Whatever your major—English, engineering, music or math—good writing matters to your success in school and after you graduate.

Portfolio Prep Workshop
August 29, 2019
Portfolios for Spring 2020 internships

- Due Monday, September 9, by 11:59 p.m.
- Prepare your 5 portfolio documents in advance
- go.osu.edu/prof-writing-apply
- Fill out online application
- You will receive a confirmation email
Portfolio Requirements – 5 pieces

- Professional cover letter
  - Different from cover letter for a specific job posting
- Writing-focused resume
- 3 polished writing samples that showcase your skills
Cover Letter Audience

The MPW Program: Dr. Lindsay A. Martin, Coordinator, Minor in Professional Writing

- The cover letter applies for placement in an internship in a Columbus-area workplace.
- It persuades your reader that you will be a skilled, adaptable, and versatile writer in the workplace in general—not a specific organization.

Secondary audience: It will also be sent to the writing workplace you’re matched with.
Sample Cover Letter

Take a few minutes to read over the sample model cover letter.

- What do you notice about this letter?
- How is it similar or different from your expectations for a cover letter?
- What works well in it?
- How might you incorporate some of these moves in your document about your own experience?
The Evidence of the Cover Letter: Discussing the Samples

The cover letter introduces your reader to the portfolio of 3 samples. These questions may guide you:

- In what context did you write the sample?
- What is the genre and purpose of each sample? How are the tone and style appropriate for that purpose?
- What writing skills do your samples showcase?

*Do not simply answer all these in order. Consider what’s essential and how you can argue that the sample proves you have a particular skill.*
Showcasing Writing Skills

These are a few of the skills many of our workplace partners want in interns. Each piece of evidence in a cover letter should prove a claim that you have one of the needed skills.

- Write press releases or develop and deliver media pitches
- Produce marketing copy or design and implement social media campaigns
- Translate technical/specialized information of a research organization for a broad audience
- Interview individuals and craft a compelling story based on interview transcripts
- Research, consolidate, and/or summarize large amounts of information
- Repurpose information for different audiences, documents, or genres
- Shift tone to suit different audiences/media (show this with range of samples)
- Write under tight deadlines, such as 24-hour turnaround
Other tips

DON’T

Emphasize what you’ll get from the experience or how it will help you

Focus on what you learned through the process of writing these documents

DO

Emphasize what you’ll bring to the workplace.

Focus on how these samples showcase skills you have right now (if you wrote the document, you have the skills!) and how you will use these skills to contribute something specific to a workplace
Choosing Your Writing Samples

- Choose samples that
  - Are excellent and clean copy
  - you feel confident discussing in the cover letter

- Samples should
  - Be **brief**: ideally no more than 500 words / 2-3 pages (whichever is shorter)
  - Demonstrate a variety of styles and genres

- Samples can
  - Be a selection from a longer piece (Use CL to contextualize.)
  - Come from a group project
Sample Types for Different Industries: Just Some Ideas

- **PR/Marketing**
  - press release, marketing blog post, full PPT marketing pitch (if it showcases writing skills), marketing copy

- **Nonprofits**
  - profile stories/feature articles, blog posts, social media campaigns

- **Grant-writing**
  - selection of a grant or selection of an academic paper that showcases research and concision skills

- **Technical Writing**
  - Any how-to manual or handout

- **Business of any type**
  - any memo that showcases tact in challenging rhetorical situations; anything summarizing large amounts of information in memo form
Some Creative/Surprising Samples

What if you don’t have much from specific jobs/internships or real-world clients through courses? Students have used…

- Selection from academic paper--*can come from a group project!*
  - One great sample: A proposal for a senior research project—brief but self-contained, and it showcased something unique about the applicant

- Voiceover script for a video project
- Personal blog post
Writing about Purpose for a Course Assignment

FOCUS ON….

The *rhetorical* purpose as if the piece were to reach readers in the real world

The purpose of a book review I wrote in English 4150 was to emulate the style of a New York Times review and intrigue readers about the thematic issues in Jodi Picoult’s novel without giving away the entire plot, thus encouraging them to buy the novel.

NOT….

The *pedagogical* purpose the instructor had in giving the assignment

The purpose was to learn how to write about a novel in the style of book reviews.
Social Media Posts

- A collection of social media posts *can* work together as a good writing sample, but only if you have enough content.
  - 3-5 individual posts will not be sufficient.

- Best: a full social media content calendar, with posts from multiple platforms demonstrating your strategy behind an entire social media campaign leading up to an event.

- Before the sample, include 1-2 paragraphs about your reasoning for why you used each platform/how you did.
Small Group Discussion: Choosing Your Writing Samples

- Take 5-10 minutes and consider a sample you plan to include in your portfolio (or one you’re considering but unsure of)
- Make some notes on how you would discuss the sample in the cover letter, or draft the actual paragraph for the CL.
- Remember to address:
  - Audience, purpose
  - How do style and/or tone connect with audience and purpose?
  - What skills does the sample showcase?
  - Context written—Course? Job? Internship?
- Optional: Share your thoughts with someone sitting next to you.
Your Resume

- Focus on your writing **accomplishments**
  - in the workplace
  - in clubs, organizations, volunteer positions
  - in coursework
- Highlight the most relevant accomplishments first
  * The top 1/3 of your resume is prime real estate
What if you don’t have much workplace experience?

- Add a section called “Relevant Coursework” to your resume (Only include writing-related courses)
- Remember your audience. Use course names—Not numbers
- Use this section to highlight
  - Collaborative projects you completed
  - Writing accomplishments: products you ended class with
    - Not—Learned how to edit documents and fix grammar mistakes
    - Instead—Copyedited and proofread a total of 15 pages, locating and correcting all errors

Tip: Go to your Carmen page/the syllabus and review the written assignments you submitted for ideas!
Organizational involvement

- Include the writing-focused activities you engaged in
- Describe collaborative tasks that you accomplished
- Remember your audience: Our workplace partners may not be familiar with your campus organization

  - Avoid undefined acronyms, and offer a brief description of the organization
Resume Bullet-Points and Verbs

- Remember your audience—They need help seeing the connection between your experience and the job
- Focus on your verbs that start each bullet-point. Review the Action Verbs for Resumes Tip Sheet.
  - Organizational and Supervisory Tasks
  - Communication Tasks
  - Science and Research Tasks
  - Clerical or Detailed Tasks
  - Possibly Teaching, Computer or Technical Tasks
Accomplishments -- Not Mundane Tasks

- The PAR (Problem-Action-Result) method ensures each bullet-point tells a complete story about a problem you solved or something you accomplished
  - [https://resumegenius.com/how-to-write-a-resume/accomplishments-on-resume-quantify-achievements](https://resumegenius.com/how-to-write-a-resume/accomplishments-on-resume-quantify-achievements)
  - OSU Center for Career and Professional Success calls it the AIR method (Action – Issue – Result) [https://artsandsciences.osu.edu/sites/default/files/asc-ccps-identifying_accomplishments2.pdf](https://artsandsciences.osu.edu/sites/default/files/asc-ccps-identifying_accomplishments2.pdf)

- Fill out the line—Try to write all the way to the right margin
- Quantify your achievements
Why edit your portfolio?

- “Go with the Flow”
- Take a minute. Read first half.
- With a partner, go through and mark any errors with your red pens
What does it mean to be “work-world ready”?

- The ability to produce clear, correct prose is a skill all workplaces need. The stakes are high!
- Editing is multi-faceted:
  - Big Picture: Do I need to include this?
  - Medium Picture: Should I restructure this? Should I reword?
  - Small Picture: Is the prose correct, proofread and free of errors?
- Know your own tendencies! Learn to edit for those.
Portfolio Submission Information

- **Deadline**
  - Spring 2020 internships: Monday, September 9 by 11:59 p.m.

- **How to prepare your materials**
  - Keep each item as its own file and save as a pdf. See website for help. Use file naming rules on website.

- **How to submit**
  - Online! Go to go.osu.edu/prof-writing-apply and click “Submit your application.”
  - You will get a confirmation page and a confirmation email.