Creating a Portfolio

Your portfolio is a collection of samples that, together, showcase your complete range of abilities. Samples can be from school, paid or volunteer work, hobbies, etc. Your portfolio will always be evolving as the quality of your work improves.

Get started

1. Start a digital portfolio.
- The recommended format is a website. There are many free portfolio website builders on the internet that you can use. Or, your portfolio could be a PDF in the form of a document or slide deck.
- There are many ways to protect your work, so do some research to find what will work best for you.

2. Collect your samples. You'll want to display a wide range of your skills. Track down examples from past projects you worked on. Samples could include:
- Class projects, term papers, reports, case studies, research, presentations, workshops developed.
- User manuals, help systems, problem summaries, testimonials.
- Sales strategies, business plans/case analyses, funding proposals, project budgets, financial summaries.
- Publicity/media/ad campaigns, articles written, newsletters edited, blogs, logos created, event/lesson plans, photos of displays.
- Charts, tables, spreadsheets, logs, lists, flowcharts, surveys.
- Products, prototypes, coding projects, web designs, videos.

3. Write about your work. Samples are not as impactful without an explanation.
- Provide a 1-2 sentence caption underneath each sample.
- Do an in-depth case study for 3-5 of your portfolio artifacts: use images and a few succinct paragraphs to describe the scope of the project, the criteria or expectations, the problem and your solutions, the skills and tools used, the process of how it evolved, the finished product and key learnings.

4. Make updates. When you finish a project that shows off a new skill, add it to your portfolio. Or, if you complete something better than an old portfolio piece, swap it out.

Tips

- Include a brief "About Me" section to introduce yourself and a "Contact Me" section with your contact information.
- Don't just include the 'finished product'. Potential employers like to see your process. Add in your rough drafts, sketches, failed attempts, iterations, research screenshots, brainstorming exercises, etc.
- Include a writing sample that shows off your voice and style. Employers want to know that you have strong language skills.
- You can include group projects as long as you ask permission from the other contributors. Present it in a way that showcases your individual contribution.
- Include as many portfolio samples as you want (aim for at least 6), but still be selective. Only use samples that show your best work, and narrow it down if multiple samples demonstrate the same exact skills.
- At least 3 samples should be in-depth case studies, and the rest can be less detailed.
- Group samples by skill set/theme or use the titles to indicate what your samples are about. Make it easy for someone to choose what they want to take a look at.
- Add your portfolio link to your resume.

Interview portfolio

When invited to an interview, you will be notified beforehand if the employer wants you to bring a portfolio. If so, you may be asked to present your case study samples at a specific time during the interview, or you may present them throughout the interview while answering their questions, to show proof of your abilities. Follow these steps to prepare a strong interview portfolio:

1. **Assess the situation.** If your job interview is in person, consider bringing a physical portfolio in a binder or your digital samples on a USB drive. If it is a virtual interview, have your samples ready in a digital format that you can send or share on your screen.

2. **Choose your samples.** *Analyze the job posting* to understand what skills the employer values, and then select 1-3 relevant samples from your main portfolio that demonstrates these skills the best.

3. **Talk about your work.** Practice explaining your role in the project, the target audience, your strategy, any constraints and how you found/measured success.

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