

# University of Montana

## Teacher Résumés & Cover Letters

### TEACHER RÉSUMÉS

The résumé is your primary marketing tool to get you in the door. Résumé writing is not an exact science; however, a résumé tailored to show an employer how you can meet their specific needs is more successful.

### RÉSUMÉ LAYOUT

#### Write your résumé toward a specific job, job type, or industry

A specific job description will provide the framework for your résumé. Build a résumé that focuses your skills, qualities, and experience towards teaching and education. Keep in mind that you may need to revise it when you see an actual job description. Always include as many keywords from the job description as possible.

#### Résumé Sections

- Name, Phone Number, Email Address, City, State
- Career Summary (professional experience, skills, and academic background relevant to job posting; keywords)
- Skills Section (skills relevant to job posting; keywords)
- Education (include GPAs 3.50+) & Credentials (teaching licensure and endorsements)
- Certifications (e.g. CPR/First Aid)
- Teaching Experience (fieldwork, student teaching, paid/unpaid, academic projects, service-learning)
  - Include position title, organization/employer name, employment dates, responsibilities, skills, achievements.
- Related Experience (work with kids; seasonal work; coaching, mentoring, instructing, etc.)
- Community Engagement / Volunteer Experience (volunteer, team membership)
- Professional Development (professional memberships, conferences, workshops, presentations, etc.)
- Honors and Awards (*optional*)
- Languages and Teaching Technologies (*optional*)

DOS	DON'TS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have a Career Coach review your résumé.</li><li>• Give your résumé to each of your references.</li><li>• Take copies of your résumé to your interview.</li><li>• Edit keywords to fit the job description.</li><li>• Emphasize positive points; omit any negatives.</li><li>• Leave white space; keep it brief and to the point.</li><li>• Shine the best light on yourself, but don't lie.</li><li>• List experience in reverse chronological order.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Add personal information (marital status, age, religious and political affiliations, pictures, etc.).</li><li>• Include a personal photograph.</li><li>• Include anything that is untrue.</li><li>• Refer to high school achievements if you're in college, unless impressive or related to the job you seek.</li><li>• Cram too much information on 1-page.</li><li>• Submit a generic, general résumé to all schools.</li></ul>

### APPLICANT TRACKING SYSTEMS & ONLINE APPLICATIONS

When applying for teaching jobs online, your résumé will likely go through applicant tracking systems (ATS). An ATS is a human resources software that scans your résumé against a job description (JD) by looking for keywords found in the JD. ATSs are designed to make recruiters' lives easier by automating the review process. You earn a higher score on ATSs by incorporating as many keywords from the JD as possible.

## ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

### Tailor Your Résumé

Integrate specific keywords from the job posting throughout your résumé in key places, e.g., career summary, skills section, accomplishment bullets, and job titles. Consider what the principal will find important, most valuable. Your résumé is a marketing document supporting your case for the position. Decide strategically what to add, omit, and spin.

### Write with Recruiter's Needs in Mind

Highlight your return on investment (ROI) by making your résumé sales-focused, relevant, visually appealing, quality-oriented, and succinct. Think about the school and district's needs.

### Write Tight in F-shape Pattern

Write in first-person implied personal pronouns ("I") with limited articles (a, an, the) and prepositions (of, by). Top- and left-load the most important information. Include periods at end of phrases.

### Include Headline & Career Summary

Under your letterhead, insert a headline (**MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER**) that clearly states the job you are applying for. Omit the objective statement and replace with a 3–5-line keyword-rich career summary that highlights your unique value, academic and professional background, certifications, experience, and skills.

### Emphasize Achievements, not Tasks

Write bullets in results-action format to highlight your accomplishments. Use action verbs to begin bullet point phrases. Quantify and lead with results when possible.

### Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) – Online Applications

Follow application instructions. Avoid using templates – start from a blank Word document. Upload in Word, not PDF. Avoid textboxes, columns, and tables. Do not put anything in a header or footer. Use an ATS-friendly font e.g., Calibri, Arial, Garamond, Tahoma, Helvetica. Spell out dates (e.g., September 2021).

### Focused and Clear

A clear, crisp résumé will make it easy to see who you are and what skills you possess. Use skill-based keywords found in the job description to describe your skills in your résumé.

### Accurate

Proofread, proofread, proofread! Errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, dates, phone numbers, addresses, and content reflect poorly on you and can quickly eliminate you from the applicant pool. Delete comments in margins if your résumé was reviewed.

### Résumés can Exceed 1 Page.

Many employers indicate that they would rather have a complete picture of an applicant's qualifications than try to read between the lines. If you have strongly related experience, your résumé can be 2 pages. The second page should be at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  page, ideally  $\frac{3}{4}$  page.

## DESIGN & FORMATTING

- Add color to your letterhead and/or section headers to attract the recruiter's eye.
- Use .5 margins on all sides and use consistent paragraph spacing to create white space.
- Use 1 phone number with periods or dashes—e.g., 406.123.4567. Omit your street address and hyperlinks.
- Use a larger font size for your name and section headings; use 11–12-point font for all other information.
- Use design elements (bullets, bolding, lines, borders, shading) to guide the readers' eyes through your résumé.

# MATTHEW SARACEN

Open to Relocation

406.123.4567 | matt.saracen@gmail.com | Missoula, MT

## GOAL: ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER (K-8)

**Enthusiastic educator** who creates stimulating learning environments, promotes social-emotional development, and helps children identify and enhance their unique potential for success. Reflective teacher who blends cooperative learning, innovative technology, and evidence-based teaching methods to create lifelong learning.

- **Proactive Leader:** Create inclusive learning environments respectful of individual student needs and cultural diversity to meet students' immediate and long-term needs.
- **Student Motivator:** Initiate early academic intervention (RTI, PBIS, MBI) to promote positive reinforcement, mutual respect, productive education setting, and individual responsibility.

*Skills and experience in:*

Classroom Management	Project-Based Lesson Planning	Indian Education for All
Differentiated Instruction	Multitiered System of Supports (MTSS)	Parent-Teacher Collaborations

## EDUCATION & CREDENTIALS

**Montana Class 2 Educator License | Elementary Education (K-8) Endorsement**

MONTANA OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, *expected May 2024*

**Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Elementary Education (GPA: 3.61)**

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA, Missoula, MT, *expected May 2024*

**CPR, AED, First Aid Certificate**, American Heart Association, 2022–Present

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

**Elementary School Teacher (5<sup>th</sup> Grade) – Student Teaching**

January 2024–May 2024

Hellgate Elementary

Missoula, MT

- Promoted learning and growth for 22 grade 5 students by providing differentiated reading, writing, math, social studies, and science instruction.
- Collaborated with parents, school staff, and administrators to foster students' academic, social-emotional, and behavioral development.
- Employed effective individual and all-classroom management techniques according to Montana Behavior Initiative (MBI) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) standards.
- Created inclusive classroom experience by assisting in re-evaluation of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and 504 plans, including observations and parent conferences.

**Elementary Teaching Assistant (2<sup>nd</sup> Grade) – Field Work**

August 2022–December 2022

Lowell Elementary

Missoula, MT

- Motivated 18 diverse 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students by implementing active learning environment, supporting instruction, and applying Response to Intervention (RTI) classroom management strategies.
- Increased students' cultural sensitivity and knowledge by planning and developing thematic units on Indian Education for All.
- Enhanced skills in behavior management, technology integration, project-based learning, and lesson planning by observing 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher.

**Elementary Teaching Assistant (4<sup>th</sup> Grade) – Field Work**

January 2021–May 2021

Chief Charlo Elementary

Missoula, MT

- Improved pedagogical knowledge by developing and implementing research project on classroom motivation techniques and presented results to colleagues.
- Contributed to students’ educational success by assisting experienced classroom teacher with evidence-based teaching and learning exercises.

**RELATED EXPERIENCE****Childcare Specialist**

June 2020–August 2020

Big Sky Nanny, LLC

Missoula, MT

- Supervised 3 children ages 3, 5, and 7 to ensure adherence to daily meal and sleep schedules, safe play at home and in community, and nutritious and allergy-sensitive food consumption.
- Supported children’s social-emotional and intellectual development by devising stimulating activities and creative projects.
- Maintained clean and organized living space by completing household chores—washed dishes, folded laundry, vacuumed floors, and cleaned up toys.

**Elementary Tutor**

August 2019–December 2019

Target Range Elementary

Missoula, MT

- Delivered individualized instruction to groups of 7+ 4<sup>th</sup> grade math students to support content understanding and answer questions about difficult concepts.
- Establish academic goals with parents and students and monitor progress by reviewing practice assignments and tracking quiz improvements.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT****Youth Volunteer**, YWCA, Missoula, MT

2019–Present

**Youth Mentor**, Flagship Program, Missoula, MT

2018–2019

**PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS****Montana Rural Education Association**

2022–Present

**National Education Association**

2020–Present

**Educators Rising, University of Montana Student Organization**

2020–Present

***Letters are important contacts with employers.  
Here's how to make a good impression:***

**COVER LETTER OVERVIEW & TIPS**

**This 1-page letter is the initial contact between you and the employer. Its purpose is to briefly market your skills, experience, and education to a specific teaching job.**

- Send it in response to an advertised job.
- Personalize it by marketing your experience, education, personal qualities, and goals toward the specific teaching position for which you're applying.
- Your résumé and cover letter should work together to strongly present your value to a prospective employer.
- It should draw attention to and expand on the most important information from your résumé.

<b>DOS</b>	<b>DON'TS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Match format, font, and letterhead to your résumé.</li><li>• Keep it clear and concise (1-page).</li><li>• Include keywords to fit the job description.</li><li>• Follow the job/internship posting directions.</li><li>• Address it to a specific person or "Hiring Manager" or "Hiring Committee."</li><li>• Write employer-focused by tailoring your skills and background to the job description.</li><li>• Have a Career Coach review it and provide feedback.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ramble or include redundant content from your résumé.</li><li>• Include personal information (marital status, age, religious and political affiliations, etc.).</li><li>• Be "me" focused by overusing "I" and "My."</li><li>• Address your letter "To Whom It May Concern:"</li><li>• Exceed 1-page.</li><li>• Submit a general cover letter.</li><li>• Include anything untrue (shine the best light on yourself, but don't exaggerate).</li></ul>

***ADDITIONAL NOTE***

**Networking Letter**

Sometimes, teachers will send a cover letter to inquire about current or potential vacancies and establish communication with schools about future employment. Personalize each letter based on the school/district.

- Use the full name and job title of the reader when possible.
- Mention your interest in applying should a teaching position exist or open up in the near future.
- Highlight your experience and/or academic accomplishments related to the position.
- Enclose a résumé and offer to provide additional information.
- State your interest in the school/district and why you want to teach there.

## COVER LETTER FORMAT

### Your Letterhead Matching Your Résumé

Date (when you will send the letter)

Contact Person's Name (Ms. Mr. Mx. First Last)

Their Title

Name of Organization

Street Address

City, State, and Zip Code

Dear Ms., Mr., or Dr. Last Name (Never use "To Whom It May Concern" or "Dear Sir or Madam." If you absolutely cannot find a person's name, then use the salutation, "Dear Hiring Committee:" or similar).

#### FIRST PARAGRAPH

**Purpose: To grab the reader's attention and establish interest in employment with the school/district.**

- Provide an opening 2-3 sentences that entice the reader to continue reading – reflect on the questions below and consider responding to one for your opening sentences.
  - *What drew you to the education field? How did you become interested in teaching?*
  - *Did a current employee refer you to the school? What do you like about the school?*
- Name the teaching job for which you are applying.
- Mention specific knowledge of the school or district to indicate your interest.

#### SECOND PARAGRAPH

**Purpose: To demonstrate your abilities and potential value to the school/district by highlighting your key strengths, experiences, knowledge, and skills related to the teaching position.**

- Acknowledge the skills, education, and credentials required for the teaching position in which you're interested.
- State the specific skills/strengths/experiences you will bring to the school and role.
- Give examples of your teaching skills and any related work experience (quantified results, accomplishments, and achievements). Explain how these skills will transfer to the role.
- Don't repeat information from your résumé. Instead, refer the reader to the enclosed résumé or application, elaborating on/providing more detail regarding how you meet the job qualifications.

#### FINAL PARAGRAPH

**Purpose: To ensure follow-up action and extend your appreciation for being considered.**

- Write 1-2 sentences summarizing your unique qualifications for the teaching position.
- Thank the hiring manager/principal sincerely for their time and consideration of your application.
- *Optional:* list your phone number and email address (contact information should match your letterhead).

Sincerely,

*Sign your name with signature-type font*

Type your name

Enclosures: résumé and professional references

# MATTHEW SARACEN

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406.123.4567 | matt.saracen@gmail.com | Missoula, MT

May 12, 2024

Mr. Chris Clevenger, Principal  
Grade 4-6 Building  
Hellgate Elementary School District  
2385 Flynn Lane  
Missoula, MT 59808

Dear Mr. Clevenger:

After completing my student teaching experience at Hellgate Elementary, Angie Jenkins recognized my passion for promoting academic excellence through hands-on student learning opportunities and encouraged me to apply for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade teaching position. The level of technology and innovation incorporated in your classrooms makes them stimulating environments for students to learn. My familiarity with the Hellgate Elementary School District coupled with my experience implementing new technologies in elementary classrooms makes me an excellent candidate for this role.

During the past several years, I have had opportunities to work with a wide variety of students in diverse learning environments. As a student teacher at Hellgate Elementary, I used technology daily, such as Smart Board, Infinite Campus, Google Classroom, and Google Workspace. Through the use of technology and altered organization, I improved my pace of the Read Well Curriculum and enhanced my overall timing in lessons. To meet the needs of all learners, I implemented Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and differentiated my instruction. In addition, I was a volunteer tutor at Target Range's Youth Education Services where I taught 4<sup>th</sup> grade math to groups of students after school.

Response to Intervention (RTI) is crucial to maintaining a safe learning environment. As a student teacher, I monitored behaviors and academic performance, addressed issues, and reported information to the appropriate administrators, teachers, and support staff. During my fieldwork at Lowell Elementary, my cooperating teacher provided valuable guidance when implementing RTI classroom management techniques. Setting clear expectations collaboratively and empowering students to choose how to take responsibility for their misbehaviors has proven an effective tool when managing a classroom.

If Hellgate Elementary seeks a dedicated educator eager to implement innovative strategies to motivate, teach, and inspire students, I would welcome the opportunity to highlight how I can contribute to the school district. You may reach me at 406.123.4567 or matt.saracen@gmail.com. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

*Matthew Saracen*

Matthew Saracen

Enclosures: résumé, professional references, and teaching philosophy statement.

## UTILIZING AI

Artificial intelligence is a remarkable tool. It equips your computer to analyze data, offer predictions, and expedite decisions when extra support is needed.

However, despite AI's intelligence, it sometimes falters in matters of common sense and context. While it excels at producing impressive data, its efficiency is lacking in data-sparse environments. Additionally, AI can display potential bias and limited creativity. As we dive into the landscape of AI integration, we must also consider the concerns of privacy, security and the unforeseen consequences of using this tool.

### PROS OF USING CHATGPT:

- **Time Efficiency:** ChatGPT can help you quickly generate application materials.
- **Language Expertise:** ChatGPT can suggest sophisticated vocabulary and grammar.
- **Customization:** You can tailor the materials by providing specific information about yourself and the job you're applying for, and ChatGPT will incorporate those details.
- **Inspiration:** ChatGPT can provide you with ideas of what to include.
- **Editing and Polishing:** ChatGPT can assist in refining your materials by suggesting improvements, rephrasing sentences, and ensuring proper formatting.

### CONS OF USING CHATGPT: PRIVACY – DO NOT UPLOAD CONTACT INFO.

- **Misinterpretation:** There's the possibility that ChatGPT could misinterpret the information you provide, leading to inaccuracies or inappropriate content.
- **Lack of Personalization:** ChatGPT might not capture your personal voice, experiences and motivations, making your writing feel generic.
- **Unpredictable Tone:** The tone and style of the generated content might not align with the desired tone, which should be professional and sincere.
- **Overreliance:** Depending too heavily on ChatGPT could hinder your own writing and communication skills.
- **Limited Context:** ChatGPT lacks real-world context and current events beyond its last knowledge update, potentially leading to outdated or irrelevant information.

**Keep in mind, your results will only be as good as the quality of the information you feed it, and the extent to which you edit the information using your own writing style, creativity, and sound judgment.**

## STRATEGIES & PROMPTS FOR GETTING BEST RESULTS

- 1. Apply the 60/40 Rule:** Begin by crafting your résumé, cover letter or personal content on your own, focusing on the key points you want to convey. Allocate 60% of the effort to your initial writing.
- 2. Content Generation:** After writing, input your content into ChatGPT and ask it to rewrite and enhance your material. Prompt it to add specific examples, quantify achievements, improve language, etc.
- 3. Review and Polish:** Review the generated text, make necessary edits, and ensure it aligns with your personal style and voice. Add any finishing touches, ensuring a well-polished final version.

**Résumé Prompts:** Upload your résumé for review and feedback (**do not include contact info**). ChatGPT will suggest improvements, identify areas for enhancement, and offer guidance on how to make a strong impression.

- What skills should I include in a resume or job application for [POSITION]?
- Write a resume for a [TITLE] based on this job description. [Copy/paste the job description.]
- Tailor my resume to this job description for a [JOB TITLE] role at [SCHOOL]. [Copy/paste your current resume and the job description]
- Using the resume and job description below, showcase 10 relevant skills I should highlight. [Copy/paste your current resume and the job description.]
- Here's my current resume. How would you rewrite it if you were applying to this [TITLE] role at [SCHOOL]? Include metrics in the achievements. [Copy/paste your resume and the job description.]
- Write 3 bullet points demonstrating my ability to [RELEVANT SKILL OR ACHIEVEMENT].
- Write a professional summary for my resume and keep it under 100 words. [Copy/paste your existing resume]
- Create a professional summary under 500 characters that showcases my skills and experiences relevant to a [TITLE] role in [INDUSTRY]. [Copy/paste your resume.]



- Act as a professional resume writer and provide quantifiable outcomes using these bullet points from my resume. Here is the job title and bullet points: [Paste in your last job title and bullet points from one of your roles on your resume].
- Based on my resume, I want to continue growing in the same industry, yet look at alternative roles to what I'm doing at the moment. Ideally, my new role should match my [skill set], yet require [new responsibilities and help me learn new know-how]. I basically need [a change of pace]. If I paste in my resume, would you be able to assess what my alternative career opportunities within [INDUSTRY] are?

**Cover Letter Prompts:** Upload your cover letters for review and feedback (**do not include contact info**). ChatGPT will suggest improvements, identify areas for enhancement, and offer guidance on how to make a strong impression.

- How can I improve my cover letter (paste cover letter text) in application for this job (paste job posting text)?
- Review the cover letter for grammar and style improvements.
- Help me write an engaging introduction for a cover letter.
- Describe my relevant skills and experiences for this job.
- Explain why I may be a good fit for this role.
- Highlight my ability to contribute positively to the organization's culture.
- Rewrite my closing paragraph so that it expresses my enthusiasm.
- Add qualities like adaptability, problem-solving, or leadership to the cover letter.
- Help me finalize the closing details and signature at the end of the cover letter.

## EDUCATION KEYWORDS

### Soft Skills

Accountable  
Active Listener  
Adaptable  
Ambitious  
Analytical  
Articulate  
Bilingual  
Caring  
Collaborative  
Communicative  
Conflict Resolution  
Creative  
Critical Thinker  
De-escalation  
Dedicated  
Dependable  
Detail-Oriented  
Diligent  
Dynamic  
Educated  
Empathetic  
Enthusiastic  
Facilitator  
Flexibility  
Goal-Driven  
Growth Mindset  
Honest  
Inclusion / Inclusive  
Initiative  
Innovative  
Interpersonal Skills  
Leadership  
Multitalented  
Open-Minded  
Organized  
Patient  
Persistent  
Persuasive  
Planning / Conceptualizing  
Positive Attitude  
Precise  
Problem-Solver  
Public Speaking  
Quick Learner  
Reliable  
Resourceful  
Self-Starter  
Strategic Planning  
Team Builder  
Technical  
Troubleshooter  
Understanding

### Hard Skills

504 Plan Support  
Academic Goals & Standards  
Academic Policies & Programs  
Academic Portfolios  
Active Lecturing  
After School Programs Development  
Behavioral Assessment & Support  
Blended Learning  
Checks for Understanding  
Classroom Management  
Common Core  
Communities of Practice  
Conflict Resolution  
Creative Problem Solving  
Crisis Intervention  
Curriculum Development  
Data-Driven Analysis  
Developing Rapport  
Differentiated Instruction  
Digital Literacy  
Discussion Circles  
Embedding Technology  
Evidence-Based Pedagogy  
Experiential Learning  
Formative & Summative Assessments  
Guided Practice  
Inclusive Classroom  
Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)  
Individualized Instruction  
Instructional Material Development  
Interactive Classroom  
Interdisciplinary Teams  
K-12 Plans & Interventions  
Lesson Planning  
Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)  
Neurodivergent Populations  
Parent-Teacher Conferences  
Personalized Learning  
Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS)  
Positive Reinforcement  
Program Management  
Progress Monitoring  
Reflective Teaching  
Research-Based Practices  
Response to Intervention (RTI)  
Scaffolded Instruction  
Small-Group Instruction  
Standardized Testing & Scores  
Student Motivation & Engagement  
Student-Guided Learning  
Technology Integration  
Testing & Assessment

### Active Verbs

Adapt  
Administer  
Advise  
Advocate  
Analyze  
Assign  
Assist  
Build  
Clarify  
Coach  
Collaborate  
Contribute  
Coordinate  
Create  
Deliver  
Demonstrate  
Design  
Develop  
Devise  
Direct  
Educate  
Encourage  
Enhance  
Ensure  
Explain  
Facilitate  
Familiarize  
Foster  
Guide  
Improve  
Incorporate  
Increase  
Instruct  
Intervene  
Introduce  
Lecture  
Listen  
Mentor  
Monitor  
Motivate  
Observe  
Organize  
Plan  
Provide  
Refer  
Report  
Research  
Supervise  
Support  
Teach  
Train