Resumes and CVs

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One of your basic (and often neglected) tasks as a scientist is to keep an up-to-date CV.

Over the course of your career, you'll be asked to provide a CV many times:

1. for employment decisions—to get a job, to get a raise, to get promoted
2. for applications for special workshops or conferences
3. for funding of research proposals
4. for nominations for honors and awards

Get in the habit of periodically (at least once a year) reviewing and adding new items to your CV. Save an electronic copy in several different places. It's one of the most important documents you'll have, and it will be exceedingly painful to have to recreate it, especially as you get further along in your career, if you lose it.

Today, we're going to talk in general about CVs, and in particular about a form of CV, the resume, which is used in job applications.

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CV = *curriculum vitae* (life story)

A concise summary of a person's education and professional experience

A resume includes many of the same elements

Academic CV	Resume
Education	Narrative (career) objective
Professional Appts	Work history, with summary of duties/accomplishments
Honors and awards	Education
Affiliations	Special skills
Publications and talks	Affiliations and licenses
Classes taught	Honors and awards
Service to profession	
Students supervised	
Grants received	

A CV is comprehensive; a resume is usually no more than two pages, tailored for a specific job application.

CVs are exhaustive and accreting

CVs are a permanent historical record of everything you've ever done professionally

They don't change direction, they just get bigger and bigger

Resumes are selective and dynamic

Tune your resume for the job you're applying for

Pick and choose what you want to emphasize (but don't leave gaps that would raise questions)

The purpose of a resume or CV is to *get an interview*

1. Convince the reader that you have the requisite education, skills, and experience to succeed
2. Convince the people who care about such things that you are attentive to detail

CVs and resumes are formal and adhering to a standardized format is essential

- Provide only factual information about your educational background, work history, special skills, honors and awards, and job-related experiences
- Organize the sections logically
- Maintain witless consistency in length, style, and punctuation

Getting started—your name goes on the first line*

Center your name and affiliation or address at the top of the page

Provide complete contact information
- Telephone number, with area code
- Fax number, with area code
- Email address

*use a common, easily read font (I recommend Times New Roman or a similar classic serif font)

Put your current affiliation on a CV

Celia Mathews Elliott

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University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
1110 West Green Street
Urbana, IL 61801-3080 USA
+1.217.244.7725 (phone) • +1.217.244.4293 (fax)
cmelliot@illinois.edu

Put your home address on a resume

Celia Mathews Elliott

3808 Deerfield Drive
Champaign, IL 61822-9773
+1.217.351.5810 (phone) • *celia.elliott@gmail.com*

Next, provide a narrative statement of your immediate career goals

- Tune the narrative to the job
- Emphasize your skills and interests
- Focus on what you can do for the employer, not what the employer can do for you
- Be specific
- Keep the narrative short and to the point

Science writer and technical editor (AIP and CBE) seeking a senior editorial position; 20+ years' experience in science journal publishing

Certified research administrator at a Research I university with extensive experience in external funding (NSF, NIH, DOE) seeking a senior proposal-development position

University alumni relations and department-level fund-raising professional seeking senior development position in the physical sciences

Seeking a challenging, highly paid position that allows frequent luxury vacations and a guaranteed pension

All of these descriptions apply to me—I'd use the one most closely matched to the job I was applying for (maybe not #4)

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If you have not received your degree yet, put the month/year that you expect to graduate and note it "expected."

What about listing your GPA if you're a current student? Optional—don't list it unless it's high (e.g., >3.7/4.0)

What about listing minors? Good idea, especially if they're job related.

Education

1971 B.A., English, *summa cum laude*
B.A., History, *summa cum laude*
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI USA

1974 M.Ed., Educational Psychology
University of Illinois
Urbana, IL USA

Latin honors are typically given by U.S. universities and appear on the diploma .

cum laude = with honor

magna cum laude = with high honor

summa cum laude = with highest honor

Do not claim honors unless it is marked on your transcript or diploma.

No uniform standard; each university sets its own rules, so comparing Latin honors from one institution to the next is impossible.

Some U.S. universities do not award Latin honors at all, and some use the equivalent phrases in English.

Next, list where you've worked and what you did there

Title the section "Employment"

List every institution where you worked in *reverse* chronological order

Each entry should include
- The organization's name and location
- The years that you worked there
- Your job title
- A brief summary of your job duties

Employment

1999–Present ***Director, External Affairs***
Dept of Physics, University of Illinois
Urbana, IL 61801 USA
- Dept liaison to NSF, NIH, and DOE
- Develop proposals for research funding
- Teach courses in technical writing

1996–1999 ***Assistant to the Head***
Dept of Physics, University of Illinois
Urbana, IL 61801 USA
- Wrote policies, reports, and nominations

1993–1996 ***Assistant Editor***
Dept of Nuclear Engineering, UI
- Edited three peer-reviewed journals

What about part-time jobs unrelated to your career goals?

Include them if you can

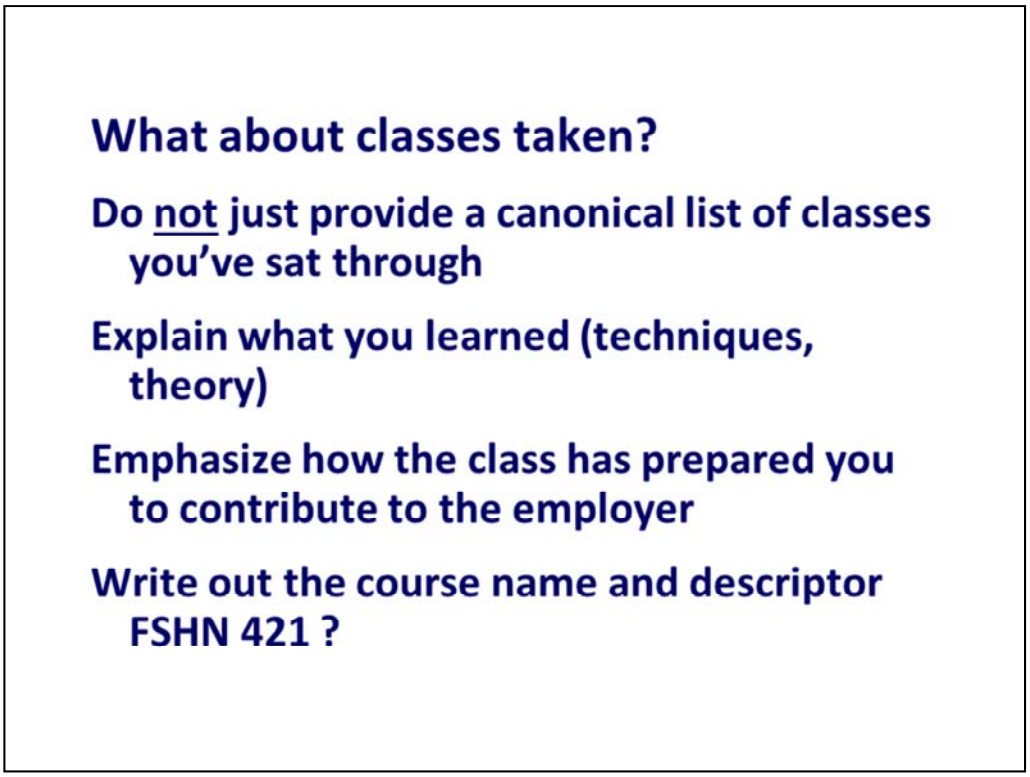
- Tie them to your commitment to your education; e.g., you flipped burgers to earn money for school
- Show how they gave you an opportunity to practice leadership, communications, or other skills relevant to your future career

What about unpaid positions?

- Include them if they are job-related
  - What skills did you gain?
    - General knowledge of technical principles and processes
    - Ability to contribute in a team environment
    - Practice in oral and written communications
    - General knowledge of project management
    - Understanding of quality control
  - How did they prepare you to be successful?

List special skills next

- Focus on skills that employers value
  - Programming—C++, Java, SQL
  - Operating systems—Unix, Linux, Windows
  - Software—MATLAB, Mathematica, Excel
  - Relational databases—Oracle, Access
  - Circuit design and analysis
  - Equipment—optical microscope, lock-in amplifier, spectrum analyzer
- List *first* the skills that you would be likely to use in the job



Food Science and Human Nutrition, "Clinical Pediatric Nutrition"

Coursework

Physics 194, "Behavior of Complex Systems"
fractals, neural nets, cellular automata, genetic algorithms, MATLAB, Mathematica

Physics 404, "Electronic Circuits"
steady-state circuit analysis using complex numbers, time-domain analysis, digital electronics, signal processing, hybrid digital/analog circuits, high-frequency circuits

Physics 402, "Light"
geometric optics, ray tracing and the matrix formalism, Fresnel formulas, polarization, Fourier optics, holography, nonlinear optics

List honors and awards and professional associations next

Honors and awards

- Title of the award
- Entity that bestowed the award
- Year it was given

Professional associations

- Name of the association
- Your rank (member, fellow, senior member)
- Years you have been associated with the organization

Awards and Associations

Phi Beta Kappa Society, 1970

Chancellor's Award for Excellence
University of Illinois, 2002

Honorary *kandidat* degree, Humane Letters
South Ural State University (Russia), 2003

Outstanding Service Medal
Civilian Research and Development Foundation (Washington DC), 2005

Davis Teaching Award, Department of Physics
University of Illinois, 2018

Member, American Physical Society, 1997–present

Use your resume to supplement your cover letter

The cover letter should explicitly state
- What job you are applying for
- Why you're a good fit
- What you can do for the employer

Use your resume to provide additional information about yourself
- Demonstrated success in other endeavors
- Related experience and appointments
- Additional special skills (job-related)
- Honors and awards

Select information to emphasize relevant experience and prior success

- If you include research interests, put the topic of the prospective position first
- List skills in the order of importance to the job you're applying for
- Emphasize classes most closely related to the job that have prepared you for success

No-nos for cover letters

- Addressing the letter "To Whom it May Concern" (dated and tacky in the extreme)
- Failing to specify exactly what job you are applying for
- Using the letterhead of your current employer
- Failing to supply complete contact information
- Sending a generic letter that is not specifically tailored for the company or the job
- Rambling on for more than a page

One size does *not* fit all—if you really want the job, do the work

Write a general "core" document and then customize it for each application

Include only job-relevant information

DO NOT include personal information that is unrelated to your skills and experience

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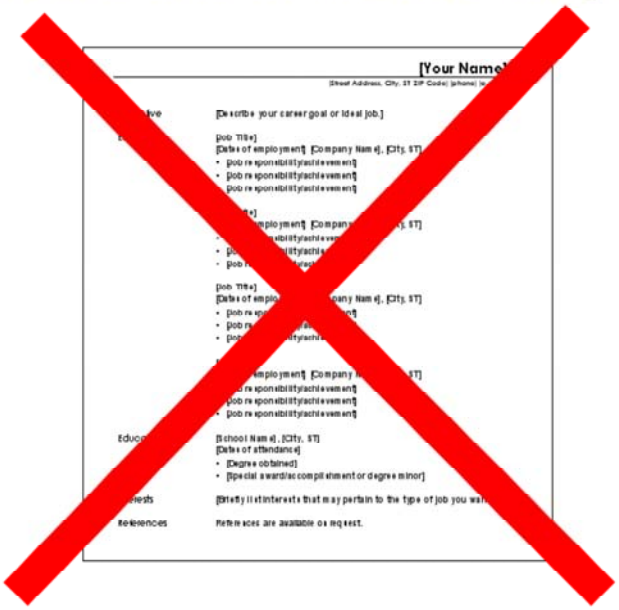
~~Marital status~~
~~Age or date of birth~~
~~Dependents~~
~~Health~~
~~Gender~~
~~Race or ethnicity~~

- Citizenship or right to work
- Year in school
- Availability for work
- Physical ability if job-related
- Gender if job-related
- Race or ethnicity if related

Do not use one of the MS templates



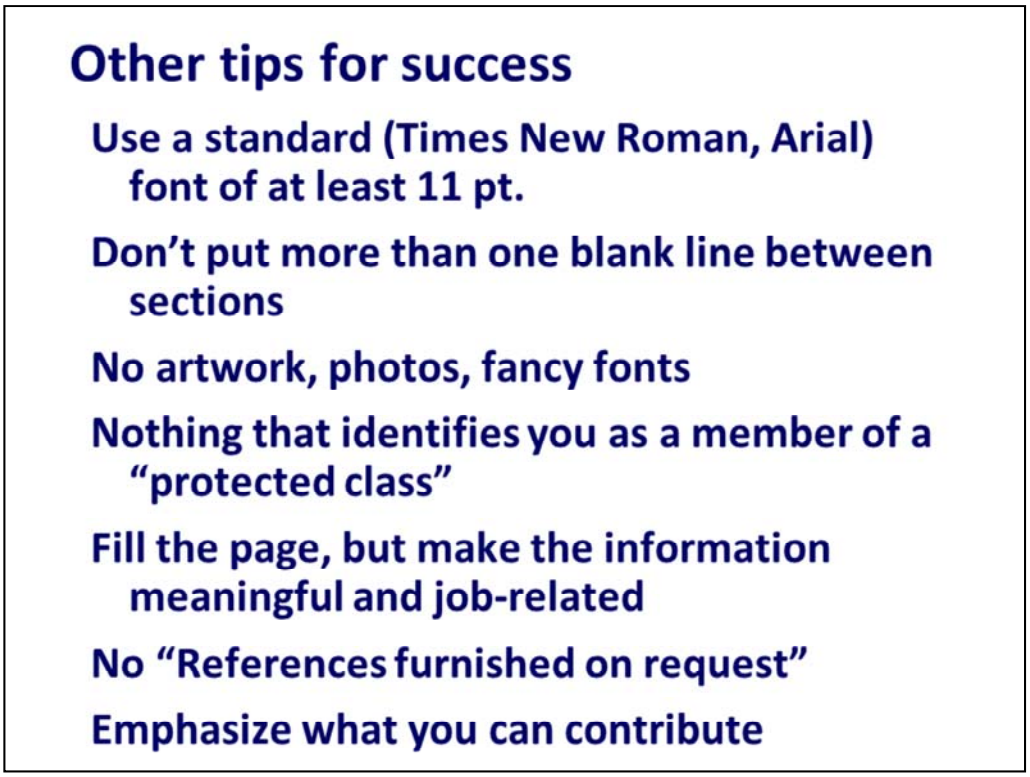
In addition to your formal CV or resume, maintain a narrative bio

Celia Mathews Elliott has worked as a technical writer and administrator at the University of Illinois since 1993. Although her primary responsibilities involve departmental administration and working with faculty to develop research proposals for federal funding agencies, she has taught undergraduate courses in scientific and technical communications for physics majors since 2000. Recently, she co-developed and team-teaches a graduate-level technical writing course in the Department of Physics.

She has presented technical-writing and proposal-writing workshops at Sandia National Laboratories, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, the University of Sao Paulo (Brazil), and National Chiao Tung University (Taiwan), and she has participated in four webinars for the American Chemical Society on scientific communications. She answered questions on technical writing in two Reddit\science "Ask Me Anything" appearances, and her lectures on scientific communications have been downloaded by people from more than 90 countries.

Celia earned bachelor's degrees in American history and English from Michigan State University and completed a master's in educational psychology at the University of Illinois. She was presented an honorary doctorate in humane letters from South Ural State University (Russia) in 2003 and the Civilian Research and Development Foundation's *Recognition Medal* in 2005 for her work with scientists in the former Soviet Union. She received the *Chancellor's Academic Professional Excellence Award* (2002) and the SPaRC Career Achievement Award (2016) from the University of Illinois and the American Physical Society's *Physics Haiku Grand Champion* prize (2004). Her teaching was recognized by the Department of Physics with the *Doug and Judy Davis Award for Excellence in Teaching Undergraduate Physics* in 2013.

People will ask for a narrative bio to advertise your talks, introduce you at conferences, or nominate you for prizes.



And don't include "References furnished on request"—of ***course*** you're going to give somebody references! Use the valuable real estate on your resume to tell the reader something useful; don't waste space on witless statements.

Train yourself to run the spellcheck every time you make a change to your document. If something has to be *perfect* (and a resume **does**), use these old proofreader's tricks:

1. Always proofread from a hard copy. Mistakes will leap off the paper that you'll never see on the screen.
2. Start at the lower right-hand corner of the document and read right to left, bottom to top.