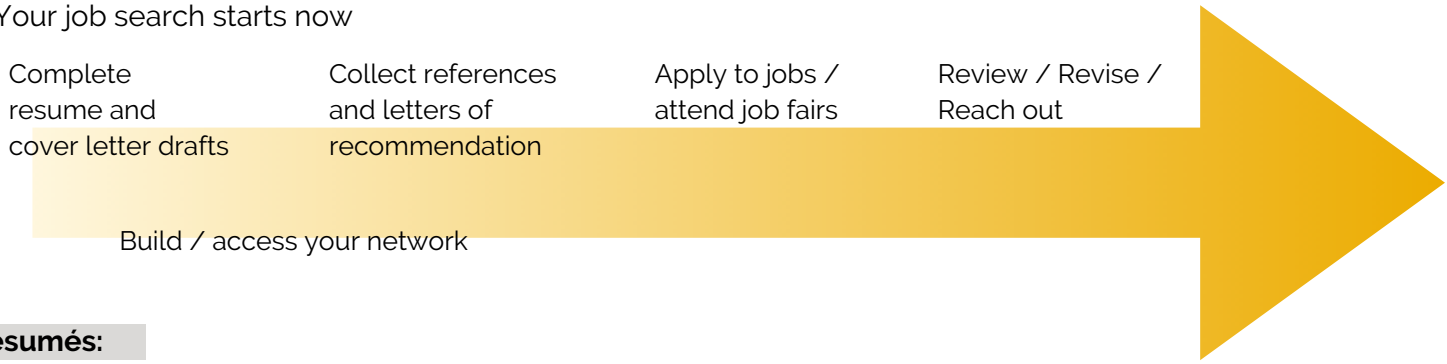
MAKE THE LEAP FROM STUDENT TO TEACHER

The classroom is waiting! You have developed the knowledge, skills, and heart of an educator. Now it's time to communicate to employers. This resource provides practical tips, examples, and strategies for creating strong application materials, navigating the job search, and interviewing with confidence as you begin your teaching career.

Job Search

- Your job search starts now



Résumés:

- Start by brainstorming your "Master List". Then decide what you will put on your resume:
  - Make sure to include: Contact Info, College Education / Teaching Licensure / Relevant Certifications, Relevant Experiences (student teaching, relevant work and volunteer experiences)
  - You might also include: Knowledge / Skills, Accomplishments / Awards, Other "Post-High School" Experiences (work, volunteer, leadership, and extracurricular activities)
  - Teaching philosophy, supplemental question answers, and license folder# do not need to be included on your resume, but it is wise to keep track of them on your master list.

- Formatting
  - Use consistent font size and style throughout
    - (usually 16-21 pt for name, 12-14 pt for headers, and 10 - 12 pt for the body).
  - Use **bold**, *italics*, and color sparingly….and purposefully
  - (Recommended): Use a 'single-column' style resume. Avoid inserting columns, charts, or tables into your resume as that can create issues for the Applicant Tracking Systems
  - (Recommended): Bullet point the information under your experiences
    - Start each bulleted phrase with an action verb; try and avoid repeating action verbs. Make each phrase unique and full of relevant information that shows what experiences you have that make you a good candidate. (include specifics, if impressive)
  - Do not include your image, and avoid any graphics or images in general, keeping the resume clean and simple
  - Try and make it 1-page; principals often appreciate succinctness. However, a 2-page resume that is full of highly relevant experience and well-formatted is appropriate for a more seasoned teacher.

- Tailoring
  - #1: Identify the goals, mindset, competencies, experiences, and skills that have shaped who you are
    - Put these on your "Master List"
  - #2: Understand the desired mindset, competencies, experiences, and skills that the employer is looking for
    - Job descriptions are invaluable for this; also district webpages and networking with staff from the school
    - Also, pretty much every employer is looking to hire someone with good Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, Communication, Teamwork, Collaboration, Leadership, Professionalism, Integrity, Technology, Inclusion.
  - #3: Identify the overlap between those areas and highlight those through relevant, transferable connections
    - Again: job descriptions and district webpages are invaluable, borrow phrases and vocabulary for your materials, including resumes, cover letters, and supplemental questions

Cover Letters

- Basic Outline

Heading

- Include your address, the date, and the organization's address
  - Follow guides for "Formal Letter Writing" or "Business Letters"

Greeting

- Use the principal's name, if known, otherwise "Dear [School] Hiring Team", "Dear Human Resources Team", etc.

1st paragraph

- State purpose (typically it is to express interest in a position, so include position title and the company name)
- Make a connection to the organization, role, and/or mission (name drop, if applicable)
- Short "thesis" statement of why you are a good fit

Middle paragraph(s)

- Support the thesis statement with examples from your experiences and provide further relevant details
- Demonstrate work ethic, skills, and credentials that are relevant to the role
- Connect to the company's mission, values, recent projects and/or accomplishments
- Convey a genuine desire for the role and to work for the organization

Final paragraph

- Reiterate your thesis statement and interest
- Reference the application/resume materials
- Explore potential meeting/interview
- Express gratitude

Signature

Have it all reviewed!!!

- Review for spelling, grammar, tone, style, and consistency
- Make sure to invite others to review your materials as well

FAQs about Resumes & Cover Letters

Is a Cover Letter required?

- Almost always. Many districts place high value on cover letters—it's where you share your teaching philosophy, classroom approach, and faith integration (if applying to Christian schools). Even if not required, it is risky not to include one. Someone in the hiring process almost always reads it.

Should I put my address on my resume and cover letter?

- These days, you don't need to put your full address on your resume or cover letter; city & state are just fine.

What about an objective statement on my resume?

- Recruiters recommend that you skip the traditional objective statement. Some people choose to include a professional summary (2–3 sentences) that highlights teaching style, strengths, and enthusiasm.

Do I need to include my GPA?

- Only if you're a recent graduate and it's 3.5 or higher. Otherwise, leave it off.

Should I include references?

- No, references are entered separately in the application process or attached as a separate document.

Finding Jobs

- Network, Network, Network

  Develop relationships, make connections. Reach out and be visible.
  - Your cooperating teachers are a great place to start, but do not overlook the importance of the support staff that help the school facilities, classes, and administration run smoothly.

- Search jobs and apply online

  Edpost and specific district websites are a great place to look ("WECAN" for Wisconsin).
  - Tailor your resume/cover letter to address the unique aspects of each job type, organization that you apply to.

- Attend a job fair

Interviews

- Practice common interview questions
- Use Career & Leadership Development resources and use your network to prepare.
  - Big Interview is a great tool to help you prepare and practice!
- Create outlines or "story boards" of experiences
- Incorporate educational philosophies attached to real-world examples
- Show up early to the interview and plan ahead.
- Bring copies of your resume and possibly some portfolio materials.
- Written "Thank You" cards don't hurt!

Tips from Educators for Student Teachers:

- Make good first impressions
- Treat everyone with respect!
  - Often secretaries/office admin and custodial staff can make life easier for you, make sure to connect with them!
- Go above and beyond, as able
  - volunteer on committees, help coach a team or assist with an after-school club, etc.
- Make sure you know what to expect for an interview
  - some of them have you teach mini-lessons, for example!

Some helpful distinctions:

- Resume vs Cover Letter: résumé = what you've done; cover letter = why it matters.
- Application vs Resume: application = employer's form; résumé = your story; both necessary
- Reference vs Letter of Recommendation: reference = contact info; letter = document prepared for you

Resources

UNW students have access to many great resources; including:

1. **unwsp.biginterview.com** – career preparedness curriculum, practice interviews and resume review
2. **unwsp.edu/career-communities** – connect with alum for informational interviews and more
3. **unwsp.joinhandshake.com** – find available jobs and internships
4. **unwsp.joinhandshake.com/stu/appointments** – schedule in-person appointments with a career coach

Eddie Cater

On Path to MN Elementary Education Licensure with CALE 5-8 Endorsement

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STUDENT TEACHING EXPERIENCE

1st Grade; Dream River Elementary School; Hope Grove, MN
October 2026 - December 2026

- Created daily lessons for a classroom of 24 students, adapting instruction to meet diverse learning needs.
- Applied Educational Non-Verbal Yardsticks (ENVoY) strategies to create a positive, well-managed classroom environment that promoted student focus and engagement.
- Integrated Seesaw to document student progress, share learning artifacts with families, and enhance home–school communication.
- Differentiated activities to support individual student growth, fostering both academic achievement and individualized social-emotional development.

5th Grade; Hamilton Heights Elementary, Minnemousa, MN
August 2026 - October 2026

- Taught 31 students in a supportive classroom community that encouraged critical thinking, respectful dialogue, and a love of reading.
- Utilized Chromebooks to engage students in reading and writing tasks.
- Applied Universal Design for Learning (UDL) strategies to design accessible lessons that supported varied learning styles and abilities.
- Implemented data-driven instruction through formative assessments and providing targeted interventions for student growth.

TEACHING-RELATED WORK EXPERIENCE

Resident Assistant; University of Northwestern - St. Paul; MN
August 2025 - May 2026

- Organize hall events, encourage and support residents, manage basic administrative tasks and procedures associated with residence life, and uphold the university's policies.
- Plan events to foster healthy community, individual growth, and interpersonal relationships.
- Show care and compassion for residents', advising and connecting them with available resources.

After School Swim Instructor; Roseville YMCA; MN
Summers 2023 - 2024
Mapledale Community Pool

- Instructed 2-5 swimmers, ages 5-11, in weekly swim lessons.
- Developed fun, engaging, developmentally appropriate lessons for swimmers while prioritizing a safe learning environment for all.

TEACHING-RELATED VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

After School English Tutor; Various Students
August 2023 - May 2025

- Tutored 4th–6th grade students in reading comprehension, grammar, and writing during weekly afterschool sessions.
- Adapted instruction to individual student needs, reinforcing classroom learning and building confidence in English Language Arts.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education; University of Northwestern - St. Paul; MN
Graduation: December 2026

- Communication Arts and Literature: Middle Level (5-8) Endorsement
- GPA: 4.0 / 4.0

Ernie Educator

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EDUCATION & LICENSE

Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education, with a Social Studies: Middle Level (5-8) Endorsement — Graduation: May 2026
University of Northwestern St. Paul, MN — GPA: 3.9 / 4.0

Minnesota State Certification in Elementary Education K-6 — Anticipated: June 2026
Folder #55555 (Example of how you would list it after you receive certification)

RELEVANT TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Student Teacher, Fifth Grade — March - May 2026
Fairview Elementary School; Fairview, MN

- Fostered a healthy, positive learning environment with the aid of Ed. Non-Verbal Yardsticks (EnVoy)
- Integrated technology into the classroom using iPads and the app Seesaw, in addition to exploring new apps and integrating video creation and flipped classroom modules
- Applied multiple curricula including: mathematics, literacy and guided reading, science, health, and social studies aligned with Minnesota Common Core State Standards; created appropriate unit and subject matter timelines, assessments and interdisciplinary learning
- Utilized data to drive instruction and create instructional strategies, improving summative grade-level and state test scores

Student Teacher, First & Second Grade Combined Classroom — January - March 2026
Fairview Elementary School; Fairview, MN

- Volunteered on the Data Correlate Committee to provide resources to teachers to meet the goals on the school Strategic Action Plan, as well as sitting in on building PBIS and Technology Committees
- Developed and implemented Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to meet all needs, including ELL students

Summer School Targeted Services Teacher (TOPS) Assistant, Fifth Grade — Summer 2025
Summerville Area Schools District

- Assisted in instruction/preparation of 19 students in math, reading, and writing
- Administered pre and post assessments: 100% of students achieved desired intervention goals

PROJECTS

Understanding by Design (UbD) Unit Plan - Curriculum Design & Instruction Course — March 2025

- Designed a multi-week standards-aligned unit using the Understanding by Design framework, including assessments, differentiated lesson plans, instructional materials, and data-driven learning objectives

Evidence-Based Intervention Research Presentation - Educational Psychology Course — November 2024

- Researched and presented evidence-based academic and behavioral interventions, analyzing effectiveness, implementation strategies, and applications for supporting diverse learners in K-12 classrooms

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

College Mentor Seminar — Fall 2024 and 2025
Mapledale High School

- Shared first-generation college experiences through panel discussions and individual mentoring, helping high school seniors prepare for the transition to higher education

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June 1st, 2023

Principal Suzie Susanson
Mapledale Middle School
134 Maple Valley Road
Mapledale, MN, 55555

Dear Mapledale Middle School Hiring Team,

I am writing to express my great interest in the 6th Grade Social Studies teacher position available at Mapledale Middle School. The school's dedication to student success through a comprehensive learning approach caught my eye as a great match for my passion of holistic education. I anticipate that the pedagogical skills I have developed thus far, as well as my enthusiasm for interdisciplinary and project-based learning, could blend excellently with Mapledale's vision for its students.

Mapledale School District is known for the outstanding values that I have to come to admire which supremely benefit students and their education--particularly its adherence to a healthy learning environment. I was fortunate to see a similar mission in action during my student teaching experience at Young Elementary School, where I expanded my skills in personalized learning techniques, incorporated synchronous and asynchronous methods, and established a safe and responsive learning environment. Incorporating hands-on and project-based learning in my classroom is my desire, and I look forward to incorporating connections to units and themes being taught in other areas of the students' curriculum. As a swim instructor planning weekly themes connected to students' lives was something which came naturally to me. One of my favorites was "Grandparent's Week", when each lesson was joined by a different swimmer's grandparent who would tell a story and then they would help lead the drills, giving fun, names to our exercises and counting down in English, Spanish, Ukranian, and Somali! It is my hope and expectation that these abilities would only evolve further should I get to join the team and would benefit Mapledale's 6th graders.

Thank you for taking the time to review my resume, as well as consider my application to fulfill the 6th Grade Social Studies teaching position. I would love to connect in-person or over the phone to further discuss this opportunity and how my experience and passion might make a positive contribution to the school.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ernie Educator

Ernie Educator