

Advice for Crafting a Professional Resume and Landing a Job

What should I include in my resume?

Your resume is your ticket to an interview. It is a well presented document that contains where you worked, for how long, what your responsibilities and tasks involved, and other things relevant to your career.

Most Academic Managers (who spend an average of 30 seconds reading a resume) advise that it should fit on no more than two pages.

Help them help you: be concise.

What format should I use?

Review resume samples for up-to-date ideas on style, format, font, organization, and content. You may end up picking and choosing from different examples. Don't feel limited by one particular format. We'll give you some in class to look at.

What should I include?

Before you start, identify one or more specific job targets and positions that you are pursuing. This helps prepare you to write your resume because you know where you're headed and what you want to showcase.

Collect job postings or announcements that are similar to jobs you'll be applying for. Review carefully to be certain you understand the core qualifications as well as the extras so that you can highlight both in your resume.

Now that you're clear on (a) the kind of job you're applying for and (b) the skills and qualities employers are looking for, use a checklist to make sure that you have addressed the essentials:

- clearly define who you are and how you want to be perceived. This should align directly with your career objective.
- document your key skills, qualifications, competencies, and knowledge.
- document your career achievements, project highlights, contributions.
- Research and compile a list of keywords and keyword phrases for ESL jobs (communication skills, cultural awareness, flexibility, knowledge of TESL, patience, planning skills). Then be certain to incorporate as many of them as you can in your resume and cover letter.

Highlight your TESL certification as 150 total course hours, including:

- 120 hours of coursework (includes foundation assignments and in-class training)
- 30 hours of practicum (includes lesson planning, peer teaching, ESL class observations, ESL class teaching).
- Acknowledged by the British Council for meeting the highest standards in teacher training

Take a second look:

- Ask friends or colleagues to review and proofread your resume. Ask them to critique the content, formatting, presentation and any other ideas they'd like to share with you.
- Proofread. Then have someone else proofread. It's easy to overlook small grammatical, punctuation or format errors. Don't let a typo stand in the way of getting an interview.

Do I need to include a cover letter?

If they ask for one, provide it. Don't send a stock letter. Send a tailored letter that includes information about the position you're applying for.

When applying for a job as an ESL teacher, remember that you are sending your application to an English teacher who is in charge of English teachers! Proofread your letter (and then get someone else to proofread it for you).

What if I don't have any teaching experience?

Don't forget about the field teaching experience you get during the course - those are real students!

If a lack of teaching hours is standing in the way of your first paid teaching job, then do some volunteer teaching, which can additionally help build your skills and confidence and show schools that you are serious about teaching as a career.