



SHOWCASE YOUR WORK

If your work speaks for itself, a well-presented portfolio is a megaphone. Read on for tips on making yours a showstopper.

A portfolio is a valuable tool for presenting yourself and your work to prospective employers and potential clients. Designing your portfolio is almost as important as the work itself—a well-thought-out approach will influence how a prospect perceives you and your work. It should be clean, cohesive and easy to navigate.



Which fields require portfolios?

Most creative fields—graphic design, advertising, photography, film/videography or writing, for instance—require a portfolio to be considered for a job. If you're not sure if a portfolio is required in your field, look for peers and professionals in your discipline and observe how they represent their work. Talk to your contacts in the field to get their thoughts.

Types of Portfolios

Portfolios fall generally under three categories based on your field and type of work product:

- **Personal websites** are designed to present a professional collection of your experience and skills. Personal websites are increasingly popular across industries and may include an “about” section that highlights your brand, your resume, evidence of your skills in the form of a writing sample or presentation slide decks, and links to your social media.
- **Demo reels** are collections of your best work in audio or video format. You'll need a reel for potential positions or projects in TV and radio advertising, animation, film and television, video games, and other audio or motion media.
- **Web or digital portfolios** are a must for any creative field—ranging from graphic design to copywriting—for their ease of access and review. Any of the above portfolio categories translate well to this format.

Portfolio tips

Assembling a presentation of your work is a great opportunity to impress even before you meet your prospective employer or client in person. Making it work hard on your behalf is key. Here are some tips:

Choose your best work.

This may seem obvious, but you'll want to include only your best work. Resist the impulse to include less-strong work samples because you're afraid your portfolio will be viewed as "thin."

Consider sequence.

Sequence is part of portfolio design because it can influence how the viewer perceives your work as a whole. Put the most "wow" sample right up front, and finish strong.

Keep it simple.

Especially in a digital format, you'll want your pages to be clean and simple. Visually busy pages can distract from the work and contribute to a less-than-professional impression.

Make it user friendly. You'll want to make it easy to view your work. If your portfolio is online, the navigation should be simple and intuitive, equally viewable on desktop, laptop, tablet and smartphone. Make sure everything functions as intended. Test periodically for broken links and other issues.

Think beyond the work. One last tip: Remember that your prospect will hire you, not your work. Include narrative and other elements—a general statement of who you are, short commentary on each sample, perhaps a photo of you—that give the viewer a clear sense of who created these brilliant samples!

WRITING SAMPLES REQUIRED? NO PROBLEM!

It's not uncommon for writing samples to be required in addition to a resume. Consider the following when choosing what to send:

Quality is the first consideration.

Any sample you provide should represent your best work. Carefully review it for grammar issues or typos, even if you read it a thousand times when you wrote it.

Match the sample with the position.

Be sure the type of writing aligns with the kind of writing most likely to be required in the job.

Follow the employer's guidelines.

Many writing sample requirements are specific as to length and format. Follow them exactly. Edit for length, draw an excerpt or reformat as necessary.

Don't be afraid to write a new sample.

If you don't have an existing sample that fits the requirements, creating one from scratch is an option. Make it great! The hiring manager just might appreciate the effort.