

CAREER

Portfolio



Connecting Maine Students to Maine Businesses

Visit our Website: <http://www.mainecareeradvantage.org>

To the Student

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

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

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

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

Good luck!

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Career Exploration and Assessment

Before you begin to work on your *Career Portfolio*, it is important to spend time thinking about what you like to do and exploring different career areas. The time you spend now doing career exploration and assessment will help you decide which businesses/colleges to apply to in the future. There are many tools and activities that you can use to gather some information about yourself—your particular learning style, strengths, abilities. Once you have thought about and identified this information, you can then begin to explore careers that match your personal characteristics.

Some examples of these tools and activities:

- *Self-Directed Search (SDS)*
- *Choices or GIS*
- *Get a Life Portfolio*
- Maine Career Advantage *What Career Might Be Best for Me?* packet
- O*NET *Work Importance Locator*
- *Harrington O'Shea Career Decision-Making Booklet*
- Job tours or shadows
- Career fairs or conferences

Please talk with your guidance counselor or teachers about which of these tools/activities may be available through your high school.

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Contents

I. Letter of Introduction

II. Career-Pursuit Information
Resume, Letters of Recommendation

III. Samples of Work

IV. Personal Interests & Achievements
Transcript and additional information

I. Letter of Introduction

I. LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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II. Career-Pursuit Information

II. CAREER-PURSUIT INFORMATION

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

- Resume

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

- Letters of Recommendation

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

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

If you have not been employed in any way, then use three character-related letters. If you are unsure of how to initiate letters of recommendation, ask your teacher about options or review the additional information about letters of recommendation in this section.

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Preparing a Resume

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

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

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

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

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

On the next page is a simple but highly effective sample resume. Use this format to present your own information.

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Sample Resume

JESSICA NADEAU

42 Washington Avenue

Auburn, Maine 04240

(207) 555-5555

jnadeau@emailaddress.com

Career Objective: Computer support technician in central Maine

Education: High School Diploma, June 2002
Edward Little High School, Auburn Heights, Auburn, ME 04210
G.P.A. 3.2 Class Rank: 45 out of 411

Honors and Awards:

Honor Roll for last three semesters

Perfect Attendance Award for the last two academic years

Relevant Courses:

Introduction to Computer Repair I

Introduction to BASIC

Database & Spreadsheets

Word Processing I

Computer Experience: **Neighborhood "Computer Expert"** - 2001-present. Performed troubleshooting for several friends and relatives who were having difficulty with their hardware or software.

Network Assistant (volunteer) - Edward Little High School.

September 2001-May 2002. Assembled 20 computers for new computer laboratory, loaded software on each one, and networked them.

Other Experience: **Waitperson**, Rolandeau's, Auburn, Maine. Summer 2001.
Provided efficient, friendly, quality service in busy fine dining atmosphere.

Child care provider - Freeport, Maine. Summer 2000. Provided safe, warm environment for two children aged 4 and 7. Supervised their self-directed play and prepared meals and snacks.

Activities: **Soccer Team** - 1998-2002 - Co-captain 2000-2002
Civil Rights Team - 2002
Soup Kitchen Volunteer - 1999-2001

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Letters of Recommendation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Recommendation Request Form

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

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

- ☐ Employment
- ☐ Acceptance into college
- ☐ Other: _____

My current career/academic goals:

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

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

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

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

Thank you for your help!

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

III. Samples of Work

III. SAMPLES OF WORK

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

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

Possible examples of academic work:

- Research papers, book reports, essays
- Math projects
- Science projects
- Exams that show achievement
- Computer projects
- Mechanical/technical drawings

Other samples of work:

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

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IV. Personal Interests & Achievements

IV. PERSONAL INTERESTS & ACHIEVEMENTS

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

You must present:

- Official Transcript (*A transcript release form is enclosed for your use.*)

Potential additional information:

- Maine Educational Assessment Report (MEA)
- Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT)
- Scholastic Aptitude Test Report (SAT)
- Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)
- Aptitude Test Battery Report (APTICOM)
- Perfect Attendance Award(s)
- Citizenship Award(s)
- Honors Award(s)
- Sports Award(s)
- Certificate of participation in a club(s)
- Technical Performance Certificate(s)
- Maine Driver's License or permit
- Other certificates (CPR, First Aid, etc.)
- Other examples of your personal interests and abilities

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Student Transcript Release Form

I hereby give permission for _____
(Name of School)

to release my (son's/daughter's) transcript to: _____
(Name of individual/organization)

I UNDERSTAND THAT THE TRANSCRIPT WILL BE INCLUDED IN MY
(SON'S/DAUGHTER'S) PORTFOLIO AND REVIEWED AS PART OF
EMPLOYMENT/COLLEGE APPLICATIONS.

Student's Social Security Number _____

_____ <i>Signature</i>	Student	_____ <i>Date</i>
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_____ <i>Signature</i>	Parent/Guardian (If under 18 years of age)	_____ <i>Date</i>
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[Remove this form and give to the appropriate school official.]

Acknowledgments

This portfolio (last revised Jan. 2003) was developed by Maine Career Advantage, a program of the Maine Technical College System.

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