

ENGL 308

Employment Project

Fall 2024

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In this project, you will learn strategies for seeking and securing employment, with an emphasis on the documents people use to represent themselves and their abilities to potential employers. This project asks you to work individually, but there will also be chances for you to work with your peers to exchange ideas and feedback.

Project summary

You will look for a recently advertised job or internship for which you are currently qualified for. Once you find a job or internship ad that meets your criteria, you will create application materials for that position. You do not have to *actually* apply for this job, you only have to create the documents as if you were applying. This project has four steps:

Step 1 of the project asks you to take stock of your skills and expertise, and to learn about and use various resources for job seekers and to select one real job or internship to pursue. Then you'll research the potential employer and position beyond the basic information given in the job advertisement. This step includes a skills inventory, and culminates in a job ad analysis.

In **Step 2**, you will compose a resumé written specifically for the position you've chosen.

Step 3 is where you revise and edit resumé and submit it for evaluation, after receiving feedback from fellow students and your instructor, for a final grade.

In **Step 4**, you will reflect on your writing for this project in a memo to your instructor.

Guidelines for selecting job/internship: It's crucial that the job or internship is real, and that you are currently qualified for the job/internship. "Pretending" by applying to a job with faked credentials won't teach you much. Other guidelines:

- If you already have a good job, you will want to find one that would be a step up for you.
- If graduation is a couple of years away, you are encouraged to look for a relevant internship.
- The job ad should disclose the employer; for the purposes of this assignment, avoid jobs listed by recruitment agencies.
- Don't select jobs which only require meeting criteria in order to be hired – such as ride sharing jobs (Lyft, Uber) or delivery services (Postmates, Doordash).
- Remember, you do not have to actually apply for the job or internship you select for this project.

Project Components

Job Ad Analysis – Provide an exact copy of the job or internship ad you choose; highlight key terms and concepts in the ad that will help you tailor your cover letter and resumé to the organization and position. Complete the job ad analysis form (posted on Blackboard); the job ad analysis will require some additional research of the organization as well as the position for which you will be applying. **I may ask you to find a job or internship more suitable for this project than the one you select, so choose carefully.**

First draft resumé - Your resumé (usually a single page, depending upon the type of job and the depth of your experience) should adapt features and follow advice and suggestions from assigned readings and class discussion. It's critical that you shape your resumé to the specific job you have chosen to apply for, so your resumé should emphasize the most relevant aspects of your professional experience. Your resumé needs to be error-free, concise, and must be presented in an easily readable format. For your first draft, submit the draft to Blackboard and bring at least two printed copies to class Wednesday, Sept. 18.

Project Reflection Memo - Compose a memo addressed to your instructor that answers the following questions: What year are you currently at NIU (sophomore, etc)? How do you feel that analyzing a job or internship ad is similar to and different from analyzing other written works that you have been asked to analyze for school projects? Describe your resume composition process for this project - did you have a resume that you started with, did you have a resume but decided to start from scratch (and why), or is this your first ever resume? How did you address feedback you received on your draft from others (from students, from instructors)? Did you seek help outside of class (Career Center, Writing Center, friends, family, other professors, other professionals?)

Final drafts – As you can see, you will have a number of ways to get feedback on your drafts. **Your revised cover letter and resumé are due October 11.**

Grading

The Employment Project is worth 242.6 points of the available 1000 points for the semester:

Internship / job ad analysis (employment Project)	66.6 points
resumé draft (smaller assignments)	42.8 points
polished resumé draft (employment Project)	66.6 points
project reflection memo (employment Project)	<u>66.6 points</u>
total	242.6 points

Grading criteria

When I grade your project, I will be looking to see how closely you followed the models and suggestions from the assigned readings and class discussions. You can take some “risks” and try something different for your documents – you will see from our readings that resúmes seem to be getting a design overhaul these days – but you will want to weigh the risks vs. the potential payoff. For instance, a creatively designed resumé may not be well-received in a field that resists change, but in a field where creativity is prized it may be welcomed. Successful documents will be carefully tailored to your selected job or internship based on our readings, examples, and discussion. Your writing for this project will need to be precise, accurate, and well-suited to the context (the job/field) and to the rhetorical occasion in tone, style,

and content. Refer to “Grading Scale and Criteria” on the course syllabus for more information, along with the material reviewed in class.

Revision

You may revise your resumé for a regrade as long as your polished draft is submitted no more than one week late.

Schedule (see Blackboard for most up-to-date version, readings)

Week 3 September 9 – 13

- **M 9/9:** Start of Employment / Internship Project; analyzing internship and job ads; skills inventory.

Homework: Finish skills inventory work. Locate an appropriate internship or job ad for our project, and complete your analysis of it using the provided form. Your internship/job must be approved for the project.

- **W 9/11:** resumé part 1: Making the document skimmable and scannable (reader-centered).

Homework: Complete job/internship ad analysis by this Thursday, Sept. 12. Complete readings assigned on resumé(s)(design, layout, overall readability, keywords); Review the feedback from your job analysis and find another internship or job if need be.

Week 4 September 16 – 20

- **M 9/16:** resumé part 2: Writing good resumé entries; whole-class critique of resumé examples to prepare for resumé workshop.

Homework: Complete assigned readings and a draft of your resumé; submit the draft to Blackboard and bring at least two printed copies to class Wednesday.

- **W 9/18:** resumé workshop in class.

Homework: Begin refining and revising your resumé draft.

Week 5 September 23 – 27

- **M 9/23:** TBA
- **W 9/25:** Career Services presentation

Homework: Employment / Internship Project and reflection due at the end of this week.

Learning Outcomes

This project addresses all of the course/Department of English learning outcomes:

Writing: Students will compose documents representing a variety of workplace genres (resumés, memos).

Textual analysis: Students will conduct textual analyses on a variety of technical documents (job and internship ads).

Professional competence: As students study and compose a variety of technical documents, they will be working towards attaining a level of competency sufficient for productive employment and advanced study.