
UNIT 3 GETTING READY FOR THE JOB MARKET AND ORGANISING A PORTFOLIO

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3.0 OBJECTIVES

In this Unit you will learn about the objectives of portfolio making. You will also learn:

- what a portfolio is;
- the difference between a portfolio and a resume;
- the importance of having a portfolio;
- what materials to collect for a portfolio;
- the order of documents in a portfolio;
- to arrange documents in a portfolio according to relevance for a job;
- to write a brief profile of yourself highlighting your strengths; and
- the importance of having a web-version of a portfolio.

Note: You may write 'resume' as we have done or *résumé* / *resume*.

3.1 WARM UP

Activity 1

- 1) Take a look at these pictures. What qualities of a person do you think each picture highlights?

i)



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ii)
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iii)
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iv)
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v)
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2) Now look at the following character traits and decide which pictures best represents these traits. You may add some relevant characteristics of your own.

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|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| i) Creativity | ii) Dedication |
| iii) Communication skills | iv) Spirit of Competition |
| v) Teamwork | vi) Ambition |
| vii) Spirit of adventure | |

3) Now make a list of the strengths you have and should highlight, while applying for any job.

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3.2 READING COMPREHENSION: ORGANIZING A PORTFOLIO

Activity 2

Pre-reading

Before you read the text on Portfolios attempt the following questions. Then read the passage and check your answers.

- 1) Is a portfolio just another name for a resume?

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- 2) Is a resume included in a portfolio?

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- 3) Can one put pictures into a portfolio?

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- 4) How long does it take to collect documents for a portfolio?

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Usually, when you talk to someone who is preparing for an interview and ask him/her if his/her portfolio is up-to-date, the response you get is that of bewilderment. People do not feel that they need to prepare a portfolio.

Perhaps the answer to their question is, “No, a portfolio is not absolutely necessary. But if you want to give proof of your skills, get an edge, make an impact, or in short do everything possible to procure a job, then yes, you really do need a portfolio when you are called for an interview for a professional position.”

How is a portfolio different from a resume?

- A portfolio is not a resume. The first personal document in the portfolio is the resume.
- It contains tangible evidence of your skills and abilities.
- It may contain colorful graphics relevant to the skills required for the position sought.
- A portfolio is not sent out like a resume; it is usually taken along at the time of the interview.

A portfolio is a powerful interview tool for just about all job seekers. It is a visual representation of your abilities, skills, capabilities, knowledge, qualities – and it represents your potential. It presents tangible proof of your skills and abilities.

Physically, it is a collection of things that represent work-related events in your life. Remember that while pursuing hobbies or volunteer activities, or simply pursuing your interests, you probably developed skills that can now be extremely useful in a work-related environment. The portfolio provides "evidence" of your potential by demonstrating what you accomplished in the past.

Why is a portfolio worth the effort?

It helps you to:

- make focused preparation for interviews.
- convince others of your skills, abilities and qualities pertaining to the job requirement.
- showcase and hence communicate your skills clearly.
- demonstrate the results of your work.
- establish the habit of documenting your accomplishments and results.
- create a personal database.
- assess your own progress in your career development.

A portfolio can be an important learning tool for students to help them assess their learning and make it compatible to the employer's need for skilled and capable employees.

How do you make a portfolio?

You start by developing a portfolio "collection" that contains all of your artifacts. If you have written, developed, created or earned anything, you can file, print, frame, photocopy, photograph or digitize it. This is the stuff of which portfolios are made. These may include any of the following:

- Articles
- Awards
- Brochures
- College transcripts and degrees
- Drawings and designs
- Grants
- Letters of commendation
- Letters of reference
- Manuals and handbooks
- Merit reviews

- Photographs
- Presentations
- Programming examples
- Project summaries and reviews
- Scholarships
- Training certificates

These should be used according to their relevance to the position currently being sought, and should appear in chronological order.

The portfolio should be housed in a sturdy 3 ring binder with not more than 20 pages. This will allow you to add or subtract documents as needed. The binder should be neat and orderly, and the contents well organized.

The first page of the portfolio should be the index. This will give the interviewer a concise overview of what is actually contained in the portfolio. It will enable him/her to look at the documents of interest, and quickly get an idea of your achievements.

The first personal document should be your personal resume or curriculum vitae. This concise document should outline all relevant credentials, education, work experiences, and activities. The next section of the portfolio will include all certificates, commendations and other credentials. The most relevant or the most recently gained document should come first in this section. Following this should be educational degrees, achievements, recognition, or volunteer acknowledgements. This section may come prior to the credential file if a person is just entering the professional world, or just graduating from college. The remainder of the portfolio can be personalized from here.

The ideal portfolio is organized, neat, and presents a clear picture of who this person is that is applying for the position. It is important to remember that the interviewer is busy, so the portfolio should present a person in the best light without too many frills or time-consuming inclusions.

The portfolio, like the resume, should be fluid. Adjustments need to be made in it for each position sought. It is important to keep the portfolio updated and complete. At the back of your mind, keep looking for documents to add to your notebook. The portfolio is your best chance of demonstrating skills and experience to a prospective employer. Make sure you have one.

Check Your Progress 1

Answer the following questions based on the reading text:

- 1) How would you define a portfolio?

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2) What are the basic differences between a portfolio and a resume?

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3) Name four qualities that a portfolio can represent.

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4) How does building a portfolio act as a learning tool for students?

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5) How should artifacts be placed in a portfolio?

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6) When should a person start collecting artifacts for his portfolio?

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3.3 VOCABULARY

Check Your Progress 2

1) Find a word in the reading text that is similar in meaning to each of the following words/phrases:

- i) Results that are easy to see so there is no doubt.
- ii) Evidence that shows people your abilities
- iii) Ornamental objects of no great value
- iv) Arranged in order of time of occurrence
- v) An object produced or shaped by human craft
- vi) An official award or a recommendation
- vii) Expressing much in few words
- viii) Coming before

2) Look at the following sentence from the Reading Passage:

The portfolio should be housed in a sturdy 3 ring binder with not more than 20 pages.

As you are aware the verb housed is derived from the noun house. There are other such words which are normally nouns but are sometimes used as verbs. Some of these words are *carpet*: carpeted, *elbow*: elbowed and so on.

Fill in the blanks with the correct form of the words in the box.

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|-------|-------|---------|--------|----------|
| motor | queue | captain | carpet | pocket |
| pilot | floor | butter | bud | shoulder |

- i) I want my room
- ii) Wedown to Lucknow.
- iii) He the plane in a skilful manner.
- iv) Who will the team?
- v) We up for the tickets.
- vi) After his father's death, heall the responsibilities.
- vii) Let me the toast.
- viii) Plants in spring.
- ix) Heall the money and left.
- x) His last question completelyme.

3.4 WRITING: SELF-PROFILE

Activity 3

Now write a brief, one-page profile of yourself. You may add this profile to your portfolio. If you are not working yet, you may write a profile of a friend who does. Use the framework as a guideline:

- Current job profile
- Responsibilities you are required to undertake in this job
- Skills required to fulfill these responsibilities
- Brief outline of previous jobs and special skills developed in the period
- Educational qualifications
- Extra-curricular activities in college and school, highlighting the skills they helped develop

- Awards, scholarships, special commendations received during student life
- Career path you would like to chart out for yourself in the next five years

Note: With relevant changes corresponding to each job you apply for, this profile may also be used as a cover letter. If you already have a job, or have held one earlier, you should highlight the first four points mentioned above, and mention the others briefly. For first-time job seekers, however, it is important to emphasize your educational background, field work, surveys, projects and major activities. You should be able to highlight how everything you did honed some skills, which can now be used to advantage in a professional environment.

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Application Letter

Name: _____

Address: _____

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3.5 SPEAKING: PRESENTATION

Activity 4

Make a presentation to your class/friend on why you think it is essential to have a portfolio while applying for a position in an organization.

3.6 LISTENING: CREATING A WEB-VERSION OF YOUR PORTFOLIO

Activity 5

Listen to an expert talking to you about **creating a web-version of your portfolio**, and answer the questions given below. You can listen to the audio two to three times, if needed.

- 1) Why is it especially beneficial for a web designer or a software engineer to have a portfolio website?

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- 2) Why must you be careful while choosing a free website to create your portfolio?

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- 3) How is it easier to show a client your expertise in a field in a web portfolio?

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- 4) Why do you need to keep checking your portfolio website regularly?

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Can you complete the following sentences based on what you heard in the audio?

- i) Having a portfolio in a web format demonstrates

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- ii) A portfolio is always work in

- iii) Artists can use the web portfolio to

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- iv) You must mention the link to your portfolio in your

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3.7 GRAMMAR: THE PRESENT CONTINUOUS/ PROGRESSIVE TENSE

Look at the following sentences:

- i) We *are sending* back the defective pieces.
- ii) What *are you doing* in London?
- iii) Mrs. Kamath is away on sick leave, so I *am organizing* the event.

The present continuous is formed by using the present tense of the auxiliary verb *be* and the *-ing* form of the verb.

Functions of the Present Continuous:

- **Moment of Speaking**

The present continuous is used to talk about an activity taking place at the moment of speaking. Example:

I'm afraid Dr. Bhardwaj is not available at the moment. She *is talking* to a patient on the other phone.

- **Current Projects:**

The present continuous is used to talk about actions or activities and current projects that are taking place over a period of time, even if they are not taking place precisely at the moment of speaking. Example:

'We may be able to sell some of the unpopular colours at a discount and get the edges interlocked at our factory. We *are sending* back the defective pieces'

- **Temporary situations:**

The present continuous is used to indicate that an action or activity is temporary rather than permanent. Example:

Mrs. Kamath organizes our events. She is on sick leave, so I *am organizing* them.

- **Future events:**

It is used for future events that are part of an arrangement or a plan, at a more informal and personal level. Example:

Suresh *is having* a party this weekend.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Put the verbs in the box into the present continuous in the blanks given below:

| | | | |
|------|-------|------|---------|
| lead | spend | have | prepare |
| deal | make | get | affect |

- i) Take these figures to Jasmeet. He needs them for the presentation he
- ii) At the moment we a training video for Indian Telecom.
- iii) I with enquiries about our new car while Suresh Kapai is away on vacation.
- iv) Cheap importsto the closure of a number of inefficient factories.

- v) Roshan: How's business?
Binoy: Not that good? The recession.....us. People
..... (not) very much and we (not) many new orders.
- vi) Kiran is upstairs with Dhruv and Shiv. They a
meeting about the new catalogue.

2) Fill in the blanks with the simple present or the present progressive verbs.

Fitsshoes was founded fifty years ago, and they ⁱ..... (manufacture)
and ⁱⁱ.....(supply) shoes to several large companies. They ⁱⁱⁱ.....
(conduct) market surveys to find out the needs of the customers. At the moment,
they ^{iv}..... (work) round the clock, to complete an order of 20,000 jogging
shoes for the Health Day marathon. The next order is for export to USA. The
chairperson of Fitsshoes ^v.....(have) discussions with the Americans to find
out what kind of shoes they ^{vi}.....(require).

3.8 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit you learnt about the importance of portfolios in job searches. A portfolio helps you to highlight your strengths as it presents a visual and tangible evidence of your skills and achievements. It has become increasingly important to have a portfolio when applying for a job.

Collecting a portfolio is not a one-day job; it is something you do over a period of time, as you achieve milestones in all you undertake to do. These are not just about the proof of what you have done but the special skills you acquired in the process. A portfolio is always a piece of work in progress. This means it is important to keep updating it regularly. House your portfolio in a three-ring binder, so that it is easy to add or subtract documents according to need. Do not let your portfolio exceed twenty pages.

It is important to index the documents in your portfolio so that a potential employer can easily locate in it the documents that are of greater relevance to the job you are seeking.

Remember the first personal document in your portfolio is always your resume, followed by credentials, and then educational degrees, volunteer work, etc. Place your documents according to their relevance to the job you are aspiring for. Having a web-version of your portfolio is an added advantage as it creates an impressive visual impact, demonstrates that you are tech-savvy, and is easy to access.

The vocabulary exercises and the grammar activities are given to help you to improve your word-power and acquire fluency in the language.

3.9 ANSWERS

Activity 1

- 1) i) Team spirit, warmth, friendliness, jubilant
ii) Sportsmanship, competitive spirit, ambition, spirit of adventure, fearlessness
iii) Multi-tasking, hardworking, flexible, willing, dedicated
iv) Innovative thinking, creativity, imaginative
v) Good communication skills, good interpersonal skills, supportive, friendly

Activity 2

- 1) No, a portfolio is not a resume. A portfolio is much more comprehensive than a resume. It is a compilation of documents that are a tangible proof of a person's achievements and skills.
- 2) Yes, the resume is the first document in the portfolio.
- 3) Yes, the portfolio can include pictures that document one's skills and achievements.
- 4) Collecting documents for a portfolio is an ongoing process. One should add all documents to it that can be used to highlight one's personality. You, however, need to edit it for each job application.

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) A portfolio is a visual representation of a person's abilities, skills, capabilities, knowledge and qualities. It presents tangible proof of these skills and abilities in the form of artifacts, certificates, and other documents. The portfolio provides evidence of a person's potential by demonstrating what s/he accomplished in the past.
- 2) A **resume** is a concise document that outlines all of a person's relevant credentials, education, work experience, and activities. It does not include any additional documents.

A **portfolio** has detailed proof of these credentials in the form of documents. It may also contain photographs. A resume is always the first document in a portfolio.

- 3) Some qualities that a portfolio can represent in the form of documented evidence are a person's abilities, skills, knowledge and potential.
- 4) It helps to form the habit of documenting your accomplishments and to make a focused preparation for interviews. It also helps you to assess your own progress in career development and compare it to the employer's requirements.
- 5) The portfolio begins with an index. The first document in a portfolio is always the resume. The next section contains certificates, commendations and other credentials. The third section of the portfolio has all educational degrees, achievements, extra-curricular activities, volunteer work, etc. The final section contains personal information in brief.
- 6) A portfolio collection is developed over a period of time. It is always work in progress and should be updated regularly. Whenever you develop, create, write or do anything that could be of value to you in your work, you should file its documents as part of your portfolio collection.

Check Your Progress 2

- | | | |
|-------|---|----------------------|
| 1) i) | Results that are easy to see so there is no doubt | Tangible |
| ii) | Evidence that shows people your abilities | Credentials |
| iii) | Ornamental objects of no great value | Frills |
| iv) | Arranged in order of time of occurrence | Chronological |
| v) | An object produced or shaped by human craft | Artifact |
| vi) | An official award or a recommendation | Commendation |
| vii) | Expressing much in few words | Concise |
| viii) | Coming before | Prior |

- 2) i- carpeted, ii- motored, iii- piloted, iv- captain, v- queued
vi- shouldered, vii- butter, viii- bud, ix- pocketed, x- floored

3.6 Listening: Creating a Web-Version of your Portfolio (Tape script)

With the ever-increasing popularity of the Web, it is advantageous for you to know how to design web pages. Consider creating a web version of your resume, with links to your digitized portfolio. It's an excellent way to display your work and impress potential employers. Placing your portfolio into a web format is extraordinarily powerful. It demonstrates that you are current and contemporary. The visual impact is striking.

Portfolio websites are especially useful for photographers and artists looking to display photos, sketches, paintings or prints on the web. If you are a writer, it can contain writing samples. It makes perfect sense for a web designer, software engineer or writer of online content, to have a web site that shows their previous work. If this is the method in which you work, what better way to present yourself than online?

Remember that your portfolio is a work in progress. You don't need to upload everything at once. Take it one step at a time and take the time to create a professional, polished portfolio. Keep your portfolio current. Check to make sure everything is in working order on a regular basis. That means no broken images or broken links to other sites or outdated information. If you have a link to your email address, test it to make sure it works.

Add a link of your portfolio to your resume and mention it in your cover letters so employers can access the information quickly and easily.

You just need to keep a few things in mind when building your online portfolio:

- If you decide to use a free website to create your portfolio, be mindful of domain names and free websites that offer you space for your site. Many free sites also use banner ads to support their sites and you have no control over what type of ad might be displayed. You would not want a hiring manager to see a pop up of Madonna on your portfolio!
- Use images and color, but keep it neat and clean.
- Edit and update as you come across new jobs that fit your interests. When you refer a potential employer to your website, you will be able to refer them to specific web pages that demonstrate the expertise they are seeking.

Activity 5

- 1) Because it shows their previous work.
- 2) Many free sites use banner advertisements to support their sites and you have no control over what type of advertisements might be displayed. This may sometimes turn out to be embarrassing.
- 3) When you refer a potential employer to your website, you can refer them to specific web pages that demonstrate the expertise they are seeking. This is easier than sifting through papers.
- 4) You need to check your website regularly to make sure everything is in working order and to ensure there are no broken images or broken links to other sites or outdated information. Also, if you have a link to your email address, you should test it regularly to make sure it works.

- 5) i) Having a portfolio in a web format demonstrates **that you are current and contemporary**.
- ii) A portfolio is always work in **progress**.
- iii) Artists can use the web portfolio to **display photos, sketches, paintings or prints**.
- iv) You must mention the link to your portfolio in your **cover letter and resume**.

Check Your Progress 3

Missing words are given in **bold**.

- i) Take these figures to Jasmeet. He needs them for the presentation he **is preparing**.
- ii) At the moment we **are making** a training video for Indian Telecom.
- iii) I **am dealing** with enquiries about our new car while Suresh Kapai is away on vacation.
- iv) Cheap imports **are leading** to the closure of a number of inefficient factories.
- v) Roshan: How's business?
Binoy: Not that good? The recession **is affecting** us. People **are not spending** very much and we **are not getting** many new orders.
- vi) Kiran is upstairs with Dhruv and Shiv. They **are having** a meeting about the new catalogue.
- 2) i- manufacture, ii- supply, iii- conduct, iv- are working, v- is having, vi- require