragraphs function as a short "break" for your readers—adding these in will help your writing be more readable. You would create a break if the paragraph becomes too long or the material is complex.
- **When you are ending your introduction or starting your conclusion.** Your introductory and concluding material should always be in a new paragraph. Many introductions and conclusions have multiple paragraphs depending on their content, length, and the writer's purpose.

Transitions and signposts

Two very important elements of paragraphing are signposts and transitions. Signposts are internal aids to assist readers; they usually consist of several sentences or a paragraph outlining what the article has covered and where the article will be going.

Transitions are usually one or several sentences that "transition" from one idea to the next. Transitions can be used at the end of most paragraphs to help the paragraphs flow one into the next.

- [Transitions and Transitional Devices](#)

- **Writing Transitions**

- **Summary:**

- A discussion of transition strategies and specific transitional devices.

- **Contributors:**Ryan Weber, Karl Stolley

Last Edited: 2013-03-01 10:35:20

- Good transitions can connect paragraphs and turn disconnected writing into a unified whole. Instead of treating paragraphs as separate ideas, transitions can help readers understand how paragraphs work together, reference one another, and build to a larger point. The key to producing good transitions is highlighting connections between corresponding paragraphs. By referencing in one paragraph the relevant material from previous paragraphs, writers can develop important points for their readers.
- It is a good idea to continue one paragraph where another leaves off. (Instances where this is especially challenging may suggest that the paragraphs don't belong together at all.) Picking up key phrases from the previous paragraph and highlighting them in the next can create an obvious progression for readers. Many times, it only takes a few words to draw these connections. Instead of writing transitions that could connect any paragraph to any other paragraph, write a transition that could only connect one specific paragraph to another specific paragraph.
- **Example:** Overall, Management Systems International has logged increased sales in every sector, leading to a significant rise in third-quarter profits.
- Another important thing to note is that the corporation had expanded its international influence.
- **Revision:** Overall, Management Systems International has logged increased sales in every sector, leading to a significant rise in third-quarter profits.
- These impressive profits are largely due to the corporation's expanded international influence.
- **Example:** Fearing for the loss of Danish lands, Christian IV signed the Treaty of Lubeck, effectively ending the Danish phase of the 30 Years War.
- But then something else significant happened. The Swedish intervention began.
- **Revision:** Fearing for the loss of more Danish lands, Christian IV signed the Treaty of Lubeck, effectively ending the Danish phase of the 30 Years War.
- Shortly after Danish forces withdrew, the Swedish intervention began.
- **Example:** Amy Tan became a famous author after her novel, *The Joy Luck Club*, skyrocketed up the bestseller list.

- There are other things to note about Tan as well. Amy Tan also participates in the satirical garage band the Rock Bottom Remainers with Stephen King and Dave Barry.
- **Revision:** Amy Tan became a famous author after her novel, *The Joy Luck Club*, skyrocketed up the bestseller list.
- Though her fiction is well known, her work with the satirical garage band the Rock Bottom Remainers receives far less publicity.

Introduction

The introduction is the broad beginning of the paper that answers three important questions:

1. What is this?
2. Why am I reading it?
3. What do you want me to do?

You should answer these questions by doing the following:

1. Set the context –provide general information about the main idea, explaining the situation so the reader can make sense of the topic and the claims you make and support
2. State why the main idea is important –tell the reader why he or she should care and keep reading. Your goal is to create a compelling, clear, and convincing essay people will want to read and act upon
3. State your thesis/claim –compose a sentence or two stating the position you will support with **logos** (sound reasoning: induction, deduction), **pathos** (balanced emotional appeal), and **ethos** (author credibility).

For exploratory essays, your primary research question would replace your thesis statement so that the audience understands why you began your inquiry. An overview of the types of sources you explored might follow your research question.

If your argument paper is long, you may want to forecast how you will support your thesis by outlining the structure of your paper, the sources you will consider, and the opposition to your position. You can forecast your paper in many different ways depending on the type of paper you are writing. Your forecast could read something like this:

First, I will define key terms for my argument, and then I will provide some background of the situation. Next, I will outline the important positions of the argument and explain why I support one of these positions. Lastly, I will consider opposing positions and discuss why these positions are outdated. I will conclude with some ideas for taking action and possible directions for future research.

When writing a research paper, you may need to use a more formal, less personal tone. Your forecast might read like this:

This paper begins by providing key terms for the argument before providing background of the situation. Next, important positions are outlined and supported. To provide a more thorough explanation of these important positions, opposing positions are discussed. The paper concludes with some ideas for taking action and possible directions for future research.

Ask your instructor about what tone you should use when providing a forecast for your paper.

These are very general examples, but by adding some details on your specific topic, a forecast will effectively outline the structure of your paper so your readers can more easily follow your ideas.

Thesis checklist

Your thesis is more than a general statement about your main idea. It needs to establish a clear position you will support with balanced proofs (logos, pathos, ethos). Use the checklist below to help you create a thesis.

This section is adapted from *Writing with a Thesis: A Rhetoric Reader* by David Skwire and Sarah Skwire:

Make sure you avoid the following when creating your thesis:

- A thesis is not a title: Homes and schools (title) vs. Parents ought to participate more in the education of their children (good thesis).
- A thesis is not an announcement of the subject: My subject is the incompetence of the Supreme Court vs. The Supreme Court made a mistake when it ruled in favor of George W. Bush in the 2000 election.
- A thesis is not a statement of absolute fact: Jane Austen is the author of *Pride and Prejudice*.
- A thesis is not the whole essay: A thesis is your main idea/claim/refutation/problem-solution expressed in a single sentence or a combination of sentences.
- *Please note* that according to the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, Seventh Edition, "A thesis statement is a single sentence that formulates both your topic and your point of view" (Gibaldi 42). However, if your paper is more complex and requires a thesis statement, your thesis may require a combination of sentences.

Make sure you follow these guidelines when creating your thesis:

- A good thesis is unified:

- NOT: Detective stories are not a high form of literature, but people have always been fascinated by them, and many fine writers have experimented with them

(floppy). vs.

- - BETTER: Detective stories appeal to the basic human desire for thrills (concise).
- A good thesis is specific:
 - NOT: James Joyce's *Ulysses* is very good. vs.
 - BETTER: James Joyce's *Ulysses* helped create a new way for writers to deal with the unconscious.
- Try to be as specific as possible (without providing too much detail) when creating your thesis:
 - NOT: James Joyce's *Ulysses* helped create a new way for writers to deal with the unconscious. vs.
 - BETTER: James Joyce's *Ulysses* helped create a new way for writers to deal with the unconscious by utilizing the findings of Freudian psychology and introducing the techniques of literary stream-of-consciousness.

Quick Checklist:

_____ The thesis/claim follows the guidelines outlined above

_____ The thesis/claim matches the requirements and goals of the assignment

_____ The thesis/claim is clear and easily recognizable

_____ The thesis/claim seems supportable by good reasoning/data, emotional appeal

For a Book Report or Book Review:

- [Writing a Book Report](#)

Writing a Book Report

Summary:

This resource discusses book reports and how to write them.

Contributors: Purdue OWL

Last Edited: 2018-02-14 03:42:15

Book reports are informative reports that discuss a book from an objective stance. They are similar to book reviews but focus more on a summary of the work than an evaluation of it. Book reports commonly describe what happens in a work; their focus is primarily on giving an account of the major plot, characters, thesis, and/or main idea of the work. Most often, book reports are a K-12 assignment and range from 250 to 500 words.

Book reviews are most often a college assignment, but they also appear in many professional works: magazines, newspapers, and academic journals. If you are looking to write a book review instead of a book report, please see the OWL resource, [Writing a Book Review](#).

Before You Read

Before you begin to read, consider what types of things you will need to write your book report. First, you will need to get some basic information from the book:

- Author
- Title
- Publisher location, name of publisher, year published
- Number of Pages

You can either begin your report with some sort of citation, or you can incorporate some of these items into the report itself.

Next, try to answer the following questions to get you started thinking about the book:

- **Author:** Who is the author? Have you read any other works by this author?
- **Genre:** What type of book is this: fiction, nonfiction, biography, etc.? What types of people would like to read this kind of book? Do you typically read these kinds of books? Do you like them?
- **Title:** What does the title do for you? Does it spark your interest? Does it fit well with the text of the book?
- **Pictures/Book Jacket/Cover/Printing:** What does the book jacket or book cover say? Is it accurate? Were you excited to read this book because of it? Are there pictures? What kinds are there? Are they interesting?

As You Read

While reading a work of fiction, keep track of the major characters. You can also do the same with biographies. When reading nonfiction works, however, look for the main ideas and be ready to talk about them.

- **Characters:** Who are the main characters? What happens to them? Did you like them? Were there good and bad characters?

- **Main Ideas:** What is the main idea of the book? What happens? What did you learn that you did not know before?
- **Quotes:** What parts did you like best? Are there parts that you could quote to make your report more enjoyable?

When You Are Ready to Write

Announce the book and author. Then, summarize what you have learned from the book. Explain what happens in the book, and discuss the elements you liked, did not like, would have changed, or if you would recommend this book to others and why. Consider the following items as well:

- **Principles/characters:** What elements did you like best? Which characters did you like best and why? How does the author unfold the story or the main idea of the book?
- **Organize:** Make sure that most of your paper summarizes the work. Then you may analyze the characters or themes of the work.
- **Your Evaluation:** Choose one or a few points to discuss about the book. What worked well for you? How does this work compare with others by the same author or other books in the same genre? What major themes, motifs, or terms does the book introduce, and how effective are they? Did the book appeal to you on an emotional or logical way?
- **Recommend:** Would you recommend this book to others? Why? What would you tell them before they read it? What would you talk about after you read it?

Revising/Final Copy

Do a quick double check of your paper:

- Double-check the spelling of the author name(s), character names, special terms, and publisher.
- Check the punctuation and grammar slowly.
- Make sure you provide enough summary so that your reader or instructor can tell you read the book.
- Consider adding some interesting quotes from the reading.

- [Writing a Book Review](#)

Writing a Book Review

Summary:

This resource discusses book reviews and how to write them.

Contributors: Allen Brizee

Last Edited: 2017-11-15 10:34:49

Book reviews typically evaluate recently-written works. They offer a brief description of the text's key points and often provide a short appraisal of the strengths and weaknesses of the work.

Readers sometimes confuse book reviews with book reports, but the two are not identical. Book reports commonly describe what happens in a work; their focus is primarily on giving an account of the major plot, characters, and/or main idea of the work. Most often, book reports are a K-12 assignment and range from 250 to 500 words. If you are looking to write a book report, please see the OWL resource, Writing a Book Report.

By contrast, book reviews are most often a college assignment, but they also appear in many professional works: magazines, newspapers, and academic journals. They typically range from 500-750 words, but may be longer or shorter. A book review gives readers a sneak peek at what a book is like, whether or not the reviewer enjoyed it, and details on purchasing the book.

Before You Read

Before you begin to read, consider the elements you will need to include in your review. The following items may help:

- **Author:** Who is the author? What else has s/he written? Has this author won any awards? What is the author's typical style?
- **Genre:** What type of book is this: fiction, nonfiction, romance, poetry, youth fiction, etc.? Who is the intended audience for this work? What is the purpose of the work?
- **Title:** Where does the title fit in? How is it applied in the work? Does it adequately encapsulate the message of the text? Is it interesting? Uninteresting?
- **Preface/Introduction/Table of Contents:** Does the author provide any revealing information about the text in the preface/introduction? Does a "guest author" provide the introduction? What judgments or preconceptions do the author and/or "guest author" provide? How is the book arranged: sections, chapters?
- **Book Jacket/Cover/Printing:** Book jackets are like mini-reviews. Does the book jacket provide any interesting details or spark your interest in some way? Are there pictures, maps, or graphs? Do the binding, page cut, or typescript contribute or take away from the work?

As You Read

As you read, determine how you will structure the summary portion or background structure of your review. Be ready to take notes on the book's key points, characters, and/or themes.

- **Characters:** Are there characters in the work? Who are the principle characters? How do they affect the story? Do you empathize with them?
- **Themes/Motifs/Style:** What themes or motifs stand out? How do they contribute to the work? Are they effective or not? How would you describe this author's particular style? Is it accessible to all readers or just some?
- **Argument:** How is the work's argument set up? What support does the author give for her/findings? Does the work fulfill its purpose/support its argument?
- **Key Ideas:** What is the main idea of the work? What makes it good, different, or groundbreaking?
- **Quotes:** What quotes stand out? How can you demonstrate the author's talent or the feel of the book through a quote?

When You Are Ready to Write

Begin with a short summary or background of the work, but do not give too much away. Many reviews limit themselves only to the first couple of chapters or lead the reader up to the rising action of the work. Reviewers of nonfiction texts will provide the basic idea of the book's argument without too much detailed.

The final portion of your review will detail your opinion of the work. When you are ready to begin your review, consider the following:

- **Establish a Background, Remember your Audience:** Remember that your audience has not read the work; with this in mind, be sure to introduce characters and principles carefully and deliberately. What kind of summary can you provide of the main points or main characters that will help your readers gauge their interest? Does the author's text adequately reach the intended audience? Will some readers be lost or find the text too easy?
- **Minor principles/characters:** Deal only with the most pressing issues in the book. You will not be able to cover every character or idea. What principles/characters did you agree or disagree with? What other things might the author have researched or considered?
- **Organize:** The purpose of the review is to critically evaluate the text, not just inform the readers about it. Leave plenty room for your evaluation by ensuring that your summary is brief. Determine what kind of balance to strike between your summary information and your evaluation. If you are writing your review for a class, ask your instructor. Often the ratio is half and half.
- **Your Evaluation:** Choose one or a few points to discuss about the book. What worked well for you? How does this work compare with others by the same author or other books in the same genre? What major themes, motifs, or terms does the book introduce, and how effective are they? Did the book appeal to you on an emotional or logical way?
- **Publisher/Price:** Most book reviews include the publisher and price of the book at the end of the article. Some reviews also include the year published and ISBN.

Revising

When making the final touches to your review, carefully verify the following:

- Double-check the spelling of the author name(s), character names, special terms, and publisher.
- Try to read from the vantage point of your audience. Is there too much/enough summary? Does your argument about the text make sense?
- Should you include direct quotes from the reading? Do they help support your arguments? Double-check your quotes for accuracy.

For a Business or Cover Letter:

- [Writing the Basic Business Letter](#)

Writing the Basic Business Letter

Media File: [Writing the Basic Business Letter](#)

This resource is enhanced by an Acrobat PDF file. [Download the free Acrobat Reader](#)

Parts of a Business Letter

This resource is organized in the order in which you should write a business letter, starting with the sender's address if the letter is not written on letterhead.

Sender's Address

The sender's address usually is included in letterhead. If you are not using letterhead, include the sender's address at the top of the letter one line above the date. Do not write the sender's name or title, as it is included in the letter's closing. Include only the street address, city, and zip code.

Date

The date line is used to indicate the date the letter was written. However, if your letter is completed over a number of days, use the date it was finished in the date line. When writing to companies within the United States, use the American date format. (The United States-based convention for formatting a date places the month before the day. For example: June 11, 2001.) Write out the month, day and year two inches from the top of the page. Depending which format you are using for your letter, either left justify the date or tab to the center point and type the date.

Inside Address

The inside address is the recipient's address. It is always best to write to a specific individual at the firm to which you are writing. If you do not have the person's name, do some research by calling the company or speaking with employees from the company. Include a personal title such as Ms., Mrs., Mr., or Dr. Follow a woman's preference in being addressed as Miss, Mrs., or Ms. If you are unsure of a woman's preference in being addressed, use Ms. If there is a possibility that the person to whom you are writing is a Dr. or has some other title, use that title. Usually, people will not mind being addressed by a higher title than they actually possess. To write the address, use the U.S. Post Office Format. For international addresses, type the name of the country in all-capital letters on the last line. The inside address begins one line below the date. It should be left justified, no matter which format you are using.

Salutation

Use the same name as the inside address, including the personal title. If you know the person and typically address them by their first name, it is acceptable to use only the first name in the salutation (for example: Dear Lucy:). In all other cases, however, use the personal title and last/family name followed by a colon. Leave one line blank after the salutation.

If you don't know a reader's gender, use a nonsexist salutation, such as their job title followed by the receiver's name. It is also acceptable to use the full name in a salutation if you cannot determine gender. For example, you might write Dear Chris Harmon: if you were unsure of Chris's gender.

Body

For block and modified block formats, single space and left justify each paragraph within the body of the letter. Leave a blank line between each paragraph. When writing a business letter, be careful to remember that conciseness is very important. In the first paragraph, consider a friendly opening and then a statement of the main point. The next paragraph should begin justifying the importance of the main point. In the next few paragraphs, continue justification with background information and supporting details. The closing paragraph should restate the purpose of the letter and, in some cases, request some type of action.

Closing

The closing begins at the same vertical point as your date and one line after the last body paragraph. Capitalize the first word only (for example: Thank you) and leave four lines between the closing and the sender's name for a signature. If a colon follows the salutation, a comma should follow the closing; otherwise, there is no punctuation after the closing.

Enclosures

If you have enclosed any documents along with the letter, such as a resume, you indicate this simply by typing *Enclosures* below the closing. As an option, you may list the name of each document you are including in the envelope. For instance, if you have included many documents and need to ensure that the recipient is aware of each document, it may be a good idea to list the names.

Typist initials

Typist initials are used to indicate the person who typed the letter. If you typed the letter yourself, omit the typist initials.

A Note About Format and Font

Block Format

When writing business letters, you must pay special attention to the format and font used. The most common layout of a business letter is known as block format. Using this format, the entire letter is left justified and single spaced except for a double space between paragraphs.

Modified Block

Another widely utilized format is known as modified block format. In this type, the body of the letter and the sender's and recipient's addresses are left justified and single-spaced. However, for the date and closing, tab to the center point and begin to type.

Semi-Block

The final, and least used, style is semi-block. It is much like the modified block style except that each paragraph is indented instead of left justified.

Keep in mind that different organizations have different format requirements for their professional communication. While the examples provided by the OWL contain common elements for the basic business letter (genre expectations), the format of your business letter may need to be flexible to reflect variables like letterheads and templates. Our examples are merely guides.

If your computer is equipped with Microsoft Office 2000, the Letter Wizard can be used to take much of the guesswork out of formatting business letters. To access the Letter Wizard, click on the Tools menu and then choose Letter Wizard. The Wizard will present the three styles mentioned here and input the date, sender address and recipient address into the selected format. Letter Wizard should only be used if you have a basic understand of how

to write a business letter. Its templates are not applicable in every setting. Therefore, you should consult a business writing handbook if you have any questions or doubt the accuracy of the Letter Wizard.

Font

Another important factor in the readability of a letter is the font. The generally accepted font is Times New Roman, size 12, although other fonts such as Arial may be used. When choosing a font, always consider your audience. If you are writing to a conservative company, you may want to use Times New Roman. However, if you are writing to a more liberal company, you have a little more freedom when choosing fonts.

Punctuation

Punctuation after the salutation and closing - use a colon (:) after the salutation (never a comma) and a comma (,) after the closing. In some circumstances, you may also use a less common format, known as open punctuation. For this style, punctuation is excluded after the salutation and the closing.

Document 3

- [Business Letters: Accentuating the Positives](#)

Business Letters: Accentuating the Positives

Summary:

This handout provides information on accentuating the positives in writing business letters.

Contributors: Dana Lynn Driscoll

Last Edited: 2010-04-21 08:21:37

Your letters will be more successful if you focus on positive wording rather than negative, simply because most people respond more favorably to positive ideas than negative ones. Words that affect your reader positively are likely to produce the response you desire in letter-writing situations. A positive emphasis will persuade the reader and create goodwill. In contrast, negative words may generate resistance and other unfavorable reactions. You should therefore be careful to avoid words with negative connotations. These words either deny—for example, **no**, **do not**, **refuse**, and **stop**—or convey unhappy or unpleasant associations—for example, **unfortunately**, **unable to**, **cannot**, **mistake**, **problem**, **error**, **damage**, **loss**, and **failure**.

When you need to present negative information, soften its effects by superimposing a positive picture on a negative one.

1. Stress what something **is** rather than what it **is not**.
2. emphasize what the firm or product **can** and **will do** rather than what it **cannot**.
3. open with **action** rather than **apology** or **explanation**.
4. avoid words which convey **unpleasant facts**.

Compare the examples below. Which would be more likely to elicit positive reader response?

Negative: In response to your question about how many coats of Chem-Treat are needed to cover new surfaces: I regret to report that usually two are required. For such surfaces you should figure about 200 square feet per gallon for a good heavy coating that will give you five years or more of beautiful protection.

Positive: In response to your question about how many coats of Chem-Treat are needed to cover new surfaces: One gallon is usually enough for one-coat coverage of 500 square feet of previously painted surface. For the best results on new surfaces, you will want to apply two coats.

Negative: Penquot sheets are not the skimpy, loosely woven sheets ordinarily found in this price class.

Positive: Penquot sheets are woven 186 threads to the square inch for durability and, even after 3-inch hems, measure a generous 72 by 108 inches.

Negative: We cannot ship in lots of less than 12.

Positive: To keep down packaging costs and to help customers save on shipping costs, we ship in lots of 12 or more.

In addition, you should reemphasize the positive through embedded position and effective use of space.

Embedded Position

Place **good news** in positions of high emphasis: at the beginnings and endings of paragraphs, letters, and even sentences.

Place **bad news** in secondary positions: in the center of paragraphs, letters, and, if possible, sentences.

Effective Use Of Space

Give more space to **good news** and less to **bad news**.

Evaluate the examples below to determine whether or not they present negative information favorably.

1. To make the Roanoke more stable than other lamps of this size, our designers put six claw feet instead of the usual four on the base and thus eliminated the need for weighting. Claw feet, as you know, are characteristic of 18th-century design.
2. No special training programs are normally offered other than that of the College Graduate in Training rotational training period. We do not expect our employees to continue their education, but we do have an excellent tuition refund program to assist in this regard (see Working with General Motors, page 8). Where an advanced degree is essential, individuals are recruited with those particular advanced degrees. Both Butler and IUPUI offer courses leading to an MBA degree.
3. With our rigid quality standards, corrections of Adidas merchandise run less than .02 percent of our total line. Because of an oversight in our stitching department, a damaged needle was inadvertently used and caused the threads to come loose in these particular bags. Since we now have a check on all our machine needles before work each day, you can be assured that the stitching on our Adidas carrying bags will last the lifetime of the bags. Thank you for calling our attention to the loose stitching.
4. We are sorry that we cannot furnish the club chairs by August 16.
5. I have no experience other than clerking in my father's grocery store.
6. ABC Dog Biscuits will help keep your dog from getting sick.

- [Cover Letter Presentation](#)

Cover Letter Presentation

Media File: [Cover Letter Presentation](#)

This resource is enhanced by a PowerPoint file. [Download the free Microsoft PowerPoint Viewer](#)

This presentation is designed to help students with their cover letters.

The following are additional Purdue OWL resources to help you write your cover letter:

- [Cover Letter Workshop- Formatting and Organization](#)

Cover Letter Workshop - Formatting and Organization

Media File: [Cover Letter Workshop - Formatting and Organization](#)

This resource is enhanced by an Acrobat PDF file. [Download the free Acrobat Reader](#)

The cover letter is one of the most challenging documents you may ever write: you must write about yourself without sounding selfish and self-centered. The solution to this is to

explain how your values and goals align with the prospective organization's and to discuss how your experience will fulfill the job requirements. Before we get to content, however, you need to know how to format your cover letter in a professional manner.

Formatting your cover letter

Your cover letter should convey a professional message. Of course, the particular expectations of a professional format depend on the organization you are looking to join. For example, an accounting position at a legal firm will require a more traditional document format. A position as an Imagineer at Disney might require a completely different approach. Again, a close audience analysis of the company and the position will yield important information about the document expectations. Let the organization's communications guide your work.

For this example, we are using a traditional approach to cover letters:

- Single-space your cover letter
- Leave a space between each paragraph
- Leave three spaces between your closing (such as "Sincerely" or "Sincerely Yours") and typed name
- Leave a space between your heading (contact information) and greeting (such as, "Dear Mr. Roberts")
- Either align all paragraphs to the left of the page, or indent the first line of each paragraph to the right
- Use standard margins for your cover letter, such as one-inch margins on all sides of the document
- Center your letter in the middle of the page; in other words, make sure that the space at the top and bottom of the page is the same
- Sign your name in ink between your salutation and typed name

Organizing your cover letter

A cover letter has four essential parts: heading, introduction, argument, and closing.

The heading

In your heading, include your contact information:

- name
- address
- phone number
- email address

The date and company contact information should directly follow your contact information. Use spacing effectively in order to keep this information more organized and readable. Use

the link at the top of this resource to view a sample cover letter - *please note the letter is double-spaced for readability purposes only.*

Addressing your cover letter

Whenever possible, you should address your letter to a specific individual, the person in charge of interviewing and hiring (the hiring authority). Larger companies often have standard procedures for dealing with solicited and unsolicited resumes and cover letters. Sending your employment documents to a specific person increases the chances that they will be seriously reviewed by the company.

When a job advertisement does not provide you with the name of the hiring authority, call the company to ask for more information. Even if your contact cannot tell you the name of the hiring authority, you can use this time to find out more about the company.

If you cannot find out the name of the hiring authority, you may address your letter to "hiring professionals" - e.g., "Dear Hiring Professionals."

The introduction

The introduction should include a salutation, such as "Dear Mr. Roberts:" If you are uncertain of your contact's gender, avoid using Mr. or Mrs. by simply using the person's full name.

The body of your introduction can be organized in many ways. However, it is important to include, who you are and why you are writing. It can also state how you learned about the position and why you are interested in it. (This might be the right opportunity to briefly relate your education and/or experience to the requirements of the position.)

Many people hear of job openings from contacts associated with the company. If you wish to include a person's name in your cover letter, make certain that your reader has a positive relationship with the person.

In some instances, you may have previously met the reader of your cover letter. In these instances it is acceptable to use your introduction to remind your reader of who you are and briefly discuss a specific topic of your previous conversation(s).

Most important is to briefly overview why your values and goals align with the organization's and how you will help them. You should also touch on how you match the position requirements. By reviewing how you align with the organization and how your skills match what they're looking for, you can forecast the contents of your cover letter before you move into your argument.

The argument

Your argument is an important part of your cover letter, because it allows you to persuade your reader why you are a good fit for the company and the job. Carefully choose what to include in your argument. You want your argument to be as powerful as possible, but it shouldn't cloud your main points by including excessive or irrelevant details about your past. In addition, use your resume (and refer to it) as the source of "data" you will use and expand on in your cover letter.

In your argument, you should try to:

- Show your reader you possess the most important skills s/he seeks (you're a good match for the organization's mission/goals and job requirements).
- Convince your reader that the company will benefit from hiring you (how you will help them).
- Include in each paragraph a strong reason why your employer should hire you and how they will benefit from the relationship.
- Maintain an upbeat/personable tone.
- Avoid explaining your entire resume but use your resume as a source of data to support your argument (the two documents should work together).

Reminder: When writing your argument, it is essential for you to learn as much as possible about the company and the job (see the Cover Letter Workshop - Introduction resource).

The closing

Your closing restates your main points and reveals what you plan to do after your readers have received your resume and cover letter. We recommend you do the following in your closing:

- Restate why you align with the organization's mission/goals.
- Restate why your skills match the position requirements and how your experience will help the organization.
- Inform your readers when you will contact them.
- Include your phone number and e-mail address.
- Thank your readers for their consideration.

A sample closing:

I believe my coursework and work experience in electrical engineering will help your Baltimore division attain its goals, and I look forward to meeting with you to discuss the job position further. I will contact you before June 5th to discuss my application. If you wish to contact me, I may be reached at 765-555-6473, or by e-mail at jwillis3@e-mail-link.com. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Although this closing may seem bold, potential employers will read your documents with more interest if they know you will be calling them in the future. Also, many employment authorities prefer candidates who are willing to take the initiative to follow-up. Additionally, by following up, you are able to inform prospective employers that you're still interested in the position and determine where the company is in the hiring process. When you tell readers you will contact them, it is imperative that you do so. It will not reflect well on you if you forget to call a potential employer when you said you would. It's best to demonstrate your punctuality and interest in the company by calling when you say you will.

If you do not feel comfortable informing your readers when you will contact them, ask your readers to contact you, and thank them for their time. For example:

Please contact me at 765-555-6473, or by e-mail at jwillis3@e-mail-link.com. I look forward to speaking with you. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Before you send the cover letter

Always proofread your cover letter carefully. After you've finished, put it aside for a couple of days if time allows, and then reread it. More than likely, you will discover sentences that could be improved, or grammatical errors that could otherwise prove to be uncharacteristic of your writing abilities. Furthermore, we recommend giving your cover letter to friends and colleagues. Ask them for ways to improve it; listen to their suggestions and revise your document as you see fit.

If you are a Purdue student, you may go to the Writing Lab or CCO for assistance with your cover letter. You can make an appointment to talk about your letter, whether you need to begin drafting it or want help with revising and editing.

Click on the link at the top of this resource for a sample cover letter. Please note that this sample is double spaced for readability only. Unless requested otherwise, always *single space* your professional communication.

The following are additional Purdue OWL resources to help you write your cover letter:

Document 4

- [Cover Letter Workshop- Formatting and Organization](#)

Cover Letter Workshop - Introduction

Summary:

This cover letter workshop resource provides a detailed explanation of cover letter objectives and information on each section of the cover letter. The OWL maintains a number of resources on cover letters including more concise materials and PowerPoint presentations. Please refer to these if you cannot find information in this workshop.

Contributors: Jenna Holt, Clint Blume, and Allen Brizee

Last Edited: 2010-04-25 08:59:07

The following resources should help you conduct research and compose your cover letter (also known as the job application letter).

[What is the purpose of the cover letter?](#)

A cover letter:

- introduces you and your resume to an employer
- explains why you are writing or applying for the job
- details why you are a good match for the organization and the position
- demonstrates your abilities and helps to establish your credibility
- draws your readers' attention to specific qualifications
- provides a sample of your written communications skills
- explains when you plan to contact your prospective employer.

Tailor your cover letter to:

- show specific needs of employers and how you meet them
- persuade that your goals align with the organization's goals (mission) and that your skills align with the position requirements (also see our [Effective Workplace Writing](#) resource).

An effective cover letter:

- highlights the qualifications related to the position as laid out in the job criteria
- proves that you align well with the organization and that you meet the job requirements
- provides contact information and a plan for future contact.

[Learning about the job](#)

Your ability to learn the needs of your readers will help you write a cover letter effectively. You should learn as much as you can about your audience (your potential employer) before writing your cover letter. Your goal is to learn about the organization, its goals and needs. Then, you should learn about what kind of employee the organization needs and what an employee will be expected to do.

After reading a job advertisement, ask as many questions as you can to learn what your prospective employer wants. Lastly, think about who will be reading your job application

documents - human resources, prospective employers, etc. Think about how your document may move through the organization you want to join (also see our [Audience Analysis](#) resource).

Some questions to begin with are:

- "What values and skills would a good match have for the prospective organization/job?"
- "What kind of personality do I have?"
- "What level of education do I need?"
- "What kind of work experience do I need?"

Read the job advertisement carefully. Most advertisements are divided into two sections, a qualifications section, and an explanation of what duties the hired candidate will perform.

Contact the organization

Another way to learn about a good match for the organization and job is by contacting someone with "inside information" (insiders).

Insiders include, but are not limited to:

- a professor
- your potential employer
- an expert in your field
- a person who holds the position you want at a different company.

Insiders may be able to tell you what a job entails, and what kind of person an employer is likely to hire.

If you decide to call insiders, it is essential for you to be kind and truthful at all times. Being kind will help you to avoid offending someone with whom you might work in the future. It is best for you to see each contact with a company as an opportunity to make a good impression.

When calling insiders, try to plan the flow of your conversation ahead of time.

- Start by explaining who you are and why you are calling.
- Ask questions that will facilitate an informative, friendly conversation.
- Write questions before calling to avoid a lull in the conversation.

Questions such as the following will help you to start an effective conversation:

- "What are the organization's goals/missions?"
- "What kind of person is your company looking for?"
- "What qualifications are most important for this position?"

- "Is there anyone else I can contact to learn more about your company?"
- "Is there anything you think someone with my experience should do to improve my qualifications?"

Try to keep the conversation rolling, and maintain a pleasant tone at all times. Also remember to thank your contact for speaking with you, even if he or she was unable to provide you with helpful information.

Read the organization's website

Another good way to do your audience analysis is by reading an organization's website.

Corporate/organization websites provide a good idea of what a company/organization values. Look for words that describe the company and its employees. Words repeated throughout the website reveal particularly important values. Some organization websites may even have a "Mission Statement" you can read to learn about what they want to achieve. Use the language on the website and in the missions statement to help guide your language in your cover letter.

Use college career centers

If you are in college, see what information is available at your university's career center. See if the university has any connections to this company. Career centers should have any information concerning upcoming visits of companies to career fairs. At Purdue University, the [Center for Career Opportunities](#) (CCO) maintains a number of resources that are helpful for students looking for internships and jobs.

- [Example Employment Documents](#)

[Annotated Example Employment Documents](#)

The documents available in PDF from the media box above provide examples of resumes, CVs, and cover letters for a variety of disciplines. The examples also contain links to other OWL resources that will help you with your job search.

Cover Letter Workshop - Formatting and Organization

Media File: [Cover Letter Workshop - Formatting and Organization](#)

This resource is enhanced by an Acrobat PDF file. [Download the free Acrobat Reader](#)

The cover letter is one of the most challenging documents you may ever write: you must write about yourself without sounding selfish and self-centered. The solution to this is to explain how your values and goals align with the prospective organization's and to discuss how your experience will fulfill the job requirements. Before we get to content, however, you need to know how to format your cover letter in a professional manner.

Formatting your cover letter

Your cover letter should convey a professional message. Of course, the particular expectations of a professional format depend on the organization you are looking to join. For example, an accounting position at a legal firm will require a more traditional document format. A position as an Imagineer at Disney might require a completely different approach. Again, a close audience analysis of the company and the position will yield important information about the document expectations. Let the organization's communications guide your work.

For this example, we are using a traditional approach to cover letters:

- Single-space your cover letter
- Leave a space between each paragraph
- Leave three spaces between your closing (such as "Sincerely" or "Sincerely Yours") and typed name
- Leave a space between your heading (contact information) and greeting (such as, "Dear Mr. Roberts")
- Either align all paragraphs to the left of the page, or indent the first line of each paragraph to the right
- Use standard margins for your cover letter, such as one-inch margins on all sides of the document
- Center your letter in the middle of the page; in other words, make sure that the space at the top and bottom of the page is the same
- Sign your name in ink between your salutation and typed name

Organizing your cover letter

A cover letter has four essential parts: heading, introduction, argument, and closing.

The heading

In your heading, include your contact information:

- name
- address
- phone number
- email address

The date and company contact information should directly follow your contact information. Use spacing effectively in order to keep this information more organized and readable. Use the link at the top of this resource to view a sample cover letter - *please note the letter is double-spaced for readability purposes only.*

Addressing your cover letter

Whenever possible, you should address your letter to a specific individual, the person in charge of interviewing and hiring (the hiring authority). Larger companies often have standard procedures for dealing with solicited and unsolicited resumes and cover letters. Sending your employment documents to a specific person increases the chances that they will be seriously reviewed by the company.

When a job advertisement does not provide you with the name of the hiring authority, call the company to ask for more information. Even if your contact cannot tell you the name of the hiring authority, you can use this time to find out more about the company.

If you cannot find out the name of the hiring authority, you may address your letter to "hiring professionals" - e.g., "Dear Hiring Professionals."

The introduction

The introduction should include a salutation, such as "Dear Mr. Roberts:" If you are uncertain of your contact's gender, avoid using Mr. or Mrs. by simply using the person's full name.

The body of your introduction can be organized in many ways. However, it is important to include, who you are and why you are writing. It can also state how you learned about the position and why you are interested in it. (This might be the right opportunity to briefly relate your education and/or experience to the requirements of the position.)

Many people hear of job openings from contacts associated with the company. If you wish to include a person's name in your cover letter, make certain that your reader has a positive relationship with the person.

In some instances, you may have previously met the reader of your cover letter. In these instances it is acceptable to use your introduction to remind your reader of who you are and briefly discuss a specific topic of your previous conversation(s).

Most important is to briefly overview why your values and goals align with the organization's and how you will help them. You should also touch on how you match the position requirements. By reviewing how you align with the organization and how your skills match what they're looking for, you can forecast the contents of your cover letter before you move into your argument.

The argument

Your argument is an important part of your cover letter, because it allows you to persuade your reader why you are a good fit for the company and the job. Carefully choose what to include in your argument. You want your argument to be as powerful as possible, but it shouldn't cloud your main points by including excessive or irrelevant details about your past. In addition, use your resume (and refer to it) as the source of "data" you will use and expand on in your cover letter.

In your argument, you should try to:

- Show your reader you possess the most important skills s/he seeks (you're a good match for the organization's mission/goals and job requirements).
- Convince your reader that the company will benefit from hiring you (how you will help them).
- Include in each paragraph a strong reason why your employer should hire you and how they will benefit from the relationship.
- Maintain an upbeat/personable tone.
- Avoid explaining your entire resume but use your resume as a source of data to support your argument (the two documents should work together).

Reminder: When writing your argument, it is essential for you to learn as much as possible about the company and the job (see the Cover Letter Workshop - Introduction resource).

The closing

Your closing restates your main points and reveals what you plan to do after your readers have received your resume and cover letter. We recommend you do the following in your closing:

- Restate why you align with the organization's mission/goals.
- Restate why your skills match the position requirements and how your experience will help the organization.
- Inform your readers when you will contact them.
- Include your phone number and e-mail address.
- Thank your readers for their consideration.

A sample closing:

I believe my coursework and work experience in electrical engineering will help your Baltimore division attain its goals, and I look forward to meeting with you to discuss the job position further. I will contact you before June 5th to discuss my application. If you wish to contact me, I may be reached at 765-555-6473, or by e-mail at jwillis3@e-mail-link.com. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Although this closing may seem bold, potential employers will read your documents with more interest if they know you will be calling them in the future. Also, many employment authorities prefer candidates who are willing to take the initiative to follow-up. Additionally, by following up, you are able to inform prospective employers that you're still interested in the position and determine where the company is in the hiring process. When you tell readers you will contact them, it is imperative that you do so. It will not reflect well on you if you forget to call a potential employer when you said you would. It's best to demonstrate your punctuality and interest in the company by calling when you say you will.

If you do not feel comfortable informing your readers when you will contact them, ask your readers to contact you, and thank them for their time. For example:

Please contact me at 765-555-6473, or by e-mail at jwillis3@e-mail-link.com. I look forward to speaking with you. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Before you send the cover letter

Always proofread your cover letter carefully. After you've finished, put it aside for a couple of days if time allows, and then reread it. More than likely, you will discover sentences that could be improved, or grammatical errors that could otherwise prove to be uncharacteristic of your writing abilities. Furthermore, we recommend giving your cover letter to friends and colleagues. Ask them for ways to improve it; listen to their suggestions and revise your document as you see fit.

If you are a Purdue student, you may go to the Writing Lab or CCO for assistance with your cover letter. You can make an appointment to talk about your letter, whether you need to begin drafting it or want help with revising and editing.

Click on the link at the top of this resource for a sample cover letter. Please note that this sample is double spaced for readability only. Unless requested otherwise, always *single space* your professional communication.

- [Cover Letters 2: Preparing to Write a Cover Letter](#)

How can I learn what will impress prospective employers?

Summary:

Before you start to write a cover letter, you should gather information about yourself, the company, and the job. This page will help you learn what kind of information to find, where to find it, and how and why to use that information to "sell yourself" in a cover letter.

Contributors:Angie Olson, Allen Brizee

Last Edited: 2018-03-09 02:17:27

In order to impress prospective employers when writing a cover letter, you must first know what they are looking for in candidates. Learning more about the company itself—and what they value—can help you do this. Here are some suggestions:

- Read the job advertisement carefully
- Research the corporate website, read and try to understand their mission statement (sometimes an organization's mission may not be overtly stated)
- Call "insiders" (people that work with the company)
- Refer to your university's career center if you are at college

Information about each suggestion are covered in the sections that follow.

- [Cover Letters 3: Writing Your Cover Letter](#)

What do I include in my cover letter heading?

Summary:

"Writing Your Cover Letter" is a series of short documents that walks you through the creation of a cover letter. Here you can see the information in the "Quick Tips for Cover Letters" and "Preparing to Write a Cover Letter" pages put to use. This page guides you through adapting your experiences to the content in your cover letter and its different sections.

Contributors:Angie Olson, Allen Brizee

Last Edited: 2010-04-25 08:58:10

The heading provides your contact information, the date you are writing, and the address of the company to which you are applying.

For your contact information, you will want to include the following:

- Your name
- The address where you can be reached (*if you live at college, will it be more accessible to include the local address or your permanent address?*)

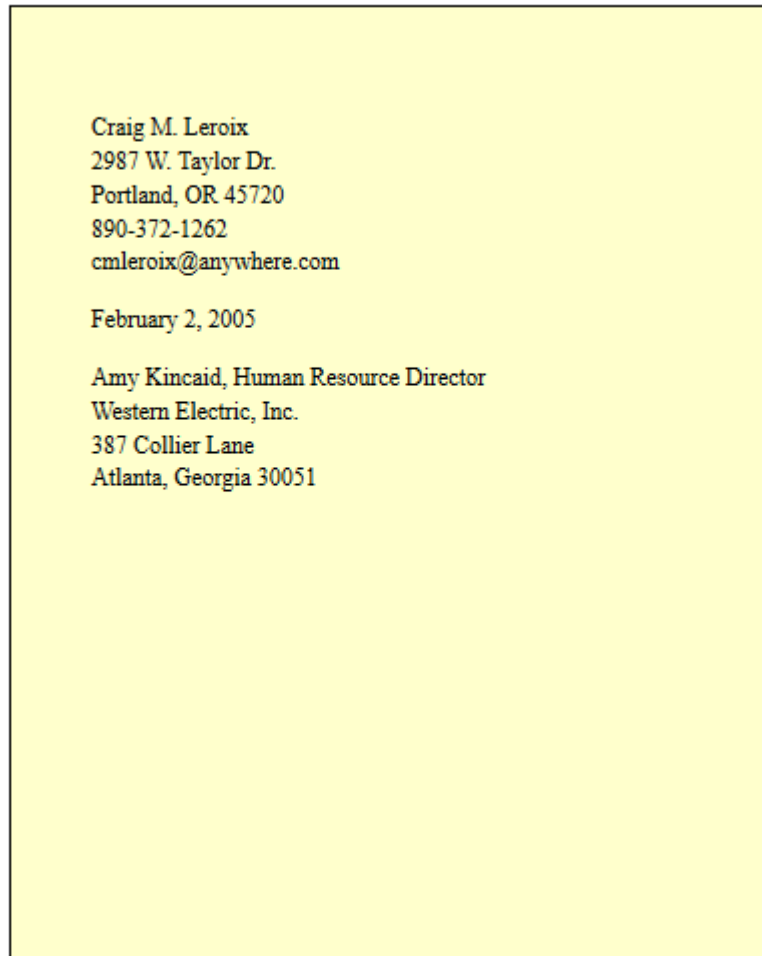
- Phone number
- Fax number (if applicable)
- E-mail address

Then, you will skip a line and write the full date (*month, day, year*). Follow this by skipping a space and writing the contact information for the person to whom you are writing:

- Name of the specific person
- Title of that person (if available)
- Address of the company

The reason you write your phone/fax number and email address is to make it easy for the company to contact you. You do not need to put this information down for the company itself.

Example:



- [Cover Letter Presentation](#)
- This presentation is designed to help students with their cover letters.
- The following are additional Purdue OWL resources to help you write your cover letter:

Document 6

- [Job Search Documents for Working Class Positions](#)

<p>Please click here to download the requested pdf.</p>

CWEST Job Search Resources (Résumés, Applications, and Letters)

Introduction

Welcome to the Community Writing and Education Station (CWEST) resource area for writing job search materials. This CWEST resource provides information about a number of job search documents WorkOne Express staff members have identified as important. These resources differ from other Purdue OWL job search documents because they are specifically designed for working class positions. Here you will find information on the following:

Reading & Using Job Ads

This resource was written by **Allen Brizee**.

Last edited by **Allen Brizee** on August 7, 2009 .

Summary:

These pages will help you read and use job ads so you can write your résumé and cover letter or fill out a job application.

Introduction

These pages will help you read and use job ads so you can write your résumé and cover letter or fill out a job application. To use these pages, you may select links in the navigation bar on the left, you may select links from the list below, or you may advance through the pages using the links at the bottom of each page. [Click here](#) to download the PDF file containing sample résumés and employment letters.

The job ad pages are orgnized into the following sections:

- [How to read and use job ads part 1](#)
 - Company name
 - Company contact information
 - Company description
 - Job title (and job number if applicable)
 - Job requirements
- [How to read and use job ads part 2](#)
 - Contact person
 - Application requirements
- [Understanding the job ad part 1](#)
 - Understanding job ad organization
- [Understanding the job ad part 2](#)
 - Understanding job ad terms

[Filling out job applications](#)

This resource was written by **Allen Brizee**.

Last edited by **Allen Brizee** on August 7, 2009 .

Summary:

These resources will help you understand and fill out job applications. These resources will also help you start a job application information sheet you can use as reference when you fill out applications or write résumés and cover letters.

Introduction

These resources will help you fill out job applications. To use these pages, you may select links in the navigation bar on the left, you may select links from the list below, or you may advance through the pages using the links at the bottom of each page. [Click here](#) to download the PDF file containing sample résumés and employment letters.

The job application pages are orgnized into the following sections:

- [Job application overview](#)
 - What is a job application?
 - Why do I need to fill out an application?
 - What should I do if I'm a veteran entering civilian life?
 - What should I do if I am transitioning from the automotive industry?
 - What should I do about time I was not working?
 - What should I do if I have been incarcerated?
 - What should my application look like?
- [Application worksheet part 1](#)
 - Personal information
- [Application worksheet part 2](#)
 - Employment information / work history
- [Application worksheet part 3](#)
 - Education and training
- [Application worksheet part 4](#)
 - References

[Writing résumés](#)

Résumés

This resource was written by **Allen Brizee**.

Last edited by **Allen Brizee** on July 6, 2011 .

Summary:

These resources will help you write your résumé. These pages will also help you design your résumé so it looks professional.

Introduction

These resources will help you write your résumé. These pages will also help you design your résumé so it looks professional. To use these pages, you may select links in the navigation bar on the left, you may select links from the list below, or you may advance through the pages using the links at the bottom of each page. [Click here](#) to download the PDF file containing sample résumés and employment letters.

The résumé pages are organized into the following sections:

- [Résumé overview part 1](#)
 - What is a résumé?
 - Why do I need to do a résumé?
 - What should I do if I'm a veteran entering civilian life?

Résumé Overview Part 1

This resource was written by **Allen Brizee**.

Last edited by **Allen Brizee** on July 31, 2009 .

Summary:

This resource explains what a résumé is, why you need to write a résumé, and what special steps returning veterans need to take to complete an effective résumé for civilian employment.

What is a résumé?

A résumé is a document that shows your education and job history. A résumé may also include life experiences related to the job you want to get.

Why do I need to do a résumé?

Many employers want workers to write a résumé. Employers use résumés to see who can do a job. Employers also use résumés to read about your past jobs. Your résumé is important because it shows employers what you have done and what you can do. Your résumé should convince an employer to give you an interview.

Even if you do not need a résumé for a certain job, it is good to keep one up to date because it is easier to fill out job applications if you have a résumé to reference.

What should I do if I'm a veteran entering civilian life?