

Think of your portfolio as a marketing presentation selling you and your work. A good cover letter and résumé will land you an interview, but a portfolio of actual classroom work is a must for interviews. Traditionally, portfolios are professional-looking three-ring binders filled with plastic sleeves that contain and protect your teaching documents. Basic documents to include are:

- Résumé
- Teacher certification
- Your philosophy of teaching or mission statement
- Evaluations
- Successful lesson plans
- Sample letter to parents about the beginning of the school year or semester
- List of rules, consequences, and positives that you've used in the classroom
- Samples from a unit (one to three pages)
- Sample of a student's work (with the name removed)
- Photos of a bulletin board or learning center you created or photos of students engaged in activities you organized
- Proof of membership in a professional organization, such as Kappa Delta Pi, International Educational Honor Society
- Letter noting a special achievement or volunteer activity or a thank-you letter from a student or parent

Candidates increasingly are creating electronic portfolios on Web pages and CDs. Electronic portfolios are convenient, creative, current, and show potential employers the candidate's technological aptitude. Hard-copy portfolios are still important however, because they provide testimony to your work and teaching strategies during interviews. The bound portfolio also serves as a backup in case the interviewer did not have time to review the electronic version or the disc is incompatible with the interviewer's computer system. Portfolios developed as PDF (portable document format) files are read easily with Adobe Acrobat Reader and increase software

compatibility. Download this software at
www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html.

Learn about developing a professional portfolio from the University of Manitoba Department of Education. Access their expert guidelines and templates for electronic portfolios at
<http://umanitoba.ca/academic/faculties/education/portfolio/home.html>

Career and Teacher Portfolios

Veteran teachers also use portfolios. They use them to track and showcase their work and display their professional development, which many states require. Teacher portfolios become career portfolios when a job change is desired. The longer you have been teaching, the more samples you may want to add. Include a table of contents and only the best-of-the-best work samples in the portfolio:

1. Table of contents

2. Background information

- Résumé
- State certification
- Transcripts
- Key beliefs

3. Teacher artifacts

- Lesson plans
- Unit outlines
- Projects
- Pictures
- Videotapes
- Student work samples
- Extracurricular interests
- Class newsletters
- Examples of collaboration/teaming

4. Professional information

- List of professional activities
- Awards and achievements
- Letters of recommendation
- Ongoing professional development
- Evaluations

The following Web sites provide links to information sources about electronic portfolios for students, teachers, and lifelong learners:

<http://eduscapes.com/tap/topic82.htm>

<http://www.helenbarrett.com/ALI/samples.html>.

Learn about developing career portfolios, as well as using portfolios in teaching, at <http://www.learnovation.com>.