

CAREER

Portfolio



Welcome to the *Career Portfolio*. This document is designed to make it easy for you to display your best work and accomplishments. Employers and college admissions staff will use your completed portfolio to judge your academic ability, maturity, and motivation. Your portfolio, along with a personal interview, will help determine your future employment or your acceptance into a two- or four-year college.

You may wonder what a portfolio is supposed to contain. You will include in your portfolio all of your accomplishments—most recent ones are best, but anything you think is still relevant is appropriate. The standards for acceptance into a business or college are high, so be certain to include your best work, and display it carefully. Follow the instructions inside and check with your teachers or a guidance counselor if you have questions on specific items. Below, in order, are the items you need to include in your portfolio. Please check these items off as you complete each section.

- An appropriate three-ring notebook/binder
- Typed letter of introduction
- Typed resume
- Three (3) letters of recommendation
- Three (3) samples of your work
- Any official school transcripts
- Copies/photos of your work, personal interests and achievements

The portfolio will stay with you for your entire career. You will add to it regularly as you master certain skills relevant to your career objectives. Ask your teachers, parents, and friends for advice and feedback to help you develop an outstanding portfolio, one that provides a comprehensive profile of you and your abilities.

Good luck!

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I. Letter of Introduction

I. LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

A well-written introduction is an important requirement of the *Career Portfolio*. This letter introduces you to prospective employers and colleges. It should be both personal and informative and spotlight your best work. A letter of introduction serves as a first impression. It is critical that you address—

- Why you are interested in this position/business/college (if you do not have a particular position/business/college in mind, choose one that might interest you).
- Your career aspirations and goals.
- The skills and abilities that would make you successful in a particular career or at a particular college.
- Why this business or college should select you.

This letter should be no longer than one (1) single-spaced, typewritten page. Be sure that it is typed neatly and is both grammatically correct and free of spelling errors. If you are unclear about the proper format for a business letter, please ask your English teacher.

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II. Career-Pursuit Information

II. CAREER-PURSUIT INFORMATION

This part of the portfolio gives businesses/colleges important information about you.

- Resume

If you already have a resume, transfer the information it contains into the format presented here.

- Letters of Recommendation

You should include at least three letters of recommendation—one of each kind described below.

- (1) Employment-related: A letter from a past employer evaluating your work performance.
- (2) Character-related: A letter from a person who has known you for more than one year and can testify to your personal and/or academic attributes. It is important that you be recommended as a good citizen and a responsible person.

If you have not been employed in any way, then use three character-related letters.

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Preparing a Resume

A resume is a summary of a person's qualifications. Effective resumes use short statements to inform potential interviewers about important facts regarding the applicant and to catch their attention. The important facts:

- Who you are.
- How you may be contacted (mail, telephone, e-mail).
- Your experiences, skills, and abilities for the position.

Think about yourself. What skills do you have? What should a potential interviewer know about you? What achievement(s) could you highlight to help you get the interview?

Draft a resume. Each resume should be personal and reflect your individual strengths. Basic guidelines for an effective resume:

- Type and spell-check it.
- Have another person proofread it.
- Make it look professional.
- Make it short--one page if possible.
- Omit personal pronouns.
- Use action verbs when describing your job responsibilities.

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Letters of Recommendation

You will need to formally ask for a letter—by phone, in writing, or face-to-face—from each person from whom you want a letter of recommendation. This is common courtesy.

Although the content of the letter is normally left to the writer, here are some points to suggest:

- Your personal character.
- Your work ethic (including punctuality, use of sick time, working with others).
- Your motivation.
- Your enthusiasm for learning.
- Your relevant technical or career-related skills.
- Your relevant academic experience.

You should explain to the writer that you will include the letter in your portfolio, which you will use as you conduct your job search.

Also explain the time frame for completing the portfolio and ask each writer to complete the letter by a specific date. Finally, either make arrangements with each person to pick up the letter yourself or provide a self-addressed, stamped envelope. This courtesy will help ensure that you have your letters on time.

Once you have received a letter, you should thank the writer, either in person or by writing a thank-you note.

On the next page is a Recommendation Request Form. Fill it in, make three copies, and give one to each of the people you have asked for a letter of recommendation. These people may be your teacher, guidance counselor, coach, advisor, employer (past or present), or an adult friend.

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Recommendation Request Form

Thank you for agreeing to write a letter of recommendation for me. My full name is _____ and my phone number is _____.

Please contact me if you have any questions. I plan to use this letter for—

- Employment
- Other: _____

My current career/academic goals:

When writing your recommendation, please consider the items below and how they relate to the plans/goals I have outlined for you.

- Personal character
- Work ethic (including punctuality, use of sick time, working with others, etc.)
- Motivation
- Enthusiasm for learning
- Relevant technical or career-related skills
- Relevant academic experience

I would appreciate it if you could complete the letter by this date: _____

- I will pick the letter up when it is completed.
- I have enclosed a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Thank you for your help!

[Give a copy of this form to the people from whom you would like a recommendation.]

III. Samples of Work



III. SAMPLES OF WORK

Your portfolio should include samples of your work. You are responsible for selecting and gathering these samples. Choose samples of which you are proud—work that shows care and planning. This section of the portfolio demonstrates what you can do and how well you can do it. Wherever possible, choose samples that display skills appropriate to the position for which you are applying.

Samples of work that are three-dimensional and cannot be placed in the binder may accompany the portfolio. However, instead of the sample itself, your portfolio can include a photograph and a note explaining the physical item. Please also include notes where necessary to explain a little about when, why, and for whom a project was completed. If you were responsible for only part of the project, explain your contribution.

Possible examples of work:

- School reports, essays
- Photos of products you have worked on in jobs or job training
- Photos of you working in various environments
- Certificates that show achievement

Other samples of work:

- Pictures, projects, descriptions of activities relating to personal interests and hobbies (i.e., photography, poetry, cooking, woodworking, etc.)
- Pictures, projects, descriptions of activities relating to community involvement within the community (i.e., Scouts, religious organizations, 4-H, etc.)

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IV. Personal Interests & Achievements



IV. PERSONAL INTERESTS & ACHIEVEMENTS

In this section of the portfolio include your current documents and other examples of your personal interests and abilities.

You must present:

- Official Diplomas or Transcripts

Potential additional information:

- ~~AA~~ Attendance Award(s)
- Citizenship Award(s)
- Honors Award(s)
- Sports Award(s)
- Certificate of participation in a club(s)
- ~~AD~~ Driver's License or permit
- Other certificates (CPR, First Aid, etc.)
- Other examples of your personal interests and abilities

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