



The Writing Center

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO
DENVER | ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

Paragraph Development: CSARR for Cover Letters

When applying to job postings or internships, focus on demonstrating your proven ability to succeed rather than just listing your qualifications. Specifically, illustrate your potential to excel in your field and establish your ability to complete valuable research or other appropriate activities. Do not simply state that you will be successful, and do not just list accomplishments available elsewhere in the application packet. Make sure you prove your abilities by advocating for past success through a supported argument. Demonstrate your ability through previous experience by using the model CSARR:

C: CLAIM—Provide examples of past success by creating a **claim** about the skill or ability you have developed.

Example: “My experience working with and maintaining workplace diversity will be an asset to Colorado Bank.”

S: SITUATION—Describe a **situation** where you used or cultivated that skill.

Example: “For example, when I worked at American Airlines as an Office Assistant, I supported my manager with client requests in the customer service department.”

A: ACTION—Follow up with a description of the **actions** you took in that situation.

Example: “I interacted and communicated with clients and made lasting connections for the company by listening to client needs and presenting them with solutions.”

R: RESULT (Local)—Wrap up with the favorable **result** for that specific situation.

Example: “From my previous experience in diverse work settings, I have learned that creating customer loyalty and having the client’s interest in mind is the best approach in business, which is Colorado Bank’s goal.”

R: RESULT (Global)—Describe how you will apply your **result** to a future situation.

Example: “This position will allow me to apply my skills and experience with various types of clients in a company that values diversity and integrity.”

For further information on related concepts, please see the following handouts:

- Guide to Writing Exceptional Cover Letters



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Paragraph Development: CSARR for Personal Statements

A personal statement (often the only writing sample submitted during the application process) presents the admissions committee with an interesting and comprehensive picture of you as an applicant beyond what the resume/CV conveys. Specifically, it allows the committee to determine whether you are a good match for the program or department, and it allows you to both demonstrate your writing skills and humanize yourself. Demonstrate a proven ability to succeed with the model CSARR:

C: CLAIM—Provide examples of past success by creating a **claim** about the skill or ability you have developed.

Example: “While working in the medical intensive care unit at the University of Colorado Health, I gained communication and critical thinking skills that strengthened my ability to succeed in a challenging and fast-paced environment.”

S: SITUATION—Describe a **situation** where you used or cultivated that skill.

Example: “I experienced many challenging moments during my clinical rotation, such as when a patient suddenly lost consciousness, initiating an emergency response.”

A: ACTION—Follow up with a description of the **actions** you took in that situation.

Example: “I quickly started to resuscitate this patient by doing compressions with a team of nurses. Using critical thinking skills, I looked for signs of fatigue in the nurses to rotate the person doing the compressions while also coordinating the medications and defibrillation required to save the patient.”

R: RESULT (Local)—Wrap up with the favorable **result** for that specific situation.

Example: “My ability to communicate with the team of nurses as well as my ability to think quickly about the appropriate medical procedures saved the patient’s life and facilitated a successful work environment.”

R: RESULT (Global)—Describe how you will apply your **result** to a future situation.

Example: “My communication and critical thinking skills not only helped me within my clinical rotation but will also prove to be an invaluable asset within the residency at Denver Health.”

For further information on related concepts, please see the following handouts:

- Personal Statements
- Sample Statement of Purpose