

# JOB SEARCH GUIDE FOR EDUCATION MAJORS

Market yourself in the job search by developing professional correspondence and effective interviewing skills that highlight what you have to offer.



## THE OFFICE OF CAREER SERVICES

SLU 10492, Hammond, LA 70402 | (985) 549-2121 | [www.selu.edu/career](http://www.selu.edu/career) | [careerservices@selu.edu](mailto:careerservices@selu.edu)

# Career Services for Education Majors

## Career Counseling and Job Search Assistance Services Offered by the Office of Career Services, Southeastern Louisiana University:

RESUME /COVER LETTER REVIEWS  
INTERVIEWING SKILLS ASSISTANCE  
JOB SEARCH ASSISTANCE

### Career Counseling Services

#### Resume/Cover Letter Assistance:

Review the sample resumes/cover letters in **THE JOB SEARCH GUIDE FOR EDUCATION MAJORS**. The sample resumes only serve as a guide - try to be as original and creative as possible in communicating your knowledge and skills to employers.

If you think that your resume needs reviewing after utilizing the Guide, then email, as an attached, Word document, your resume and/or cover letter to the Career Services Email Resume Review Service at [career counseling@selu.edu](mailto:career counseling@selu.edu).

For additional assistance in building your resume, utilize our **LionHire** system: [www.selu.edu/lionhire](http://www.selu.edu/lionhire) and, after building your resume, submit it to for review for a Career Services staff member to review.

#### Interviewing Skills:

The importance of preparing for the job interview cannot be emphasized enough. Review **THE JOB SEARCH GUIDE FOR EDUCATION MAJORS** for **Interview Questions and Suggestions for Responses** as well as other interview tips to assist you in preparing for your interviews.

Information on **Behavioral Interviewing**, a common interview technique, is provided, as well as **Dress for Success** recommendations. You may make an appointment with Career Services for a “mock interview” to assist you in developing your interview responses.

### Job Search Assistance Services

#### LionHire:

Access Career Services’ online job search system, LionHire, for job vacancies related to the field of Education, or, jobs open to “any major,” in which you may have an interest. However, most teaching job vacancies can be found at the **College of Education Teacher Job Fair** held Fall and Spring semesters.

#### Job Board Links:

Check our [Job Board Links page](#) for teaching and other job search boards with job postings in Louisiana and across the US and abroad. Click on **Find a Job** on our home page, scroll down to **Job Board Links**, then click on **Teaching and Education** to see job search sites specific to these fields.

## Key points to keep in mind when beginning a job search



The first step to job search success is understanding that your resume and cover letter are the first impressions you will make on an employer. Learn to think of them as marketing tools designed to sell an impressive product: you.

Demonstrating self-motivation, critical thinking, attention to detail, and creativity in preparing your resume and cover letter, conducting your job search, and interviewing, can be an indicator of your performance as a future employee!

Before you begin developing your resume, take time to read the information in this document. It is designed to assist you in understanding and appreciating all you have learned through your educational preparation – and other experiences. Remember, being able to communicate your qualifications on your resume is preparing you to communicate your qualifications during the interview!

## Key areas of knowledge and skills to be included in your resume, cover letter, and job interview:

- List teaching methods you have successfully utilized to educate students, including implementing the curriculum through lectures, activities, demonstrations, group projects, etc.
- Briefly describe the content of the subjects you have knowledge of and/or have actually taught – refer to your course syllabi or course descriptions in the Southeastern catalog to refresh yourself!
- Describe technology you have knowledge of, and how you have utilized it in the classroom.
- List experiences, in addition to your student teaching, in which you have worked with children of the age group you will teach, such as work or volunteer experiences.
- Think of how you approached (in student teaching), or will approach, (in your future career) establishing your classroom management or leadership style.
- Describe your approach for establishing goals for lessons and projects, how you communicate these goals to students, and how you use assessment to monitor student progress.
- Describe how you establish rapport, offer emotional support, and respond to the needs of students on an individual basis; refer to your ability to work effectively with students with differing academic, social, and psychological needs.
- Describe instances where you have been able to improve skills such as social skills, team work, or leadership skills of students, through group activities or projects.
- Highlight your experience in communicating with parents and/or other teachers regarding a student's progress, or challenges he/she faced.
- Include the size of the classes you have taught, especially if the number of students is high.
- Include experience in administering and scoring tests, recording results; your ability to assign, correct and grade homework, and to prepare report cards.
- Mention your involvement in planning and supervising field trips, class projects and other school events.



# Resumes

Your resume is the first impression you will make on an employer. What kind of impression will your resume make at that ever important moment? Will it land you that interview or will it end up in the rejected pile? By following the resume format guidelines & content guidelines, you are increasing your chances of developing a quality resume that will not be overlooked.

## Resume Format Guidelines

### Avoid errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation:

This can be an indicator of the quality of your future work performance – i.e., errors suggest that you will be an unprofessional representative of the organization, and careless with your work.

### Avoid resume templates:

Templates can unnecessarily force the resume onto two pages with a lot of unused “white space,” and create spacing that cannot be adjusted to condense the resume to one page. Instead, type your resume as a regular document in Word to keep it to one page.

**NOTE:** The employer may not be able to open an email attachment created in other programs.

### Create a header for your resume:

A header includes: name, address, phone, and email address.

- DO NOT include the word “RESUME” as part of your header.
- DO NOT include personal information (such as age, marital status, health status, ethnicity, etc.)
- DO NOT use “cute” or “provocative” words in your email address – make sure it is professional.

### A one page resume is recommended!

If your resume must be two pages, check the margins and the font size, as well as the amount of “white space.” These factors may be forcing it to two pages unnecessarily. Times New Roman or Arial fonts are suggested for professional appearance and easier “readability” by the employer.

- Margins can be adjusted to .7 inches all around.
- Reduce the font size to 10 or 11 point font.
- Major headings can be 11 or 12 point font.
- Your name may be from 14 to 18 point font.

### If your resume must be two pages in length:

On the second page, put your name and phone number in the upper left corner, and “Page 2” in the upper right corner. Paper-clip rather than staple the pages. DO NOT include the same full header as you have on the first page of your resume on the second page.

### Make sure your resume is “scannable.”

If the resume is sent via USPS mail, or handed to employers at a career fair, the employer may scan it and store it in a computer database.

- A “scannable resume” AVOIDS italics, underlining, shading, borders, and graphics.
- Acceptable formatting includes bold type and “ALL CAPS” to emphasize major headings, and bullets to emphasize SKILLS SUMMARY statements.
- Use quality resume paper, white or off-white, and a quality printer with black ink.

### Do not fold resume, cover letter, or other application materials:

Use an 8 ½” x 11” manila envelope for mailing. If possible, use labels rather than typing or printing addresses directly on the envelope; or, if typing directly on the envelope, use a high-quality printer. DO NOT hand write addresses on envelopes.

# Resume Content FAQ's by Category

## OBJECTIVE

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### Do I need an objective? What should it say?

Although it is optional, an objective can demonstrate “focus” in terms of your career goal. It is also an excellent opportunity for you to emphasize your top skills.

#### *Examples:*

- To demonstrate excellent skills in instruction and classroom management, in a professionally rewarding educational environment.
- To apply communication, leadership, and organizational skills, with the goal of contributing to the academic success of students.
- A teaching career with opportunity to contribute strong instructional, motivational, and organizational skills.
- A career in the field of Education in which challenging students to develop a desire for lifelong learning is valued.
- To motivate students to learn by applying teaching and classroom leadership knowledge and skills, acquired through academic preparation and practical experience.

## EDUCATION

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### Is it important that my degree information is correct?

Absolutely! Errors on your resume are not acceptable. Check for the correct title of your degree on your academic program's departmental web site, your transcript, your Southeastern catalog, or with your faculty advisor. It is suggested that graduates who have completed the Praxis Exam state this in the **Education** category.

#### *Example:*

Bachelor of Science, Elementary Education, Grades 9 – 12  
Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA December 2010 Overall GPA: 3.4  
Praxis Exam Completed

### Should I list my GPA?

Only if 3.0 or above. However, if your Overall GPA is less than 3.0, but the GPA in your major is above 3.0, you can list your Major GPA only, and as follows: **Major GPA: 3.0** If both GPA's are above 3.0, you can list both: **Overall GPA: 3.2 Major GPA: 3.5**

### Should I list courses I completed?

For career-specific academic programs of study such as Education, listing courses is optional. However, you may want to list some courses that support your career goal. List course titles, not abbreviations and numbers.

### Should I list every college or university I've attended on my resume?

It depends upon the length of time you were enrolled. If you attended another college or university for only one or two semesters, it's not necessary to list this info. If you attended at least a year, or if you earned an Associate's Degree, then list the additional college or university (and degree information if applicable).

### In what order should I list my Education information, if I've attended more than one college?

List most recent educational experience first, and other colleges attended in reverse chronological order. Only list courses from other colleges – from which you did **NOT** get a degree – if they support or enhance your career goals.

#### *Examples:*

Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA  
**Bachelor of Arts, Management; concentration in Human Resource Management**  
Graduation Date: May 2013

Delgado Community College, New Orleans, LA  
**Associate of Arts, Office Administration** December 2008

### Should I list high school diploma information?

No – this isn't necessary once you're a college graduate, unless you have some major accomplishments such as honors or officer positions in student organizations. However, we recommend you list high school accomplishments **ONLY** if you do not have many in college.



## SKILLS SUMMARY

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### What is the purpose of a Skills Summary? Is it optional?

Including this category is optional. It allows you to direct the employer's attention to transferable skills you want to emphasize – that is, your abilities, personality characteristics, and areas of knowledge and experience you've acquired through course work, work experiences, involvement in student organizations, working on team projects in courses, & volunteer work that will be required for your success as a teacher.

**Example:**

"Communication" is definitely a skill requirement for teachers; you may have developed this skill through involvement in class team projects or in leadership positions in student organizations.

### What is the best format for a Skills Summary?

Create bulleted statements which describe your transferable skills as detailed above. Don't forget to include computer skills in one of your statements. Begin each statement with an ACTION VERB – see ACTION VERBS & ADVERBS webpage – or phrase such as "Responsible for...", "Experienced In...", etc.

Access the Career Services webpage, [www.selu.edu/resume](http://www.selu.edu/resume), for resources to assist you in developing your SKILLS SUMMARY. Research current or previous jobs to understand and better communicate your transferable skills on your resume.

## EXPERIENCE

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When it comes to listing experience on your resume, you may create two categories: **Related Experience** and **Additional Experience**. Student teaching, work, and/or volunteer experience directly relating to your career goal can be listed under **Related Experience**. Other experience less relevant can be listed under **Additional Experience**.

### Should I list every job I've had?

No; list only those jobs held while in college. If you had "seasonal employment" or other "short-term" jobs that didn't allow you to develop or apply skills toward your career goal, you may omit these. Regarding high school jobs: No, unless you held a job in high school that relates to your career goal, or illustrates an achievement – e.g., if you had your own business (shows maturity, self-motivation, and leadership skills).

**NOTE:**

If you are a "non-traditional student" with work experience from the 1980's or prior, you may want to omit these jobs as they could indicate your age; although age discrimination is illegal, still, it can occur.

### Should I list my student teaching experience under the experience category?

YES! Student teaching experience should be listed under the **Experience** category, as it is considered work experience (it is not necessary that only paid work experience be listed under the **Experience** category).

### In what order/format should I list my work experience?

Begin with the most recent job first, and list others in reverse chronological order.

**Examples:**

Sales Associate, 2010 - present  
JC Penney, Lakeside Mall, New Orleans, LA  
*[Put job description here]*

Student Assistant, 2008 - 2010  
Office of Career Services, University Name  
*[Put job description here]*

### What type of information should I include in my job descriptions?

Use present tense verbs for current jobs and past tense verbs for former positions. Include statements describing the type of business or organization (its services, purpose, etc.) if the organization name is not descriptive of this. Describe tasks performed, but also skills/knowledge acquired, and if possible, results of your efforts, and accomplishments. Include numbers if possible (e.g., of staff for whom you worked). AVOID using "I" – rather, begin each statement with an ACTION VERB – see ACTION VERBS & ADVERBS webpage – or phrase such as "Responsible for...", "Experienced In...", etc. Access [www.selu.edu/resume](http://www.selu.edu/resume) for resources to assist you in developing your job descriptions.

## ACTIVITIES & HONORS

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### What type of information should go in this category?

It is strongly recommended that you list extracurricular activities in which you participated while in college. Participation in activities gives you the opportunity to develop key skills employers look for, such as team work, communication, organization, and leadership skills. More specifically:

#### Student Organizations

Include sororities and fraternities, departmental clubs, honor societies, etc. If you have served as an officer in an organization, or served on a committee, indicate this. Also list any community service and/or fund raising activities you were involved in as a member.

**Example:** Society for Human Resource Management: President, 2012 - 2013; Vice President, 2011 - 2012.

#### Honors and Awards

These include honors such as "Dean's List, multiple semesters," "President's List," "Gamma Beta Phi honor and service society," etc., and awards.

**Example:** African American Achievement Award, 2012.

#### Volunteer Experiences

These may also be listed in this category.

**Example:** Volunteer, North Oaks Hospital, Hammond, LA, 2012 - present. (You may list a brief "job description" for this experience as well, if related to your career goals.)

You need only have one category for all of the above, called: Honors & Activities, or Honors, or Activities, or Accomplishments, or Community Service, or Professional Activities, etc.

## REFERENCES

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A reference is a verbal or written statement of support for your application for a job by someone who has interacted with you in a professional capacity, and can therefore comment on your work, academic, or student organization/volunteer performance. Examples would be a current or former employer, professor, coach, advisor to student organization, supervisor of internship or volunteer experience.

### Should I include the statement 'References: Available Upon Request'?

Employers will expect you to eventually produce either a page listing your references, or possible letters of recommendation when they ask; therefore this statement is optional. DO NOT include a separate references page when submitting your resume; instead, bring copies of references page in a portfolio to the interview.

#### **NOTE:**

If an employer requires a References page as part of the application process, do not include this statement, but instead include a separate References page along with your resume.

### How should my references page look?

Reference information should be on a page separate from your resume, and should contain the same header as your resume, with the word References underneath.

- Three to five references is an appropriate number to list. Always ask permission to list someone as a reference, and give them a copy of your resume. This will be helpful to them if they are contacted by a prospective employer.
- List each reference's name, current job title, place of employment (including city, state, and zip code – mailing address not necessary), work telephone number/area code (NOT home or cell number unless given permission).
- DO NOT include a separate references page when submitting your resume unless a job ad requests it. Instead, bring copies of references page in a portfolio to the interview.
- Avoid character references (e.g., a friend, minister of your church, relative, etc.).

# Letters of Recommendation

Many companies/organizations are only interested in a references page – not letters of reference or recommendation. However, if a job ad asks for letters of reference/recommendation, following are some guidelines:

- Letters of reference should be current – i.e., dated within the current year.
- If possible (without causing inconvenience to the person recommending you), letters should be addressed to the contact person listed in the job ad. If this is not possible, the letters may be addressed: “Dear Human Resources Director,” “Dear Hiring Manager,” “Dear College Recruiter,” or “Dear Search Committee Chair,” etc.
- Giving your references a copy of your resume and mentioning to them key points you would like for them to emphasize in their letter is appropriate, and can be helpful to the reference in writing their letter! Additionally, a copy of the job ad or description of the job can be helpful!

# Cover Letter / Letter of Application

When initially contacting a specific employer, it is recommended that you accompany your resume with a cover letter (also known as a “letter of application”), tailored to the position and to the organization.

## COVER LETTER FORMAT

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- Header – Use the same header (your contact information) for your resume, cover letter, and references page
- Length – Limit to one page; font 10 point to 11 point looks best; three to five paragraphs
- Paper – Use white or off-white resume paper; use same paper for resume, cover letter, and references page
- Include the date – And remember, check grammar, spelling, capitalization – MUST BE ERROR FREE!

## COVER LETTER CONTENT

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### 1st paragraph

Should state how you learned of the position, and you should mention the position title and name of the organization.

### 2nd paragraph

Summarize your recent accomplishments, including getting your college degree, and what you learned in your program of study and in your student teaching experience.

**NOTE:**

If you are applying with the school where you are completing your student teaching, or did complete it, mention that fact, and discuss the “positives” of that experience!

### 3rd paragraph

Discuss knowledge and skills highlights developed in your other work experiences, and student organizations or volunteer activities, that relate to the position for which you’re applying.

### 4th paragraph

Indicate WHY you want to work for this particular organization – base this statement on knowledge of the organization you acquired through online research, personal experience, publicity, or others’ positive comments.

### Final paragraph

Tactfully suggest your availability for an interview, and where and how you can be reached.

**Remember:**

- Address letter to contact person listed in job ad if possible, or if not, to “Dear Human Resources Director,” “Dear Hiring Manager,” “Dear College Recruiter,” or “Dear Search Committee Chair.”
- Sentence structure – DO NOT start every sentence with “I” – instead, vary the sentence structure.
- Select highlights from educational and work experiences that pertain to the job for which you are applying instead of repeating all that’s on your resume.



# Sample Resumes of Education Majors

## AMY ANTOINE

11111 South Way, Holden, LA 70744

(225) 555-0000

aantoine24@bellsouth.net

**OBJECTIVE:** To contribute skills and experience in instruction and classroom management to a teaching position in a professionally challenging environment with opportunity for continued professional growth.

### KEY QUALIFICATIONS:

- Ability to motivate students through applying teaching techniques and encouraging class participation.
- Effectively manage classroom by implementing well-developed lesson plans, presenting information informatively to students, and utilizing assessment to monitor student progress.
- Aware of importance of individual learning styles of students, and adapt instruction accordingly.
- Work well individually and as part of a team through applying strong communication and interpersonal skills.
- Committed to professional development in the field of Education, including actively attending/participating in Professional conferences and other professional development activities.
- Computer skills: Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Smart Board, Prezi

### EDUCATION:

#### **Bachelor of Arts, Elementary Education (Grades 1-8)**

Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA

Graduation Date: December 2006      GPA: 3.6 on 4.0 scale      Praxis Exam Completed

### RELATED EXPERIENCE:

#### **Student Teacher**, August 2006 - December 2006

Walker Junior High School, Walker, LA

Under supervision, taught 6<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies classes. Responsible for developing lesson plans, instructing students in subject area, and assisting students in completing classroom assignments. Managed classroom with goal of creating an enthusiastic, supportive, and motivational atmosphere for learning.

#### **Daycare Assistant**, January 2001 - December 2002

Kids and Kids Daycare, Baton Rouge, LA

Supervised children in educational and recreational activities. Creatively developed learning activities for children, interacted with parents to discuss children's social development. Prepared and served nutritious snacks/meals.

### ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE:

#### **Student Assistant**, January 2003 - May 2006

Department of Management, Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA

Assisted departmental secretary with office administrative responsibilities including assisting students with questions and concerns, performing input of student records data, and organizing and maintaining filing system. Assisted faculty with various projects.

#### **Secretary**, May 2000 – January 2001

District Attorney John H. Smith, Baton Rouge, LA

Applied organizational and time management skills in organizing weekly criminal court dockets and updating criminal defendant court records. Assisted attorneys in and out of courtroom with litigation functions.

### ACTIVITIES AND HONORS:

Phi Kappa Phi honor society; Dean's List, The Thirteen Club honors organization

# Jason Jones

10000 Jones Drive Baton Rouge, LA 70000

Phone: (225) 000-5555

Email: jjones000@charter.com

**OBJECTIVE:** A rewarding teaching position in an elementary school setting in a progressive school community, with the opportunity to demonstrate excellent communication, leadership, and classroom management skills.

## EDUCATION:

Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA

**Master of Arts, Teaching, Elementary and Mild/Moderate Special Education**

Graduation Date: May 2006 GPA: 3.89

**Praxis Exams Completed:** Elementary Education, Special Education, and Early Childhood

**Honors:** Kappa Delta Pi Honor Society

Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA

**Bachelor of Science, Psychology,** May 2005 GPA: 3.52 Psi Chi Honor Society

## PROFESSIONAL SKILLS:

- Strong leadership, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills developed through work experiences in instructional environments, as well as through academic experiences.
- Ability to motivate students and achieve class participation through energetic and engaging presentations of instructional information.
- Excellent classroom organization and management skills, designed to meet the academic and behavioral needs of students.
- Demonstrated strong management skills in planning, organizing, and implementing activities, yet able to adapt to the unexpected and successfully multitask.
- Computer skills: Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Smart Board, Prezi

## RELATED EXPERIENCE:

### **Student Teacher: Fourth Grade / Special Education, Kindergarten – Second Grade**

Denham Springs Elementary, Denham Springs, LA, August 2005-December 2005

Under supervision, responsible for the development and implementation of lesson plans which correspond to district, state, and national standards. Practiced planning, instruction, classroom management, and interpersonal communication required for an environment conducive to learning. Upon completion of student teaching, will acquire over 200 teaching hours.

### **First Grade Teacher / Summer School Teacher**

The Dunham School, Baton Rouge, LA, February 2005-June 2005

Responsible for the development and coordination of subject-specific lesson plans that corresponded to district, state, and national standards. Responsible for the implementation of the lesson plans in a positive, risk-free environment, considering individual differences and behavioral needs, as well as diverse cultural factors.

### **Childcare Assistant Director / Day Camp Director / Nursery Supervisor**

YMCA, Baton Rouge, LA, January 2003-February 2005

Managed staff in supervising their specific areas of responsibility. Responsible for the direction, care, and safety of children left in the care of the staff. Developed curriculum and lesson plans of all children ages four to six. Experienced in programs such as Nursery, After School Care, Summer Camp and Holiday Camp.

## ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE:

### **Administrative/Technical Assistant**

XYZ Company, Baton Rouge, LA, July 1999-June 2002

Responsible for support staff training and on-going assistance in computer technologies involving all Windows software. Responsible for the management and accounting for all cellular phones and pagers for 30 employees, as well as managing all travel arrangements for 30 employees.

**Brandi L. Langston**  
**900 Rainbo Court St. Amant, Louisiana 70774**  
**(225) 600-6000 b77@hotmail.com**

**Objective:** To obtain a teaching position in an elementary/middle school setting, utilizing my practical experience and academic knowledge to facilitate student learning.

**Education: Bachelor of Arts, Elementary Education (Grades 1-8), May 2004**  
Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, Louisiana  
GPA: 4.0      Praxis Exam Completed

**Key Qualifications:**

- # Committed to positively influencing and facilitating the learning experiences of my students through hands-on activities and project-based learning.
- # Motivate students through creative, enthusiastic, and thought-provoking presentations of information.
- # Strong organizational and time management skills acquired through educational and work experiences.
- # Effective problem-solver with ability to use creativity and critical thinking skills to analyze and address challenging situations.
- # Ability to multitask and manage responsibilities with focus on efficiently and effectively achieving goals
- # Computer skills: Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Smart Board, Prezi

**Related Experience:**

**Sixth Grade Science Teacher**, August 2005 – present  
St. Amant Middle School, St. Amant, LA

Responsible for developing and coordinating subject-specific lesson plans that corresponded to district, state, and national standards, as well as implementing those plans in a meaningful manner in a supportive, risk-free environment, considering individual learning and behavioral needs, as well as diverse cultural factors. Organize and coach girls' soccer team; coordinate service projects and school-sponsored activities for school's chapter of Beta Club; served as sixth grade Team Leader by scheduling meetings and conferences, serving as mediator between administration and sixth grade teachers.

**Student Teacher**, January 2004 - May 2004  
Lake Elementary School, St. Amant, LA

Under supervision, developed instructional skills for teaching fourth grade students the core subjects. Practiced delivering instruction, time and classroom management, and interpersonal communication.

**College Tutor**, August 2001 - May 2001  
Student Support Services Tutoring Lab, Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA  
Instructed college students in a variety of courses (Botany, History, Statistics)

**Instructor/Counselor**, 1998 - 2002 (Summers)  
Camp Nakanawa, Crossville, Tennessee

Instructed 8-12 year old girls in sport of tennis; organized activities as committee chair; maintained order and discipline in cabin of girls; used communication and interpersonal skills to motivate campers.

**Honors, Awards and Organizations:**

Nominated for Student Teacher of the Year; President's Medal for Outstanding Academic Excellence; Exemplary Elementary Education Graduate; Southeastern Louisiana University's Thirteen Club; Dean's List; Most Outstanding Junior in the College of Education; Board of Trustees Scholarship; TOPS Teacher Award; Phi Kappa Phi honor society; Kappa Delta Pi (educators honor society) alumni; Gamma Beta Phi honor society alumni

# Sample Cover Letters of Education Majors

**Brandi L. Langston**  
**900 Rainbo Court St. Amant, Louisiana 70774**  
**(225) 600-6000 b77@hotmail.com**

April 17, 2013

Mr. Harrison Ford, Principal  
Westbrook Middle School  
303 Blue Skye Drive  
Fairfax, VA 30030

Dear Mr. Ford:

Please accept this letter and enclosed copy of my resume as proof of my interest in working in the Fairfax County Public School System. I currently teach sixth grade integrated sciences at St. Amant Middle School, a public school in the state of Louisiana. However, I will be relocating to your area in June 2013, and am very interested in continuing my teaching career in your highly regarded school system.

In May 2010 I graduated from an accredited education department at Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond, Louisiana. I was the top graduate of the College of Education that semester and was nominated for Student Teacher of the Year. I believe I have very successfully transferred my personal success into my classroom. Students respond well to my varied teaching styles and high expectations. With the use of high-interest lessons and rehearsed routines, I have very few discipline issues in my classroom.

I have three years of experience teaching middle school science, but I am certified to teach all subjects in grades one through eighth. In the three years I have taught, our school has used three different schedules: a seven period day, an eight period day, and currently an A/B block schedule. Thus, I am a flexible teacher. I am a teacher who looks forward to collaborating with and learning from others. At school, my contributions go beyond the classroom. I have served as the sponsor for our very productive and award-winning Beta Club for three years. I have also coached the girls soccer team for three years.

Enclosed is a copy of my resume. I realize that job vacancies are not posted until July 1<sup>st</sup>, but currently being out-of-state, I wanted to make contact with you early. I am grateful to you for your time in reviewing my resume. I also look forward to an interview and the opportunity to further discuss my qualifications as to why I would be an asset to your school community. I will be in Fairfax County May 25th – 28th. If the opportunity to meet with you is possible, please contact me via email at b77@hotmail.com, or by calling (225) 600-6000.

I thank you very much for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Brandi L. Langston

Enclosure

# **AMY ANTOINE**

**11111 SouthWay, Holden, LA 70744**

**(225) 555-0000**

**aantoine24@bellsouth.net**

June 20, 2014

Mr. Ron Abel  
Director of Education Outreach Programs  
SLU 10568  
Hammond, LA 70402

Dear Mr. Abel:

I am writing in reference to the Outreach Specialist position within the Talent Search Program that recently became available in your department. I believe my education, own experiences as a college student, and work experience will benefit the Talent Search Program at Southeastern Louisiana University.

I graduated from Southeastern Louisiana University in December of 2013 with a 3.85 GPA. I obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education, which certifies me to teach grades first through eighth. With coursework in child psychology, classroom management, methods-teaching, student teaching, and serving as a teacher in the Livingston Parish School System, I have developed the skills necessary to effectively teach and work with young students, as well as older students.

My teaching experience has allowed me to become competent in multi-sensory lesson plan development, organizational skills, student development and affairs, test development, informal and formal assessment techniques, and conducting presentations. I have also learned innovative ways to instruct students in various skills, not directly taught in the academic curriculum, such as organizational skills, test-taking strategies, anger management, drug and alcohol awareness, character building lessons, and motivation for higher education.

From researching your program, I have learned that these are some of the various educational techniques and interventions your outreach specialists are required to apply in working with your program participants; therefore, I believe that my educational and work experiences as a teacher will allow me to provide the knowledge and skills you are seeking for the Outreach Specialist position.

Enclosed is my resume with references, complete college transcript, and one letter of recommendation. I will be sending you two additional letters of recommendation once they become available to me. If additional information is needed please contact me. I look forward to an interview and further discussing my qualifications with you.

Sincerely,

Amy Antoine

Enclosure

# Sample References Page

**JANE DOE**

1234 Adams Road, Hammond, LA 70401

985-000-0000

janetdoe12@yahoo.com

## REFERENCES

Mr. Alan Smith  
Student Teacher Supervisor  
Independence Elementary School  
Independence, LA 70443  
(985) 000-0001

Dr. Joan Jones, Assistant Professor  
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# Interview Preparation

Don't assume you can simply walk into an interview and answer a few questions. Ask any recruiter and they will tell you that preparation and practice are key to a successful interview. These sample interview questions will not only help you prepare for questions you may be asked by an interviewer, but they will also give you insight into information you should take into consideration when formulating your answer. Your responses to these questions should be two to three minutes in length.

Be aware that you could be asked to do a telephone interview before the first face-to-face interview. It is important to prepare for this telephone interview as you would a face-to-face interview. If you are contacted about a telephone interview, use the information found on our website at [www.selu.edu/interviewtips](http://www.selu.edu/interviewtips) in conjunction with the interviewing information found here.

## Interview Questions & Suggestions for Responses

### **Tell me about yourself.**

Keep your response brief (less than two to three minutes). It is suggested that you start with your most recent accomplishment, such as getting your college degree, then possibly explain why you chose your major, and definitely discuss your student teaching experience! Keep your comments positive, and always include the knowledge and skills you've developed through academic, student teaching, work, and extracurricular experiences, and how they will contribute to your success as a teacher. Develop a "closing statement" to summarize what you've just discussed. Limit disclosing personal information as this is not pertinent to your ability to perform on the job (e.g., DO NOT mention age, marital status, children, health, etc.).

### **Which college course or courses have you enjoyed the most? Why? The least? Why?**

For the courses you liked the most, discuss those that allowed you to develop knowledge/skills the employer is seeking for the position, if possible. Or, choose courses that allowed you to grow intellectually and/or interpersonally – such as a course that allowed you to develop the ability to view things from different perspectives, or the opportunity to work as part of a team on a special project.

Re: the courses you liked the least, you may state that you enjoyed all of your courses because you learned something in each. Or, you may choose a course that does not relate to the position. In that case, be able to explain why you disliked it and end on a positive note; for example, although you didn't particularly like the course, the course allowed you to improve your \_\_\_\_\_ skills. Or, although you did not have an interest in the course, you chose to view it as a challenge, and that you applied yourself, and succeeded in the course.

### **Name three of your greatest strengths.**

Not only should you be able to name your strengths without hesitation, such as: "Communication skills, organizational skills, and the ability to motivate others," you should also be prepared to provide examples of how you have successfully applied these strengths in a specific, real-life situation, to make improvements or to resolve a problem situation. This is known as "behavioral interviewing" and is a technique often used by interviewers – to assess your future performance based on examples of how you have performed in the past.

### **What is your greatest weakness?**

Design your response so that your weakness is really a "positive" in disguise. For example, "I tend to expect others to work as hard as I do," or "I'm a bit of a perfectionist." Then explain, however, that since you've recognized that weakness, you've taken steps to correct it. Then give specific examples of steps you've taken to improve, and discuss successful outcomes.

IMPORTANT: Be sure the weakness you talk about is NOT a key element of the position!

### **Which of your work experiences has been most rewarding? Why? Least rewarding? Why?**

Again, relate positive work experiences to the requirements of the job for which you are interviewing. In other words, focus on the knowledge/skills you acquired in a past job and describe how such knowledge and skills will allow you to be effective in this position. Choosing your student teaching experience as your most rewarding work experiences is a good idea! As for "least rewarding" experiences, NEVER say anything negative about a former employer, professor, etc. You may indicate (as with the "favorite courses" question above) that you have learned something from each job you've held, OR, if a job did not offer opportunity for you to learn or grow professionally, you may state this; still, attempt to communicate something positive about the job!

### **Tell me what you have learned from your involvement in extracurricular or volunteer activities.**

Think about the knowledge and skills required for the job when responding to this question, and tailor your response by discussing your experiences and what relevant skills you acquired, such as team work, leadership skills, communication skills, ability to plan and organize activities, etc. Be able to provide real-life examples!

### **Describe your leadership style.**

It is suggested that you think about situations in which you have exercised leadership abilities, what steps you took to develop and serve as a leader, and the positive results that came from those efforts – such as in your student teaching experience, in a class team project, or as part of a student organization activity or event. Think in terms of guiding/motivating people, AND managing tasks – both are crucial elements of leadership.

### **Describe your classroom management style.**

Describe specific knowledge you have of classroom organization and management. Refer to any courses you have completed on this subject, and techniques you learned. Also describe how you applied those techniques – successfully! – in your student teaching experience.

### **Describe an accomplishment, and how you achieved it. What does “success” mean to you?**

Describe an accomplishment that demonstrates the setting of a goal, and commitment to achieving that goal. Provide a specific example from college, work, or extracurricular activities. Describe the process you went through to achieve the goal, and what you learned. OR, choose to describe an obstacle that you overcame, and how you overcame it. Your accomplishment can be anything that illustrates positive qualities about you, and the results from your efforts. Regarding your definition of “success,” let your response reflect your values – i.e., what basic attitudes and beliefs you possess regarding life, career, yourself, and others.

### **Do you work well under pressure?**

Answer in the positive – for example: “Yes, I work very well under pressure. In fact, pressure can generate a certain energy level that can be the driving force for getting things done. It can also be the source of creativity in solving problems.” Remember too, that this question can also be used to learn more about your ability to manage your time effectively, to multitask, to organize and prioritize your responsibilities. You may want to mention that you always try to effectively plan, organize, and accomplish your tasks in a timely manner so that if something unexpected occurs that requires a sudden deadline, you can meet the deadline.

### **How do you evaluate your own teaching performance?**

“I evaluate my performance from several perspectives: My own personal perspective, the progress of my students, suggestions and recommendations from colleagues, and performance feedback from my supervisor or principal. I consider it very important to periodically reflect on my teaching effectiveness, as well as to stay abreast of current issues and trends in the field of Education, in order to develop professionally.” This is an example – you will need to tailor it to your actual approach.

### **Where do you see yourself five years from now? What are your career goals?**

Be careful with your response! DO NOT describe career goals which will lead you away from the current job opportunity. That is, do not state that you plan to pursue an advanced degree if you’re unsure if this could be perceived as positive by the interviewer (“professional development”) or negative (“taking focus away from your new job”). INSTEAD, use this question to emphasize your strong desire for a career path with THIS school system, and refer to your commitment to your professional development: “I am looking for the opportunity to continue to develop professionally, and in a direction that will benefit my students and my employer.”

### **Why do you want to work for our school system?**

Learn as much as possible about the specific school system for which you’re applying, and certainly a specific school in which you are interested. Any first-hand information you possess can be shared, such as your positive student teaching experience there, your own experience of attending there, etc. Also, any other positives such as the school’s good reputation (and know WHY they have a good reputation so you can mention this).

### **What do you have to offer to this position that would “set you apart” from other applicants?**

Of course you cannot know the qualifications of the other candidates. However, this question presents a great opportunity for you to highlight, in a summary statement, what you have to offer. Also, listen to what qualifications the interviewer states they are seeking – and assure them that you possess those qualifications!

## **In what ways do you uniquely contribute to a team effort?**

- Research the definition of team work so you can begin to answer this question by describing the elements required for a successful team effort. For example, stating that you believe all team members have something to contribute could be part of your “philosophy of successful teamwork.” If you have taken the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), there is online information on the teamwork abilities. Answer along the lines of the following options, and if possible, give a specific example to support your statements:
- I’m a very organized person, and I usually assume the role of the person keeping the team on track. I write down everyone’s name and the tasks they are assigned for the project. I make sure everyone knows what their tasks are. I also develop a timeline of everyone’s tasks and even a breakdown of the steps for each member’s assigned tasks, and due dates for those. I also try not to come across as a drill sergeant, however! I let everyone know organization is my strength and that I’ll be happy to take on the role of timeline coordinator for the project.

**Or**

- I tend to be the team member who tries to make everyone feel they are a part of something worthwhile, and that they each have something to contribute. I love hearing everyone’s thoughts and enjoy encouraging them to think out and voice their ideas. I like making all of the team members comfortable so no one feels intimidated. For those that are somewhat shy, I encourage them to speak up, or I’ll tactfully ask them if they would like to be in charge of a certain task.

## **OTHER POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:**

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- How do you motivate your students?
- How would you describe your communication abilities with parents?
- Provide an example of a parent-teacher conference in which you participated, involving a student.
- Describe a day in your classroom (provides insight into methods, techniques, classroom management).
- How do you know your students are learning? What do you think the role of homework should be?
- Recall a teaching experience that went poorly. What would you do differently?
- What special talents do you bring to our school? Could you start a writing program or coach a sport?
- What should a new teacher expect from a principal? What should a principal expect from you?
- What was the most useful criticism you received and who was it from? How did you react?
- What are you reading professionally? Keep up with trends and show that you are a learner!

## **APPROPRIATE QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO ASK THE INTERVIEWER**

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You should refrain from asking questions until the interviewer asks you for questions (this opportunity usually takes place at the conclusion of the interview). An exception to this “rule” may occur if you do not understand, or need clarification of, a question you are asked during the interview, in which case you may ask the interviewer to explain. Following are some appropriate questions for you to ask – and DO ASK QUESTIONS – this shows interest and initiative!

- What qualifications do you think are necessary to be successful in this job?
- Could you describe the training period/program? How would my performance be evaluated?
- What are the opportunities for professional development? Does the school encourage participation in professional organizations and conferences? Continuing education activities?
- What are your recommendations for the success of new teachers?
- When can I expect to hear from you regarding your hiring decision?

## **DO NOT EVER:**

- Initiate discussion of salary, vacation, or benefits during the first interview.
- Push for an early decision by mentioning the other opportunities you have awaiting you.
- Ask for feedback on your interview performance.

# Behavioral Interviewing

Expect to encounter this interview technique – commonly utilized by employers. “Behavioral” questions are designed to probe applicants’ past behavior in work situations, on the premise that the best predictor of future performance is past performance.

To prepare, think in terms of a challenging or problem situation, how you assessed the situation (including various perspectives you considered in order to effectively address it), actions you took to resolve it, and the positive results that came from your efforts.

**There are three basic types of behavioral questions:**

Skill-specific: “Could you give me an example of how you successfully applied your communication skills?”

General-situation: “Describe a difficult or challenging situation and how you successfully handled it.”

Hypothetical: “How would you react if you encountered an angry customer in your job?”

Complete the following exercise to help you begin to understand behavioral interview questions.

## My three greatest strengths:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Examples of how I have applied those strengths in athletic, academic, work, or extracurricular settings:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## These are skills employers generally seek, and behavioral questions addressing each skill:

### Decision Making & Problem Solving

- How did you make the decision to come to Southeastern? To major in Education?
- Give me an example of a time when you had to quickly come to a decision.

### Leadership/Motivational Skills

- What challenges did you face in implementing your classroom management approach?
- Give me an example of a situation in which you effectively motivated others.

### Communication/Interpersonal Skills

- Give an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate with a student, co-worker, or parent.
- What have you done in past situations to contribute toward a teamwork environment?

### Planning and Organization

- How do you decide what gets top priority when scheduling your time?
- What do you do when your schedule is suddenly interrupted? Give an example.

# Post-Interview Tips

## After the Interview

Follow up needs to be conducted with an employer after any interview situation whether it is a telephone interview, a first face-to-face interview or subsequent interviews.

- Conduct a self-evaluation of interview: make notes on your performance and difficult questions.
- Write a hand-written thank you note within two days of your interview (see following example).
- You may call if you haven't heard from the employer within the time frame you were given to expect a response.

### *Example:*

June 26, 2013

James R. Smith, Human Resources Director  
XYZ Company  
0000 Rue Benet  
Hammond, LA 70000

Dear Mr. Smith:

Thank you for the interview yesterday for the teaching position with (name of school or school system). The interview with you confirmed my initial positive impressions of your schools, and I want to reiterate my strong interest in working for you – and hopefully making a positive impact on your students.

Again, thank you for your consideration. If you need any additional information, please feel free to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,  
Gail Theriot

## Other Job Search/Interview Tips

ALWAYS return calls/answer emails from prospective employers. Even if you're not interested in the position, such a professional courtesy can leave a positive impression of you, and, there may be other opportunities for you with that organization in the future.

Make sure the message on your answering machine is professional, and answer the phone in an enthusiastic, positive voice! It's extremely important for you to organize your job search, and a critical element to organizing your search is organizing your employer information; more specifically, maintaining a record of:

- Employers you have contacted, including the organization name and representative's name, job title and contact info (address, phone, and email).
- How you learned of the position, a copy of the job ad, as well as a printout of information on the job from your research on the organization web site (if you are able to gather this information).
- A copy of the cover letter and resume you sent (as you will need to tailor each cover letter to the specific job for which you apply).
- Methods by which you have contacted/interacted with the employer and dates of these contacts; estimated time frame for when you should hear back from employer both after application and/or if interviewed, when you should learn of the employer's hiring decision, AND a copy of the thank you note sent.

# Dress for Success

The first impression you make on a potential employer is the most important one, and to a large extent is going to be based on what you are wearing. Always dress professionally for a job interview, even if the work environment is casual. And, the more professional you look, the more professional you'll feel.

**NOTE:** Surveys indicate that a majority of employers prefer NOT to see body art – tattoos, piercings, etc.

## Women

### THE SUIT

- A business suit – matching jacket and skirt – is most appropriate – not a dress!
- Pantsuits are acceptable except for conservative employers, e.g., banks and accounting firms
- Should be conservative color – solid or small pattern – black, navy, gray, brown, taupe
- Should fit – not too tight or too loose; avoid fabrics that wrinkle easily, such as linen
- Blouse should be conservative to medium color – not bright color
- No short skirts – hem should be just above knee or just below

### THE SHOES AND HOSIERY

- Closed toe ONLY! No sandals – even those with heels; conservative colors – no gold, silver, red, etc.
- No “spiked” heels – should be comfortable for walking: heels should be 1 inch to 2 ½ inches high
- Neutral colored hosiery only: taupe, off black, navy, off white – avoid textures

### THE JEWELRY, MAKE-UP, ACCESSORIES, AND HAIR

- Seven pieces of jewelry maximum – count gold or jeweled buttons as jewelry
- One earring per ear – should be small, not dangling; watch – dress, not sports
- Go easy on the blush, eye shadow and lipstick; wear little or no perfume
- If hair is longer than shoulder length, wear pulled back from face
- Carry either a purse or briefcase – but not both – should be neutral color; purse should be small
- A nice portfolio containing a note pad and extra copies of your resume and references page may be carried along with your purse; carry nice pen

## Men

### THE SUIT

- Always wear a suit! Expensive is not necessarily better – but should fit properly
- Medium to dark colors, solids or conservative stripes
- Tip of jacket sleeve should fall 5 inches above tip of thumb when thumb is extended down
- Shirt: pastels, solids, conservative stripes; sleeves extend one half inch below jacket sleeve edge

### THE SOCKS, SHOES, AND TIE

- Socks nice, thick material; dark, solid or small pattern; hide leg hair when legs are crossed
- Shoes should be leather; should be lace-up or dressy loafer; should shine, shine!
- Tie in small, repetitive pattern or solid – no “theme” ties (e.g., “Tabasco”)
- End of tie should touch top of belt - should contain loop in which to insert small end of tie

### THE JEWELRY, HAIR AND ACCESSORIES

- Wedding band/dress watch is sufficient
- Hair should be “business cut” – short and neat; long hair for males is discouraged
- Face should be clean-shaven; if beard, keep short and neatly trimmed; use aftershave sparingly
- Carry nice portfolio containing a note pad and extra copies of your resume and references page; carry nice pen



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