

TEACHER'S NAME: Elena Vidrascu

REEP LEVEL(s): 400/450

LIFESKILLS UNIT: Work and Technology

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Students will learn how to create a simplified resume and a cover letter, using a word processing program, and, as extension, how to send them by email to prospective employers.

TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION: Computer lab with Internet access

LANGUAGE SKILLS TARGETED IN THIS LESSON (X all that apply):

Speaking     Listening     Reading     Writing

ESTIMATED TIME: 3-4 -two-hour classes (a minimum of 60-90 minutes in the computer lab for typing, formatting, saving, retrieving, and emailing the cover letter and the attached resume);

RESOURCES AND MATERIALS NEEDED:

- relevant websites and resources:
  - Resume/cover letter samples: Susan Ireland's Resume Site: [www.susanireland.com](http://www.susanireland.com);
  - Resume/cover letter tutorial: Literacy Link of South Central (Ontario, Canada), Workbook 5: [www.llsc.on.ca/node/99](http://www.llsc.on.ca/node/99)
  - Job listings: Craigslist: [www.craigslist.org](http://www.craigslist.org); [www.monsters.com](http://www.monsters.com); and [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)
- text resources:
  - cover letter: Ventures 4 (pp.104-105); Future 4(pp. 42-43); Downtown 4 student book (p.148)
  - resume: Future 4 (pp 30-31); All-Star 4 (student book (pp. 98-99); All-Star 4 (workbook) (pp 122-123)
- possible handouts:
  - File: 400-450\_QA\_worksheet
  - File: 400-450\_evaluation-checklist
- Additional resources for self-directed study:
  - Microsoft Training for In-Demand Job Skills: <http://www.microsoft.com/about/corporatecitizenship/en-us/community-tools/job-skills/>
  - Goodwill Industries online tutorials for MS Word: <http://www.gcflearnfree.org/word>
  - Center for Career Development: <http://www.ccd.me.edu/careerprep/>

## LESSON PLAN AND TEACHER'S NOTES

Students with limited or no computer skills need extra help before the Work unit is introduced. A computer literacy needs assessment session could be conducted at the beginning of the cycle, during the first lab session. Then, the students who express a need for resume and cover letter writing but do not have the required word processing skills, could work with a volunteer or the lab assistant during regular lab sessions, using the suggested self-directed resources in this Module.

The word processing skills need for resume and cover letter writing are objectives #5-9 in the REEP Technology Curriculum. Teachers may find that the resources in modules for level 300-350 useful as a pre-requisite for students with limited computer skills.

### In the classroom

**Warm-up/Review/Motivation:** 15 - 20 minutes

The teacher will ask the students if they have jobs, and if they do, if they wish to get better jobs. Those who do not have jobs, will be asked if they want to get a job. Most students will probably answer "yes," since they had selected the "Work" topic during the initial needs assessment. Moreover, at the 400/450 level the students should be aware that they are attending a program designed to help newcomers find jobs.

The students who are not, and do not plan to be, in the work force will be shown the language and cultural benefit of learning about how Americans work toward finding better jobs.

**Motivation/Background building:** 5 - 10 minutes

The teacher will ask the students what documents are needed when someone is looking for a job, especially for a professional job. If they do not know the answer, the teacher will provide the information: the resume and the cover letter. Write "resume" as one column and "cover letter" as another. Ask students to explain how these are similar and how they are different and note this information in the columns. Ask questions like, "What information do they contain? What is the purpose of each? this level the students will probably come up with incomplete and/or erroneous information.

**Presentation/ Practice Activities:** 15-20 minutes

Show the students samples of a resume and a cover letter and ask them to compare the two and find out what is the same and what is different to evaluate the accuracy of their prior knowledge (see resources listed above for samples, or use your own). Have the students work in small groups and then report to the class. Make corrections to the students' answers on the board, if needed.

## **Presentation/ Practice Activities:** 60-90 minutes

1. Reading activity: A teacher-led presentation of a resume and a cover letter to accompany the resume and cover letter which the students already have (from the classroom textbook or from a textbook in the REEP resources. The teacher will explain the new vocabulary, (with the help of the higher level students, time permitting).
2. Q and A Activity: Depending on the amount of time spent on the introduction and on the reading activity, the teacher can dictate the comprehension questions (listening activity), and the students will then answer them in writing; or the teacher will provide the questions on a worksheet (see *400-450\_QA\_worksheet*).

### Q&A Activity

1. What is a resume?
2. What are the parts of a resume?
3. What basic information must be provided in a resume?
4. What personal information is not provided on the resume?
5. What is the order of the jobs that the applicant has had before?
6. What is the order of the schools attended, training courses and/or classes taken?
7. What is a cover letter?
8. What are the parts of a cover letter?
9. What information in the cover letter does not appear on a resume?
10. What information is in each paragraph of the body of the letter?

NOTE 1      The Q&A Activity can be homework.

NOTE 2      The 400 students do not have to answer questions 9-10.

Write “soft skills” on the board and elicit definitions and examples. The teacher should have prepared a general list of soft skills that are useful in many different jobs, or *transferable*. The list can include: people or interpersonal skills, being a team player, taking pride in one's work, being a self starter, being a quick study, reliable, punctual, trustworthy, organized, friendly, have leadership skills, follow-up skills, etc. The words above could be included in the cover-letter.

## **In the lab**      60 minutes

Students will first compare sample cover letters and resumes and then find a job listing of interest to them.

### Activity 1: 30 minutes

Select an online resource where students could access sample resumes and cover letters (see resource list). Students take notes on similarities and differences between the teacher-provided reading activity and the sample resumes and cover letters from the textbooks (All Star 4, Ventures 4, Downtown 4, etc.), and the Internet-provided

resources (How is the content similar or different? How about formatting? What is the language structure like? Any other differences? Which ones do you like better? Why?)

**MANAGEMENT:** Two students should share one computer to encourage discussion of the information on the site. Give students a time limit to formulate responses.

The conclusions which the students arrived at while working in pairs should then be shared with the class, either during the same lab session or during the next classroom session. It is useful for the teacher to write some brief conclusions on the board.

Activity 2: 30 minutes

Students choose a job listing as a focus for their resume and cover letter activity. Have students select an online resource where students could access authentic job listings (see resource list) and have them select and print one of interest to use in the next activity.

**Application:** 100 - 150 minutes

Students will construct the components of their own resume and a cover letter relevant to the job listing they chose in the previous lab class.

Have each student should make several lists of the following:

- a. Jobs (both paid and volunteer jobs) that you have had, with names of employers, dates of employment and job duties for each one of them;
- b. Schools attended, classes, courses, training (with dates);
- c. Skills - job related skills and soft or transferable skills;
- d. Job-related achievements, awards, promotions.

Each student should use the information on those lists to create their own resume (for a job he or she would like, based on a job ad from the Internet or the newspaper – see job listing resource list above), and the cover letter to accompany it.

**NOTE 1:** The sample resume and cover letter, and the reading activity provided by the teacher should be used as models. Also, the students who are more proficient with the Internet, could use a model from an online resource listed above.

**NOTE 2:** The 400-level students, who are lower level, could just substitute their information for that in the sample resume and cover letter that the teacher has provided already.

**NOTE 3:** Attach the job ad to the two documents.

## **In the computer lab**

The students should type their resumes and cover letters in "Word," print, and save them (for editing purposes).

The students should edit their documents: they should be error-free, should cover the entire page, and the information should be easy to find (they should use a standard format); the documents should be as pretty as possible.

NOTE 1: The students who have a home computer with email and a word processing software could email their work to themselves for editing.

NOTE 2: Each student could e-mail their resume and cover letter to a partner and/or the teacher for further review.

## **In the classroom**

Evaluation Activity: Work with a partner: 30-40 minutes

Imagine you are a manager and your partner is a job applicant whose resume and cover letter you are reviewing. Use the following check list to evaluate the documents (see *400-450\_evaluation-checklist*)

The resume:

1. Are there any spelling, punctuation, or capitalization errors?
2. Is the information complete - contact information, objective, experience (place and dates of employment, job duties), education?
3. Is the information relevant (does it relate to the job ad)?
4. Is it easy to locate the information on the resume?
5. Does it look neat and pretty?

The cover letter:

1. Are there any grammar, spelling, punctuation, or capitalization errors?
2. Are the parts of a business letter there?
3. Does it specify where the applicant found out about the job?
4. Does it sum up the applicant's special skills, including soft skills, and qualifications for the job?
5. Does it show that the applicant is highly interested in the position? How? (only 450 students)
6. Does it look neat and attractive?

Bonus question: (for 450 students) "Based on the two documents, do you think this is a strong candidate? Would you be interested in interviewing this applicant? Why? Or why not?"

Reflection Activity: 30 -40 minutes

Ask the students to think about what soft skills they have and what jobs could need such skills. The class can refer to the list of soft skills which has been generated before (see item 3 under Practice Activities), and the students will try to find which ones they have, then ask the classmates' opinion, see if opinions match.

Extension Activities for the Classroom and Beyond:

Option #1: Ask the students to select a job from a job site and create a resume and cover letter tailored for that particular job as homework.

Option #2: Encourage students to visit their local employment office or other career websites on their own to find out more about jobs and how to modify their resumes to fit different requirements.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Resume and Cover Letter Comprehension Questions**

1. What is a resume?
2. What are the parts of a resume?
3. What basic information must be provided in a resume?
4. What personal information is not provided on the resume?
5. What is the order of the jobs that the applicant has had before?
6. What is the order of the schools attended, training courses and/or classes taken?
7. What is a cover letter?
8. What are the parts of a cover letter?
9. What information in the cover letter does not appear on a resume?
10. What information is in each paragraph of the body of the letter?



**Resume and Cover Letter  
Evaluation Checklist**

Reviewer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Resume:**

1. Are there any grammar, spelling, punctuation, or capitalization errors?
  
2. Is the information complete - contact information, objective, experience (place and dates of employment, job duties), education?
  
3. Is the information relevant (does it relate to the job ad)?
  
4. Is it easy to locate the information on the resume?
  
5. Does it look neat and pretty?

**Cover letter:**

1. Are there any grammar, spelling, punctuation, or capitalization errors?
  
2. Are the parts of a business letter there?
  
3. Does it specify where the applicant found out about the job?
  
4. Does it sum up the applicant's special skills, including soft skills and qualifications for the job?
  
5. Does it show that the applicant is highly interested in the position? How? (only 450 students)
  
6. Does it look neat and attractive?