Transition to Work and Self Sufficiency Video Series

Instructor's Guide

for

The Job Seeker's Toolkit

Overview

Every job requires the right tools. Finding a job *is* a job, and it requires a specialized tookit. This includes documents such as the resume, cover letter, and portfolio. Such job search tools are often used by employers to screen out applicants, but with the right methods and some hard work, it is possible to create job search documents that will help you avoid the "reject" pile and lead to interviews.

Such documents must be professional. They have to reflect the best possible version of you. That means they must be easy-to-read and error free. But it also means they must highlight your strengths, exhibit your best skills, and show evidence of your past successes.

This video helps students write their resume, walking them through the steps required as well as offering various options for adapting their resume to their specific situation. The video also addresses the need and strategies for creating cover letters and portfolios. The video tracks the progress of four job seekers—Tanya, Jack, Karen, and Anthony—as they move through these steps, and students should be encouraged to discuss their own anxieties and needs as it relates to writing resumes and other job search documents. Feel free to pause the video for activities and discussion as your own schedule dictates.

Presentation Suggestions

Begin by asking students what a resume is *for*? Why do employers ask for them? What makes one resume stand out from the pile? What have students done in the past to make their own resumes stand out? What problems have they encountered when trying to write them?

You may find that many students resist writing resumes. It is important to stress that the process of creating a resume is not difficult once it is broken into steps. As with all other parts of the job search process, the toolkit is just one more chance to answer an employer's overriding concern: Why should I hire you?

When you feel students have begun thinking about these issues, give them the **Anticipation Quiz** to complete prior to watching the video. If you wish, allow the students to state their answers and discuss them.

Show the video. Encourage students to take notes or to make changes to the answers they put down for the Anticipation Quiz while watching the video.

At the conclusion of the video, ask students to discuss any changes they made to their answers on the Anticipation Quiz as a result of information they learned. Follow up this discussion with the **Activities**.

Use the **Discussion Questions** to request oral or written responses from students or assign the questions as homework essays.

Give the **Quick Quiz** at the conclusion of class and correct the quizzes as a group. Assign the **Homework Option**, if desired.

Anticipation Quiz

Directions: Answer these questions as completely as possible. You may revise your answers as you watch the video.

1. What is a resume?

2. What are the differences between chronological, skills, and combination resumes?

3. What are the major parts of a resume?

4. What is the point of having a cover letter?

Answer Key

1. A resume is a summary of your skills, training, and job goals, as well as your first chance to make a good impression.

2. Chronological resumes focus on the jobs you've held in chronological order. Skills resumes organize work experience by key skills rather than specific jobs. Combination resumes uses elements of chronological and skills resumes, giving you the flexibility to highlight qualifications and minimize details that might get you screened out.

3. Contact information, job objective, education and training, work experience, skills.

4. A cover letter introduces you and highlights the most important parts of your work experience. It allows you to address the reason you are sending the resume and explain how you are the most qualified applicant for the job.

Activities

Activity #1
Title: Resume Jumpstart
Format: Individual, pairs
Time: 20-30 minutes
Materials: Worksheet, pen
Procedure:

1. Use the worksheet provided with this guide to help students create a simple resume. Remind students that their goal is to just get the basic information down. It doesn't have to look pretty yet—they will need a word processing program for that later. Encourage them to include any information they would need to apply for any job they might be interested in, but remind them that they will want to customize their resumes to fit specific jobs or industries.

2. As students are filling in the information, encourage them to work collaboratively with other students or to ask you for suggestions. When they have finished, have students trade their resume drafts with each other. Instruct them to offer three suggestions for improvement on the back of the resume they were given.

3. If students already have resumes and have brought them to class you can run a resume workshop instead, splitting students into groups of two or three to trade and evaluate each other's resumes.

Activity #2
Title: Cover Letter Creation
Format: Individual
Time: 20-30 minutes
Materials: Paper, pen, classifieds/job openings
Procedure:

1. Bring enough job openings so that each student can have two. These can be printed from the Internet or copied from the classifieds. Try to choose job openings that are descriptive and that include contact information.

2. Give each student two job descriptions and tell them to choose one that they would like to apply for. Then have students compose a cover letter introducing themselves, highlighting their skills, and requesting an interview for the position. Be sure to review the parts and goals of the cover letter as a class before they start writing.

3. If there is time, have students trade their cover letters with each other and offer three suggestions for improvement. Remind them that each cover letter will be different—customized to the job they are applying for—but that the basic formula will stay the same.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you need a resume? What do employers expect to see on them? What do employers use them for?

2. What impact have computers and the Internet had on the job search? How have they made writing resumes easier? What do employers expect when it comes to using computers to find jobs and send and receive information such as resumes, cover letters, and portfolios?

3. Why do you need a cover letter if you have a resume? What additional function does it serve? What about a portfolio? What value does it add to your job search package? As an employer, what would you want to see in a portfolio? What can your portfolio do for you as a job seeker, even if an employer never looks at it?

Quick Quiz

Note: You may read these questions out loud, allowing time for students to respond, or copy and hand this out as a written exercise.

Directions: Indicate whether each statement is true or false, according to the video.

1. A cover letter should always be addressed to "To Whom It May Concern".

2. You should include the names of references on your resume.

3. You should always have someone else write your resume for you.

4. A single mistake on a resume or cover letter can cost you an interview.

5. Employers use resumes to screen out applicants.

6. You should have an e-mail account if you are going to look for jobs.

7. A skills resume is good for avoiding gaps in employment history.

8. Most good resumes are usually two or three pages long.

Answer Key

1. False
2. False
3. False
4. True

5. True
6. True
7. True
8. False

Homework Option

Have students go home and gather materials that they could include in a portfolio. This could include a resume, school transcripts, copies of official documents, skills

summaries, diplomas, certificates, recommendations, and examples of work (photos, writing, business reports, etc.). Have students bring these materials to the next class and spend a few minutes discussing how they can be organized and presented to an employer in an interview situation.

Quick Resume Template

Use this template to get you started on your resume. Remember to provide specific examples whenever possible and to use active, energetic language.

Contact Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

Job Objective

_____

_____

Skills Summary

_____

_____

Education and Training

Name of Institution: _____

Degree or Certification Earned: _____

Dates Attended: _____ GPA: _____

Notable Courses or Training: _____

Name of Institution: _____

Degree or Certification Earned: _____

Dates Attended: _____ GPA: _____

Notable Courses or Training: _____

Work History (Most Recent First)

Job Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Dates of Employment: _____

Job Duties: _____

_____

Skills Used: _____

_____

Examples of Successes: _____

_____

Job Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Dates of Employment: _____

Job Duties: _____

_____

Skills Used: _____

_____

Examples of Successes: _____

_____