

Resume, Cover Letter, & Interview Resources

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



Resumes

In Canada, employers expect to receive a resume or curriculum vitae (CV) that outlines in point-form your skills, work or volunteer experience, educational attainment, and any other qualifications you possess that might be relevant to the job.

Although “resume” and “CV” are typically used interchangeably, job postings that require a resume are more likely to be wanting a short, 1-2 page summary of your most significant accomplishments. For the majority of jobs, this type of resume is appropriate. On the other hand, if a curriculum vitae or CV is requested, the employer might be expecting a longer document that describes your accomplishments in much greater detail. This type of resume is more common with senior-level positions or those that require a lot of education or qualifications.

Since resumes aren't supposed to list everything you've ever done and all the things you know how to do, it's a good idea for job seekers who are applying to multiple different types of position to create multiple versions of their resume. Each resume should be designed to showcase only those skills and qualifications that are desirable for the type and level of the job position being applied for.

There are lots of resources available online and at the library to help you create a Canadian-style resume. Below are a few suggestions for library books and online resources you can use to help familiarize yourself with how to write a resume that will impress Canadian employers.

Books

- **Modernize Your Resume: Get Noticed...get Hired** / Wendy Enelow, 2023, 650.142 E56m
- **Get That Job: CVs and Resumes, How to Make Sure You Stand Out From the Crowd** / 2022, 650.142 G39b
- **Resume & LinkedIn Strategies for New College Graduates: What Works to Launch a Gen-Z Career** / Jan Melnik, 2023, 650.142 M52r

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- You can also search the VPL catalogue by *Subject* for “**Resumes (employment)**” to get additional suggestions

Online Resources

- **How Do I Create a Canadian-style Resume?**
<https://settlement.org/ontario/employment/find-a-job/resume/how-do-i-create-a-canadian-style-resume>
- **Writing Resumes and Cover Letters: A Guide for Newcomers to British Columbia**
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/writing-resumes-and-cover-letters>
- **Canada Job Bank Resume Builder**
<https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/findajob/resume-builder>
- **LinkedIn Learning** (log in with your VPL card and search for “resume” for video tutorials)
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/linkedin-learning>

Tip: Canadian job applicants don't include their birth date, country of origin, marital status, religion, or a photograph of themselves on their resume or CV.

Cover Letters

Cover letters are another commonly expected element of Canadian job applications. These are typically around 1 page long and are written in the style of a formal letter. The purpose is to emphasize to the employer why you're the right fit for the specific position or organization you are applying for.

Although you will certainly want to highlight select elements from your resume that are especially relevant to the job, the point of the cover letter is not to simply repeat what is already on your resume; it is an opportunity for you to put your experience and qualifications into context for the employer and for you to further differentiate yourself from all the other candidates.

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Some positions will state openly that a cover letter is required in addition to your resume. However, even when the posting doesn't specify this as necessary, employers in Canada are often expecting to receive one, and may look more favourably on applications that contain one.

While you might have a few different resumes ready to send out depending on the type of job you are applying for, you will need to create a separate cover letter for each and every position. This doesn't mean you have to write a brand new one from scratch for every application though. It's perfectly acceptable to reuse wording from previous cover letters you've written so long as it is relevant to the current position.

See the recommendations below for library books and online resources that can show you how to write an effective cover letter for your next job application.

Books

- **Best Canadian Cover Letters** / Sharon Graham, 2013, 650.142 G7381bc1
- **Cover Letters in A Week** / Patricia Scudamore, 2016, 650.142 S43c
- You can also search the VPL catalogue by *Subject* for "**Cover Letters**" to get additional suggestions

Online Resources

- **How to Write a Cover Letter (With Tips and Examples)**
<https://ca.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/how-to-write-a-cover-letter>
- **LinkedIn Learning** (log in with your VPL card and search for "cover letter" for video tutorials)
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/linkedin-learning>

Tip: Always keep a copy of the cover letters you submit. In addition to saving you some time when writing your next cover letter, you'll want to provide each of your professional references with a copy of it should your job application get to the reference-check stage.

Interviews

After an employer has looked at all the applications, they will come up with a shortlist of potential candidates to invite in for an interview. For some positions, multiple rounds of interviews may be necessary. In some cases, you will even be asked to come prepared to deliver a presentation or speak on a specific topic. In all cases though, you should expect to be asked a series of questions designed to test whether or not you are the right person for the job.

Even though you won't know what the specific questions are in advance, you can still prepare for success. Knowing what to expect from a typical Canadian interview, and understanding what it is that the employer is actually looking for in your answer, can make all the difference. Once you know what to expect, you can more effectively prepare for the interview beforehand by reflecting on the qualities you possess that you most want to impress upon the employer and by coming up with some examples from your past that best demonstrate these qualities in action.

While you likely won't receive any response from the employer if your application does not result in you being invited to interview, it is common practice in Canada for employers to inform all the unsuccessful candidates that they aren't being offered a job. Even though this might not be the outcome you were hoping for, it can be a great opportunity to ask for feedback on your interview performance so that your next interview is more successful.

Books

- **Interviewology: The New Science of Interviewing** / Anna Papalia, 2024, 650.144 P21i
- **Get That Job: Interviews: How to Keep Your Head and Get Your Ideal Job** / 2022, 650.144 G39a1
- **The Ultimate Interview Book: Tackle Tough Interview Questions, Succeed at Numeracy Tests, Get That Job** / Alison Straw, 2023, 650.144 S91u

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- You can also search the VPL catalogue by *Subject* for “**Employment interviewing**” to get additional suggestions

Online Resources

- **Interviews**
<https://www.uottawa.ca/current-students/career-experiential-learning/career-development/interviews>
- **Interview Questions and Answers**
<https://www.indeed.com/hire/interview-questions>
- **LinkedIn Learning** (log in with your VPL card and search for “interview” for video tutorials)
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/linkedin-learning>

Tip: Practice, practice, practice! Get a friend or family member to sit down with you and rehearse the process in a “mock interview.” They ask the questions, and you get to practice answering them in a lower-stress, non-judgmental setting.

Questions? Please ask the Information Staff in the Central Branch, Vancouver Public Library or telephone 604-331-3603.

Please note that the information in this guide is also available online through the Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre website at <https://www.vpl.ca/siic>

