



# RESUME & COVER LETTER GUIDE

**CAREER DEVELOPMENT**  
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## **ACTION VERBS FOR RESUME WRITING:**

accelerated	demonstrated	instituted	reduced
accomplished	designed	instructed	reinforced
achieved	developed	interpreted	reorganized
adapted	devised	launched	researched
administered	directed	lectured	revamped
analyzed	discovered	led	reviewed
approved	effected	maintained	revised
assessed	eliminated	managed	scheduled
assisted	enriched	mastered	set up
broadened	established	monitored	shaped
budgeted	estimated	motivated	simplified
built	evaluated	operated	solved
clarified	exceeded	organized	specialized
collaborated	expanded	originated	streamlined
compiled	expedited	participated	strengthened
completed	facilitated	performed	structured
conceived	found	planned	summarized
conceptualized	fulfilled	pinpointed	supervised
conducted	gathered	prepared	supported
consolidated	generated	presented	surpassed
contributed	improved	proficient in	taught
controlled	increased	programmed	trained
created	influential	proposed	translated
cultivated	implemented	proved	utilized
defined	initiated	provided	won
delegated	innovated	recommended	wrote

## **CONCRETE NOUNS AND POSITIVE MODIFIERS:**

ability	competent	proficient	technical
actively	consistent	qualified	versatile
capacity	effectiveness	resourceful	vigorous
competence	pertinent	substantially	

# GUIDELINES FOR RESUME WRITING

The good news for artists or individuals pursuing work in creative industries such as graphic design, animation, computer art, etc. is that there is not a “standard” resume. It doesn’t have to be one-size-fits-all, rather a chance to promote your individuality and style. However, there are some general guidelines that can help you create a more effective one.

1. The resume should be a **one-page**, concise listing of your education, employment history and accomplishments. Make all your text additions and edits first, not worrying about the length. Lastly, try get it down to one page by cutting out unnecessary or repetitive text, or adjusting the format.
2. Consider including a “Summary” or “Profile” section as your first section. See below for details.
3. **Don’t Over Design.** Keep it simple, organized and only in black and white. Some resumes are so over-designed that they become difficult to read, and readability is the key. Consider various fonts and the use of bold and italic to make certain topics stand out, like job titles and company names.
4. Do **not include an objective** on your resume; this is no longer typical on resumes.
5. **Use easy-to-read font and size**, no smaller than 10pt.
6. **Do not use a resume template in MS Word, Apple Pages or other program.** These limit your ability to customize your resume design, and you’ll risk having a resume that looks extremely similar to others’.
7. **Make sure your resume is letter-perfect.** Misspellings and grammatical errors give a potential employer a terrible first impression. Have at least two people proofread your resume.
8. Be consistent in format and style—if you put a job before place of employment in your first entry, do the same for the rest of your experience.
9. **Use action verbs, concrete nouns and positive modifiers** (see attached suggested list) and omit personal pronouns (i.e. “implemented procedures” rather than “I implemented procedures”).
10. Arrange your information in **reverse chronological order**; the most recent school attended and the most recent job you have held should be listed first.
11. **Test your resume for relevancy.** The information included in your resume should either support your job or career objective directly or support your character in general. If you have no definite purpose for including something, leave it out.
12. Always **attach your resume** to an emailed application **as a PDF file**, unless the posting specifies otherwise.
13. If mailing your resume, or when bringing copies to an interview, print only on high-quality resume paper. Keep a separate list of references and make them available to potential employers **only upon request**.
14. Remember your resume is only a door opener. **Your goal is a personal interview.**
15. Do not mention that you references are available; it is assumed that you will provide references if asked.

## SAMPLE RESUME FORMAT

### NAME/ADDRESS/PHONE NUMBER/EMAIL/WEBSITE ADDRESS:

Be sure to print your name in a bold, large font size.

### SUMMARY/PROFILE/BIO (optional):

Four to six bullet points or a short paragraph summarizing your most relevant skills and accomplishments in an action verb format.

### EDUCATION:

List in reverse chronological order. Include institution, location, school division, degree, graduation date or expected graduation date, majors and minors. Do NOT include high school.

### HONORS/AWARDS:

List any honors, scholarships or awards you have received, including any received from community or civic organizations.

### RELEVANT COURSEWORK:

List courses that are relevant to the position. Focus on electives and advanced courses.

### EXPERIENCE:

List job title, employer/organization, location (city and state only), dates of employment and a brief job description. Emphasize results and accomplishments! Do not lead with “duties or responsibilities included.” Use action verbs!

### SKILLS:

Include all computer, foreign language and technical skills. Characterize your level of ability (proficient, knowledge of, experience in, familiar with, etc.)

### ACTIVITIES (optional):

Include club memberships, community service and hobbies relevant to the job you’re applying to. Emphasize leadership duties

# JANE ANDERSON

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321 East 19th Street #5B, New York, NY 10003, 212-685-3333, janderson@yahoo.com, www.janeanderson.com

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## EDUCATION

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**School of Visual Arts** New York, NY  
Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree, *Photography* 2016

### COURSE WORK

- *Advanced Black and White Printing*, Linda Peterson
- *Advanced Color Printing*, Eric Weeks
- *Studio/Location Photography*, Stacy Morrison
- *Lighting for Portraiture*, Jessica Miller
- *Digital Photography*, Justin O'Neill

## WORK EXPERIENCE

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Light and Image Works New York, NY  
**Photography Lab Assistant** 2015 – Present

- Assist photography staff in all aspects of production, location scouting, packing still life objects for shoots, portfolio reviews and returns, answering phones and filing

Stardust Studios New York, NY  
**Freelance Photographer** 2013 – 2015

- Photographed various bands and celebrities for CD covers, editorials and advertisements
- Clients included: Spin, Details, Sony

303 Photographic Gallery New York, NY  
**Gallery Assistant** 2012 – 2013

- Reviewed artist portfolios, handled client relations, maintained digital inventory and executed bulk mailings

## COMPUTER SKILLS

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Mac/PC proficient: Adobe Photoshop, InDesign, Illustrator, Lightroom, Flash  
Capture One, ImageReady, FlexColor  
Adobe Dreamweaver and Basic HTML  
MS Word, PowerPoint, Excel

## TECHNICAL SKILLS

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Cameras: Canon and Nikon DSLR systems, Hasselblad digital backs, Mamiya  
Large format: 4 x 5 and 8 x 10  
Printing/Processing: Epson digital printing, b&w printing and processing  
Retouching skills: color correction, photo retouching  
Lighting: tungsten and strobe lighting

# TRAVIS CARTER

111 Broadway, New York, NY 10001, 212-555-5555, tcarter@sva.edu, www.travisfilms.com

## EDUCATION

### **School of Visual Arts**

Bachelor of Fine Arts in *Film & Video*

New York, NY

2016

- Dean's List 2014-2016

## FILM EXPERIENCE

*Assistant to the Director*

2016

### **Requiem Pictures**

New York, NY

- Provided continuity on the set of an independent short horror film
- Maintained a comprehensive log of acceptable sound and visual takes
- Assisted with special effects and make-up preparation

*Assistant to the Director*

2015

### **Sydney Productions**

New York, NY

- Served as liaison between the Director and both crew and talent
- Assisted with sound, lighting and script supervision on the set of *Underground*, a feature film

*Production Assistant*

2014

### **Miramax Films**

New York, NY

- Assisted in all areas of film production including gathering and managing props and preparing shoot locations
- Provided production updates to various departments of Miramax

*Production Intern*

2013

### **Tribeca Films**

New York, NY

- Assisted with production scheduling, research, script revision process, script distribution and general office work

## ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

*Computer Services Assistant*

2011 - 2012

### **Citibank**

New York, NY

- Assisted department managers with desktop publishing, graphic design, network administration, computer maintenance and application troubleshooting/instruction

*Administrative Assistant*

2010

### **Westside Medical Center**

New York, NY

- Performed general office duties including answering phones, greeting patients, handling correspondence, filing and computer database input

## SKILLS

Proficient with PC, Macintosh, Microsoft Office, AVID, Final Cut Pro

Fluent in Spanish, proficient in French

**JASMINE JONES**

330 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue #8A, New York, NY 10036 917-555-1234  
 www.jasminejonesarts.com  
 jjones@sva.edu

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**PROFILE**

- Current arts administrator with five years experience in arts non-profits
- Recognized ability to plan, organize, coordinate and direct successful educational, cultural and arts programs
- Highly developed interpersonal skills; experience with diversity of professionals, clients and staff members
- Energetic team player, thrives under tight deadlines; Imparts vision and enthusiasm to all projects

**EDUCATION**

**School of Visual Arts**, New York, NY 2013  
 Master of Fine Arts in Art Criticism & Writing

**New York University**, College of Arts & Science, New York, NY 2004  
 Bachelor of Arts in English Literature

**HONORS**

Dean's List, Golden Key National Honor Society Member, Society for Academic Excellence Member

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

*Arts/Cultural Management Associate*, **NEW HOPE ARTS CENTER**, New York, NY 2009-Present  
 Not-for-profit media arts center and screening venue

- Initiate and coordinate public, private and corporate support; Act as liaison between company and city organizations, media and vendors
- Perform grants research and writing for private and public foundations; Develop comprehensive fundraising and sponsorship plan
- Conduct sponsorship drive among local businesses for weekly screening program
- Manage stage and technical support for screenings

*Program Coordinator*, **CHELSEA CULTURAL CENTER**, New York, NY 2004-2009  
 Community-oriented cultural performance space

- Participated in conception, development and successful launch of community cultural center performances
- Managed program planning and event coordination; Negotiated contracts and coordinated interdepartmental logistics
- Directed staged readings and edited dramatic scripts

*Media Department Assistant*, **WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART**, New York, NY 2001-2004  
 Media, educational and promotional division of art museum

- Assisted with exhibition coordination and curatorial activities
- Researched foundations and corporate sponsors for film and video
- Performed fundraising efforts and general administration

**SKILLS**

COMPUTER: Raiser's Edge, Microsoft Office (Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Outlook), Filemaker Pro, Internet Research

LANGUAGE: Fluent in Spanish and German

Grant writing and proposal writing

Basic bookkeeping

# GUIDELINES FOR COVER LETTER WRITING

The purpose of the cover letter is to introduce yourself to an employer. It gives you the opportunity to highlight your skills and experience as appropriate for a particular position.

*When preparing a cover letter, keep these points in mind:*

1. Type each cover letter individually, **addressing it to a specific person and company**. If you don't know the name and title of the person to whom you should address it, do some research online to find out. This demonstrates that you've done your research, you're detail-oriented, and you're invested.
2. Include **relevant** information in each letter that specifically **connects your experience and interest with that of the company** or person to whom you are writing.
3. Cover letters should be **brief**, approximately 3 paragraphs.
4. Use a **business letter format** when typing your cover letter, always using a colon after Dear\_\_\_\_:
5. **Proofread** carefully for spelling and grammatical errors.
6. It is acceptable to **include your cover letter in the body of an email** and simply attach your resume, unless the job posting instructs you to attach the cover letter as a separate document. If attaching separately, be sure to send it as a **PDF** so that your formatting is preserved.
7. If sending by hard copy, use **good quality paper** that matches your resume paper.
8. An effective way to end the letter is to **state your plan for following up**, i.e. "I will call next week to discuss the possibility of setting up an interview," and by thanking the employer for considering your application.
9. **Always ask others to proofread** the letter for clarity, grammar, typos, and spelling.
10. Do not begin your letter with "My name is \_\_\_\_\_." Your name is in the closing, and in your letterhead. It's not necessary to state it twice.
11. Try not to focus your letter on what YOU will learn or gain from working there, but rather **what you can contribute** to the company.

## SAMPLE COVER LETTER FORMAT

Date

Person's name  
Person's title  
Organization  
Address

Dear Mr./Ms. (Sir/Madam or Hiring Manager, if you are unable to confirm a contact name):

**FIRST PARAGRAPH:** Introduce yourself and explain which position you are applying for, and where you saw the posting. If someone referred you to the job, give the name of the person and mention how you know them. Attract the employer's attention by focusing the letter on his or her needs or interests. Include one sentence sharing why you want to work there, demonstrating your knowledge about the company.

**SECOND PARAGRAPH:** Explain how your abilities, background, and qualifications will enable you to contribute to the organization. Highlight strengths relevant to the position using specific examples. The cover letter supplements your resume, highlighting your special qualities and strengths that might help persuade an employer to contact you. Choose one or two specific examples from a previous job or school project that clearly illustrate relevant skills and experiences. Use the S.T.A.R.S method explained in this guide to help you write about your accomplishments.

**FINAL PARAGRAPH:** Reiterate your interest and ask for an interview. You may provide a date when you will contact him/her to set up an appointment. Thank the employer for his/her time and consideration. Include a link to your online portfolio or website.

Sincerely,

*First Name Last Name*

## SAMPLE COVER LETTER #1

April 14, 2016

Lisa Smith  
Director of Photography  
Photography Gallery, Inc.  
4436 East 82<sup>nd</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10013

Dear Ms. Smith:

I am writing in response to the advertisement for a Studio Assistant, listed on the School of Visual Arts online job board. I have been following your gallery for years and am very impressed with your exceptional roster of artists. After reviewing my resume, I am confident you will find that my education and experience will make me an asset to Photography Gallery, Inc.

Currently, I am a junior attending the BFA Photography program at SVA. During my studies, I have gained both knowledge and technical proficiency in a wide variety of photographic practices. I am familiar with most lighting packages including strobe and tungsten and have a strong familiarity with most camera formats; digital film, medium and large format. I have focused my studies in digital photography and am very well versed in basic scanning, retouching and digital output. In addition, I have recently completed an internship within the photography department at Saturday Night Live. My responsibilities included the set-up of lighting/camera equipment for still shoots, assisting staff photographers as needed and basic administrative tasks. I believe I will be an excellent addition as a Studio Assistant to Photography Gallery, Inc.

Thank you for your time and consideration. You can view my portfolio online at [janeanderson.com](http://janeanderson.com). I look forward to meeting you to further discuss my qualifications and the available position. I can be reached at 212-685-3333 or [janderson@yahoo.com](mailto:janderson@yahoo.com).

Sincerely,

Jane Anderson



August 18, 2016

Stephanie Johnson  
Production Coordinator  
New Films, Inc.  
880 Park Avenue South  
New York, NY 10003

Dear Ms. Johnson:

I would like to express my interest in the Production Assistant position with New Films, Inc., listed on your company's website. It would be an honor to work on New Films' award-winning productions. With my background in film production and my dedication to the industry, I would be a valuable addition to your production team.

I am looking for a challenging position in a film production company where I can utilize my production and organizational skills in a fast-paced, creative environment. As my resume indicates, I have just completed a BFA in Film and Video at the School of Visual Arts. In addition, I believe that my experience working on numerous student films and completing two film production internships with Coastal Productions and Carnival Pictures, would allow me to make a valuable contribution to New Films, Inc. I am proficient with AVID and Final Cut Pro, fluent in Spanish, and perform well both independently and as part of a team.

I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you at your convenience to discuss my background and qualifications in greater detail. I can be reached at 917-555-6789 or probertson@sva.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Paul Robertson

## YOUR NAME

Address, Telephone Number, Email Address, Website

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### **REFERENCES**

- 1 **Name**, Job Title  
Organization/Company Name  
Address Line 1  
Address Line 2  
Telephone Number  
Email Address
  
- 2 **Name**, Job Title  
Organization/Company Name  
Address Line 1  
Address Line 2  
Telephone Number  
Email Address
  
- 3 **Name**, Job Title  
Organization/Company Name  
Address Line 1  
Address Line 2  
Telephone Number  
Email Address

# **S.T.A.R.S.**

STARS is a technique to help you think and write about your experiences and accomplishments.

Your STAR statements can be used in your resume, cover letter, pitch and interview practice. It will help you realize how important your experience really is!

Situation—Task—Action—Result—Skills/Attributes

## **Why is this exercise useful?**

- People freeze up and/or become blocked. STARS facilitates flow.
- People often undersell themselves because they don't know how valuable or relevant their experience is.
- People forget things. STARS helps to stimulate the memory.
- Seeing all the great things you have done (that you may not have realized) builds confidence and helps you speak/write more effectively about yourself.

## **How to use STARS:**

- Think of setting a scene and telling a story.
- Keeping in mind the requirements and language of the job(s) you want, let your mind drift in that direction when filling in the STARS.
- BE SLOPPY AND INCLUSIVE!! Make a mess. Jot down whatever comes to mind. You'll pull out the good stuff later. Do one STARS sheet for each accomplishment you want to highlight.
- The "stories" of your accomplishments will illustrate skills and qualities that will be valued by your prospective employer.
- Use LOTS of numbers.
- The skills are implied, demonstrated by the story.

# S.T.A.R.S. Worksheet

**S** (SITUATION: Describe the company; it's climate; how big, interesting or otherwise impressive; timing; interpersonal situations, "This is what was happening—this was the situation where I worked...")

**T** (TASK: The objective, assignment or problem to be solved)

**A** (ACTION: How YOU accomplished the task)

**R** (RESULTS: Use numbers, what the result means for the company or for you)

**(S)** (Skills/Attributes illustrated)

**Worksheet: Using STARS in Your Resume – List your Accomplishments using STARS statements.**

Use this worksheet to create the content for a tailored resume for each job you apply for.

**STARS** means – Situation/Task/Action/Results/(Skills Illustrated). Quantify (add #'s) wherever you can, so the employer knows exactly what you did, why you did it, and what for.

First Job title you are interested in: \_\_\_\_\_

List of skills needed for that job:

- a.
- b.
- c.

List examples of your accomplishments using the above skills as STAR statements.

- a.
- b.
- c.

Second Job title you are interested in: \_\_\_\_\_

List of skills needed for that job:

- a.
- b.
- c.

List examples of your accomplishments using the above skills as STAR statements.

- a.
- b.
- c.