



DOMINICAN
UNIVERSITY

Office of Career Programs and Employer Relations

EDUCATOR RESOURCE GUIDE

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JOB SEARCH

BASICS AND A CHECKLIST

JOB SEARCH BASICS



RESUME

Administrators are most concerned about the teaching-related content of your resume, such as student teaching and other practicum experiences. You may want to include other experiences, such as tutoring or working as a camp counselor, that are relevant to working with your desired population in a teaching or mentoring capacity. Your resume must be easy to read and free of errors. Be truthful about all of the information that you provide on your resume.

COVER LETTER

Write individual letters for each job application and personalize those letters by explaining briefly why you want to work in that opportunity and that district. Give specific examples of your accomplishments related to the position you are applying for. Keep in mind that cover letters also serve as writing samples, so make sure it flows well, makes sense, and is free of errors. Your cover letter gives you the opportunity to expand on the content from your resume.

THANK-YOU LETTER

Thank-you letters can be either handwritten or typed, but make the effort to write one within one to two days of an interview. The thank-you letter reconfirms your interest in the job and provides you another opportunity to briefly summarize your qualifications. It also sets you apart from those who do not take the time and effort to write one.



INTERVIEWING

When considering what clothes are appropriate for interviewing, dress up and dress conservatively. Be prepared to discuss your accomplishments and tell a story! More information on interviewing follows in this Education Career Guide.

In general, school districts are looking for teachers who:

- Have good interpersonal skills and enjoy working with children
- Are knowledgeable about the science of teaching
- Are knowledgeable about the content of their discipline
- Have had a variety of experiences
- Are organized
- Have good communication skills
- Will present a good model for children
- Believe that they can make a difference in a child's life through their teaching.



JOB SEARCH: BASICS AND CHECKLIST

JOB SEARCH CHECKLIST

- Register online on Handshake (Quick Links found at careercenter.dom.edu)
- Begin constructing a resume or update one you already have. Set up an appointment to meet with a career counselor to review your resume.
- Upload your resume onto Handshake. Make sure to make your profile and resume visible to recruiters
- Create a LinkedIn account and join the [Dominican University Alumnae/i group](#).
- Attend upcoming career workshops, information sessions, and other related events.
- Meet with a career counselor to start planning a job search strategy.
- Determine the types of schools and geographical area in which you will apply for teaching positions. If you are “mobile” and can relocate, your options will increase.
- Start collecting reference letters from previous field experiences.
- Attend any job interviewing and/or job fair preparation workshops.
- Attend education job fairs in the area and any other opportunities for professional development.
- Send follow-up thank-you letters and e-mails after interviews and job fairs.
- Apply to school systems online or on paper; follow each district’s specific procedures.
- Maintain a continuous (but non-aggressive) communication process with all districts to which you have applied and/or interviewed.
- Keep a log of these communications and all of your applications.
- Review the offer to best decide the fit between you and the position, as well as to obtain clarification on any points that do not make sense to you.
- If you decide to accept the offer, take time to celebrate!
- If you do not end up with a full-time contract, you may want to try looking for teaching assistant or substitute teaching positions. Stay in contact with DU's Office of Career Programs and your preferred school districts in case any last-minute opportunities arise.

HELPFUL HINTS: RESUME

CREATING AN IMPRESSIVE RESUME

Keep in mind the basics about resumes

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Your resume is the first presentation of you that a potential employer will see. Be sure to double check spelling and grammar. Have a friend proofread your final product. Typos and other small errors make a big difference!

FONT

Use only one font consistently throughout your resume. Arial and Times New Roman at 11 or 12 point are very standard fonts. Also, bolding, italicizing and underlining within the same font can improve the readability and appearance of your resume (if these graphics are applied consistently and not overused).

CONTACT INFORMATION

List your name, address, phone number and e-mail address at the top. Include a professional e-mail address (double check yours!) and your home or cell phone number as forms of contact. Most employers are comfortable leaving messages on answering machines (double check your voicemail greeting!)

GPA's

List GPA's of 3.0 or higher on your resume. Include your major GPA if that is significantly higher than your cumulative GPA.

LENGTH

College students and recent graduates should maintain a one-page resume until they have completed an internship or full-time professional experience. If you have an extensive work history, or are in a graduate degree program that relates to your professional field, then a two-page resume is acceptable.



NOTE

Have your resume printed on plain, white paper, resume paper is fine, but not required. Avoid fancy borders and graphics as they will distract the reader from your accomplishments. Since your resume is a work-in-progress, prepare only a few copies. Your address and phone number may change or you may take on a new position. Use effective and concise language and word choices.

HELPFUL HINTS: RESUME

Your resume is an advertisement for your skills, accomplishments, and experiences. It is a tool to help sell yourself to employers and secure an interview.

EMPLOYERS LOOK FOR THESE 3 THINGS

When looking at your resume, employers want to be able to quickly answer these questions:

1. Is this person qualified for my open position?
2. Does this person have relevant experiences?
3. What else does this person bring to the table?

WHAT TYPE OF RESUME IS RIGHT FOR ME?

There are several ways to format your resume, and each way has its own advantages for different types of job seekers. For entry-level job seekers, the most common format is **reverse chronological**.

- A reverse chronological resume presents your work experience information from newest (most recent) to oldest (least recent).
- This is the most commonly used format among job seekers, and the one covered in the **DU Resume Guide**.

DID YOU KNOW?

Recruiters spend as little as 7.4 seconds reviewing a resume.

Source: (2018, Ladders, Inc.)

ORGANIZING YOUR RESUME

A perfect resume must have more than error-free spelling and grammar. It must present you in the most clear, compelling way possible. With the overwhelming volume of resumes that recruiters receive, they need to quickly know how you would contribute value to their organization. Your resume should make it easy for recruiters to see how you add value with organized information in easy-to-read, clear sections.

A reverse chronological resume typically includes a standard set of sections. The structure of your resume will depend on your level of experience, what you want to emphasize, and the position for which you are applying. Here are two possible ways to organize your resume, although there are many others:

1

VERSION 1

Name and Contact Info
Profile or Summary
Education
Relevant Experience
Co-curricular & Volunteer Experience
Languages and Skills
Selected Coursework

2

VERSION 2

Name and Contact Info
Education
Technical Skills
Professional Experience
Work Experience
Research
Honors and Awards



EXAMPLE RESUME

Joe Student

123 Park Street
Elmwood Park, IL 60123

708.123.1234
joestudent@gmail.com

PROFILE Cross-industry experience gained through four years of part-time work experience (tutoring and childcare). Superior writing skills highlighted in various articles for university newspaper. Dean's List, five semesters.

EDUCATION

Dominican University, Rosary College of Arts and Sciences, River Forest, IL
Bachelors of Arts in Elementary Education
Minor in English

GPA: 3.5/4.0
Expected Graduation: May 202X

Notable Projects

- Completed a semester-long research project on writing instruction at the K-5 levels for students with reading disabilities. Presented findings at the 202X URSCI & Experiential Learning Expo.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Dominican Star, River Forest, IL

May 202X – Present

Student Writer

- Assist in researching subjects and preparing interview questions.
- Participate in team meetings to review tone, style, and on-campus events
- Wrote article about the university community coming together for the Hispanic Heritage Month Mass, which was published in the November 2022 edition

Goedert Center for Early Childhood Education, River Forest, IL

January 202X – Present

Teacher Assistant

- Supported the head teacher in classroom management and lesson planning for a preschool class of 17 children.
- Promoted the development of organizational skills by creating a name tag system for preschoolers to identify their lockers.
- Communicated with parents and guardians about advancements and areas for improvement in their child's development.

Longfellow Elementary School, Oak Park, IL

November 202X – May 202X

Volunteer Writing Tutor

- Taught students how to engage in “the writing process” by assisting with their research, drafts, and final edits.
- Met with groups of 10-15 students to lead interactive collaborations in various writing activities, including essay outline creation.

SKILLS

- Advanced proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite and Google Workspace
- Proficiency in Canvas, a web-based learning management system
- Certified in first aid and CPR

HELPFUL HINTS: COVER LETTER

CREATING A WINNING COVER LETTER

Keep in mind the basics about cover letters

KEEP IT SHORT.

The ideal cover letter is 3-4 paragraphs and never exceeds one page.

ADDRESS A SPECIFIC PERSON.

This could be an administrator, principal, or HR personnel. Make sure to spell their name correctly and use the proper salutation (ex. Mr., Ms., Dr., etc.) Make a phone call if you're not sure who to address it to.

FIRST PARAGRAPH

Answer three questions: Who are you, what do you want, and why are you a good fit? (this does not mean, start the paragraph by saying, "My name is...") Provide information showing your specific interest in the company. Also indicate how you became aware of the opening and the specific job title. At the end, briefly state one or two qualities and experiences that make you an excellent candidate. You'll expand on these qualifications in the following paragraphs.

BODY PARAGRAPH(S)

Sell yourself! Highlight the qualifications you introduced in the first paragraph to illustrate why you would be of greatest interest to the employer. Be specific! Don't just say "I'm organized," say, "I have demonstrated strong organizational skills in preparing lesson plans and assignments for a 2nd grade class with 26 students." Point out your experience or specialized training that's related to the job.

EXPLAIN WHY YOU WANT THE JOB.

Keep the focus on the school and what you can offer them, not what YOU wish to obtain in the position. Genuine enthusiasm will set you apart from those sending generic form letters.

LAST PARAGRAPH

Thank the reader for their time and consideration. Indicate that your resume is enclosed and your credential file (academic transcript) is available. Express that you are looking forward to hearing back from them.

KEEP THE TONE AND CONTENT PROFESSIONAL.

If you are sending via email, do not use the casual tone associated with emails and text messages. Keep it formal.

REMEMBER

This is a sample of your writing style. Proofread. Proofread again. Spell check will not catch everything. Even if your letter is free of typos, poor grammar also makes a bad impression.

HELPFUL HINTS: COVER LETTER

A cover letter, often requested as part of an application, is a **subjective space** where you have the opportunity to expand on your relevant experiences and skills, clear up any misconceptions or possible red flags about your resume, and explain why you are the best fit for that job, project, and/or company. If no cover letter is requested, it is recommended that you still include one. At minimum, you should include this information in a shorter format within an email.

GETTING STARTED

Your cover letter should express the following ideas in their respective sections. The most common way to create sections is with separate paragraphs.



Section One - "I'm interested in the job."

- Introduce yourself, state which job you're interested in, and explain how you found it or how you are connected to the company (if applicable). You should also make sure to mention why you're enthusiastic about the position (i.e. their mission inspires you, you're excited about their projects).



Section Two - "Here's how I shine."

- Detail the things that make you stand out from other candidates. Talk about what makes you passionate about your work, your relevant experience, and the value you would bring to this position because of who you are. Don't just rehash your resume here; pick a few projects/roles that you want to highlight.



Section Three - "Please, thank you, and give me an interview."

- Close out by thanking the reader for their time and state that you're looking forward to hearing from them about the position.

Tailor your cover letter to the specific job or internship for which you are applying, using the position description as a guide. The points highlighted in your cover letter should align with the skills outlined in the position description. Select a few strong experiences to expand upon in your cover letter. The experiences you choose should demonstrate the skills required for the position.

FORMATTING

- You shouldn't indent the beginning of each paragraph (because this is a formal business letter), but do leave spaces in between paragraphs.
- Be consistent & concise.
 - The letterhead should match the one on your resume.
 - Aim for 1/2 to 3/4 of a page. Do not exceed one page, including letterhead, addresses, and signatures.
- If you know (or can find out) the person to whom this position reports, be sure to address them at the top of your cover letter.



NOTE

Refer to the **DU Resume Guide** for more information about the STAR approach. Your cover letter will tell a stronger story if you focus on the results of your work and avoid describing traits or skills that you possess. With the STAR approach, the underlying philosophy is that the best predictor of future performance is past performance that can be conveyed by observable behavior and concrete results.



EXAMPLE COVER LETTER

Joe Student

123 Park Street
Elmwood Park, IL 60123

708.123.1234
joestudent@gmail.com

January 20, 2022

Attn: Ellena Grace Smith
Horace Mann Elementary School
921 N Kenilworth Ave
Oak Park, Illinois 60302

Dear Ms. Smith,

I am writing to express my interest in the listing for a third-grade teacher at Horace Mann Elementary School. I will be graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education from Dominican University in May 202X with a minor in English. My experience in working with children and my skills in learning technology prepare me to be an excellent candidate for this position.

During the pursuit of my bachelor's degree, I completed a student teaching experience in a fourth-grade classroom at Lincoln Elementary School in River Forest, Illinois. This opportunity provided me with hands-on experience in helping manage and instruct a classroom of 22 students. While developing my skills in working with young children, I honed my abilities in using a personalized approach to each student's questions and personal learning styles. I incorporated this knowledge into leading classroom instruction for the group of students as a whole.

In my most recent internship experience, I lead a project on modernizing a mathematics curriculum for the second-grade level. In order to be successful this project, I completed online learning modules on LinkedIn Learning for Canvas, a prominent learning management system, which resulted in a LinkedIn badge. In addition to familiarizing myself with various learning management systems, I also took a variety of classes at Dominican in which we utilized various databases and presentation tools. My experience in this range of programs give me the tools to prepare students for a world that is connected and powered by technology.

In short, I would love the opportunity to join Horace Mann Elementary School as a third-grade teacher. I very much look forward to speaking with you soon about this opportunity. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to reach out if I can provide any additional information. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Joe Student

HELPFUL HINTS: INTERVIEW

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING

Behavioral Interviewing is a style of interviewing that more and more organizations are using in their hiring process. The basic premise behind behavioral interviewing is this: the most accurate predictor of future performance is past performance in a similar situation.

During a behavioral interview, always listen carefully, ask for clarification if necessary, and answer the question completely. Your interview preparation should include identifying examples of situations from your experiences on your resume where you have demonstrated behaviors sought after by the company. During the interview, your responses need to be specific and detailed. Tell them about a particular situation that relates to the question, not a general one. Briefly tell them about the situation, what you did specifically, and the positive result or outcome. Your answer should contain these four steps (Situation, Task, Action, Result or STAR) for optimum success.

Before the interview process, identify two or three of your top selling points and determine how you will convey these points (with demonstrated STAR stories) during the interview.

STAR METHOD

- **Situation:** Give an example of a situation you were involved in that resulted in a positive outcome.
- **Task:** Describe the tasks involved in the situation's task.
- **Action:** Talk about the various actions involved in the situation's task
- **Result:** What results directly followed because of your actions.

EXAMPLE STAR ANSWERS

- **Situation:** During my student teaching last spring, I managed a classroom of 5th grade students.
- **Task:** I noticed that whenever we studied our science lessons, many of the students became disengaged and disinterested which caused disruptions in the class.
- **Action:** I revised the lesson plan and had teams of students research and create displays showing the differences in cell structure of both plants and animals. The students then presented their findings to the class.
- **Result:** As a result, whenever we have science lessons, students are more focused and engaged. I have integrated more “hands on” learning into my lesson plans.



NOTE

Whenever you can, quantify your results. Numbers illustrate your level of authority and responsibility. For example: "I was a teaching assistant." could be "As teaching assistant, I contributed to curriculum development and assignment grading for a 5th grade classroom of fifteen students."

HELPFUL HINTS: INTERVIEW

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Tell us about yourself and why you are interested in this school district and/or position.
- What are your short term and long term career goals?
- What do you consider to be your major strength that you bring to the classroom?
- What do you enjoy most about teaching?
- What is your most successful accomplishment?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Discuss your student teaching experience. What did you like/dislike? What changes would you have made?
- Review your teaching experiences, such as levels/subjects taught, years, location, etc.
- Tell me about your most challenging experience while working with children or in the classroom.
- Tell us about your other school-related experiences, such as extra-curricular activities, committees, and curriculum development.
- What are some opportunities regarding multicultural education that you have brought into your classroom?
- What experience have you had with working with culturally diverse classrooms?
- Describe the best lesson you have delivered. Why was it successful?
- Describe the teaching techniques or strategies that are most effective for you.
- Describe your typical lesson. What does it include, who participates, and how do they participate?
- How would you include cooperative learning in class teaching?
- How important is success in learning? How do you help students experience success?
- How will you instruct and challenge students with varying abilities?
- If students were having difficulty learning a skill or concept, what would you do?
- Tell me about some specific motivational strategies you use to get students excited about learning.
- Describe different student learning styles and how you adjust lessons to benefit those differing styles.
- Explain your skills using a computer, including classroom management, instruction, interactive activities, and more.
What is your level of comfort with the use of technology in the classroom?
- What is your philosophy regarding discipline?
- What was the most challenging discipline problem that you encountered and how did you handle it?
- What techniques would you use to handle discipline problems that may arise in your classroom?
- What is your classroom management plan/style? What are your goals?
- How would you describe your learning environment?
- What role does classroom management play in the education process?
- Describe a situation when you felt pressure. How did you handle it?
- Describe your educational background and teaching experience related to your subject area.
- How do you stay current in your field?
- Are you willing to sponsor any extra-curricular activities?
- What are some methods of communicating student progress to parents other than report cards?
- How can you get students to be excited about learning?
- Do you have a specific grade level/age that you prefer to teach? Why?
- Why have you chosen teaching as your profession?

THANK-YOU LETTER



EXAMPLE

THANK YOU

This should be sent no later than 24 hours after an interview. Remember, coming off as either uninterested or too aggressive will not make a good impression.

SENDING

Send your thank-you letter quickly, within 24 hours. Some interviewees send within 12 hours (often on the same business day as the interview).

Send an individual thank-you letter to each person with whom you interviewed. Email is the most common way to deliver these.

ADDRESS THE LETTER

Address the hiring manager or the person you interviewed.

Start with "Dear _____," or "Hi _____," but NEVER "Hey _____"

REFERENCE THE INTERVIEW

Don't forget, it's a thank-you letter! Express gratitude for the interviewer's time.

"I appreciated the opportunity to interview with you for the position of _____"

EXPRESS YOUR INTEREST

Reaffirm that you're interested in the position and are looking forward to hearing from them. Offer to provide more information if needed.

*"If you have any more questions about what I will bring to your students,
please don't hesitate to contact me."*

CLOSING

Sign off with "Sincerely," "Thank you," or "Many thanks," followed by your full name.

Keep it short and professional!

WEBSITES FOR EDUCATORS

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

National Education Association	www.nea.org
American Federation of Teachers	www.aft.org
Association of American Educators	www.aaeteachers.org
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development	www.ascd.org
Association for Middle Level Education	www.amle.org
National Association for Gifted Children	www.nagc.org
Association for Childhood Education, International	www.ceinternational1892.org
American Assoc. of School Personnel	www.aaspa.org
Administrators American Association for Employment In Education Illinois Assoc. of School Administrators	www.aaee.org http://www.iasaedu.org/Chicago

ELEMENTARY-SECONDARY INFORMATION & JOBS

Certification Requirements for all 50 states	https://teach.com/
Illinois State Board of Ed	https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Home.aspx
Illinois Regional Offices of Education	https://www.isbe.net/roe
Archdiocese of Chicago	https://schools.archchicago.org/
Job Board K-12 Jobs.com	https://www.k12jobspot.com

PRIVATE SCHOOLS/NON-TRADITIONAL ROUTES TO TEACHING

Teach for America	www.teachforamerica.org
Boarding Schools Online (Private Schools)	www.boardingschools.com
Careers with Non Profit Organizations	www.npo.net

DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

Visit careercenter.dom.edu or scan the QR code here to access all things career-related from DU!

Lewis 216 | careers@dom.edu

