

Effectively reading and responding to a job description is critical to a successful job search. Use this sample to learn how to (1) Read a Job Description, (2) Write a targeted Cover Letter, and (3) Write a targeted Resume.

Part 1: How To Read an Industry Job Description

This is a sample job description. Please see page two to read about how to dissect a job description, and why it's important.

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION:

Crystal DNA, Inc. is a leading organization focusing on research and drug commercialization.

POSITION INFORMATION:

Crystal DNA, Inc. is inviting applications for a Scientist I position in the Cancer Research Department. We are seeking a remarkable individual to lead a research group to study cell biological questions in cancer biology, with an emphasis on inflammation and cancer. Our collective goal is discovering novel targets for therapy using innovative approaches.

The successful candidate will lead projects to elucidate inflammatory pathways and mechanisms that contribute to the pathogenesis of cancer, and to translate their discoveries into therapeutic approaches for clinical development. At Crystal DNA you will be among renowned scientific leaders in the areas of Oncology, Immunology, and Virology. You will have the opportunity to contribute to the development of therapeutics.

QUALIFICATIONS:

As a strong candidate, you will have:

- PhD and/or MD with postdoctoral research experience in cellular biology, cancer biology or immunology
- Minimum of 5 years of research experience using cellular biology techniques; 1-3 years of industry experience a plus
- Track record of publishing in top-tier journals

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS:

To apply, please send CV/resume and cover letter to careers@crystaldna.com

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A. Why dissect a job description?

A job description details the ideal candidate an organization seeks in regard to scientific training, technical skills, professional skills, and overall fit.

If you take the time to analyze the job description, and ask yourself what the employer seeks, you will be able to:

1. Determine if your skills, interests and values are a good fit for the position.
2. Tailor your resume and state - what you did, when you did it and where you did it.
3. Tailor your cover letter and state - how you believe your experiences are relevant, and why you want to work for their organization.

B. In the Position/Responsibilities section:

Look for:

- A. **The scientific area of expertise (department/group)**
- B. **How this position contributes to the mission of the organization**
- C. Professional skills
- D. Accomplishments

Scientific area of expertise may include:

1. Academic training
2. Technical skills

C. In the Qualifications section:

Highlight scientific and professional skills that directly reflect your experiences, and accomplishments. Use these as keywords in your resume and cover letter.

Look for these categories:

- A. **Scientific training/Technical skills**
- B. **Professional skills**
- C. **Accomplishments**

If your scientific or professional training and accomplishments match 70% or more of what is listed, you may be considered a competitive candidate for this position.

If you don't meet all the listed requirements, but can detail similar or relevant experience, it's important to highlight that in your resume and cover letter. *

**Source: Kforce.com, "Are You Really a Good Fit for the Job?"*

D. What if the job description is too broad or vague?

Connect with someone in your network or via LinkedIn to find out more information about the role. Read this [Linkedin article about how to cold contact individuals](#), and make a difference in the response rate during your job search.

Part 2: How To Write a Targeted Industry Cover Letter

Please see page four to read about the purpose and format of a well-written cover letter.

Rosalind Franklin
Crystal DNA, Inc.
14 Famous Women Way
San Francisco, CA 94114

June 1, 0000

Dear Dr. Franklin:

I read the description for the Scientist I position at Crystal DNA, Inc. with great interest. I am a postdoc studying Cancer Research at UCSF and believe that I have the skills and qualities necessary to be a successful addition to your team - a balance of cell biology bench experience, project management experience, and a demonstrated commitment to translational research. The possibility of contributing to the groundbreaking research at Crystal DNA, Inc. that is impacting human health is an exciting prospect.

I have 8 years of experience in **applying cellular biology techniques to investigate immune signaling** pathways that are critical in cancer research. Specifically I have:

- Expertise analyzing inflammatory activation in primary innate immune cells using flow cytometry and other cellular assays.
- Co-authored 6 papers, 2 reviews, and published in journals such as Cancer Cell.
- Collaborated with industry scientists, and believe I have a good understanding of how to design experiments to answer clinically relevant questions.

In addition to my research training, I have **project management experience** in both the scientific and non-scientific communities. I thrive in the team environment and work well with clear deadlines and project milestones. As a project leader in our lab, I am responsible for setting, communicating, and **meeting milestones with our industry collaborators**. As a coordinator for the UCSF Improv Group, I lead an initiative to enhance training in professional skills on-campus. Specifically, I work closely with theater professionals to develop workshops to help grad students and postdocs in the UCSF-wide community practice and improve their presentation skills. The popularity of these sessions has even drawn faculty members to attend our events.

The potential to contribute to the work at Crystal DNA will be rewarding, because I enjoy researching translational questions that may lead to the development of cancer therapeutics. I would welcome the chance to talk to you more, and can be reached at 123.456.7890, or via email, at marie.curie@ucsf.com.

Regards,

Marie Curie

Part 2: How To Write a Targeted Industry Cover Letter

Rosalind Franklin
DNA, Inc. San Francisco
14 Famous Women Way
San Francisco, CA 94114

June 1, 0000

Dear Dr. Franklin:

I read the description for the Scientist I position at DNA, Inc. with great interest. I am a postdoc studying Cancer Research at UCSF and believe that I have the skills and qualities necessary to be a successful addition to your team - a balance of cell biology bench experience, project management experience, and a demonstrated commitment to translational research. The possibility of contributing to the groundbreaking research at Crystal DNA, Inc. that is impacting human health is an exciting prospect.

I have 8 years of experience in applying cellular biology techniques to investigate immune signaling pathways that are critical in cancer research. Specifically I have:

- Expertise analyzing inflammatory activation in primary innate immune cells using flow cytometry and other cellular assays.
- Co-authored 12 papers and published in journals such as Cancer Cell.
- Collaborated with industry scientists, and believe I have a good understanding of how to design experiments to answer clinically relevant questions.

In addition to my research training, I have project management experience in both the scientific and non-scientific communities. I thrive in the team environment and work well with clear deadlines and project milestones. As a project leader in our lab, I am responsible for setting, communicating, and meeting milestones with our industry collaborators. As a coordinator for the UCSF Improv Group, I lead an initiative to enhance training in professional skills on-campus. Specifically, I work closely with theater professionals to develop workshops to help grad students and postdocs in the UCSF-wide community practice and improve their presentation skills. The popularity of these sessions has even drawn faculty members to attend our events.

The potential to contribute to the work at Crystal DNA will be rewarding, because I'm passionate about researching translational questions that may lead to the development of cancer therapeutics. I would welcome the chance to talk to you more and can be reached at 123.456.7890, or via email, at marie.curie@ucsf.com.

Regards,

Marie Curie

A. Why write a cover letter?

A *resume* reports your relevant scientific training and professional skills – it tells the reader what you did, when you did it and where you did it.

A *cover letter* covers the how and why – how you believe your experiences are relevant, and why you want to work for their organization. It sheds light on the specific skills that make you a qualified candidate, your interest in industry research, and explains how you'd contribute to their organization.

B. Often, employers only skim the first paragraph, so Marie's paragraph is a summary of:

- E. What she brings to the table (experience & skills)
- F. Why she wants the job (desire)

This includes her:

1. Scientific training
2. Professional skills
3. Desire

The skeleton of your cover letter will follow the same format as your first paragraph.

C. In your second and third paragraphs:

Summarize your range of skills and experience. Highlight skills in your resume that directly reflect the skills in the job description. Use keywords. Emphasize any industry experience or industry collaborations that you've engaged in. Demonstrate your desire to transition into industry. Summarize:

1. **Why you fit:** What skills or knowledge did you gain from these experiences?
2. **What you impact is:** How have you excelled in your activities? Hiring managers say they take a chance on academic scientists who have a track record of leadership and success both in and out of the lab.

D. Don't forget to explicitly detail what excites you about the company (the culture, the science, the approaches). Frame it in the context of what the company is committed to. Remember they are looking for a match.

Do you like their company philosophy or their mentorship program? Tell them!

Marie Curie, Ph.D.

San Francisco, CA 94114, 415-555-2345, Curie@ucsf.edu
 US Permanent Resident

SUMMARY

- Five years of postdoctoral research in tumor immunology, with focus on cell interactions that regulate cell migration
- Experience includes flow cytometry, molecular mediator release assays (ELISAs), cell migration assays, primary immune cell isolation and cell culture techniques
- Lab supervisor of flow cytometry equipment, microscopy equipment, and animal facility
- Experienced in working collaboratively with chemists and industry scientists

The **Summary** section is the abstract for your resume:

- Summarize your relevant scientific training and professional skills.
- Tailor this section to the job description.
- Remember to back up the experience listed here, in the sections below!
- Be concise – a paragraph is okay, but keep in mind bullet points are easier to skim.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Cancer Research Lab, Postdoctoral Scholar 01/2000 - present
 University of California San Francisco, CA
 Project: Tumor cell migration

- Investigation of the **chemokine and cytokine release** from tumors using **flow cytometry-based assays on primary immune cells**; **pioneered new ex vivo technique for the lab**
- **Molecular mediator expression profiling** of different cell populations from tumors; in **collaboration with industry partners**
- **Supervisor** of 1 graduate student and 1 research associate
- **Manager and instructor for flow cytometry and multiplex ELISA equipment**

Use the **Research/Scientific Exper.** section to highlight specific skills that the employer seeks. Include components of **C.A.R.**:

- **Collaborations** - Include **relevant collaborators**.
- **Actions** - Write about your research for a lay audience. Include **technical skills sought in the job description**. Leave out other technical skills to avoid making it harder to see how you're a good fit for the position, or consider creating a separate Technical Skills section.
- **Results and Roles** - When possible include the impact of your findings, any **accomplishments from your work**, and your **range of responsibilities**.

Immunology Lab, Graduate Student 08/2000 – 05/2000
 University of Geneva, Switzerland
 Project: Chemokine biology in zebrafish

- Biochemical characterization of chemokine homologs
- Studies **resulted in 2 co-author publications**
- Expression and purification of chemokines using bacterial and mammalian expression systems, FPLC protein purification
- In vitro ligand structure analysis using NMR spectroscopy; in **collaboration with industry partners**
- **Collaborated with chemists** to design inhibitors
- **Supervisor** of lab microscopy equipment, including equipment maintenance, assessment and testing of new equipment

A comment on Formatting Dates:

- Place dates on the **right** side of the line. We read from left to right, so you want to the more important information, like title and organization, to be the first thing the employer reads.
- Dates in numerical form are easier to skim. (ex: 08/2000 vs. Aug 2000)

PROJECT MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE

Founder & Lead Coordinator, UCSF Improv Group 10/2000 – today

- **Initiated** campus organization to enhance presentation skills training
- **Developed innovative, interactive workshops** with **Bay Area improv professionals**
- Successful workshops evidenced by **attendance by over 200 postdocs, students, and faculty**

In this section (Project Management):

- Use a **descriptive section heading** that the employer cares about. For example - Leadership, Industry Exper., Consulting Exper., Clinical Trial Exper., etc.
- Choose strong action verbs to describe your contribution and impact to the group.
- Include **Collaborations, Actions, and Results**.

Course: UCSF Scientific Leadership Management Course 2000

- 16 hours of **training about leading research groups**
- Topics included: giving and receiving feedback, working with and through others, leadership styles, and managing your time effectively

Marie Curie, Ph.D.

San Francisco, CA 94114, 415-555-2345, Curie@ucsf.edu
 US Permanent Resident

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Cell Biology Teaching Assistant 10/2000 – 06/2000
 University of Geneva, Switzerland

- Supervisor of practical courses in undergraduate **Cell Biology** and **Biochemistry** classes
- Classroom size was **30-40 pre-med** students each semester; taught 3 semesters
- **Students noted my ability to explain complex biological concepts simply**

If you have a **Teaching** section, include details that are interesting to the employer:

- **course topic**, but not necessarily course title
- **audience details** like number of students, and major or vocation
- if you received student evaluations, include **comments that highlight your communication abilities**

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Immunology 2000
 University of Geneva, Switzerland
 Dissertation: Cellular Mechanisms Controlling Cell Migration in Zebrafish

B.Sc., Cellular Biology 2000
 University of Geneva, Switzerland

Additional Training
 Scientific Communication Skills Seminar, UCSF 2000
 Scientific Presentation Skills Seminar, UCSF 2000

In the **Education** section: If you have your Ph.D., consider moving this section lower on your resume, to use the prime space on the first page to highlight experiences.

INVITED SCIENTIFIC PRESENTATIONS

Methods of analyzing primary cell types from tumors
 Am. Assoc. for Cancer Research Annual Conference, Chicago, USA 2000

Control of chemokine-guided cell migration
 Gordon Research Conference Chemotactic Cytokines, Germany 2000

Control of chemokine-guided cell migration in zebrafish
 International Institute of Science, Kyoto, Japan 2000

In a **Presentations/Conferences** section: Employers have commented that they look for invited talks or awarded posters, because presenting posters is a common activity for students and postdocs.

What if you have not been invited to give a talk nor presented a podium presentation at a meeting? Consider including presentations that highlight accomplishment, conference topic, or special audiences.

AWARDS

European Cellular Biology Organization - Postdoctoral Fellowship (for leadership) 2000

University Training Fellowship - Ph.D. Fellowship (5 students awarded of 100) 2000

In the **Awards** section: When possible, describe the award qualitatively or quantitatively.

- (monetary) \$100K total or 3 yrs salary
- (competitive) 2% awarded nationally
- (skill) for outstanding essay

How far do you go back? It's less about a cut-off date; include awards that communicate an interesting and relevant accomplishment to the employer.

PUBLICATIONS

Curie, M., Nadal, R., Federer, R., et. al. (2000) JBC. Publication title.

Curie, M., Seles, M., Nadal, R., et. al. (2000) Cancer Cell. Publication title.

Williams, S., Curie, M., et. al. (2000) Jour. of Immunology. Publication title.

Williams, S., Sampras, P., Curie, M., et. al. (2000) JBC. Publication title.

In the **Publications** section:

- **Bold your name** to help the employer identify your contribution.
- Separate manuscripts *in preparation* under a separate subheading. If, under review, state the journal name.