



**The English Language Center
Faculty of Languages and Literature
University of Central Punjab, Lahore**

**DOWNLOADABLE HANDOUT
TOPIC: ACADEMIC ESSAY**

Topic: Academic Essay

What is an academic essay?

An academic essay is a focused piece of writing that develops an idea or argument using evidence, analysis, and interpretation.

There are many types of essays you might write as a student. The content and length of an essay depends on your level, subject of study, and course requirements. However, most essays at university level are argumentative—they aim to persuade the reader of a particular position or perspective on a topic.

Academic Essay Writing Process

The essay writing process consists of three main stages:

Preparation: Decide on your topic, do your research, and create an essay outline.

Writing: Set out your argument in the introduction, develop it with evidence in the main body, and wrap it up with a conclusion.

Revision: Check the content, organization, grammar, spelling, and formatting of your essay.

The writing process of preparation, writing, and revisions applies to every essay or paper, but the time and effort spent on each stage depends on the type of essay. For example, if you've been assigned a five-paragraph expository essay for a high school class, you'll probably spend the most time on the writing stage; for a college-level argumentative essay, on the other hand, you'll need to spend more time researching your topic and developing an original argument before you start writing.

1. Preparation

- Define your essay topic
- Do your research and gather sources
- Come up with a thesis
- Create an essay outline

2. Writing

- Write the introduction
- Write the main body, organized into paragraphs
- Write the conclusion

3. Revision

- Evaluate the overall organization
- Revise the content of each paragraph
- Proofread your essay

Essay Structure

Writing an academic essay means fashioning a coherent set of ideas into an argument. Because essays are essentially linear—they offer one idea at a time—they must present their ideas in the order that makes most sense to a reader. Successfully structuring an essay means attending to a reader's logic.

The focus of such an essay predicts its structure. It dictates the information readers need to know and the order in which they need to receive it. Thus, your essay's structure is necessarily unique to the main claim you're making. Although there are guidelines for constructing certain classic essay types (e.g., comparative analysis), there are no set formula. In short, structure your essay in the most effective way to communicate your ideas and answer the question. All essays should more or less include the following structure.

1. Introduction

The introduction moves from general to specific. This is where you:

- open with a short orientation (introduce the topic area(s) with a general, broad opening sentence (or two);
- answer the question with a thesis statement; and
- provide a summary or 'road map' of your essay (keep it brief, but mention all the main ideas).



2. Body

The body of your essay consists of paragraphs. Each is a building block in the construction of your argument. The body is where you:

- answer the question by developing a discussion.
- show your knowledge and grasp of material you have read.
- offer exposition and evidence to develop your argument.
- use relevant examples and authoritative quotes.

If your question has more than one part, structure the body into sections that deal with each part of the question.



Conclusion

The conclusion moves from specific to general. It should:

- restate your answer to the question;
- re-summarise the main points and;
- include a final, broad statement (about possible implications, future directions for research, to qualify the conclusion etc).

However, NEVER introduce new information or ideas in the conclusion - its purpose is to round off your essay by summing up.

Writing the introduction

The introduction sets the tone for your essay. It should grab the reader's interest and inform them of what to expect. The introduction generally comprises 10–20% of the text.

1. Hook your reader

The first sentence of the introduction should pique your reader's interest and curiosity. This sentence is sometimes called the hook. It might be an intriguing question, a surprising fact, or a bold statement emphasizing the relevance of the topic.

Let's say we're writing an essay about the development of Braille (the raised-dot reading and writing system used by visually impaired people). Our hook can make a strong statement about the topic:

The invention of Braille was a major turning point in the history of disability.

2. Provide background on your topic

Next, it's important to give context that will help your reader understand your argument. This might involve providing background information, giving an overview of important academic work or debates on the topic, and explaining difficult terms. Don't provide too much detail in the introduction—you can elaborate in the body of your essay.

3. Present the thesis statement

Next, you should formulate your thesis statement—the central argument you're going to make. The thesis statement provides focus and signals your position on the topic. It is usually one or two sentences long. The thesis statement for our essay on Braille could look like this:

As the first writing system designed for blind people's needs, Braille was a groundbreaking new accessibility tool. It not only provided practical benefits, but also helped change the cultural status of blindness.

4. Map the structure

In longer essays, you can end the introduction by briefly describing what will be covered in each part of the essay. This guides the reader through your structure and gives a preview of how your argument will develop.

5. Example of an introduction paragraph

The invention of Braille marked a major turning point in the history of disability. The writing system of raised dots used by blind and visually impaired people was developed by Louis Braille in nineteenth-century France. In a society that did not value disabled people in general, blindness was particularly stigmatized, and lack of access to reading and writing was a significant barrier to social participation. The idea of tactile reading was not entirely new, but existing methods based on sighted systems were difficult to learn and use. As the first writing system designed for blind people's needs, Braille was a groundbreaking new accessibility tool. It not only provided practical benefits, but also helped change the cultural status of blindness. This essay begins by discussing the situation of blind people in nineteenth-century Europe. It then describes the invention of Braille and the gradual process of its acceptance within blind education. Subsequently, it explores the wide-ranging effects of this invention on blind people's social and cultural lives.

Writing the main body

The body of your essay is where you make arguments supporting your thesis, provide evidence, and develop your ideas. Its purpose is to present, interpret, and analyze the information and sources you have gathered to support your argument.

1. Length of the body text

The length of the body depends on the type of essay. On average, the body comprises 60–80% of your essay. For a high school essay, this could be just three paragraphs, but for a graduate school essay of 6,000 words, the body could take up 8–10 pages.

2. Body paragraph structure

To give your essay a clear structure, it is important to organize it into paragraphs. Each paragraph should be centered around one main point or idea.

That idea is introduced in a topic sentence. The topic sentence should generally lead on from the previous paragraph and introduce the point to be made in this paragraph. Transition words can be used to create clear connections between sentences.

After the topic sentence, present evidence such as data, examples, or quotes from relevant sources. Be sure to interpret and explain the evidence, and show how it helps develop your overall argument.

3. Example of a body paragraph

Lack of access to reading and writing put blind people at a serious disadvantage in nineteenth-century society. Text was one of the primary methods through which people engaged with culture, communicated with others, and accessed information; without a well-developed reading system that did not rely on sight, blind people were excluded from social participation (Weygand, 2009). While disabled people in general suffered from discrimination, blindness was widely viewed as the worst disability, and it was commonly believed that blind people were incapable of pursuing a profession or improving themselves through culture (Weygand, 2009). This demonstrates the importance of reading and writing to social status at the time: without access to text, it was considered impossible to fully participate in society. Blind people were excluded from the sighted world, but also entirely dependent on sighted people for information and education.

Writing the conclusion

The conclusion is the final paragraph of an essay. It should generally take up no more than 10–15% of the text.

1. Elements of a strong essay conclusion

- Returns to your thesis
- Ties together your main points
- Shows why your argument matters

A great conclusion should finish with a memorable or impactful sentence that leaves the reader with a strong final impression.

2. What not to include in a conclusion

To make your essay's conclusion as strong as possible, there are a few things you should avoid. The most common mistakes are:

Including new arguments or evidence

Undermining your arguments (e.g. "This is just one approach of many")

3. Example of a conclusion paragraph

Braille paved the way for dramatic cultural changes in the way blind people were treated and the opportunities available to them. Louis Braille's innovation was to reimagine existing reading systems from a blind perspective, and the success of this invention required sighted

teachers to adapt to their students' reality instead of the other way around. In this sense, Braille helped drive broader social changes in the status of blindness. New accessibility tools provide practical advantages to those who need them, but they can also change the perspectives and attitudes of those who do not.

Your complete essay should look like this

An Appeal to the Senses: The Development of the Braille System in Nineteenth-Century France

The invention of Braille was a major turning point in the history of disability. The writing system of raised dots used by visually impaired people was developed by Louis Braille in nineteenth-century France. In a society that did not value disabled people in general, blindness was particularly stigmatized, and lack of access to reading and writing was a significant barrier to social participation. The idea of tactile reading was not entirely new, but existing methods based on sighted systems were difficult to learn and use. As the first writing system designed for blind people's needs, Braille was a groundbreaking new accessibility tool. It not only provided practical benefits, but also helped change the cultural status of blindness. This essay begins by discussing the situation of blind people in nineteenth-century Europe. It then describes the invention of Braille and the gradual process of its acceptance

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The Braille system also had important cultural effects beyond the sphere of written culture. Its invention later led to the development of a music notation system for the blind, although Louis Braille did not develop this system himself (Jimenez, et al., 2009). This development helped remove a cultural obstacle that had been introduced by the popularization of written musical notation in the early 1500s. While music had previously been an arena in which the blind could participate on equal footing, the transition from memory-based performance to notation-based performance meant that blind musicians were no longer able to compete with sighted musicians (Kersten, 1997). As a result, a tactile musical notation system became necessary for professional equality between blind and sighted musicians (Kersten, 1997).

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Tips to remember

1. Begin by choosing a topic that interests you (unless the specific topic is assigned) and that you know something about.
2. Brainstorm briefly for supporting ideas, an approach for the introduction, and organization of the paragraphs. Clustering, freewriting, and/or a brief outline can help.
3. Make sure the introduction has a clear thesis statement, located at the end of the first paragraph, to give the essay focus and direction.
4. Organize body paragraphs logically. Make sure each paragraph is closely related to the topic and discusses one major point or group of related points. Each body paragraph should have a topic sentence and sufficient supports related to it. The sentences in any paragraph should follow an orderly, logical sequence. Also, be sure that paragraphs do not overlap in content but have smooth transitions from one to the other.

5. Make sure the conclusion relates to the original thesis statement in a logical way. Avoid introducing new or off-topic ideas.
6. Read through the essay for relevance. Is the whole essay on the topic and in the mode required? Do body paragraphs support the thesis statement? Do paragraph supports relate to the topic sentence? Does the conclusion relate to the thesis statement?
7. Read the essay a second time for cohesion. Do the parts connect together well? Are there logical links between ideas? Are more or different transitions needed?
8. Read the essay a third time for parallelism. Are there awkward sentence constructions or missed points in a paragraph discussion? Are all items in each series listed in similar grammatical form?
9. Read the essay a fourth time for clarity and style. Are any sections unclear? Are there any vague pronouns, awkward or informal phrases, or excess wording? Does it sound professional and polished?
10. Read the essay a final time for mechanics, looking at grammar, spelling, punctuation, word forms, verb tense, and pronoun agreement.

Topic 2: Academic Essay Types

Throughout your university education, you may be required to write different types of essays. In some cases, such as school or job applications, someone decides which type of essay you write. Other times, you choose what type of essay to write. You may use an essay to convince readers to take your side, explore an abstract topic or try to evoke an emotional response. You often select an essay type based on what you're trying to accomplish. For example, if you want to teach the reader how to do something, you may use a process essay that breaks the directions into individual steps.

Here are 10 types of essays you may use in your academic writing:

1. Narrative essays

Narrative essays tell a story and often are the most personal type of essay you may write. They allow you to exercise creativity and imagination, and you can base them on a particular

prompt, such as the first time you drove a car by yourself, or a more open-ended prompt, like a time you overcame a fear. You may submit a narrative essay, usually called a personal statement, for college or graduate school applications.

You can use literary techniques in narrative essays to create an essay that reads like fiction. To do this, consider including metaphors, analogies, alliteration, imagery and dialogue. A narrative essay generally has an opening that gets the reader's attention and provides enough background information for the story to make sense. A conclusion helps summarize the main point of your essay or reiterate your goals. For example, if you're writing a narrative essay for a job application, you could conclude by summarizing how your experience solidified your desire to become a lawyer.

2. Descriptive essays

Descriptive essays provide a detailed description of your subject. This may be a person, place, thing or event. Descriptive essays, like narrative essays, allow for a more creative approach to writing. Unlike narrative essays, which provide a complete story, descriptive essays often focus only on the subject.

When writing a descriptive essay, consider including vivid imagery and incorporate actions, thoughts, sensory details and emotions to immerse the reader instead of simply explaining the situation or events. You can do this by using strong action verbs and unique, descriptive adjectives. This can make your writing more engaging and help the reader feel more involved and connected to your essay and its characters.

3. Expository essays

Expository essays explain a topic neutrally. Writers use expository essays to demonstrate their knowledge or expertise in a certain area. Teachers often assign expository essays to test their students' understanding of a topic. These essays often avoid emotion or opinion and instead focus on factual information. For instance, if you're writing about environmental conservation, try to avoid claiming someone should do something or taking a stance on a controversial issue. Expository essays can take different formats, but they typically include:

An introduction with a thesis statement explaining exactly what the essay will discuss

The body that details the facts of the subject, often citing sources

A conclusion that summarizes the main points

4. Definition essays

Definition essays are a type of exposition essay that defines a term or idea. These essays typically examine complex or abstract topics and provide in-depth analysis and explanations. For instance, a definition essay might discuss what existentialism is or the meaning of quantum physics. Definition essays are common in academic and research settings.

5. Process essays

Process essays are another type of exposition essay that describes how to do something or how something works. You can write a process essay in chronological order to maintain organization and clarity. Process essays usually contain the following elements:

Introduction: Introduce the process you will describe.

Body: These paragraphs describe each step in chronological order. Consider using transition words that signal where you are in the process.

Conclusion: Finish your essay with a conclusion that summarizes the process to help the reader remember the most important idea of the document.

6. Compare and contrast essays

Compare and contrast essays discuss two subjects and detail the similarities and differences between them. These essays include an introduction, at least one paragraph to explain the subjects' similarities, at least one paragraph to discuss differences and a conclusion. Compare and contrast essays are common in academic settings. An example of a compare and contrast essay is one describing the similarities and differences between bees and wasps.

7. Argumentative essays

Argumentative essays try to convince the reader to take a certain side based on the information the writer presents. Argumentative essays rely on facts rather than emotion to sway the readers. For instance, an argumentative essay may discuss why companies should offer wellness packages as part of their benefits plan. The essay can incorporate research about how regular exercise increases productivity and how people who eat well and work out take fewer sick days.

Argumentative essays avoid first- or second-person statements. Rather, they support one side of an argument and may argue against other sides using objective information. You can use phrases like "Research suggests" or "According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention" to present the facts that support your argument.

8. Persuasive essays

Persuasive essays aim to persuade readers to have an opinion or take a side using facts and emotional appeals. To support an argument or cause, persuasive essays can include moral and emotional reasoning to connect to the reader.

For example, a persuasive essay about the previous topic of companies including wellness packages in employee benefits may include appeals to employers' satisfaction with providing an extra perk for their employees. It also could discuss employers' responsibility to ensure their employees have access to features that keep them healthy or how excited and grateful employees are for the new benefits.

9. Cause and effect essays

Cause and effect essays detail why certain events or situations led to other events. Writers create a clear connection between the two sets of events or circumstances and explain what features of the initiating event created the subsequent incidents. Cause and effect essays are types of expository essays, so they state facts and avoid subjective opinions. A cause and effect essay may examine how Charles Darwin's scientific discoveries led to the origin of new theories of social science, for instance.

10. Critical essays

Critical essays provide an in-depth analysis of a topic. They can critique paintings, books, movies, plays or restaurants. Many college courses, especially literature and humanities courses, require critical essays as a way to test students' ability to think critically and identify evidence from a specific work that validates their observations. Critical essays use facts from the subject to justify an opinion. For instance, in a movie review, a writer could note a movie uses boring dialogue. They then could support that observation by citing specific lines from the film.

Essay Examples

Narrative Essay

My First Life Lesson

When I was five years old, I always favored exploring new things in streets and different places. I found deep satisfaction in analyzing the things I found when I was walking as a kid.
Background: You set the background of your storyMy grandfather taught me a life lesson that I still don't forget: Always think good for other people.Theme: You introduce the theme of your narrative essay.

As usual, I was looking for different objects in our backyard, covered with apple trees. When I came down from a tree, I came up with an exceptionally exciting pin needle. The pinhead was cubic, and I could easily put it on the floor, heading upwards. I really didn't want to hurt someone. I was only shocked by the fact that I found a pin needle with a cubic head, and I

started playing with it. **Description:** This part expands on author's feelings and story. My grandfather, who was around his 60s, saw me placing the pin needle heading upwards. He warned me –“You can hurt someone walking by putting the pin needle like this, watch out!” **Character introduction:** This part introduces the teacher of the story. After a while, I somehow left it heading upwards rather than getting rid of the pin needle. When I was running towards the backyard, I stepped on the needle and felt a crazy pain in my heel. Yes, I totally forgot the needle, and I was the one who stepped on it. When the doctor came, I instantly remember my grandfather's advice. **Development:** Here you develop and detail your story.

The experience has taught me to think more “deeply” when making an action—It may hurt someone even if you don't want to. I also learned that I should listen to older adults as they have much more experience than us.

Descriptive Essay

League of Legends Nights

On weekend afternoons, I love to play League of Legends in my study room. The game is online, addictive, and enjoyable, but I usually have a good time when I play with my friends. **Introductory sentences:** You introduce the scene/setting. I am in my own space without work and daily stress. I feel the competitive environment resulted from this game's nature. **Impression:** You state your feelings and personal impression. Usually, we play a 5v5 ranked game, and we always start with a rush to enemy resources. As usual, I follow my support player as my champion is an attack damage carrier and extremely vulnerable. The rest of the team positions themselves to get kills and, of course, enemy resources.

Description: This part expands on the story. Meanwhile, I need to position myself to damage enemy tanks, which are hard to combat. I save my leap for their engagement and press it when they rush on me. While my support tries to protect me, I damage enemy champions and try not to die soon. Because without me, my team wouldn't be able to win the fight. But, whenever I use my leap, I have no choice but to die.

Analogy: This part describes the behavior. Waiting in the base to respawn, I feel hopeless and pray for my friends to win the fight without me. However, I still have high hopes of winning the game as there are many combats to fight. After all, I lost the first fight, but why not try another?

Argumentative Essay

The excessive use of social media is a concern for many psychologists. **Topic sentence:** What will the paragraph be about? Its prevalence among society is extremely high; research found that almost every individual has a social media account (Radovic et al., 2017). However, many studies have stressed a strong link between heavy social media and an increased risk for depression, anxiety, loneliness, self-harm, and even suicidal thoughts (Scheinbaum, 2017)

Evidence: You state and cite your evidence. Psychologists are not mistaken to think that social media can have serious impacts on human psychology; however, a further and expanded investigation is also necessary. **Interpretation:** This part evaluates the evidence. At this point, many psychologists stress the negative aspects of social media, but scholars have also highlighted the positive impacts of social media such as the availability of social

networks, the feeling of belonging, and numerous business opportunities (Akram & Kumar, 2017).

Counter-argument: You present a counter-evidence to argue against the original claim. Therefore, the use of social media has positive sides that help individuals look for opportunities and different communities.

Expository Essay

How to Get Rid of Hiccups

Some people get annoyed over hiccuping over and over. There are even people who have chronic hiccuping. In fact, “how to get rid of hiccups” is one of the most searched queries on the internet. Well, there are many things you can do. In order to get rid of hiccups, you can complete breathing and posture techniques, use pressure points to your advantage, eat and drink certain things, and use some special remedies. All of these solutions will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

Firstly, there are many breathing and posturing techniques you can use to get rid of hiccups. Most of the techniques are easy to do. According to Healthline, there are six physical methods of vanquishing your next hiccup: practicing slow breathing, holding your breath in for a while, breathing into a paper bag, hugging your knees for two minutes while sitting down, compressing your chest by leaning or bending forward, and completing the Valsalva maneuver. As stated by Healthline, “To do this maneuver, try to exhale while pinching your nose and keeping your mouth closed” (“How to Get Rid of Hiccups: 26 Remedies That Can Actually Help”). You cannot do all these techniques simultaneously, but you can try them one by one and see which ones work best for you.

And then, there are some strange techniques that have been recommended by scientists and other specialists. One of these theories states that hiccups can be relieved by having an orgasm (Peleg, R.). Another study mentioned that a rectal massage can aid in getting rid of hiccups (Odeh, M, et al). Other alternative methods include tapping or rubbing the back of one’s neck, poking the back of the throat with a Q-tip, and distracting yourself with something fascinating (“How to

Get Rid of Hiccups: 26 Remedies That Can Actually Help”). The last one is even a time-honored tradition in certain countries.

Hiccups can be a nuisance, especially if they turn into a chronic condition.

Thankfully, there are many actions we can take to clear up this issue: you can complete breathing and posture techniques, employ pressure points, eat and drink particular substances, and use some alternative remedies. It is best to find what works best for you out of the many choices discussed in this essay, as each body is different.

Topic 3: Resume Writing

What is a resume?

A resume is a brief, informative summary of your abilities, education, and experience. It should highlight your strongest assets and skills, and differentiate you from other candidates seeking similar positions. Although it alone will not get you a job or internship, a good resume is an important element toward obtaining an interview.

Tailor your resume to the type of position you are seeking. This does not mean that all of your work history must relate directly, but your resume should reflect the kind of skills the employer would value.

What kind of language should be used in a resume?

- Specific rather than general
- Active rather than passive
- Written to express not impress
- Articulate rather than “flowery”
- Fact-based (quantify and qualify)
- Written for people who scan quickly

Dos of Resume Writing

- Be consistent in format and content
- Make it easy to read and follow, balancing white space
- Use consistent spacing, underlining, italics, bold, and capitalization for emphasis
- List headings (such as Experience) in order of importance
- Within headings, list information in reverse chronological order (most recent first)
- Avoid information gaps such as a missing summer
- Be sure that your formatting translated properly if converted to a .pdf

Don'ts of Resume Writing

- Use personal pronouns (such as I)
- Abbreviate
- Use a narrative style
- Number or letter categories
- Use slang or colloquialisms
- Include a picture
- Include age or sex
- List references
- Start each line with a date

Top 5 Resume Mistakes

1. Spelling and grammar errors
2. Missing email and phone information
3. Using passive language instead of “action” words
4. Not well organized, concise, or easy to skim
5. Too long

Action Verbs Resource for your Resume

When you created or wrote something...

Acted, Adapted, Combined, Composed, Conceptualized, Condensed, Created, Customized, Designed, Developed, Devised, Directed, Displayed, Entertained, Established, Fashioned, Formulated, Founded, Illustrated, Initiated, Instituted, Integrated, Introduced, Invented, Modeled, Modified, Originated, Performed, Photographed, Planned, Revised, Revitalized, Shaped, Solved.

When you were a research machine...

Analyzed, Clarified, Collected, Compared, Conducted, Critiqued, Detected, Determined, Diagnosed, Evaluated, Examined, Experimented, Explored, Extracted, Formulated, Gathered, Identified, Inspected, Interpreted, Interviewed, Invented, Investigated, Located, Measured, Organized, Researched, Reviewed, Searched, Solved, Summarized, Surveyed, Systematized.

When you managed a project or group...

Accomplished, Administered, Advanced, Analyzed, Appointed, Approved, Assigned, Attained, Authorized, Chaired, Considered, Consolidated, Contracted, Controlled, Converted, Coordinated, Decided, Delegated, Developed, Directed, Eliminated, Emphasized, Enforced, Enhanced, Established, Executed, Generated, Handled, Headed, Hired, Hosted, Improved, Incorporated, Increased, Initiated, Inspected, Instituted, Led, Managed, Merged, Motivated, Navigated, Organized, Originated, Overhauled, Oversaw, Planned, Presided, Prioritized, Produced, Recommended, Reorganized, Replaced, Restored, Reviewed, Scheduled, Secured, Selected, Streamlined, Strengthened, Supervised, Terminated.

When numbers and figures are your thing...

Administered, Adjusted, Allocated, Analyzed, Appraised, Assessed, Audited, Balanced, Budgeted, Calculated, Computed, Conserved, Controlled, Corrected, Decreased, Determined, Developed, Estimated, Forecasted, Managed, Marketed, Measured, Netted, Planned, Prepared, Programmed, Projected, Qualified, Reconciled, Reduced, Researched, Retrieved.

When you creatively brought an idea to life...

Acted, Adapted, Combined, Composed, Conceptualized, Condensed, Created, Customized, Designed, Developed, Devised, Directed, Displayed, Entertained, Established, Fashioned, Formulated, Founded, Illustrated, Initiated, Invented, Modeled, Modified, Originated, Performed, Photographed, Planned, Revised, Revitalized, Shaped, Solved.

When you helped with a project...

Adapted, Advocated, Aided, Answered, Arranged, Assessed, Assisted, Clarified, Coached, Collaborated, Contributed, Cooperated, Counseled, Demonstrated, Diagnosed, Educated, Encouraged, Ensured, Expedited, Facilitated, Familiarized, Furthered, Guided, Helped, Insured, Intervened, Motivated, Prevented, Provided, Referred, Rehabilitated, Represented, Resolved, Simplified, Supplied, Supported, Volunteered.

When you needed to explain technical expertise...

Adapted, Applied, Assembled, Built, Calculated, Computed, Conserved, Constructed, Converted, Debugged, Designed, Determined, Developed, Engineered, Fabricated, Fortified, Installed, Maintained, Operated, Overhauled, Printed, Programmed, Rectified, Regulated, Remodeled, Repaired, Replaced, Restored, Solved, Specialized, Standardized, Studied, Upgraded, Utilized.

When you were the teacher...

Adapted, Advised, Clarified, Coached, Communicated, Conducted, Coordinated, Critiqued, Developed, Enabled, Encouraged, Evaluated, Explained, Facilitated, Focused, Guided, Individualized, Informed, Installed, Instructed, Motivated, Persuaded, Simulated, Stimulated, Taught, Tested, Trained, Transmitted, Tutored.

Sample Resume

Melanie Robinson

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linkedin.com/melanie.robinson



Summary

Qualified Customer Service Representative with over 4 years in fast-paced customer service and call center environments. As a customer service representative, I am personable good at building loyal relationships, solving problems, and Increasing Sales. I also excel in listening to customer needs, articulating product benefits and creating solutions that provide value to the customer.

Skills

- International sales support
- Strategic sales knowledge
- Exceptional communication skills
- Stock records management
- Quality assurance and control
- Strategic sales knowledge
- Exceptional communication skills

Education

Bachelor of Arts:
Marketing Oregon State University – 2014

Reference

Steve Halloway - Business Consultant
at SX Solutions
shalloway@sxsolutions.com
305-300-7891

Work history

Customer Service Representative – 04/2017 to 09/2018

BATS Global Markets Inc., Chicago

- Contact customer to follow up on purchases, suggest new merchandise and inform on promotions and upcoming events.
- Promote business as superior provider committed to efficiency and accuracy when engaging with customers.
- Answer product questions with up-to-date knowledge of sales and store promotions.
- Provide timely and effective replacement of damaged or missing products.

Customer Service Representative – 04/2015 to 09/2016

Foodspotting Inc., Chicago

- Assisted customers with food selection, inquiries and order customization requests.
- Answered average of 100 calls per day, addressing customer inquiries, solving problems and providing new product information.
- Recommended, selected and helped locate and obtain out-of-stock product based on customer requests.
- Contacted customer to follow up on purchases, suggest new merchandise.

Topic 4: Cover Letter

What is a cover letter?

A cover letter is a document sent alongside your CV when applying for jobs. It acts as a personal introduction and helps to sell your application. Cover letters are necessary as they give you the chance to explain to an employer why you're the best candidate for the job.

A strong cover letter is...

- ☐ Targeted to employers and specific jobs
- ☐ Promotes your abilities
- ☐ Looks organized and professional
- ☐ Enthusiastic and conveys interest
- ☐ Clear and concise articulation of skills
- ☐ Error-free

Components of a Cover Letter

- ☐ Your contact information
- ☐ Date
- ☐ Employers' contact information
- ☐ Salutation
- ☐ Introductory paragraph
- ☐ Body of letter: one or more paragraphs connecting your skills to employer needs
- ☐ Conclusion
- ☐ Closing
- ☐ Signature, if in paper format

How to write an opening paragraph?

- ☐ Why are you writing?
 - ☒ What position are you applying for?
 - ☒ How did you hear of the opening or organization?

Activity:

Example: Dr. Anderson in the Anthropology Department at Oregon State University recommended that I contact you. I would like to apply for the archaeology internship available in your office.

How to write the middle paragraph?

- ☐ Explain interest in working for this employer and reasons for desiring this position

- ☐ Do NOT iterate entire resume; rather expand on one or two areas that reflect relevant skills learned
- ☐ Emphasize skills or abilities that relate to the job
- ☐ Express confidence and enthusiasm

How to write the final paragraph?

- ☐ Persistent, businesslike closing statement
- ☐ Indicate desire for a personal interview
- ☐ Example: I will call you on [date] to discuss this career opportunity with [name of organization].
- ☐ “Thank you” for consideration

Closing:

Sincerely,

Sign name

Type name

Enclosure

Tips to Remember

- ☐ Address letter to a specific person if possible
- ☐ One page only
- ☐ Use industry “buzz words”
- ☐ Follow through with employer
- ☐ Let them know you have done your homework
- ☒ Say something flattering about the organization

(e.g.: “Energy Plus has an excellent reputation locally for customer satisfaction, and I would like to become part of your customer service team.”)

Resume and Cover letter Writing Activities

Activity 1: Structuring a Successful Resume

Step 1: Read through the list of information that may appear in a resume

Step 2: Decide and write down the section heading(s) that you think will best present each piece of information in a resume

Step 3: Rank each of these sections in the order that you would present them in your own resume

Your information Possible Section Heading(s) in Your
Resume

Rank Order

Your academic qualifications and track record

The skills, knowledge and personal qualities you will bring to the position

Where you see yourself moving within that field or industry

Your interests

Referee contact details

Your principal achievements, within and outside of university

What you do in your free time, on campus and outside of university

Your employment and work experience

Where you live, your phone numbers and email address

Memberships

Your name

Activity 2: Using a Job Analysis Checklist

Read through the job advert. Highlight and underline important information - this includes (where applicable) application closing date, contact details etc.

Step1: How well do I understand the broader context of this job opportunity?

$\frac{3}{4}$ The type of industry/organisation: products, services, growth, goals, mission, culture, size, structure, location, competitors, market share, challenges, opportunities etc?

$\frac{3}{4}$ The purpose and importance of this role to the organisation?

$\frac{3}{4}$ All the terminology used in the job advert?

Tip: Start to think about how and where can you demonstrate (some or all of) this knowledge in your resume – look at the section titles you identified in the previous activity to help you decide.

Step 2: Have I analysed what they say they are looking for? (ie. what selection criteria are listed?)

$\frac{3}{4}$ From the job advert (and job description, if available), list everything the employer is looking for.

$\frac{3}{4}$ Allocate each of the selection criteria that you identify to one of the categories within the Job Analysis Checklist (below).

Tip: Be as specific as you can be – eg. if the advert mentions that you must have “Excellent Communication Skills”, don’t simply copy this into your checklist (perhaps in the Transferable Skills column). Instead, think of who your target audience will be on the job (will there be more than one group of them?) and, therefore, how you will be required to demonstrate different types of communication skills to them. For example you may need to list both ‘Giving formal presentations to groups’ and ‘Explaining product information to customers via the telephone’ etc.

Step 3: What additional criteria will be necessary to do this job well? (ie. what info doesn’t appear in the advert?)

$\frac{3}{4}$ Next, from extended research and by thinking through the reality of working in this job, supplement your list with additional experience, skills, personal qualities, knowledge and/or qualifications that you believe the employer would also be impressed by (Note: you are listing here what the employer ideally wants - not yet what you may be able to offer them!)

Tip: Aim to have listed approx. 12-20 selection criteria in total by this stage. Use more paper if necessary - the more accurate and comprehensive your job analysis, the better your application will be!

Step 4: What do I need to highlight in my resume?

$\frac{3}{4}$ From the selection criteria list you’ve identified on your checklist, now highlight the 3 or 4 you think are especially critical if the job is to be done

well.

Tip: Review how and where in your resume you will present this (most important) information.

Job Analysis Checklist

⇒ Job Context

- •
- •
- •
- •

⇒ Relevant Experience (if applicable)

- •
- •
- •
- •

⇒ Skills

Technical skills Transferable (ie. generic) skills

- •
- •
- •
- •

⇒ Personal Qualities/Attributes

- •
- •
- •
- •

⇒ Relevant Knowledge & Qualifications (if applicable)

- •
- •
- •
- •

Activity 3: Writing a Career Objective Statement

Look over these sample job objectives, to see how others have written them.

Draft your own with a particular job or industry in mind.

Examples

$\frac{3}{4}$ To use my computer science training in software development for designing and implementing operating systems.

$\frac{3}{4}$ A public-relations position which will maximise opportunities to develop and implement programs, to organise people and events, and to communicate positive ideas and images. To use my public speaking and organisational skills in managing a publicity/promotional campaign.

$\frac{3}{4}$ A position as a general sales representative within a pharmaceutical house, which will enable me to use my chemistry background and ability to work on a self-directed basis, in managing a marketing territory and delivering high quality client services.

$\frac{3}{4}$ A position in data analysis where skills in mathematics, computer programming and deductive reasoning will contribute to new systems development.

<http://www.careers.unsw.edu.au/careerEd/workshops/downloads/resumeWriting-activities-v1.pdf>

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$\frac{3}{4}$ To use my knowledge of financial analysis in an environment where initiative, attention to detail and communication skills are valued. To take on increasing responsibility and deliver outstanding results whilst working on key client accounts.

$\frac{3}{4}$ A position which will maximise opportunities to develop and implement programs which promote environmental awareness within the community. To utilise my effective public speaking and experience in the management of publicity/promotional campaigns.

$\frac{3}{4}$ To contribute my knowledge of applied mechanical engineering, and my ability to work on a self-directed basis in managing projects and designing contemporary and environmentally sustainable solutions.

$\frac{3}{4}$ To work in an engineering environment that provides continual personal and intellectual challenge through creative problem solving. To manage and apply my technical skills and knowledge to a range of engineering projects that can help improve the efficiency, competitiveness and safety of a manufacturing organisation.

¾ To be employed in the area of urban and regional planning where my analytical and problem solving skills will enable me to define a range of urban or environmental problems and plan appropriate strategies to resolve them.

Your Turn:

Remember, your career objective statement should:

¾ Be a clear, specific, and positive statement of the type of career you want

¾ Be tailored to each position - using broad categories rather than specific job titles, and defining a 'bracket of responsibility'

¾ Be 1-4 lines in length

It can also:

¾ Show a clear understanding of the key skills, knowledge, experience required for the role

¾ Refer to your most relevant skills and knowledge – currently, and what you intend to develop in the future

¾ Reflect on your current and longer term goals

Activity 4: Writing Skills Statements

Look over these sample skills statements, to see how others have written them.

Draft your own with a particular job or industry in mind.

Examples

Analytical & Problem Solving:

In preparing my Honours thesis for my Geology degree, I needed to produce a precise written document of a high standard that reviewed and integrated the relevant literature

and accurately reported all experimental procedures. My thesis involved researching stormwater management, more specifically the problem of pollution in Waverly Council area. I studied comparative data on pre and post ocean outfall and water quality and was able to implement a management program resulting in major improvements. My strong ability to analyse and solve problems was also demonstrated in the fact that I achieved a mark of First Class Honours for the project.

Time management:

Having undertaken full time study while also conducting a research project part time at CSIRO last semester, and maintaining a casual job at my local chemist, I needed to plan my time carefully in order to meet competing deadlines. My careful scheduling and prioritising resulted in my maintaining a Distinction average for the semester as well as completing the research project one day prior to the due deadline.

Leadership:

As a volunteer representative for an international exchange student orientation program, I led teams of exchange students and acted as a Student Advisor whilst on exchange camps. In these roles I had responsibility for ensuring the safety and for monitoring the well being of my team. As a result, I made decisions concerning the group, provided support for team members and helped create a sense of adventure and excitement for the camp programs. The program organisers who were impressed with my ability to manage and organise such large groups asked me to continue working for them on a part-time basis.

Teamwork:

In the final year of my degree I participated in the Higher Education Workplace Skills Olympiad (HEWSO) competition. I was a member of a multi disciplined team and our task was to provide strategies for improving the work/life balance at Optus. During the 4 weeks of the project the team members agreed to delegate tasks and set milestones. Regular meetings were arranged to integrate information and update the team's progress. My role was to research strategies used by other organisations and to analyse exit survey information. Our team presented our findings to an audience of 15 management staff from Optus, UNSW representatives and 4 other student teams via a 20 minute presentation, a 100 page report and a website. We were judged the winning UNSW team and will now

compete in the national finals.

Your Turn:

1. Think about a position that you are applying to (or the kind of position you want).
2. Identify (up to) 3 key skills that you think the role might require. These skills may have been developed in your education, employment, extra curricular experiences or other life experiences

REMEMBER: Your skills statements should:

Be ordered in terms of importance and/or relevance for the employer/position

Have a title and be approximately 4 –7 lines

Use the STAR method to structure the description of your past or current example:

Situation, Task, Action, Result

Provide clear, concrete details of how you demonstrated that skill behaviour in that situation

Position: _____

Skill 1:

Skill 2:

Skill 3:

Activity 5: Writing Achievement Statements

Look over these sample achievement statements, to see how others have written them.

Draft your own with a particular job or industry in mind.

Examples

$\frac{3}{4}$ Received an Australian Development (AusAid) Scholarship from the Government for tertiary studies and living expenses, to the value of \$26,000 per annum. The scholarship was awarded on the basis of academic achievement across all secondary school subjects.

$\frac{3}{4}$ Implemented plant process control equipment resulting in \$53000 raw materials savings in nine months.

$\frac{3}{4}$ Privately tutored three, high school students in the HSC 4-unit extension mathematics course, resulting in an average increase of 15% in the students' academic grades.

$\frac{3}{4}$ Exceeded sales quota by more than 20% in two consecutive years, resulting in approximately \$3,000 commission-based earnings.

$\frac{3}{4}$ Suggested improvements in the firm's internal auditing systems that saved \$40,000 per annum.

Your Turn:

1. Think about a position that you are applying to (or the kind of position you want).
2. Identify (up to) 3 key achievements from your education, employment, extra curricular activities or other life experiences that you think demonstrate skills and/or knowledge relevant to the position.
3. For each achievement, try drafting an achievement statement that demonstrates the level you were performing at and the significance of the achievement.

REMEMBER: Your achievement statement should:

$\frac{3}{4}$ Provide clear, concrete details of the achievement and be results-based where possible

$\frac{3}{4}$ Be relevant to the position

Position: _____

Achievement statement 1:

Achievement statement 2:

Achievement statement 3:

Things to avoid when writing career objectives, skills statements and achievement statements

¾ Do not make highly exaggerated claims that you cannot back up with fact.

¾ Avoid general statements and unclear descriptions.

¾ Avoid copying statements directly from the website. Employers are unimpressed by a lack of imagination and motivation. They also get frustrated at reading the same things 100 times!

¾ Avoid using examples of things that are not related to, or that are less important for, the job you are applying for. Your resume will have more impact if you select competencies that are vitally important in the jobs you will be doing and/or competencies that have been identified as important for that whole organisation.

¾ Don't use the same example over and over again – variety will maintain interest.