



## ***A Beginning Teacher's Guide to Getting "The Job"***

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## A Word on Resumes

A resume is your way to sell yourself. There are a few guidelines to consider when crafting this artifact.

- Use action verbs and keywords (Buzz Words). For instance, if you have experience with PBIS as a classroom management system, don't say "classroom management". Say "PBIS."
- Prioritize the most valuable experiences or details about yourself and organize it as such.
- Choose a non-distracting template. Something understated and clean will register as professional.
- Proofread! Proofread! Proofread!
- Limit yourself to no more than 2 pages. Most interviewers will not read more than this.

### Types of Resumes

A candidate with limited experience is often better served by listing an "Objective" upfront on his resume. This objective provides a direction for the interviewer.

*Example:*

"English-Language Trainer/Tutor of ESL or standard English. To assist, encourage and motivate students of every age to demonstrate and improve their verbal and written skills."

A candidate who has extensive work experience is often well served by listing a "Summary" of prior experience. This is a great "teaser" for an interviewer because it highlights skills or experiences that might transfer into teaching.

*Example: Summary of Qualifications*

- Curriculum Development
- Instructional Leadership & Coaching
- Departmental Supervision
- Community Engagement
- Rigorous, Data-Driven Instruction
- Inquiry-Based Lesson Planning

A resume typically contains a few sections:

- Contact Information
- Objective/Summary
- Education
- Experience
- Skills
- Additional Information

### Contact Information:

Include your current mailing address, current phone number, and professional email address. You might also include a resume website, but do not include social media sites. Also consider using a phone number dedicated to professional calls- when that line rings, you know it is someone important and can answer appropriately.

### Education Section:

When listing education, do not include high school. List only previous universities from which you obtained a degree or are currently enrolled. Include the degree you were awarded and GPA, as well as graduation date.

### Experience Section:

In the section for experience, underscore experience related to education. Field placements, student teaching and internships, as well as substituting all count as education work experience.

### Skills Section:

Skills should be listed, but evidence should also be provided. Use action verbs. Data should be included if you have it. For instance, how many of your students met or exceeded the standard for the CRCT when you student taught? There might also be other markers where you can include numbers, such as Common Unit Assessments or number of office referrals you made after implementing your classroom management strategy of choice.

#### Skills Often Looked for in Teachers:

- Teaching Skills
- Communication Skills
- Passion and Enthusiasm
- Commitment to Lifelong Learning (Professional Development)
- Flexibility and Adaptability
- Team Work
- Good Attitude

#### Essential Traits for Teachers:

- Competence
- Self-Confidence
- Intelligence
- Passion and Enthusiasm
- Energy
- Imagination and Creativity
- Initiative
- Innovation
- Leadership
- Teamwork
- Appropriate Judgment
- Love for Students

Try to convey that you possess the above traits in your skills section. This can be done easily by using these adjectives as modifiers. Say something like, “Enthusiastically created and implemented differentiated, fun, and engaging lessons.”

### Portfolio

Consider crafting a portfolio for yourself, even if you have one from student teaching.

Education portfolios contain artifacts from education experience. Examples of items to include might be:

- lesson plans,
- student surveys or letters about you,
- student work samples from successful lessons,
- classroom management plan,
- reflections, and evaluations from observers like university supervisors or principals.

These artifacts should speak to your educational philosophy, your ability to reflect on your own teaching practice, your capacity to maintain accurate records, how you have grown and developed throughout your experiences, and your professionalism.

## Application Process

-Start applying early. These applications are lengthy and have multiple parts. Be armed with phone numbers and addresses of previous employers and references. Seek permission from your references before submitting. If you are student teaching in the spring, for instance, start applying for teaching positions in March. Use [teachgeorgia.org](http://teachgeorgia.org) to view openings across the state. Even if there are no openings in the district where you want to work, put in an application anyway.

-Complete all the areas requested on the application. Send in transcripts, background check information, copies of GACE scores, and certifications if you have them.

-Proofread your application like you would your resume. Have someone else proofread your essays if there are any.

-Have a basic cover letter prepared that you can customize for each district or school for which you apply. Find a good template online to use. Make sure to proofread!

-Once you have applied, send emails to prospective employers. Be courteous and respectful. Start your email with "Dear (principal's correct title and name)" and end it with "Sincerely" or "Thank you". Your inquiry about potential openings should include a resume and a reason you seek employment in that school or district. Also include a reason why you would be a good fit for said school or district. Are you enthusiastic? Leadership oriented? A whiz at data? Say so!

-Once you have applied, consider hand delivering resumes to schools. This can be hit or miss- some principals will have time for you and others will not. If you can't shake the principal's hand, be very courteous to the secretary, give her a copy of your resume, and send a follow up email to the principal. You may never hear back, but this extra effort will often keep you in the forefront of the principal's mind when he or she does have an opening.

-Be willing to move. Prepare yourself for the potential of moving to a new city for a job.

## Scoring the Interview

-Clean up your social media (facebook, twitter, instagram, etc.). Adjust your privacy settings so that it is very hard for employers to locate your profiles or see much on them.

-Identify people who will give you excellent references. Your cooperating teacher and university supervisor are great people to start. Also consider a mentor or master teacher who can speak to your work ethic and teaching skills. Relatives do not count.

-Update your resume and have plenty of copies made.

-Attend job fairs. Leave resumes and letters of recommendation with the representatives. Converse with them- ask specific questions about their district. You might ask about technology use, classroom management systems, scheduling, etc. Engage the representative in some way so they remember you. Dress like you are on an interview.

-Read the application and employ honesty when filling it out.

-Be ready to disclose convictions you may have had in the past. Be the one to disclose this information rather than have it discovered through a background check.

-Do not underestimate the power of networking. Professors, university supervisors, and cooperating teachers may hear of opportunities, and you want to be the first person they think about when these arise. Maintain good relationships with anyone and everyone in any position of authority at a school- they may be an asset for you when you put in your application.

## Before the Interview

-Principals love hearing about their school. Do your homework and come to the interview armed with knowledge about the school, district, and special programs offered there. This might include test scores, demographics, extra-curricular activities, and even history of the school. One candidate was fortunate to find an interview posted online with the principal of the school where she was interviewing and was able to learn a great deal about the school. The interview with the principal provided a good idea of her perspective on education, goals for the school, etc. Having prior knowledge indicates interest and that you went above and beyond!

-Consider taking advantage of the career services offered at local universities. They may offer practice interviews or other tips. Role play with your cooperating teacher- he or she has been through this process before! Even if you think you have no chance of scoring the job, consider the interview a really wonderful opportunity to practice and improve at your craft.

-Spend time thinking about what you believe about your profession, education, and kids.

-Write your answers to common questions and practice them over and over.

-Find good directions to the school or place of interview.

-If you must travel out of town, consider making sure your vehicle is in good working order to avoid missing the interview because of a flat tire or other issue.

-Pick out your interview outfit and prepare it.

## Appropriate Interview Attire

Females	Males
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Skirt/dress pants and blouse or business casual dress</li> <li>- Blouses should be conservative in cut. Red and pink convey confidence, collars convey power.</li> <li>- Length of dress or skirt should be no more than 2" above the knee (Do the sit test, too!)</li> <li>- No visible tattoos!</li> <li>- Heels no more than 3" or flats</li> <li>- Iron your outfit!</li> <li>- Minimal jewelry</li> <li>- Clean, short nails and non-distracting polish (there are differing opinions on color here, but the accepted neutrals are generally clear, nude, pink, or red)</li> <li>- Clean, simply styled hair (do it in such a way that you won't play with it while speaking)</li> <li>- Makeup should be understated but polished: avoid distracting eyeliner (no cat eyes), colored eye shadows, and bright lip color. Neutral is best.</li> <li>- Minimal perfume</li> <li>- Ask yourself: "Could I wear this again to work at this school?" If you say yes, you're on the right track.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dress pants or khakis and collared shirt, tucked in</li> <li>- Attractive tie: simple pattern, but polished</li> <li>- Dark dress shoes, dark socks, and dark laces</li> <li>- Iron your outfit!</li> <li>- If wearing a white shirt, make sure to wear an undershirt</li> <li>- A watch and one ring maximum: wedding band or college ring</li> <li>- No earrings</li> <li>- No visible tattoos!</li> <li>- Clean, simply styled hair</li> <li>- Groomed facial hair (nothing distracting) or clean shaven</li> <li>- Clean, short nails</li> <li>- Minimal cologne</li> <li>- Ask yourself: "Could I wear this again to work at this school?" If you say yes, you're on the right track.</li> </ul>

## General guidelines

Don't bring your cellphone into the interview.

No chewing gum, candy, or tobacco products.

Arrive 10 minutes early. If you're earlier than that, sit in your car. Don't pressure your interviewer by being terribly early.

Be nice to the secretary! He or she holds the keys to the kingdom. You must pass through the secretary to get to the principal.

### What to Bring

Ask your interviewer what they would like for you to bring. They may have a list of specifics.

If not, consider the following:

- 10 copies of current resume (even if you emailed it to them)
- Copies of certificates, if you have them
- Copies of state test scores (GACE, Praxis, etc.)
- Copies of diplomas or transcripts, if you have them
- Several exemplary lessons that capture your teaching style and that you consider the most successful. Bring several different types of lessons: a differentiated lesson, a research project, a project-based instruction unit.
- Your Student Teaching Notebook or Portfolio- don't expect your interviewer to look through it, but they might ask to see or talk about something specific.

Another thing one candidate found to be particularly successful was a binder full of anonymous letters from her students about her as a teacher. When asked what students would say about her, the candidate directed interviewers to this binder. Both interviewers read each and every one of the letters students wrote (all 120 of them). While there were other factors in addition to this snapshot, the candidate was offered both jobs immediately following the interview.

## The Interview

- Be 10 minutes early. Allot plenty of time for travel, traffic, and any potential pitfalls along the way. Have a good contact number for the interviewer and the secretary just in case something happens and you miss the appointment window.
- You may bring a bottle of water. Interviews typically last an hour or so, but can last longer.
- Be personable, kind, and courteous to anyone you encounter.
- Be prepared to speak to a group of people.
- Greet everyone with a firm handshake and make eye contact throughout the interview with everyone in the room.
- Display confident body language. Smile! Be yourself.
- Listen to questions carefully before answering. If you need time to formulate an answer, ask for the interviewer to elaborate.
- Answer concisely. Avoid rambling or tangents.
- You may jot down key points or components to a complicated question. You may be asked how you might respond to a particular scenario- it may be complex or multi-faceted. This ensures you will answer every component of the question.
- Answer the questions honestly and base answers upon your own experience. Don't offer generic or ambiguous answers.
- Avoid using buzzwords or jargon that are not used by your interviewer unless you have experience with them or truly buy into them. Be careful though- if you suggest that you favor a model that the school has tried and abandoned or never considered, you might not be considered a good fit.
- Have several questions for your interviewer prepared, but limit yourself to your 5 most important inquiries. Have more than 5 prepared just in case they are answered in the interview.
- Once the interview is over, shake everyone's hand and thank them for their time. Thank the receptionist or secretary.
- Immediately write a thank you email and send it to your interviewer; ask for it to be forwarded to any members of the hiring committee. Then, write a handwritten thank you note and get it in the mail as soon as possible.

## Possible Interview Questions and Your Responses

“Tell me about yourself.”

- This is another way of saying- “What’s your life story in less than 2 minutes?” Consider personally crafting a quick “about me” and rehearsing it several times. If you can make connections to teaching in what you say, that can be very beneficial. It’s also great to make it a little humorous- that’s an awesome way to connect with your interviewer. Nothing crude or inappropriate. One candidate said: “I related to an interviewer my undergraduate journey through anthropology- the major about which many people asked, ‘What will you do with that? Teach?!’ A question that used to warrant a response on my part of, ‘No! I’m going to be a real anthropologist and live all over the world!’ I wrapped this story up by saying, ‘Now here I am..!’ Then we had a good laugh and moved on to the crux of the interview where I described my passion for teaching, and not just because the prospect of rural living without the commodities of home frightened me away from anthropological research.”

“How would your students describe you?”

- Have an answer in three words. This is similar to “What’s your teaching philosophy?” Say something like: “Fun, inquiry-based, and engaging.” Use the current jargon, but only if you truly buy into it. Here is the best place to whip out student surveys or letters about you and hand them over. This is genuine and gives voice to your students. Otherwise, relate a story about a student telling you what he or she thought about you- one candidate had a story about a student who said, “I like it when you teach...your voice gets all excited about what you’re teaching and I get excited, too!”

“Why teaching?”

- See above. Describe your journey to teaching, explain how you think education should occur and why it’s important to contribute.

“Describe your preparation for this position. How are you qualified?”

- If you’re new to teaching, describe the struggles, obstacles, and victories of student teaching. Did you student teach in a Title I school? How did that experience change or transform you and how you teach? Did it equip you with super-hero like management skills? Did you student teach in an IB school? What did you learn about challenging and engaging students that would transfer to other classrooms?

“How do you handle classroom management?”

- Answer based upon your experience. Are you a strict teacher? Do you go with the flow? What are your favorite routines or procedures?

“What does a well done co-taught classroom look like?”

- This one should be easy if you had a good co-teaching model with your cooperating teacher. If you were not lucky enough to experience a good co-teaching rhythm, remember what you were taught at university. What should it look like, even if you have never seen the ideal?

“What are your strengths and weaknesses?”

- Be careful to avoid clichés like, “I care too much...” Instead, be honest in a positive manner- if you aren’t super organized, say so. The positive spin might be, “I struggle with organization, but lately I found this great planner and it has gotten much easier for me.” If you are not the most creative activity planner, suggest that you have taken or are willing to take professional development seminars to improve in that area. Principals want to see teachers recognize their own shortcomings and demonstrate willingness to get better. They don’t expect you to be perfect. Conversely, don’t be afraid to brag on yourself if you are really, really good at something.

“How do you handle parents?”

- This question might be open-ended or come in the form of a specific scenario. If it’s open ended, offer an example from your experience. If it’s a specific scenario, base your answer on how you responded to a similar experience.

“What is your collaboration style?”

- Principals want teachers who play on a team. You should indicate that you like to share ideas, lessons, and assignments- that you won’t be an island. This does not mean that you are incapable of working on your own, but that you are willing to contribute in a group setting and toward a group objective.

“How do you deal with unruly students?”

- Again, root this answer in personal experience. Relate a situation in which you dealt with an unruly student and how you handled it. Consider pointing out what you might have done differently. Pointing out areas where you might have reacted differently indicates that you are constantly reflecting on your choices.

“How do you differentiate lessons?”

- Differentiation is a process. It is both intentional at the outset of a lesson and informed by the students as they participate- consider describing how you decide what learning modalities to target within a given lesson. Do you give students learning style tests and then cater to the results? Do you build in the activities they consider the most fun? Do you use a combination? What about if a lesson is not working? What’s your course of action?

“How do you use assessment?”

- In today’s data driven school district, the ability to use assessment to evaluate, modify, and make teaching decisions is crucial. Be familiar with the assessment methods used and preferred by the state and the district, and discuss how you would effectively employ them. Explain how you structure lessons to provide you with informal/formal checks on learning, formative and summative evaluations, and how you ensure that students can be assessed in a myriad of ways- with special attention to diverse learners.

“Tell me about your use of technology.”

- Students must be prepared to enter the 21st century with skills in technology, and as their teacher, it will be your responsibility to teach them these skills. If you aren’t particularly adept with technology, indicate your willingness to learn- from professional development, from other teachers, even from your students!

“Why do you believe you would be the best candidate?”

- This is your chance to sell yourself. Do so confidently! Remark on your best qualities, your willingness to grow and learn, and your desire to teach in such a great school.

“Why should we hire you?”

- See above.

“What will you contribute to our school, department, team?”

- Think of ways outside of teaching that you can contribute- are you a great athletic coach, club coordinator, a meeting notes taker extraordinaire? Offering great teaching is a given, but being a teacher is more than instruction. Find a way you can contribute outside of instruction and capitalize on it as an opportunity to sell yourself onto a teaching team.

“Where do you want to be in 5 years?”

- There’s no key for this question. This is about you and your aspirations. However, you might consider indicating how you want to grow- do you want to pursue a higher degree, move into a leadership position, or create and offer a unique elective? Principals are always seeking candidates committed to self-improvement who can articulate long- and short-term goals for themselves.

## **Questions You Might Ask**

When will you know about the position?

How does department funding work?

Will I be floating or have my own classroom?

What types of materials or resources will be at my disposal?

Does the school system have furlough days?

How many students are in a typical class?

What is the local supplement for new teachers?

How much planning time will I have?

What subject(s) will I be teaching?

Will I be expected to run or sponsor extracurricular activities?

What do you consider the role of an administrator?

How do you view discipline?

What are your goals for the school in the coming year?

Will I have a mentor?

## **Appendix A: Sample Letter of Introduction**

## Letter of Introduction

[Your Name]

[Street Address]

[City, State zip]

[Optional- Email Address]

[Today's Date]

[Name of Recipient]

[Title]

[Company]

[Address]

[City, State Zip]

Dear [name of recipient], or To Whom It May Concern:

[Indicate that you are writing to introduce yourself to the school/ district. Talk about your educational background, and your strong areas.]

[Discuss your future plans. How are you going to continually develop yourself into a better educator. (e.g. professional development, higher degrees, etc.)]

[What have you done up to this point (student teaching, edTPA, inquiry lessons) that will help you for this position. This is where you really sell yourself, and why you would be a good candidate for the position]

[Conclusion: This is where you thank the reader for taking the time to read your letter of introduction. If you have a website, you may want to invite them to view it.]

Sincerely,

[Name]

## SAMPLE LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Timothy Jones  
1020 Manley Drive  
Columbus, GA 31907  
(706) 575-3697

5. April 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to be writing this letter as a means of introducing myself to Harris County School District. In May of 2014, I will be earning my Bachelor of Science in Chemistry along with my certification to teach secondary science. My extensive coursework provides me with a conceptual understanding of chemistry, and allows me to make inter-curricular connections. I believe you will find me to be a dedicated educator who is well qualified to provide instruction that students need to successfully learn in science. I am practiced in inquiry-based learning and project-based instruction that provides students with skills necessary to succeed both inside and outside of the classroom.

In the future, I would like to continue developing professionally. This includes striving for my PhD in secondary science that will allow me to become well rounded in the sciences. Further, I plan on continuing to develop myself academically and pedagogically by attending American Chemical Society, UTeach, and National Science Teacher conferences. These opportunities allow me to stay current in chemistry, and find new instructional techniques to hone my teaching skills. I have attended several conferences to date and utilized local pedagogical development workshops.

Having completed a UTeach portfolio and fulfilled edTPA requirements, I have experience creating inquiry based lessons, and analyzing my own teaching techniques. Implemented lessons in my undergraduate career were oftentimes videotaped. These were used to analyze pedagogical skills. For example, in my edTPA segment, I implemented an inquiry-learning segment on stoichiometry. Using the skills needed for the UTeach portfolio, I have honed my skills in reflecting on implemented lessons. These are used to better myself as a teacher to help implement more effective lessons. While reflecting on lessons is critical, using professional development can help aid with these reflections and implementation of better instruction. It has taught me that teaching requires many skills, and there is always room for development.

Thank you in advance for taking the time read this letter. I invite you to visit my website at [TimothyJonesTeaching.webs.com](http://TimothyJonesTeaching.webs.com) where you can find out more information about me.

Sincerely,

Timothy Jones

## **Appendix B: Sample Resume**

# Timothy Jones

1020 Manley Drive Columbus, GA 31907

Phone: (706) 575-3697 E-Mail: Jones\_Timothy9@ColumbusState.edu

Website: TimothyJonesTeaching.webs.com

## Career Objective

To obtain a secondary science teaching position that will allow me to implement inquiry based learning instruction, and provide students with the tools necessary to be successful both inside and outside of the classroom.

## Education

Columbus State University [2009-2014]

Degree: Bachelor of Science in Chemistry: Professional Track Minor: UTeach Program GPA: 3.31

GACE Certification: Chemistry- Passed; General Science- Expected June 2014

## Teaching Experience

Student Teaching: Hardaway High School: Chemistry (Pre-IB and IB)

- Individual and Collaborative Planning for 15 weeks (Inquiry Based)
- Applied various research based instructional methods: formative assessments, summative assessments, collaborative learning, and differentiated instruction
- Communicated with families via E-mail and Telephone

ESOL Tutoring [Fall 2013]: Arnold Middle School

U-Teach Internship: Physical Science Homeschool Lab Teacher [2012-2013]

Math Science Learning Center: Tutor [2011-2013]

University Involvement & Leadership

WeTeach [2011-2014] - Secretary of Student Affairs [2013-2014]

American Chemical Society [2010- 2013] - Secretary [2012]

## Honors & Awards

Noyce Robert Teaching Grant [2013-2014]

U-Teach Internship Award: Fall 2012, Spring 2013, Summer 2013, and Fall 2013

U-Teach Scholarship [2012 & 2014]

## Research Experience

“Investigation of Toxic Heavy Metals in the Chattahoochee River Water Using Atomic Absorption Spectroscopy” [2011, 2013]

Mentor: Dr. Samuel Abegaz

## Professional Development and Memberships

National Science Teacher Member [2013-Present]

American Chemical Society Member [2012-Present]

UTeach Conference in Austin, TX [Spring 2014]

- Presenter - "Preparing Uteach Columbus Students for Success on Edtpa"
- Presenter - "Getting Your Feet Wet with Project Based Inquiry"

21<sup>st</sup> Century Technology Training [Spring 2014]

Teacher Content Development Workshop [Fall 2013]

ACS Regional Conference in Atlanta, GA [Fall 2013]

UTeach Conference in Austin, TX [Spring 2013]

- Presenter - Presented on implementation of Homeschool Lab Instruction

ACS National Conference in New Orleans, LA [Spring 2013]

- Presenter – Presented on discoveries found in the Chattahoochee River

Undergraduate Research Conference in Athens, GA [Fall 2011]

- Presenter – Undergraduate research at Columbus State University

## Community Involvement

Science Olympiad Event Supervisor [2013-2014]

Science Fair Judge [2012-2014]

Science Olympiad Volunteer [2012]

Columbus High School Senior Project Judge [2012-2014]

Boys and Girls Clubs of the Chattahoochee Valley [2007]

## References

Ms. Gail Sinkule: UTeach Master Teacher

Email: Sinkule\_Barbara@ColumbusState.edu Tel: (706) 507-8729

Mrs. Kelly Cavanaugh: Cooperating Teacher at Hardaway High School

Email: Cavanaugh.Kelly.C@muscogee.k12.ga.us Tel: (706) 748-2766

Dr. Kimberly Shaw: Co-Director of UTeach Columbus/ Professor of Earth and Space Sciences

Email: Shaw\_Kimberly@ColumbusState.edu Tel: (706) 507-8344

Dr. Floyd Jackson: Department Chair/ Professor of Chemistry

Email: Jackson\_Floyd@ColumbusState.edu Tel: (706) 569-3031

## **Appendix C: Action Verbs Commonly Used by Teachers**

**Action Verbs Commonly Used by Teachers**

<b>Teaching Skills</b>	<b>Management Skills</b>	<b>Clerical or Detail Skills</b>	<b>Communication Skills</b>	<b>Creative Skills</b>	<b>Helping Skills</b>
adapted advised clarified coached collaborated communicated coordinated defined developed enabled encouraged established evaluated explained facilitated guided informed initiated instructed lectured persuaded presented set goals stimulated taught trained updated	acquired administered analyzed assigned attained chaired conserved consolidated contracted coordinated delegated developed directed eliminated evaluated exceeded expanded headed improved increased managed maximized minimized obtained organized oversaw planned prioritized produced recommended scheduled streamlined strengthened supervised	achieved approved arranged catalogued classified collected compiled dispatched documented executed gathered generated implemented inspected monitored operated organized prepared processed purchased recorded retrieved screened specified systematized tabulated validated	addressed arbitrated arranged authored communicated cooperated corresponded defined developed directed drafted edited enlisted formulated influenced interpreted lectured mediated moderated motivated negotiated persuaded promoted publicized reconciled recruited renegotiated reported researched responded solicited spoke summarized translated verified wrote	acted applied composed conceived conceptualized created designed developed directed established evaluated fashioned formed formulated founded illustrated instituted integrated introduced invented loaded molded originated perceived performed planned presented produced proposed refined revamped revitalized shaped	advocated aided assessed assisted clarified coached contributed counseled demonstrated diagnosed educated expedited facilitated familiarized fostered guided referred rehabilitated represented supported