

Resume and Cover Letter Workshop For Computer Science Students

Filip Jagodzinski*

* Past co-presenters have included See-Mong Tan, who added invaluable content about mentioning in your CV what impact and role you specifically had in past experiences



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Attend ALL Of the tech talks

Attend ALL of the career fairs

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Goals of this workshop

Part I: Showcase a well-reasoned resume Part II: Showcase a well-reasoned cover letter Part III: Resume peer editing



Resume and Cover Letter Workshop For Computer Science Students

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Part I: Showcase a well-reasoned resume

Q: What should your resume look like?

Q: Is there a best format?

Q: Are all cover letters the same?



Single best format?

- There is no one single correct format for a resume, but there are plenty of ways to write a bad one
- Good resumes come in different formats and designs ...

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Single best format?

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Q: Does that mean that any resume will do? For CS or non-CS?



Q1 : Your resume should be <u>brief</u> but <u>concise</u> ...

- A. Because long resumes are for English majors only
- **B.** Because brief resumes require less ink and are environmentally friendly
- C. Because a recruiter will spend 20 seconds (or less) looking over it



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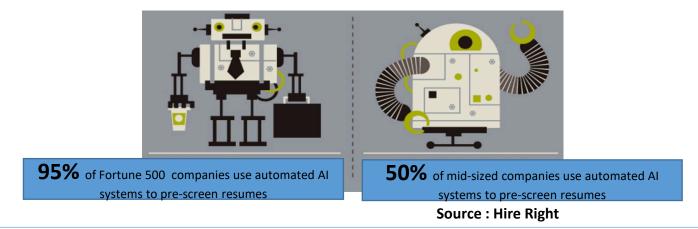
Q2 : Your resume should <u>target</u> a specific job ...

- A. Because all employers are bow and arrow expert marksmen
- B. Because you don't have anything better to do with your time and you want to spend 12 hours editing a single sentence
- C. Because a recruiters for a cupcake company in need of a baker doesn't want to read about your babysitting skills, nor you winning the national badminton competition, nor how you are the bestest (yes that's a word!) competitive Frogger player



Q2 : Your resume should <u>target</u> a specific job ...

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Q3 : Your resume should <u>distinguish</u> you from the "other" candidates' resumes ...

- A. Because you want to give the impression that even after you get hired, your number 1 goal will be to compete with your co-workers
- B. Because you want to make it obvious that you have a higher GPA than everybody else and that you aced CSCI301
- C. Because you've worked your butt off to get where you are, so why not highlight those skills that make you the best candidate for the job



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Source : Hire Right



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Bad news Q: how many of the 75,000 applicants to Google each week have a BS in computer science or a combination of formal and informal training?





If you've had a loooong week, and you remember the bare minimum from this presentation, then remember these 3 things :

Your resume should be brief but concise

Your resume should <u>target</u> a specific job or skillset

Your resume should <u>distinguish</u> you from the "other" candidates' resumes



- Majoring in mathematics and/or computer science
- 2+ years experience in Fortran and C++
- Experience with IDEs and APIs
- Have worked as part of a medium (3-10 person) development team

Candidates should also have the following preferred qualifications:

- Knowledge of computer architecture
- Ability to write formal documentations
- Experience with punch-card computers

Let us write a resume targeting the job description on the left

Although this job/internship looks generic and simple enough, there is a wealth of information being given to you that you should <u>use</u>!



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Take a close look at the job/internship posting ...

It is often said that the ONE single biggest mistake made my students is that they do not read the job posting closely enough, thinking ...

"meh, just another CS job ... I'm a computer science student, I cleeeearrrly know this stuff ..."

Keep in mind ... an HR company might get hundreds of resumes for a internships/job posting ... don't give them a chance to eliminate you



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Take a close look at the job/internship posting ...

These are the "must have" qualifications ... if you don't meet the employer's criteria, then it'll probably be very difficult for you to get an interview ... You should possess at minimum <u>MOST</u> of these skills ...

especially if the employer uses a computer program to pre-scan applicants

95% of Fortune 500 companies use automated AI systems to prescreen resumes



Source : Hire Right

50% of midsized companies use automated AI systems to prescreen resumes



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This does not mean that you have to be an expert in all of these ... it is okay if you are not an expert in none of them ... but you should more-orless have heard of these, and be able to converse intelligently about them

Some good news : There is a reason why students get internships or "entry" level jobs ... you aren't an expert yet ... that happens 5-10 years after you graduate



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These are the "should have" qualifications ... the more of these that you can say "yes" to, the better



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In all cases, don't fool yourself ...

... you've Wikipedia-ed "punch card" ... or you've glanced at the punch card posted in the foyer



Are you now the expert?

... no



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Then, look closely at what the employer is looking for ... read between the lines



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Then, look closely at what the employer is looking for ... read between the lines

Find the <u>keywords</u> in the posting ... employers are busy ... when they say they want this-and-that, they mean they want this-and-that ...

> Q: What are the keywords in this posting?



- Majoring in <u>mathematics</u> and/or computer science
- 2+ years experience in Fortran and C++
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Then, look closely at what the employer is looking for ... read between the lines

Use the keywords to determine if you qualify ...

if you really really really want the job, but you don't meet any the qualifications, then perhaps the job posting is not a good match with your skill set ...



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Then, look closely at what the employer is looking for ... read between the lines

You should possess <u>most</u> of the required, and <u>at least a few</u> of the preferred qualifications if you expect your resume/application to be considered



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Then it is time to write the resume

...



Goal: create a tailor-written resume for each position that you are applying for ...

It is okay to have a standard template, but you'll need to tweak the resume for each job/internship you are applying for



> The resume is about you ... you must identify yourself, and provide details for your (potential) employer to contact you ...

Goal: make this part of the resume easy-to-read



Current Address 332 Churchill Rd. London, England 673442 <u>Mailing Address / Website</u> 674 Humbolt Lane, London, England 652212 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alan_Turing The resume is about you ... you must identify yourself, and provide details for your (potential) employer to contact you ...

Goal: make this part of the resume easy-to-read

Do you need to provide a website? **No** Do you need an email address? **Yes** A phone number? **No, but it's nice**

Linked-in profiles are good A GitHub with sample code is good, too



Current Address 332 Churchill Rd. London, England 673442 Mailing Address / Website 674 Humbolt Lane, London, England 652212 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alan Turing

Objective

Be up front ... indicate WHY you desire the job and/or internship ...

But don't just say why you need the job



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Be up front ... indicate WHY you desire the job and/or internship ...

But don't just say why you need the job

"I'd like to get a job as a computer engineer" ... well, umm, yeah, you ARE applying ... and there is no value added in that statement

... an employer doesn't want to hire somebody who is needy ... somebody who needs, wants, needs, and wants ...

Explain what you might offer ... what are your potential contributions?



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• Gain an entry-level job; contribute as a member of a low/mid/large scale team

From the employer's perspective, the ideal candidate is somebody who will contribute AND who will make everybody else's job easier ...

This section is tailor written for the internship/job that you are applying for ... no generic statements allowed!



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Recruiters already know what you're applying to, so this section may be redundant. You can omit this section if you need more space for experiences and later sections



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Education

Don't dwell too much on your education ... if you are applying for a position that requires a BS in computer science, then ALL qualified candidates will have a BS in computer science ...



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Don't allow your BS in computer science to be your distinguishing characteristic ... because most likely it is **NOT**

When compared to peple with no CS training, your techy skills induce amazement and wonder ...

Among your peers and the hiring manager, for (int i=0; i<20; i++) is ... Yawn, no big deal



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Put yourself in the mindset of the employer who is doing the hiring ... how many of the applicants will have computer science experience?



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You can highlight here your focus/concentration of study ... If you will earn your degree in the near future, state that. For example: "expected June 2066" or something similar



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Experience

This is <u>**THE**</u> most important section of your resume ... it sets you apart from everybody else

Goal: describe those experiences that make you the best thing since sliced bread!

This section is also tailor-written for the job/internship ... you want the potential employer to think, "Gee, this job was created for this person"



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Scenario: place yourself in the role of the hiring manager ... you want to hire somebody who

- A. Will make YOUR job easier
- B. Will need constant attention
- C. Has a variety of irrelevant skills



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- A. Will make YOUR job easier
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Q: Which experiences should you (the candidate) list?



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<u> </u>	

Give a heading for each experience ... include:

- Your title/role
- Who/where your employer was located
- Duration/Time of experience

And ... you guessed it ... this is very very tailor-written for the job/internship posting

If you were a biology lab assistant from 1990 through 1995, and you are applying for a code developer position, then it is PROBABLY not a good idea to list the biology job as the first item (or maybe not list it at all)



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Goal: Use active verbs ... to describe what YOU did ...

don't say "Java was used to write code for a mobile application" ... give yourself credit ... highlight what YOU did ... instead, write "Designed, developed, and deployed a mobile application currently in use by 12,000 people"



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Goal: Use active verbs ... to describe what YOU did ...

don't say "Java was used to write code for a mobile application" ... give yourself credit ... highlight what YOU did ... instead, write "Designed,

developed, and deployed a mobile application currently in use by 12,000 people"

Explain clearly your contribution, and what impact YOU made ... technical is good ... be quantitative!



"Accomplished [X], as measured by [Y], by doing [Z]."



Resume and Cover Letter Workshop For Computer Science Students "Accomplished [X], as measured by [Y], by doing [Z]."

Before

Company, San Francisco, CA May -- August 2017 Software Engineering Intern

- Deployed company's new and improved in-house account reconciliation system
- Generated daily reconciliation report for Finance team
- Languages: Python



"Accomplished [X], as measured by [Y], by doing [Z]."

Before

Company, San Francisco, CA May -- August 2017 Software Engineering Intern

- Deployed company's new and improved in-house account reconciliation system
- Generated daily reconciliation report for Finance team
- Languages: Python

After

Company, San Francisco, CA May -- August 2017 Software Engineering Intern

- Deployed new in-house account reconciliation system using Python and improved latency by 12% by designing and implementing new framework
- Generated daily reconciliation report for team by automating workflow of 8 different tasks



Co-Founder & VP -- Sept 2016 - Present

- Spearhead new initiative to create undergraduate data analytics community
- Grew club from **50 to 300+** members through enhanced recruiting circuits, **20+** industry visits, and **monthly** high-profile speaker engagements
- Collaborate to plan annual Data Visualization Hackathon for 200+ attendees citywide

Head Teaching Assistant, Intro to Data Structures -- Sept 2017 - May 2018

- Led weekly office hours to **25+** students; debugging in Java, homework assistance
- Supervised **55 TAs** with curriculum support resources for **500+** undergraduates

Focus on your impact

Quantify your impact



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Tailor the descriptions for the job that you are applying for ... if the job requires skills in software documentation, then you should choose experiences where you wrote or used software documentation

See the handout for a list of active verbs



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Remember those keywords that you extracted from the job posting ...

If I were the employer, I'd say, "wow, this job opportunity is EXACTLY for this person"



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Q: Which experiences should you list?

- Experiences lasting 2 or more months
- Course-long projects are okay
- CSCI 491, 492, 493 projects are perfect (but describe the project, and NOT the class)
- Any multi-faceted project involving design, development, testing, etc.



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- Enough to entice the reader
- Leave your essays at home!
- List YOUR contributions, and what impacts they had/have ... improved run time by 10%? In use by 1M people?
 Remember : 20 seconds!



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Skills

Place here your skills ... but not just any skills ...



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Skills

Place here your skills ... but not just any skills ...

emphasize those skills that you have and which the employer is **looking** for

...

If you are a Perl guru (you are the uber bestest awesomest Perl programmer in the world) but the job description does not require Perl programming, you probably shouldn't highlight the fact that you are a Perl genius ... you can still include that part, but that shouldn't be the focus ...



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• C

• UML Diagrams

Turing Machines

Reductions

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Skills

- Fortran
- Java
- Waterfall Design
 - Model
- Mathematical Induction Unit Testing

• C++

 Complexity Theory • Mathematical Logic Consider indicating how proficient you are at each skill ... 1, 2, or 5 years of C++ experience? Or, use words such as "working knowledge," "expert," or "basic understanding" ...

You may also categories skills into easyto-read sets. For example

> **IDE**: netbeans, eclipse, jGRASP Languages : C++, java, python, C# **OS**: Mac, Linux, Windows XP



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• C++

• Investigated use of mathematical biology to infer important biological principles

Skills

- Fortran
- Java
- Waterfall Design
 - Model
- sign •
- Mathematical InductionUnit Testing
- Complexity Theory
 Mathematical Logic

You don't need to explain further these skills. They are usually the run-of-the-mill buzzwords

but you MUST include them to showcase your technical prowess

Here's a good rule of thumb : any skill that you list you should be able to chat comfortably about without needing to reference a book, calling Bill Gates, emailing Linus Torvalds, etc.



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Skills

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•	Java	•	Mathematical	•	UML Diagrams
•	Waterfall Design		Induction	•	Turing Machines
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-	C 1 1 10 m1	-	3.6.4		

Complexity Theory
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Q: Should you list courses completed?



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Skills

- Fortran • C++ Java Mathematical • Waterfall Design Induction
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- UML Diagrams Turing Machines Reductions

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• Mathematical Logic

Q: Should you list courses completed?

It is up to you – but especially consider "cool" courses that you have taken which might distinguish you from other candidates

Thus, it is okay to mention that you have completed ...

algorithms, database, OS, networks, bioinformatics, machine learning, etc.

but don't mention course numbers (CSCI301), which are meaningless to anybody external to WWU



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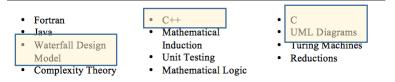
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Skills



You don't have to be an expert in all the skills that you list, but in this case, because you've listed them, then ...

- You should know what UML stands for
- Be able to describe aesthetic and underlying differences between C++ and C
- Be able to discuss the differences between the waterfall and agile design processes



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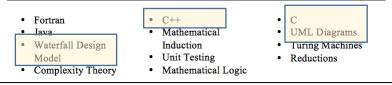
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Skills



Q: How much detail about your technical and non-technical skills should you provide?



Just the technical stuff (ie, you are a robot) Just the nontechnical stuff (code ... what's that?)



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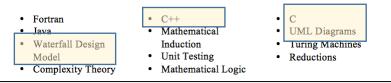
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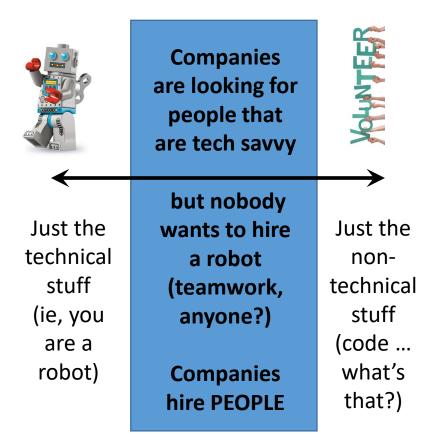
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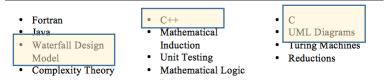
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Q: Should you include references?



Current Address 332 Churchill Rd. London, England 673442 Mailing Address / Website 674 Humbolt Lane, London, England 652212 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alan_Turing

Objective

• Gain an entry-level job; contribute as a member of a low/mid/large scale team

Education

 Bachelor of Arts, Mathematics, first class honors Kings College, 1930-1934
 Focus : Cryptography, Mathematics

Experience

1930-1938

1944-1947

- Developed the theoretical foundations for modern-day computers
- Wrote ground-breaking thesis, entitled, "Systems of Logic Based on Ordinals"

Scientist, National Physical Laboratory

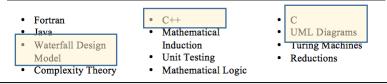
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Skills



Q: Should you include references?

Generally no

References are contacted only AFTER a candidate has progressed to the offer stage, at which point the HR department would contact you to ask you to identify references*

Again put yourselves in the shoes of the employer ... are they going to contact every reference for every resume received (even those resumes that are clear rejects)?

* It is unethical (and some argue illegal) for a company to contact references without your explicit consent



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- Fortran
- Java
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- UML Diagrams
- Turing Machines
- Reductions

- Complexity Theory

• C

Q: Is writing a resume that simple?



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- Turing Machines
- Reductions
- Reduction

Q: Is writing a resume that simple?

Well, yes ... but there are several pitfalls that you should be aware of ...



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- Mathematical Logic
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- Reductions

Pitfall 1 : Font is too small!



A recommended font size is 11 or 12.

Use universal fonts - the ones that open the same on PCs and Macs of all ages.

> **Times Roman** Arial Century MS Sans Serif Book Antiqua **Century Gothic** Calibri



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Pitfall 2 : Spelling mistakes



Nothing shows an inattention to detail like glaring spelling errors!

Use the spell-check tool, but remember that the <u>best</u> <u>proofreader is another set of eyes</u>

Be sure that there are no spelling errors, poor word choice, or misuse of language...



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Pitfall 3 : Redundancy



Use a <u>variety</u> of action verbs to prove your transferable and diverse skills.

Utilize <u>different</u> action verbs to highlight the wide range of skills and knowledge that you possess.



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Pitfall 4 : Having just one version



Resumes need to be "fluid"

You may have several different versions depending on the jobs you are targeting. You can :

- Change the order of things
- Emphasize different things
- State different objectives...



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 M
- ing

• C

UML Diagrams Turing Machines

Reductions

• Mathematical Logic

Pitfall 5: Clutter!



Filter out information that might seem irrelevant to the position. Be wise in choosing certain facts to be included on your final resume.

Use fewer but more encompassing words. Keep it brief and to the point.



Alan Turing turing@enigma.com Cell: 509.963.9983

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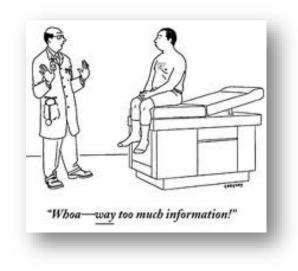
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Pitfall 6: Including Personal Information



Personal information, like age, gender, and head shot should not be included on your resume (unless you are a performing art student).



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 Turing Machine
- Turing MachinesReductions
- Reductions

Pitfall 7 : Using too many abbreviations



Your resume is a formal document ... be sure to omit esoteric abbreviations or contractions in your words or sentences

Just because you KNOW what CSCI301 and CSCI141 are, you cannot assume that the employer does



DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE



Resume and Cover Letter Workshop For Computer Science Students

Filip Jagodzinski*

Part II: Showcase a well-reasoned cover letter

And is a cover letter required?



And is a cover letter required?

- A cover letter gives you the opportunity to personalize your application.
- In the cover letter you may want to include things that cannot be placed into the resume.



The cover letter is often required, and/or often takes the place of an in-person recruiter meeting. If you haven't met anybody from the company that you are applying to, then send a cover letter with your resume.



If you've had a loooong week, and you remember the bare minimum from this presentation, then remember these (additional 3 things) about cover letters :

First Paragraph : Mention the job / position

Second Paragraph : Articulate why your skills are a perfect match

Third Paragraph : Discuss next steps, thank the recipient



Looking for qualified applicants to fill two entry-level full-time computer engineer positions. Candidates must have the following qualifications:

- Majoring in mathematics and/or computer science
- 2+ years experience in Fortran and C++
- Experience with IDEs and APIs
- Have worked as part of a medium (3-10 person) development team

Candidates should also have the following preferred qualifications:

- Knowledge of computer architecture
- Ability to write formal documentations
- Experience with punch-card computers

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UML Diagrams

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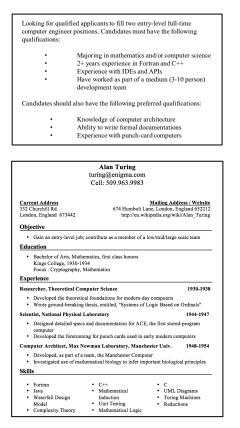


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Skills			
 Java Waterfall Design Model 	C++ Mathematical Induction Unit Testing Mathematical Logic	 C UML Diagrams Turing Machines Reductions 	

Just as with the resume, there is no single "best" cover letter format.

However the cover letter has a very standard format, which recruiters are looking for, so you SHOULD stick to it.





Alan Turing turing@enigma.com Cell: 509.963.9983

Include a letterhead that at a minimum contains your name, and contact information.

Whether or not it is centered or left justified is up to you.

A mailing address is a good idea, too.



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Alan Turing turing@enigma.com Cell: 509.963.9983

September 24, 1949

Sally Jenkins Comps-R-US 3242 Umptum St.

Seattle, WA 98214

Include the date, along with the recipient's name and address.



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Alan Turing turing@enigma.com Cell: 509.963.9983

September 24, 1949

Sally Jenkins Comps-R-US 3242 Umptum St. Seattle, WA 98214

Dear Ms. Jenkins :

Address the recipient

If you know the person by name (you've chatted with them, have their business card, etc.) then include their name and title.





	pplicants to fill two entry-level full-time titons. Candidates must have the following
• 2+ • Ex • Ha	ajoring in mathematics and/or computer science - years experience in Fortran and C++ perience with IDEs and APIs we worked as part of a medium (3-10 person) velopment team
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Dear Ms. Jenkins :

If you are not sure who the recipient is, write (in order of "best" to "worst")

Dear [insert name] : Dear Hiring Manager : Dear Recruiting Team : Dear Comps-R-US :



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Dear Ms. Jenkins :

As a last resort write

To Whom it may concern :

as it might come across as a template letter



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Alan Turing turing@enigma.com Cell: 509.963.9983

September 24, 1949

Sally Jenkins Comps-R-US 3242 Umptum St. Seattle, WA 98214

Dear Ms. Jenkins :

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The first paragraph should be short and sweet. Indicate which position you are applying for.



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If you've met the recipient in-person, or if an existing employee is referring you to the job, then be sure to say that.

Networking, Networking, Networking

Take advantage of your connections!



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In the body paragraph (at most two paragraphs), mention why you are qualified for the position. Mention work experience.



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Mention why you WANT to work for this company, and what you'd contribute ...



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	Com 50775057705
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Focus on the keywords in the job description and mention experiences specifically related to those keywords



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I look forward to discussing with you further my qualifications and can be reached at <u>turing@enigma.com</u> or by phone 509-963-9983.

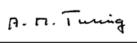
Discuss plans (looking forward to hearing from), and if you intend to follow up in a specific way (visit, phone call, email, etc.) mention that.



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Sincerely,



Close with "Sincerely" and/or thank the recipient for their time, and provide a signature. If creating a PDF, "draw" the signature and save as a PNG, JPEG, etc. and place into the document



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The same rules apply to the cover letter as to the resume.

 Write in active voice (you don't want to sound as if good things just miraculously happened to you ... <u>you</u> <u>Make things happen</u>).

• Take credit for your accomplishments

• Use active verbs



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A. T. 1 m

DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE



Resume and Cover Letter Workshop For Computer Science Students

Filip Jagodzinski*

Part III: Resume peer editing

DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE



Resume and Cover Letter Workshop For Computer Science Students

Filip Jagodzinski