

# THANK YOU FOR JOINING

We will start shortly.



**Employee Tears**  
@EmployeeTears



Good morning to everyone except the companies that require applicants to upload their resumes and subsequently ask them to complete a form entering the exact same information.



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Centre for Career  
Development

# STORYTELLING AND ARTICULATING SKILLS IN YOUR RÉSUMÉ AND COVER LETTER

Candice Chen (she/her)

Career Leader, Centre for Career Development

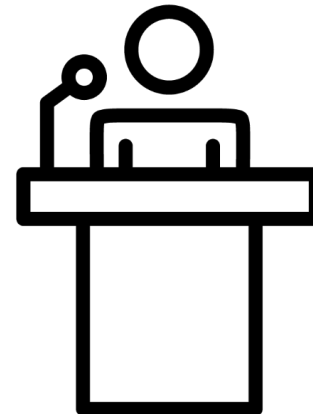


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# Candice(Yixin) Chen (she/her)

- Career Leader, Workshop Facilitator @ Centre for Career Development
- PhD Candidate, Department of GEM
- [linkedin.com/in/candice-yixin-chen-phd](https://www.linkedin.com/in/candice-yixin-chen-phd)



# 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 centralized within the Office of Indigenous Relations.

Let's keep learning. Why not take a course?  
INDG 201 The Indigenous Experience in Canada  
<https://ucalendar.uwaterloo.ca/2223/COURSE/course-INDG.html>



# A Safe(r) Space

Going into this presentation, my intention is to create as safe a space as possible.

A safe space means different things for everyone, but we'll do our best! Let's keep 3 things in mind:

- **Choice**
- **Respect**
- **Care**



Photo by Dennis Leinarts from Pexels



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# Learning Goals

By the end of this workshop, you will be able to:

1. Analyze a job posting to identify the skills and competencies of relevance to an employer and what is important to you
2. Understand the components of an effective résumé and cover letter, and how they can be strategically arranged to be persuasive
3. Identify and articulate relevant skills and experiences for a résumé and cover letter
4. Implement action verb statements in resumes and unified organization in cover letters



# A Job Posting Has Appeared!

- 1) What does the job ad reveal about the company?

*Is there anything that interests me about the description? Do I share values?*

- 2) What are the requirements for this job?

*Which requirements reflect my unique & strongest qualifications within the role?*

- 3) What are the responsibilities listed in this job ad?

*Have I done something similar in work, volunteer, school, or hobbies?*



# Research Beyond the Posting



Google News



The image features a bright yellow background with several abstract, colorful geometric shapes. On the left, there is a red L-shaped bar at the top and a light purple L-shaped bar below it. At the bottom, there is a horizontal bar divided into light purple and teal segments. On the right side, a blue vertical bar curves downwards and then horizontally to the left, ending in a red vertical bar. A light purple diagonal bar also extends from the right side towards the center. The text 'TRANSLATING ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES' is centered in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

# **TRANSLATING ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES**

**“If we take the degree as a job, then we need to learn how to articulate our time in the degree as time spent *working at a job.*”**

- Erin Wunker, “Articulating Academic Work Experience in a Non-Academic World,” *Hook & Eye*



# Translation 101: Research/Course Projects

Reflect on and jot down:

- What roles did you take up when you were researching or working on a project?
- What did you *do* in your research/project? What were your responsibilities?

\*keep these handy as we'll use them later for a bullet point writing exercise!



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# Translation 101: Verbs

Passive (Academic) Language	Active Language
Look at/study/examine x	Evaluate/analyze x
Hold office hours	Communicate complex information to non-expert audiences
Run tutorials	Facilitate/lead group meetings
Defend thesis	Led discussion on research findings and methodology with experts in field
Give presentation	Presented research findings interactively (to experts in the field)
Do research	...



# Research-related Statements

- Defended my thesis

VS.

- Presented research results and justified my methodological approaches through engaging in a discussion with experts in the field

# Teaching-related Statements

- Conducted successful tutorial sessions

VS.

- Facilitated engaging group discussions by ensuring group members felt heard and their opinions were valued

The background is a solid yellow color. It features several abstract, colorful geometric shapes and lines. On the left side, there is a red L-shaped bar at the top, a light purple vertical bar below it, and a light purple horizontal bar at the bottom. A teal horizontal bar is positioned below the purple bar, extending towards the right. On the right side, there is a thick blue vertical bar that curves at the bottom. A light purple diagonal bar crosses the blue bar from the bottom left towards the top right. A red vertical bar is located at the bottom center, overlapping the teal bar and the blue bar.

# **COMPONENTS OF A RÉSUMÉ**

# Major Sections of a Résumé (not exhaustive!)

- ❖ Header
- ❖ Summary of Qualifications
- ❖ Relevant Experience
- ❖ Additional Experience
- ❖ Selected Projects
- ❖ Education
- ❖ Technical Skills
- ❖ Professional Development/ Certifications
- ❖ Other Categories? Ask me!





# We will focus on these Major Sections of a Résumé

- ❖ **Header**
- ❖ **Summary of Qualifications**
- ❖ **Relevant Experience**
- ❖ **Additional Experience**
- ❖ **Selected Projects**
- ❖ Education
- ❖ Technical Skills
- ❖ Professional Development/ Certifications
- ❖ Other Categories? Ask me!



# Header



Your Name (can include your pronouns!)



Location: optional and can be kept general (e.g., Waterloo, ON)



Contact info: email and phone



Additional profile links: Github, LinkedIn, etc.



Want to include an Objective? These are great for cold-calling or searching for internships that are not advertised!



# Summary of Qualifications



HIGHLIGHT 4 – 6  
QUALIFICATIONS  
THAT BEST  
DEMONSTRATE  
YOUR STRENGTHS



OUTLINE YOUR  
UNIQUE VALUE



REFERENCE  
WHERE AND/OR  
HOW YOU  
DEVELOPED  
THE SKILL



STRONGLY  
RECOMMEND  
USING  
KEYWORDS  
FROM POSTING



BE CONFIDENT  
AND ACCURATE



# (1st Draft) Summary of Qualifications

- ❖ Background in political science and global governance
- ❖ Excellent interpersonal skills
- ❖ Ability to write reports and give presentations
- ❖ Completed data analysis as part of thesis project



# Revised Summary of Qualifications

- ❖ 2+ years research experience in global affairs with a specialization in political conflict and migration
- ❖ Strong qualitative and quantitative data analysis skills with a proven ability to identify trends
- ❖ Excellent written and oral communication skills as demonstrated by policy report writing and stakeholder presentations
- ❖ Exceptional interpersonal skills strengthened through collaborative project work



# Experience Sections

You could use Work Experience and Volunteer Experience. But sometimes the below sections give you more control over your resume in highlighting your strengths:

- ✓ Relevant Experience
- ✓ Select Projects
- ✓ Additional Experience
- ❖ Prioritize sections based on relevance
- ❖ Extract transferable skills to use for your bullet points

# Writing Effective Bullet Points

- ❖ Focus on accomplishments/impact of action not duties
- ❖ Arrange bullet points from the most important to the least (but still!) important
- ❖ Two models you can use:
  1. What + How + Why
  2. Achievement Verb\* (what+why) + How you did it

\*available at <https://careerhub.uwaterloo.ca/sections/Marketing/action-verbs.aspx>



# WRITE A BULLET POINT ABOUT RESEARCH/PROJECT

- 1) What you did + How did it + Why (outcome or purpose)
- 2) Achievement Verb\* (what+why) + How you did it



# Additional Experience

## ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Greeter (Volunteer), Grand River Hospital Emergency Room, Kitchener, ON

Sept 2017-present

Sales Associate, Mountain Equipment Co-op, Toronto, ON

Sept 2015-Sept 2016



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# Professional Development/ Activities and Interests

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Fundamentals of University Teaching Certificate  
Centre for Teaching Excellence (CTE), UWaterloo

Dec 2018

Leadership Essentials Certificate  
University of Toronto

April 2016

## ACTIVITIES AND INTERESTS

Member, Second Place Winning Team, IIE Consulting Case Study Competition

Oct 2018

Member, Institute of Industrial Engineers (IIE)

Sept 2017-present





# 5 MINUTE BREAK

Get up, take a bathroom break, dance, get some  
water/coffee

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# COVER LETTERS

# Main Focus

1. What do I think is most critical to the employer?
2. Where do I have the strongest evidence that I am proud of to support my ability to demonstrate these critical elements?
3. What connections with the employer can I make (values, career goals, mission statements, etc)?

# Cover Letter Paragraphs

1. Introduction (Establishes that connection immediately)
2. Body Paragraphs (Grouped by themes: Skills-based, Experience-based, etc)
3. Conclusion (Wraps everything up, maintaining that connection to company)

# Introductory Paragraph

Consider the following:

- ❖ How would you like to introduce yourself?
- ❖ Why are you interested in this role or what motivated you to apply?
- ❖ Is there something about the organization you're interested in?
- ❖ Why are you the candidate they need to select?

# Your Thesis Statement

## Template

*What is your thesis statement? What are your claims?*

My background in \_\_\_\_\_, my experience with \_\_\_\_\_, and my skills in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ make me an ideal candidate.

## Example

- » **x** and **y** demonstrate my ability to excel at **c**.
- » My background in **x**, my experience in **y**, and my skills in **a** and **b** make me an excellent candidate for **c**.





# What's missing from this example?

Dear Ms. Quraishi,

I am very excited about the possibility of joining the Software Engineering Unit of General Motors in the position of Junior Engineer as advertised on the GM website. Your tradition of innovative automotive engineering design and progressive product development is inspirational to developing professionals like myself.

From [careers.yorku.ca](http://careers.yorku.ca)



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# Narrative Approach Prompts

- ❖ What interests you about the company or role you're applying to?
- ❖ What motivations were behind your career choice?
- ❖ What kind of meaningful work, or "impact," would you like to do in your career?
- ❖ Do you share the company values? If yes, how so?
- ❖ How might this job be the next step in your career path?
- ❖ How might your interests, motivations, and/or values contribute to the team?



**REFLECT: WHAT MIGHT YOUR NARRATIVE  
APPROACH BE?**

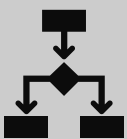
# Body Paragraph(s)



Begins with a clear topic sentence and is “unified” throughout the paragraph, letting the reader know exactly what this paragraph is about



Skills-Based Paragraph: One/Two skills across multiple experiences



Experience/Project-based Paragraph: One experience that demonstrates multiple skills



# Body Paragraph(s)

Consider the following :

- ❖ What stories will be strongest in proving your suitability for this job?
- ❖ How can you provide evidence, rather than making a list of unsubstantiated claims?
- ❖ How can you incorporate multiple skills of relevance into your examples?
- ❖ How can you make connections between your evidence and the job description to best demonstrate your fit?



The background features a black field with several thick, overlapping geometric lines. A yellow line runs horizontally across the top. A green line forms an L-shape on the left side. A blue line runs horizontally across the bottom. A pink line forms a U-shape on the right side. The text is centered in the black space.

# ACTIVITY: THINK OF A STORY YOU'D LIKE TO TELL

Can be about a specific skill, a skill set, your education, or about an experience!

# Activity Prompts

- ❖ Think of a story you want to share
- ❖ What skills did you use in this experience? And how?
- ❖ What was the outcome/result?
- ❖ Think of a topic sentence to introduce this story

# Concluding Paragraph

Consider the following questions to ensure your letter is complete:

- ❖ Why are you interested in this line of work/company/role?
- ❖ In summary, what is it that you bring to this position/organization?
- ❖ Discuss application further in an interview
- ❖ Thank you



The background is a solid yellow color. It features several thick, colorful geometric shapes: a red L-shaped bar in the top-left corner, a light purple L-shaped bar in the middle-left, a light purple horizontal bar at the bottom-left, a teal horizontal bar at the bottom-center, a blue vertical bar on the right side, and a red vertical bar at the bottom-right. The text is centered in the upper-middle portion of the page.

**FAQ:**

**IS IT POSSIBLE TO CREATE A GENERAL COVER LETTER? I HAVE A LOT OF APPS TO APPLY TO!**

# Reviewing Your Letter

## Key considerations:

- ❖ Have you focused your letter on elements that the employer has *asked for*?
- ❖ Did you provide *evidence* to support your claims?
- ❖ Have you included any facts/skills/experiences that may appear *irrelevant* to the employer?



# Key Takeaways for Today

1. A job ad offers clues and ideas of how to make connections to the employer
2. Academic Experiences DO NOT make you “over-qualified” but rather need to be re-framed in employer-friendly terms and key phrases (located in the job ad!)
3. Strategic components of a résumé include Summary of Qualifications and writing effective bullet points can support tailoring and use of keywords
4. Storytelling in cover letters gives you concrete examples & provides opportunities to connect with the employer via interest, values, or career goals
5. Cover letters can’t “cover” everything! Selective focus and careful organization give depth and evidence that your resume can’t really provide
6. Documents should work together to make the most effective argument possible for your candidacy



**Regular  
Co-op  
Undergrad  
Masters, PhD, Postdocs  
Alumni  
Employees**



**Job Search Tactics  
Résumé  
Cover Letter  
Interview Prep  
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**Individual Appointments  
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Thank you!