

The Job Hunt

Resumes

Cover Letters

Interviewing

References

Other Stuff

MMEA/NAfME Collegiate Conference: Resume & Cover Letter Workshop

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Before you apply

- Know about the job
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- Know
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 - a
- Know about the program
 - tradition of strong music program? active in state, region?
 - comprehensive, unified, balanced, methodologies?

Make sure the
job is a
“good fit.”

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Know who will be reviewing your materials, and who will be on the interview team.

Consider having a letter in your file from each team member's "opposite number," not just your college profs.

Before you apply



RESUMES

LENGTH Keep them short. 1 to 2 pages tops; 1 page if you are a beginning teacher. Above all else, avoid half pages--they look incomplete.

STYLE NO MISTAKES. Clean. Simple. B&W. Lots of "white space."
Use "action" verbs--organized, taught, implemented
1 inch margins; bullets (•)
Font choice: 12 pt for body, slightly larger for headings, use bold and italic for organization, choose a serif font (not non serif)
No need to invest in "stationery"--use regular copy paper
Educational approach--"too busy and serious to be attractively designed"

Reverse chronological works best.

ORDER

Education (not HS)

CONTENT

Certification information (Music JQ, granted, pending)

Teaching experience, including student teaching

Musical/Performing experience

Other work/educational/teaching experience (focus on music, teaching)

Include references' names and phone #s/emails, if space (separate page is fine)

MORE RESUME TIPS

LENGTH

*If you really want/need a longer resume, try this idea:

- instead of stapling 2 pages, or paper clips. . .
- take 2 pages and print side by side on 11 x 17 paper, facing pages
- fold in half, and include your name, address, phone # and email address on cover
- open, and you have a detailed resume that presents all of your information at a glance

CONTENT

No need to include an objective or goal; they are not useful, and often prove needlessly limiting

Unless you are teaching art--no graphics

Avoid too much information about your adherence to a specific methodology or teaching approach--its a double-edged sword

Consider establishing a "professional" email account (Gmail, Apple, etc.); avoid using your MSU account, and email addresses that could be misconstrued (i.e., sexysaxlady@yahoo.com; lalalegs@gmail.com; studbone@comcast.net)

COVER LETTERS

PURPOSE Cover letters allow you to customize your application, and to elaborate or expand upon specific details regarding your background that make you an attractive candidate for the position.

CONTENT Opening salutation
How you learned of the opening (colleagues, newspaper)
Why you would be a viable candidate/how your skill set matches the job description
Your interest in being granted an interview
Closing

AUDIENCE Research the District or School to determine to whom you should address the letter
Try not to send a cover letter to “Whom it May Concern” or “Dear Sir” or “Dear Assistant Superintendent”

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Portfolios

- Résumé
- Letters of recommendation
- List of references
- Sample lesson plans with video
- Recital CD
- Video clip with you conducting at a concert
- Classroom rules
- Instructional strategies
- Programs (recital, concerts, student teaching)
- Photographs (professional and personal)
- Philosophy statement
- Student work
- Example of tests
- Rubrics
- Handbook
- Special skills (bi-lingual, Orff certification, computer skills)
- Judges comments from large-group festival
- Awards

Research indicates that most interviewees have 30 seconds in which to make their impression on the interviewer.

Sitting - lean slightly forward

- Personal grooming

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Interviewing

- Before the Interview**
- Do your research; visit the town, get the “lay of the land”--it’s a 2-way street--determine if you want to live/work there by finding out as much as you can about the community, the school, the faculty, the music program, etc.
 - Do “mock” interviews with your friends, coops, administrators
 - Prepare for the “given” questions and the situational queries that WILL be asked
 - Polish your shoes and cut your nails
 - Dress one level higher than the job for which you’re interviewing
 - Don’t eat or drink anything messy
 - Turn off cell phones
 - Don’t wear perfume or cologne
 - Make sure your hair is neatly trimmed, but not the day before

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Interviewing

During the
Interview

- Be honest--don't say you can do something if you can't--there's no point in agreeing to conditions you know you can't--or won't--be comfortable with
- Answer all the questions--unless you can't!
- Make good eye contact with whom you are speaking
- Don't fidget, tap, shake, etc.
- Be enthusiastic, but not giddy
- Don't ever say anything bad about anyone else
- Smile and show your excitement about teaching and kids

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Interviewing

During the Interview

- Avoid looong answers--don't babble
- Show that you've done your research--mention what you know about the school, community, program
- If asked inappropriate questions (age, marital status, sexual preference, religious or political beliefs, etc.), politely and gently steer the conversation back to music and teaching
- When asked if you have any questions, always have at least 2 or 3--no more: "What makes the Whatsamatta Schools so distinctive?" "What qualities are you looking for in the successful candidate for this position?"
- Do inquire as to the timeline for making the decision
- Don't ask about salary until an offer is on the table
- The best interviews for you are when the interviewers talk more than you--and vice versa

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Interviewing

- After the Interview**
- Send a hand-written Thank You note--
NO EMAILS
 - You may call a week or so after the interview if you have not heard
 - Don't accept a job you don't truly want
 - Never accept a job on the spot, even if forced; you can always say, "I'm very interested in this position, but need a day or so to discuss it with my family/husband/wife/etc."

References

How Many? 3 are good, more are better, 10 is too many!

From Who? Limit your university references to 1 or 2
Make sure to include your coop(s)
Try to cultivate a letter from a building or district administrator, music supervisor

Confidential or Not? YES! If the letter can't be confidential, don't ask for it, and for sure don't include it. (Most reference writers will not agree to write a non-confidential letter.)

Generic or Customized? Both are useful--some references will agree to provide both if asked

Sent Directly or To You? Whichever way the writer is comfortable with
Good idea to compile a "stealth file" (more later)

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The “Stealth File” With the speed with which so many positions come open and close nowadays, it’s wise to build a “stealth file” that you can use to respond immediately when a job that you desire becomes available.

The “stealth file” requires:

- A good quality printer and word processing software
- Resume updated and ready to customize and print
- Cover letter template ready for insertion of school and contact information
- 3-5 “generic” reference letters ready to be copied
- A supply of mailing envelopes, labels, stamps, etc.

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Statements of Philosophy, Essays & Other Writing Requirements

My advice here is a little untraditional; work hard on crafting one ***killer*** personal statement about your teaching beliefs and use it for every application that requests a sample of your writing.

The statement should:

- Address your most deeply held beliefs about education, music, music's place in the schools, and even education's place in society.
- Be clear about what you believe students should know and be able to do as a result of comprehensive, sequential instruction in music.
- Reference or mention other professional thought on these topics, so as to place your thinking in a context.
- Be clear, concise, as brief as possible, and free of jargon or technical terminology.
- Be capable of slight adaptation in case you need to modify it for a specific application or other purpose.

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Materials

- To download any materials shared today, go to:
- <http://www.mitchellrobinson.net/clinic-and-workshop-materials/>