DEAR ENGLISH MAJOR

PRESENTS

From

GRADUATION

to

CAREER READY

in

21 DAYS:

A GUIDE FOR ENGLISH MAJORS

Alyssa W. Christensen

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A Guide for English Majors

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Day 11: Tailor your resume for Job #1.

Today it's time to put together your first official resume! Yes, you technically already put together a resume on Day 3, but now it's time to pare it down to a one-page beauty that highlights your best professional self for Job #1. You should **definitely, absolutely** tailor your resume to each job you apply for. Yes, it's time consuming, but it's essential.

Here are some tips to get you started:

- **Include only relevant experiences.**
Let's say you have experience working for your college's newspaper, nannying, and working as a library assistant. If you're applying for a job at a children's book publisher, or as a social media coordinator at a children's clothing company, then including your nannying experience could be a major plus! It shows that you're truly in touch with the subject material and can probably relate more to the customer. However, if you're applying to work as a proposal writer at a law firm, then it's probably best to not include it.

- **Re-package your roles and responsibilities.**
If you're applying for a position as a social media coordinator, then make sure recruiters know about that time you managed your college magazine's Facebook page! Make it front and center by putting it at the top of your list of responsibilities for that position.

- **Include important keywords.**
It's important to keep in mind that some recruiters won't even see your resume if it doesn't contain certain keywords. These keywords are most likely included in the job description, so do your best to include what you can while being honest and authentic. Go through the job posting and make a note of key responsibilities, skills, and qualifications. For example, the employer might require proficiency in WordPress. Your resume might already list "Contributed articles to company blog," but this will go unnoticed when an employer is looking for the keyword "WordPress." If you worked with WordPress, then you increase your chances of being seen by being more specific: "Contributed articles to company blog using WordPress platform." Just be careful—you don't want your resume to become a canned list of keywords you obviously copied and pasted from the job posting.

What if I don't have what they're looking for?
Whatever you do, do not misrepresent your actual skills. No good can come of this.

For example, if your dream job requires proficiency in HTML5, you have three options:

1. If you're proficient, then of course, include this skill in your resume!

2. This might not be the job for you, but you can highlight skills like "quick learner"—they might provide on-the-job training if they find the right candidate. Do not let the fact that a job requires a skill you don't have deter you from the job altogether—lots of employers expect this and are willing to train a new hire if they're the right fit otherwise. But if it seems like it will be a big component of the job, then it's probably not the right fit for you.

3. If you've noticed that several jobs you're interested in require HTML5, consider investing the time in learning it!

It's also worth noting that sometimes, these are just buzzwords used by people who don't know what HTML5 is but assume that the job of the social media manager means they need someone who does. Like we mentioned before, if it seems like a reasonable bet but you're not 100% qualified, we say go for it!

Let's get started.
Begin by opening your resume and the first job you're applying for. Carefully re-read the listing for Job #1, and pay close attention to the job requirements and responsibilities. Which of your experiences best reflects your ability to do Job #1?

For example, if you're applying for a position as a copyeditor, then you'll want to be sure and highlight any copyediting or proofreading experience you have. Once you've selected the experiences you want to include, take a look at the responsibilities and achievements you have listed for each one. Consider moving more applicable bullet points to the top of the list.

Here is what the original from your first resume might look like:

Internship at Publishing Company (2013-2014)
- Managed book submissions.
- Managed all company social media, maintaining the company voice and brand while generating new and compelling content.

- Edited all magazine articles for correct spelling, punctuation, grammar and syntax.
- Identified specific areas of improvement in articles.
- Worked directly with writers to revise articles.
- Collaborated in team environment.
- Contributed articles to company blog.

Considering that you're applying for a copyediting position, you'll want to make it easy for recruiters to see your most applicable skills at a glance:

Internship at Publishing Company (2013-2014)
- Edited all magazine articles for correct spelling, punctuation, grammar and syntax.
- Identified specific areas of improvement in articles.
- Worked directly with writers to revise articles.
- Collaborated in team environment.
- Managed book submissions.
- Managed all company social media, maintaining the company voice and brand while generating new and compelling content.
- Contributed articles to company blog.

What are the other skills, requirements and responsibilities they're looking for? Is it important that you're good with deadlines and able to collaborate on a team? Include experiences that show deadlines are nothing new to you, and that working on a team is something you're well-accustomed to.

Keep in mind that a recruiter might not know much about about the job position that's being offered, so you'll want to make it as easy as possible for them to skim your resume and see that you're the right one for the job. Don't make them sift through information that might have them wondering how this qualifies you for the position—make it obvious!

There's a lot to remember with each resume, and we highly recommend using the checklist below to make sure you're staying on top of your game.

Your final resume checklist:
- Make sure all information is accurate.
- Check for correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.
- Ensure that all contact information is correct.
- Make sure your resume is easy to skim and visually appealing.
- Make sure that all formatting is consistent.
- Choose a font that is distinguished, yet easy to read.
- Keep job descriptions and responsibilities succinct.
- If you have a long list of jobs and achievements, resist the urge to list every little thing you've ever done and focus on the items that are more applicable to the job at hand.
- Limit the length of your resume to one page. (No double-sided resumes, either!)

Resume editing tip: Instead of reading your resume line by line, consider looking for one particular thing at a time. For example, check that all sentences have periods. Then check that each line is indented at the same spot. Next, check that each title is bolded and formatted the same, and so on. This allows you to focus on one thing at a time.

Re-save each resume that you send. Don't keep modifying one over and over. Having a "master" resume for social media, one for copywriting, and one for editing will be helpful if you apply for a several jobs in a similar field.

Yes, this is time consuming. But it's certainly a waste of time to half-heartedly send off applications that you've put minimal effort into, not to mention the fact that recruiters will be able to tell! **Give it your all, and do it right the first time.** You can sleep easy knowing that you gave it 100%.