

Creating An Effective Résumé

Facilitator

Date



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Centre for Career
Development

WHOSE LAND ARE WE ON?

The University of Waterloo acknowledges that much of our work takes place on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee peoples. Our main campus is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land granted to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River. Our active work toward reconciliation takes place across our campuses through research, learning, teaching, and community building, and is co-ordinated within the Office of Indigenous Relations.

Curious about the land that *you* are on?

Visit <https://native-land.ca/>



Artwork by local Indigenous artist Alanah Astehtsi Otisistohkwa
(Morningstar) Jewell

Co-creating a safe(r) space

- A safe space means different things for everyone, but we'll do our best! Let's keep 3 things in mind:
 - Choice, Respect, Care
- Participate in the way that feels most comfortable for you!
- Please use the chat or raise hand for questions/comments
 - Feel free to send me a direct message if you would like to share anonymously
- Ask questions whenever! We'll also dedicate time at the end for Q&A
- Take what works for you, leave what doesn't.

3 REASONS WHY RESUMES GET OVERLOOKED

SKILLS

Skills aren't clearly communicated, or are listed without supporting evidence

TAILORING

Job seekers are mass applying, but resumes aren't tailored to specific job/industries

ATS/AI

Not all resumes are "ATS friendly"

Intended Learning Outcomes



Write effective bullet points



Tailor your resume



Analyze a job description



Navigate ATS and Gen AI in application process

Resume Basics

Purpose:

- Communicate your skills, knowledge, abilities and experiences in a structured format
- Land an interview

What to include:

- Background, experience, knowledge, skills, languages
- Projects, extra curriculars, clubs, volunteering
- Accomplishments, awards, certificates
- Interests, passions, hobbies



Source: Magnific

COMMUNICATING YOUR SKILLS

Skills Employers Look for on Resumes

1. Problem-solving skills
2. Ability to work in a team
3. Written communication skills
4. Initiative
5. Strong work ethic
6. Technical skills
7. Verbal communication skills
8. Flexibility/adaptability
9. Analytical/quantitative skills
10. Detail-oriented
11. Interpersonal skills
12. Computer Skills
13. Leadership

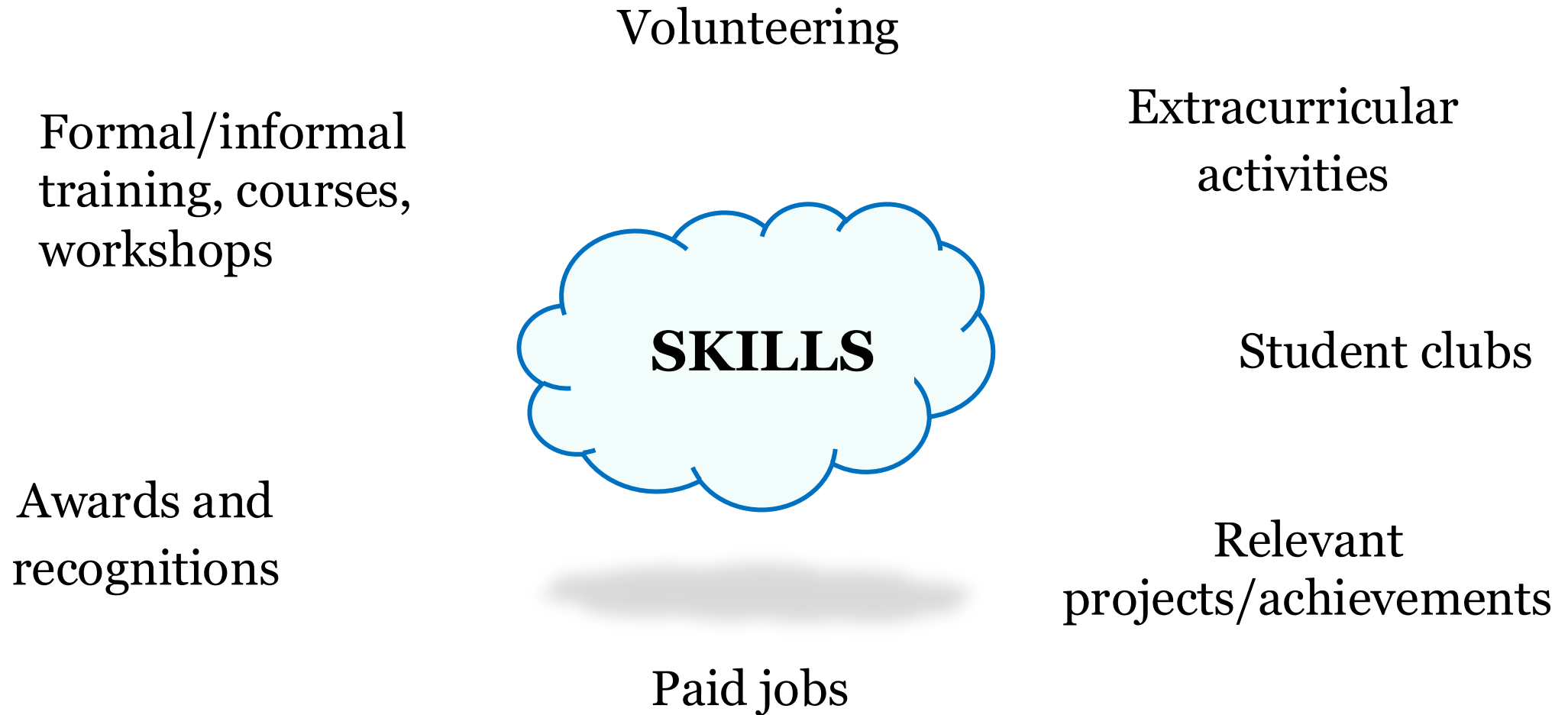
Source: The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Job Outlook 2025 Survey



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Skills Can Come From Anywhere



Summary Section

Relevant information tailored to job description (Technical/Transferrable)

Experience	Accomplishments	Knowledge
Awards	Characteristics	Training
Skills	Languages	Education

Possible section titles: **Summary of Qualifications**, **Skills**, Professional Summary, or Profile

Things to consider:

- Strengthen bullet points by referencing where or how you developed the skill, knowledge, etc.
- Think of it as an overview or a “movie trailer” for your resume
- Target this section to the job description (employers scan this section first!)

Summary Section Examples

Summary of Qualifications

- Strong oral and written communication skills developed by conducting group presentations and writing comprehensive reports during academic courses
- Skilled in prioritizing and completing assignments in timely manner, with accuracy and attention to detail
- Ability to lead and motivate team members while demonstrating integrity, enthusiasm, and professionalism
- Excellent multi-tasking skills; ability to work under pressure in fast-paced environment

Skills

- **Programming Languages:** C++, Java, Python, C#, TypeScript, Javascript, CSS, HTML, Node.js
- **Frameworks and Libraries:** PyTorch, React, Bootstrap,
- **Developer Tools:** Git, Docker, Vite, Visual Studio Code (VS Code), Final Cut Pro
- **Technologies:** CUDA, Unity Game Engine, Unreal Engine

More examples on [CareerHub](#)



Experience Bullet Points

WHAT	HOW	WHY
Action verb to describe your responsibility	Tools, methods, process, adverb - how you completed the task	Results, impact or outcome of your work
Ex: Analyzed, coordinated, designed accelerated.	Ex: Using Excel VBA, Python, collaboratively, efficiently.	Ex: Increased sales by 15%, created a safe learning environment for students

Things to consider:

- Provide specific evidence that back up the claims you make in your summary of qualifications
- Use strong action verbs to start your bullet point
- Would a “Relevant Skills” section help?
- Include paid/unpaid work, projects and more!

More examples on [CareerHub](#)



Quote: THE EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVE

“Imagine a doctor's résumé... do you want the doctor's résumé to say, “**has worked with patients**” or “**familiarity with medical practices**” or do you want her to say “**successfully performed 20 surgeries**” and leave all that other stuff off? [Use] the highest value points and leave the other stuff to be implied.”

Director of Product Management, Primal



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Experience Section Example

Communications Coordinator, University of Waterloo | Waterloo, ON Jan – Aug 2026

- Managed a Twitter and Instagram account with over 15,000 combined followers
- Designed, coordinated, and scheduled social media content using Canva and Hootsuite
- Collected weekly department updates from 4 different teams and curated a bi-weekly email newsletter to maintain faculty-wide communications
- Supported office manager in coordinating room bookings, tracking office inventory, and handling incoming and outgoing mail

Sections of a Resume

Contact Information

**Summary of
Qualifications**

Education

Work Experience

Volunteer Experience

Project Experience

**Awards and
Certificates**

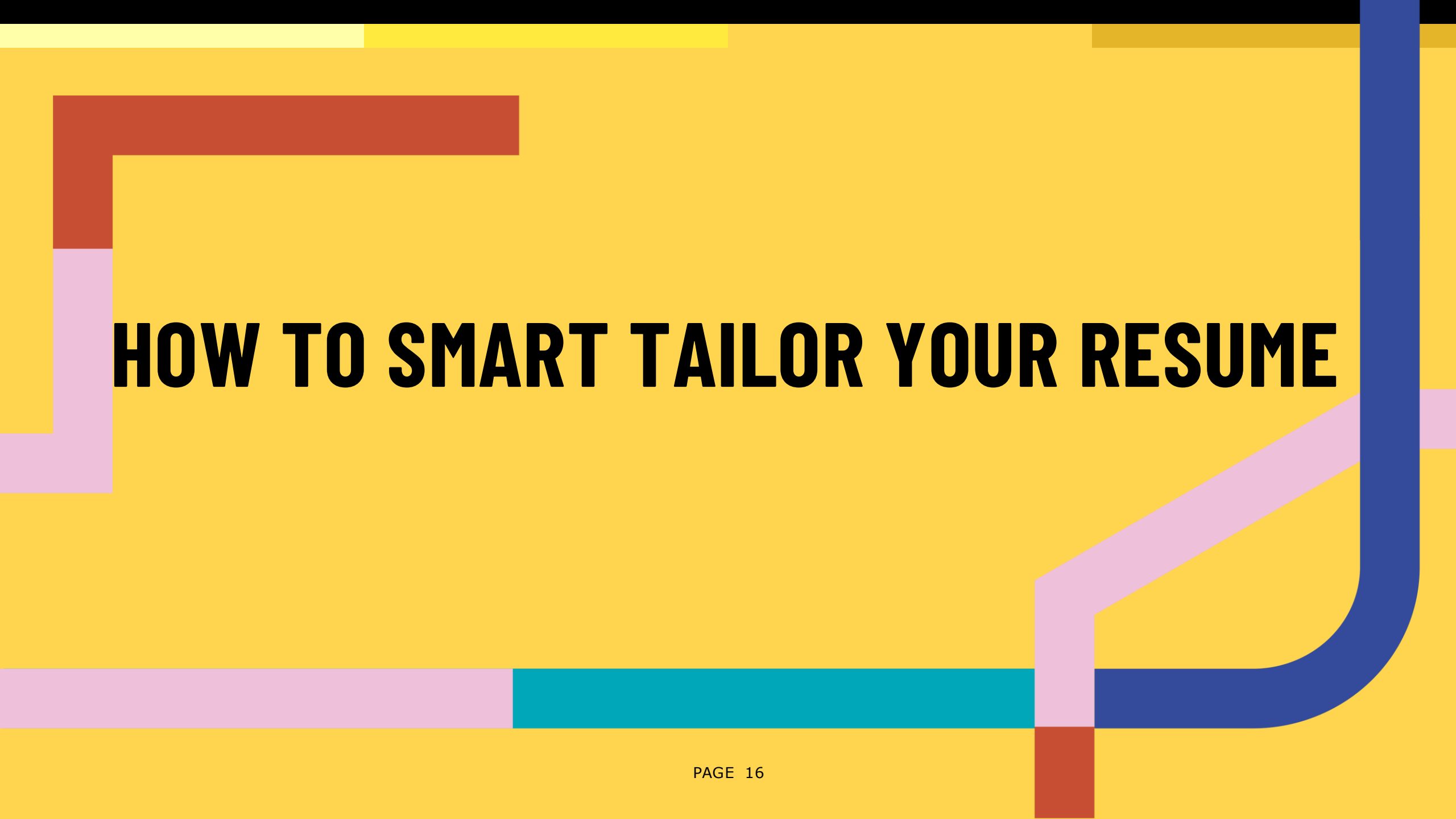
**Activities and
Interests**

Other sections: objective statement, technical skills, languages, relevant courses, publications, references



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HOW TO SMART TAILOR YOUR RESUME

TAILORING TAKES TIME! WORK SMARTER, NOT HARDER



Create a “master resume”, which includes ALL of your experiences in one document



Create a “master summary of qualifications”



Create multiple versions of your resume if applying to jobs in different fields

Job Description Analysis

Employer: Toronto Transit Commission

Job Title: Customer Experience Analyst

Work Location: Toronto

We are seeking a highly-motivated individual with the passion and enthusiasm to help develop and implement changes that will improve customer experience right across the organization. The student will analyze and evaluate different sources of information to identify trends, variances, gaps and insights.

Required Skills

- Solid customer service skills with experience working in a customer-focused environment, including identifying and responding to customer needs
- Excellent communication (oral and written) skills
- Strong presentation skills
- Ability to think critically & interpret multiple data sources to draw meaningful conclusions and make recommendations
- Well-developed organizational skills including attention to detail, the ability to prioritize work and the ability to work collaboratively across multi-disciplinary teams.
- Must have vision, commitment and enthusiasm for change



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Identifying Key Words

Employer: Toronto Transit Commission (TTC)

Job Title: Customer Experience Analyst

Work Location: Toronto

solid customer service skills

excellent written communication skills

- **Required Skills**

- strong presentation skills

- Solid customer service skills in a customer-focused environment, including identifying and responding to customer needs

- Excellent communication (oral and written)

- Strong presentation skills

- ability to interpret multiple data sources

- Ability to interpret multiple data sources and make recommendations

- Well-developed organizational skills including attention to detail, the ability to prioritize work and the ability to work collaboratively

- well-developed organizational skills

- Must have vision, commitment and enthusiasm for change

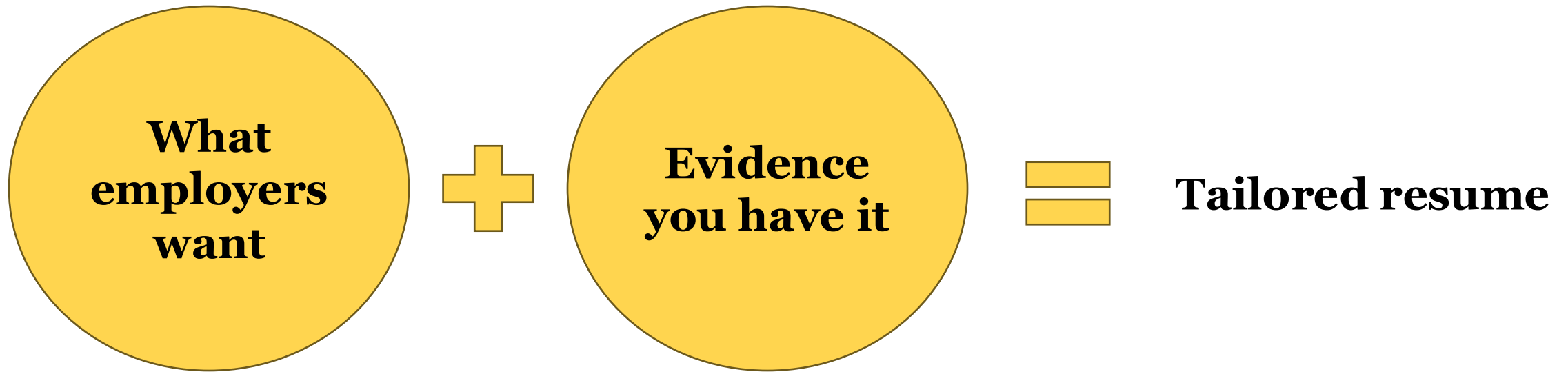


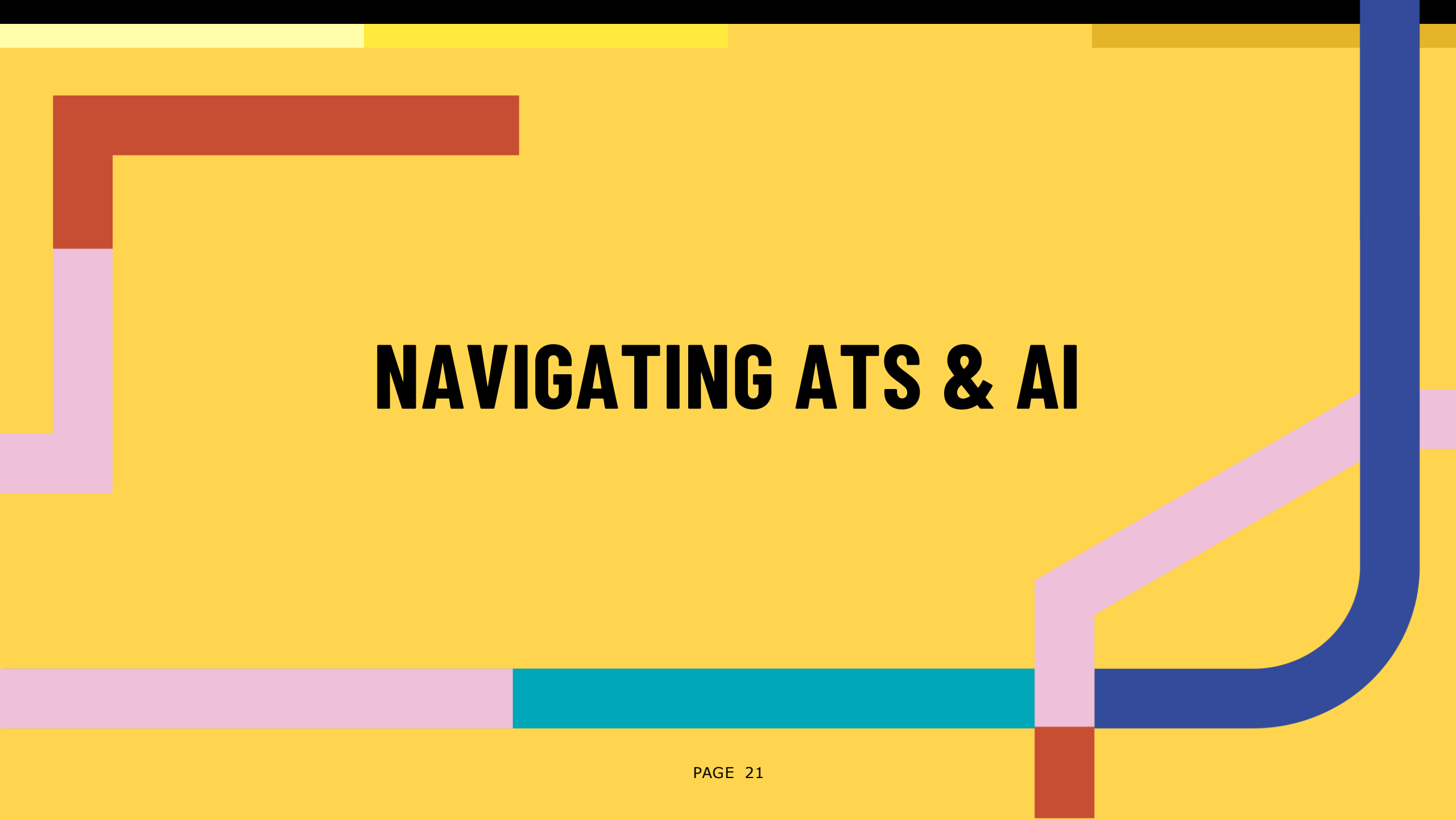
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Drawing Connections

Draw connections between what employers want (key words) and what you have (skills, qualifications, experience).

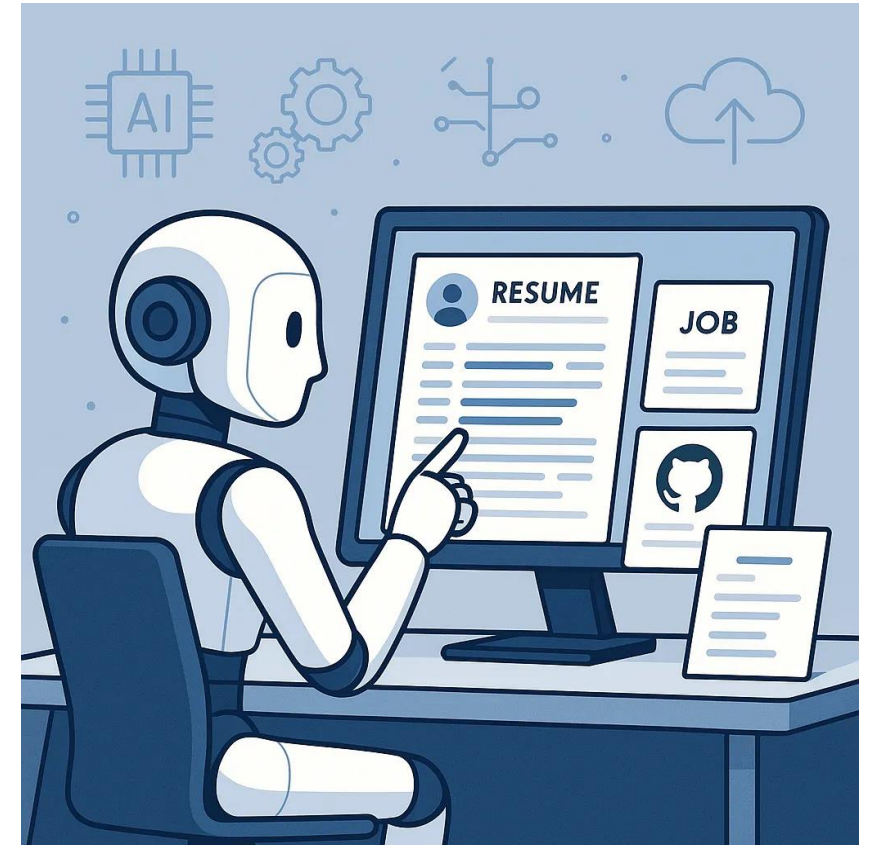


The background is a solid yellow color. It features several thick, colorful lines and shapes. On the left, there is a red L-shaped line and a pink L-shaped line. At the bottom, there is a horizontal bar composed of a pink segment on the left and a teal segment on the right. On the right side, there is a blue line that curves upwards and then turns right, and a pink line that runs diagonally upwards from the bottom right towards the center. A small red rectangle is located at the bottom right corner.

NAVIGATING ATS & AI

What is an Applicant Tracking System?

- Applicant Tracking Systems (**ATS**) are software programs that help employers manage the hiring process
- These systems can include resume screening tools that scan and filter resumes based on relevant experience, skills and qualifications
- Employers use ATS to varying degrees
- What does this mean for our resumes?



Source: Medium

Tips for an ATS-Friendly resume

1. Tailor your documents, incorporating key words from the job description with supporting evidence for your skills
2. Create in Word, upload as PDF
3. Avoid web templates and graphic tools like Canva
4. Avoid multiple columns
5. Use simple, black & white formatting (avoid using images, icons, tables/charts, headers or footers)
6. Consider including a summary section
7. Use standard, minimalist fonts like Aptos, Arial, etc.



Risks and Benefits of Using AI in Job Applications

Drawbacks

- Often not personalized/tailored
- Can lack evidence/context for skills and experience
- May generate false information about your skills and experiences
- Employers may be able to detect that GenAI was used and may have mixed opinions or be explicitly against the use of GenAI for job applications

Advantages

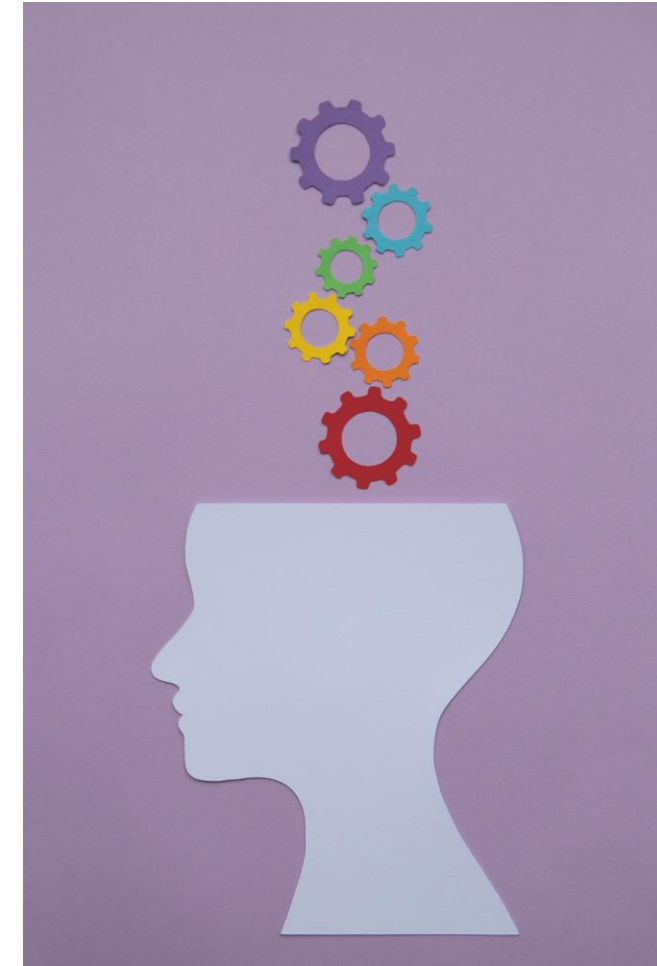
- Can save time and energy
- Offers tips and considerations, including suggested for structure and content, that may help with creating more effective application documents
- Can provide a rough starting point for your first draft
- Can serve as an editing partner for writing bullet points

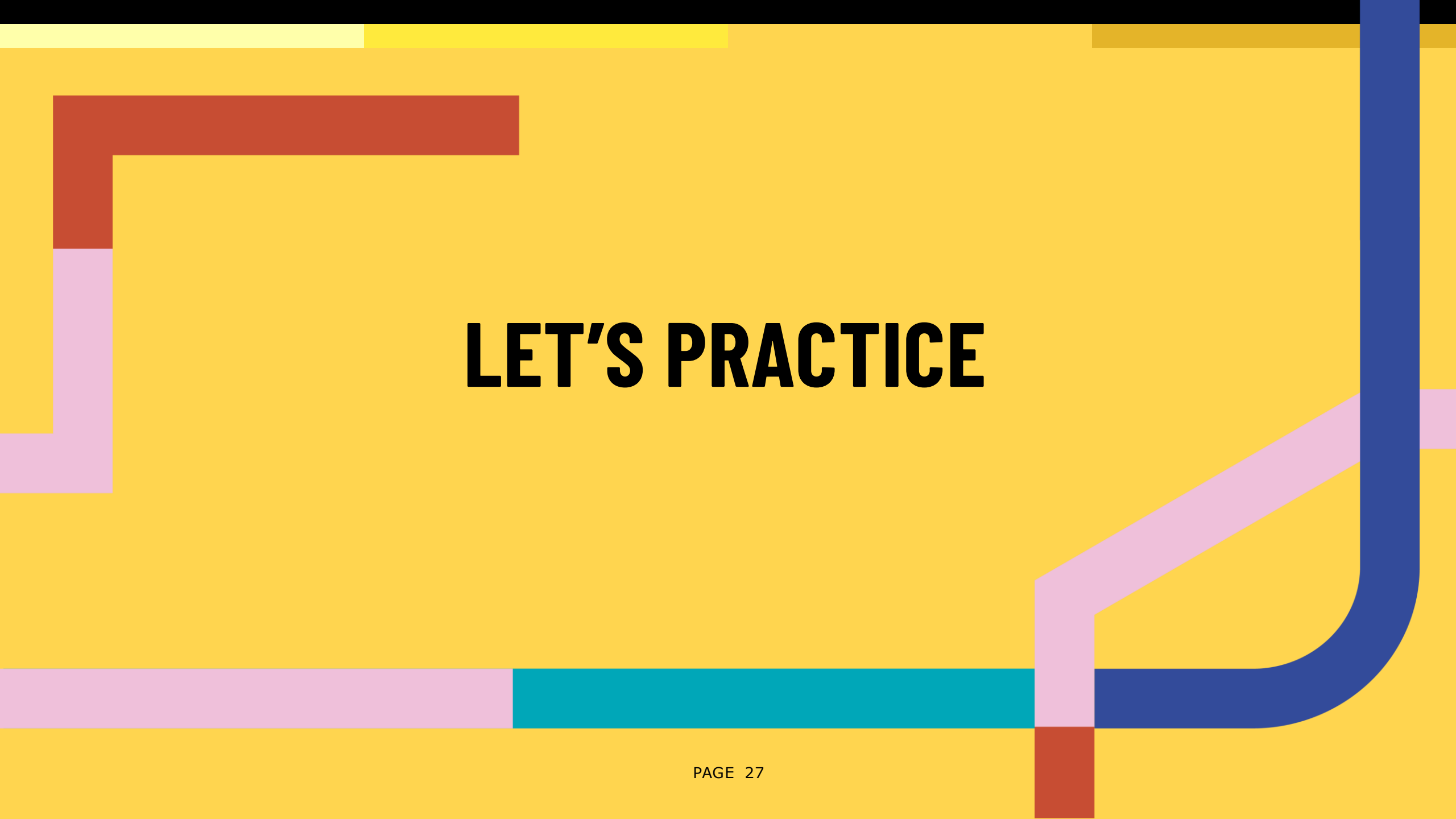
Using AI Responsibly

- AI is a tool, and like with any tool, there are pros, cons, and considerations
- Ensure you can take accountability for your documents
- Ensure AI-generated content is accurate, legal and ethical
- For co-op students: to support employer privacy, **do not input job descriptions from WaterlooWorks into AI**
- Employers have differing opinions about AI – be mindful of if and how you use it in your job applications
- Read more tips on [CareerHub](#)

The Job Market is Changing

- While AI is changing the world of work, **human judgment, creativity, empathy, and ethics remain essential.**
- Employers still need people who can:
 - Ask good questions
 - Think critically about information
 - Communicate complex ideas clearly
 - Work well with others
 - Adapt and learn new tools (including AI!)



The background is a solid yellow color. It features several abstract geometric shapes: a red L-shaped block in the top-left corner; a pink L-shaped block below it; a horizontal pink bar at the bottom left; a teal horizontal bar at the bottom center; a blue shape on the right side that includes a vertical line and a curved bottom; and a pink diagonal bar crossing the blue shape. The text "LET'S PRACTICE" is centered in the middle of the page.

LET'S PRACTICE

First, start with the job description

Employer: Liberty Tutoring
Job Title: Private Tutors for Math, Science & English

Do you love math, science, or English? Want to help high school students actually understand the concepts, not just memorize answers? Are you a creative, inspiring tutor who can make learning enjoyable and meaningful? If so, we want you on our team.

Job responsibilities

- Work closely with students to solidify their understanding of concepts, strengthen foundations and empower them to approach new challenges with confidence
- Prepare lessons, assignments and tests tailored to students' individual learning needs
- Evaluate students' progress and discuss results with students and/or their parents

Required skills

- Must be a university student or a recent graduate from university
- Outstanding teaching skills
- Excellent academic merit
- Previous tutoring and/or coaching experience
- Reliable, takes initiative and very organized
- Patience, good communication skills, and creativity



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What do you notice?

Leena Ali

(519) 123-4567 • email@uwaterloo.ca • LinkedIn

Summary of Qualifications

- Excellent communication skills developed through 3 years of customer service in fast-paced environments
- Collects, organizes, and analyzes data from multiple sources identifying trends that support decision-making
- Manages inquiries and administrative tasks simultaneously ensuring accuracy, efficiency, and attention to detail
- Works well independently and in a team environment
- Library and Software Developer experience through co-op

Work Experience

Software Developer (Co-op), ABC Company, Waterloo, ON

Jan – Apr 2026

- Enhanced software applications using Java, Python, and C++ to support business and user requirements.
- Developed full-stack features using React and Node.js, improving workflow efficiency for internal users
- Debugged and resolved software issues by analyzing logs, reproducing defects, and implementing solutions
- Learned new technologies quickly and applied them to project development and problem-solving tasks

Shelver, Waterloo Public Library, Waterloo, ON

May – Aug 2025

- Assisted patrons with locating books and library resources while providing friendly customer service
- Shelved and organized books using classification systems and ISBN information to ensure accurate placement and efficient resource retrieval

Project Experience

- Co-Developed a cross-platform app for a Baseball coach to position his players with the use of the Xamarin framework and C#
- Developed a multiplayer game based on snake where up to 4 players can play to see who can make the longest line without crashing
- Designed games involving hardware interfacing with breadboards and simple electronic circuits communicating with software through serial ports
- Currently learning about Arduino interfacing to further understanding of communications between hardware and software through the development of simple projects

Education

Bachelor of Applied Science in Computer Engineering, University of Waterloo

Exp 2029

Source: [University of Waterloo](#)

We'd love to hear from you!

Please complete the survey linked in the email with the slides, for a chance to win one of 5 prizes of \$20 added to your WATcard.

It helps us improve!



Remember...



Identify and clearly communicate relevant skills, experiences, etc.



Analyze job descriptions and tailor your resume



Prioritize sections based on relevance



Make sure your resume is ATS friendly



If using AI, make sure to proofread, edit, and ensure what's being communicated is accurate

Centre for Career Development Student Services



Career advising

One-on-one appointments for:

- Résumé & cover letter writing
- Interview practice
- Career exploration
- Work search strategies
- Further education support

Book via [WaterlooWorks](#)



Workshops and events

Topics include but not limited to:

- Résumé & cover letter writing
- Building a LinkedIn profile
- Job search strategies
- P4E Job Fair
- Further Education Fair

Register via [WaterlooWorks](#) or [Portal](#)



Drop-in advising

Same day, peer-led 20-minute conversations for:

- Résumé review
- Cover letter review
- Quick interview prep

Registration on [WaterlooWorks](#) daily at 8 a.m.



Online resources

- [CareerHub](#)
- [Recorded workshops](#) for flexible learning

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YOU+WATERLOO

Our greatest impact happens together.