



Exploring 4-H at Home

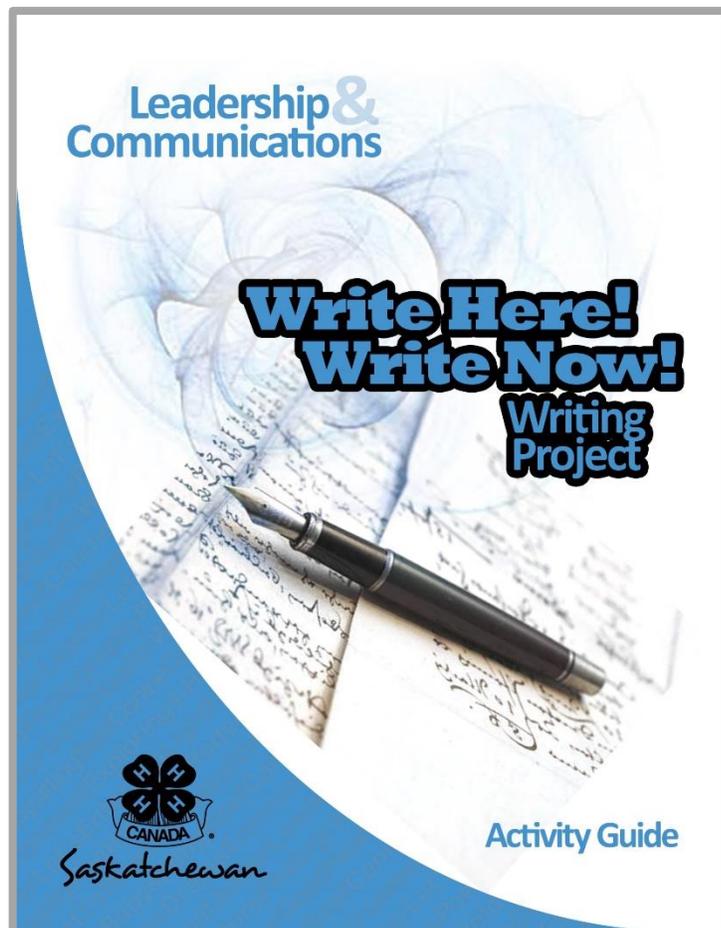


Community Engagement
and Communications

Pillar: Community Engagement and Communications

Project: Write Here! Write Now!

Activity: Résumés, Cover Letters and Interviews



Résumés

Though some of you may not be quite old enough at the moment to be employed, the day will likely come when you want to apply for a summer or after school job. Writing a résumé is an important skill to have when that day comes.

A **résumé** is a summary of your experiences and skills. It highlights your accomplishments to show a potential employer that you are qualified for the job for which you are applying. It doesn't need to be longer than one page.

As a student, you may have had little or no work experience. That's okay. No one expects a 16-year-old to have an extensive work record. A **functional résumé** is best for a student. Rather than listing past jobs in chronological order, this type of résumé focuses on skills gained from previous jobs, activities, experiences or volunteer work.

Do include your extra-curricular activities such as student council, drama club, sports, school newspaper, and leadership experiences such as organizing a Terry Fox Run or managing the school canteen.

Try to tailor your résumé to the job you are applying for. To do that, think about the skills the job would require and try to figure out if there have been experiences or extra-curricular activities in your life that have given you those skills. Don't lie but don't be too modest either.

For example, let's say you're applying for a job as a server at a local restaurant or for work with a caterer, both jobs involving food and people – bringing food to people. Have you ever helped out in the dining room at camp? Have you worked in the cafeteria or canteen at school? Have you worked in the rink kitchen? It's all experience working with people and food. Include it in your résumé.

You're applying for a job where you will be one of several workers on the job at the same time. Make sure you mention any team sports you play or have played, and groups you belong to, all proof that you can work well with people. You're a good team player.

The following example of a functional résumé was composed using the template at: http://www.youth.gc.ca/eng/topics/jobs/tp_functional_resume.shtml

Imagine Tom Campbell is 16-years-old, and in grade 11. He's applying for a job at the *Anytown Sentinel*, the local weekly newspaper. The Sentinel wants a student who can come in on production day to help set up the paper on a computer. There will also be an opportunity to proof (read and check spelling and grammar) some of the copy that comes in from volunteer writers in the community, such as club and school reports. Eventually, there will be the opportunity to report and write stories for the newspaper.

Tom Campbell
Box 563
Anytown, SK S0A 1W0
555-555-5555
t.campbell@pretendguy.ca

Skills and abilities

Summary

- Strong work ethic
- Speaks and writes both English and French fluently

Communication skills

- First prize in Canadian Legion essay contest at the Provincial level in 2012
- Summer scholarship for Young Francois Writers in Quebec City in 2012
- First prize at Provincial level in 4-H Public Speaking in 2010 and 2011

Self-starter

- Supervised and cared for younger nephews (ages six and eight) for five days and four nights when their parents attended Agribition in 2012. This included making meals, getting the children to school, supervising homework and playtime as well as doing some laundry and housework
- Organized Snowmobile Safety classes in the winter of 2011-12 at the Anytown Arena
- Raised and showed 4-H calves for the past six consecutive years

Computer Skills

- Proficient in the use of Microsoft and Mac computer programs
- One of the founders of the Anytown Computer Club, a group of high school students who get together to learn new skills and offer computer help and troubleshooting to students free of charge

Experience

Farm sitting: 2010-12

Did chores including feeding pigs, chickens, sheep and household pets for farmers in the Anytown, Sask. area

Babysitting: 2009-12

Babysat siblings and neighbourhood children evenings, weekends and school holidays

Volunteer experience

- Junior editor of *The Bugle*, Anytown High School online newspaper
- Terry Fox organizing committee
- Stage crew Anytown High Drama Club

Education

Anytown High School
2010 to present

Cover Letters

Tom also submits a cover letter to the newspaper. A **cover letter** is a formal letter that accompanies your résumé. Its purpose is to offer new information, not included in the résumé and to further personalize your job application. Ideally, you should write a fresh cover letter for each job application.

The cover letter introduces you, states the position you are applying for and explains how you found out about the job. It explains how you are qualified for the job, requests an interview and thanks the employer. It's important to make sure there are no typos or grammatical errors in your résumé and cover letter. Do not rely on spell check. Make sure the name of the potential employer is spelled correctly.

Here is an example of a cover letter from the University of Saskatchewan:

<https://students.usask.ca/documents/secc/cover-letter-sample.pdf>

Interviews

A couple of weeks later, Tom gets a phone call from the *Anytown Sentinel*. They are interested in **interviewing** him for the position! He is very excited but also unsure as to what to expect. For employers, an interview is an opportunity to get to know you and see what you have learned from your past experiences. As a job applicant, this is an opportunity to expand on your résumé and cover letter, and show that you are excited about the position. Here are some tips from the Government of Manitoba (https://www.gov.mb.ca/cyo/youth/services/interview_preparing.html) on some common interview questions.

“Tell me a little about yourself”

- This question can put you at ease and shows the interviewer how you define yourself. What is important to you?
- Try to share some interests and experiences that relate to the job
- Share a little bit about your family, community and how you relate to others. This shows a well-rounded character.
- Do not “ramble on” with your life history – this is just an introductory question!

“What are your strengths?”

- The interviewer learns reasons for hiring you and if you believe in yourself through this question.
- Your answer should be honest and relevant to the job.
- Share some personal attributes, and back these up with stories and/or examples

“What are your weaknesses?”

- This question tests your honesty and ability to be objective about yourself
- You could give a weakness and then share how you are addressing it (ex: "I am so enthusiastic that I want to do a hundred things at once, so I have to sit down and make a list of priorities and plan a schedule")
- You could also give a positive attribute and then show how you address it when it is not being met (ex: "It is important for deadlines to be met and all messages to be responded to, but I also have to learn to be diplomatic/patient when this doesn't happen")

“What would you do in ‘this’ situation?”

- The interviewer is seeing how you will react to unexpected questions, learn about any past experiences that have taught you something about this position and ensure that your response would be in line with company policy.
- You can demonstrate that your reactions in real-life situations will be calm and appropriate.
- This can be through related skills, past experiences or specific training

“Do you have any questions?”

- This indicates that the interview is almost over, and shows that you are quite interested in the position.
- Here you have the opportunity to show that you have researched the company.
- You can ask questions to decide if the job is for you (any concerns, potential duties or other questions).

Activity

With a partner (sibling, parent, friend, etc.) hold a mock interview. Come up with some questions beforehand as well as some basic information about the job. Are you apply to be President of the Moon or a gardener or a nurse? This may change some of your questions. When you are done, let them know what they did well and what they could improve. Then switch roles and interview again!