

English 393BL First Assignment

Audience-Based Resume & Cover Letter

- ✓ First Draft: Post approved job description, resume, and cover letter to ELMS
- ✓ Second Draft: Post revised application package to ELMS, bring hard copy to class
- ✓ Final: Submit a copy of job description, rhetorical analysis memo, cover letter, and resume to ELMS, either as four separate Word files or one combined Word file

Assignment Overview

This assignment will illustrate the importance of creating a successful audience-based resume and cover letter. You'll be writing a resume and cover letter for a real-world audience -- the company looking to hire someone just like you -- using the job description you found. Each of the three documents required for this assignment should be *exactly* one full page of single-spaced text.

Both an audience-based resume and cover letter will convey a definite impression of a candidate's abilities, and your goal is to provide a professional, persuasive set of documents tailored specifically for one employer, one job, one audience. **The resume** is the chance to provide a concise and targeted look at the abilities that closely match the skills an employer imagines the ideal candidate will possess. How do you know what an employer will want? Research! **The cover letter** is an opportunity for you to use that research to talk about who the employers reading it care most about -- themselves. The cover letter should be addressed to a specific person, and you should be able to tell this person exactly why your classmate is a perfect fit for the position within the company.

You'll be graded on two areas of this assignment: **Style** (grammar; consistency; correctness; layout and design elements) and **Content** (the evidence you provide to your audience to demonstrate the candidate's suitability for this specific position).

Please note: You will be writing both documents completely from scratch. You are to choose a new layout, new format, and look for new, appropriate words to describe your past experiences. You may not recycle an old resume; this is considered a violation of the University's academic integrity and will be dealt with accordingly.

The Rhetorical Analysis Memo

This document will be in the form of a single-spaced, one-page memo. *Part One:* You'll be paired with a classmate for the pre-writing parts of this assignment. After draft workshop concludes and revisions are made, please assess your partner's resume by analyzing the choices s/he made in terms of both content and style. Describe the audience in specific detail; then, match aspects of your classmate's resume and cover letter to these specific traits. Discuss the content of the resume in terms of audience needs. Next, analyze the style choices that were made: in addition to following the principles of clarity, concision, and correctness, how did the arrangement of the resume attend to the audience's needs? Finally, discuss the limitations of your classmate's experiences and make specific additional recommendations for your classmate in pursuing employment in this field. *Part Two:* Perform the same scrutiny on your own documents. Include a paragraph describing your audience, using your research, and then refer to specific places on your resume and cover letter where you attend to those traits. Make sure to also include a section that details your research including additional information obtained about your audience.

Choices you'll need to make:

- How should I organize the resume? Chronologically, functionally, or by skills?
- What information should I emphasize? What experiences should I leave off?

Additional key points to keep in mind:

- ❖ Looks do count: make smart formatting choices based on our readings and examples.
- ❖ Always remember the audience members: both the resume and the cover letter should be tailored to their concept of the ideal employee.
- ❖ Remember that the cover letter is about your audience's needs, not yours.
- ❖ On the resume, descriptions should be persuasive as well as informative.
- ❖ Proof-read carefully: even one mistake may ruin a candidate's chances in a competitive market.