

# WRITE TO WIN!



## A STANDOUT RESUME

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AUTHOR OF AWARD-WINNING BOOK  
*WRITE TO INFLUENCE!*

## Copyright

*Write to Win! A Standout Resume*

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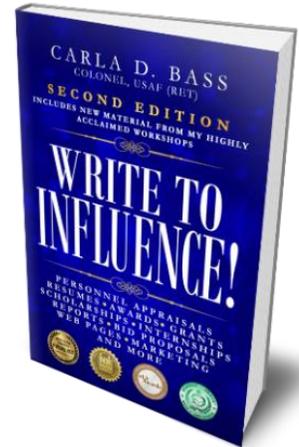
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## Want to learn more?

This **FREE** e-book will help you compose that standout resume.

**But, do you want more? Among many things, learn to:**

- **Craft a stellar resume** ... to land that dream job
- **Nail input to performance reviews** ... to score a big promotion
- **Write winning proposals** ... to secure contracts and grants
- **Project a web presence** ... to energize new business
- **Compose email** ... to elicit a prompt, thorough response
- **Justify resources** ... to launch new or expand existing projects



Grab a copy of the **second** edition of the multiple award-winning book “Write to Influence!” Replace bureaucratic blather with text that is clear, concise, and compelling. Then, hone your skills with 200 exercises (answers provided).

Light-hearted, engaging, and effective ... it’s not your mama’s grammar book!

**Available in e-book and paperback formats. Purchase wherever books are sold online. For more information, visit: <http://getbook.at/WriteToInfluence>**

## Endorsements

Write to Influence! will rejuvenate the lost art of clear, concise, professional writing. Corporate CEOs will rejoice at no longer being encumbered by reports difficult to read and frustrating to unravel!

**Judith A. Sprieser**, Non-Executive Director Allstate Corporation, InterContinental Exchange Inc., and Reckitt Benckiser plc

Write to Influence! should be in every professional's library. As a lawyer, clear and convincing writing is key to making a compelling, successful argument. This book sets out a roadmap for achieving that goal.

**Baba Zipkin**, Former Senior Counsel, IBM

Don't just read Write to Influence! Take your time with it. Practice it to become a better communicator and achieve goals throughout the rest of your life.

**Carl Dickson**, Founder of CapturePlanning.com and PropLIBRARY

As a career coach, I see a lot of resumes. With Carla's sage advice, my listeners and clients have been able to add impact to their resumes and cover letters.

**Magdelyn M. Mistal**, Career Consultant, Speaker, Dubbed by CNN as One of Nation's Best-Known Career Coaches

Carla is a trusted resource in our professional development toolkit. She pairs pragmatic exercises with tailored 1:1 feedback. Lessons can be applied immediately in the workplace and beyond.

**Teal Baker**, Chief Operating Officer, Invariant Group

Write to Influence! training led to increased professional advancement opportunities for countless numbers of service members.

**Lt Gen Dana T. Atkins, USAF (Ret)**, President and CEO, Military Officers of America Association (MOAA)

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Get Expert Help from Carla D. Bass

Other Books by Carla D. Bass

# Write to Win! A Standout Resume

## Chapter 1 – Powerful Writing Changes Lives

**This is not a theoretical e-book. It is chock-full with proven, practical advice.**

I speak now to everyone seeking employment: those entering the workforce, seasoned professionals laid off by downsizing spawned by Covid-19 or other economic factors, and individuals seeking opportunities for career growth.

Your goal is to WOW! the potential employer with a standout resume that elicits this response, “Tell me more!” or better yet, “You’re hired!”

“Powerful writing changes lives!” is my battle cry ... I’ve seen it ... I’ve done it ... throughout my 30-year career in the Air Force. Simply stated, an indisputable correlation exists between the ability to write well and success – personal and professional.

Powerful writing opens doors to promotion, fellowships, internships, scholarships, grants, career-broadening opportunities, and ... *employment*.

On the flip side, you might be the most qualified candidate – hands down – but if the competition is better at telling a story ... you lose. So does the employer, who unwittingly hires that less qualified individual.

**Question: What do these have in common?**

- Provide input to your performance review (1,000 characters)
- Summarize your grant proposal (250 words)
- Develop a corporate decision briefing (25 minutes)
- Give me your elevator speech (90 seconds)
- Compose a resume (2 pages maximum)

**Answer: You must persuade the recipient.** How? Make each word count and every second of the reader’s time play to your advantage. **How? Write to influence!**

I teach writing as a two-step process in my webinars and workshops, private coaching, and my Write to Influence! Master Class. First, strategize your message then apply Word Sculpting Tools to hone your draft so the message is clear, concise, and compelling. I present here 12 strategies and three Word Sculpting Tools to compose a standout resume.

## Chapter 2 – Strategies to Write A Standout Resume

Own your success! Proudly claim credit for your achievements. Now is not the time to be humble. Follow these 12 strategies to compose that gripping resume:

### **Strategy #1: Know Your Audience.**

This is the cardinal rule in all communication. The key in composing a job-clinching resume is to focus on the needs of the employer, not on yourself. Do your homework to ascertain information such as: the company's mission, vision, and goals; customers; products and services; its background; and recent growth. This provides context to frame your story. The research pays an additional dividend in preparing for a job interview.

### **Strategy #2: Record Accomplishments.**

Record your accomplishments as they occur. This ensures you don't overlook significant events, otherwise clouded by time. Many organizations use a Weekly Activity Report (WAR). If so, contribute regularly and retain your submissions. If a WAR is unavailable, maintain a job journal. Maintain an objective focus in documenting your achievements. What was your impact? Capture the "so-what."

### **Strategy #3: Gather the Data.**

Like an investigative reporter, dig for the details of your achievements. Employ Rudyard Kipling's "Serving Men" ... who, what, where, when, why, and how. The following questions will help ascertain this information:

- What was your level of responsibility?
- Did you resolve a difficult situation? What? How? With what result?
- Were you responsible for equipment? What was the monetary value?
- Did you save resources? How and what, exactly?
- Did you work on a significant project? What was its duration? What was your impact?
- Did you demonstrate leadership, initiative, flexibility, or teamwork? How?

#### **Strategy #4: Play the “Great Match Game.”**

Highlight in your resume as many correlations as possible between your skills, talent, and experience ... and the employer’s mission, values, goals, and needs. Incorporate in your document key words from the vacancy announcement to reinforce the identified correlations.

#### **Strategy #5: Set the Hook.**

In a resume, the opening two lines constitute the hook. Empathy is the key. To put this in context, an effective marketing campaign centers on the customer’s quintessential question, “*What’s in it for me?*” In the resume, you are marketing yourself. Accordingly, in these critical opening lines answer the employer’s unspoken question, “*How can I benefit by hiring you?*” Focus on the employer’s needs and tailor each resume to the job for which you are applying. “One size fits all” is not an advantageous approach in seeking a job.

- How not to: *Job objective is to fully utilize my office and security management experience in a business-oriented environment. [aka “I want to work.”]*
- How to: *23 years of senior leadership and management experience in defense and international S&T projects. In-depth expertise in policy, planning, operations, and security at [specified six organizations]. Outstanding executive skills including interagency coordination, executive correspondence, decision making, staff management, and team building.*

#### **Strategy #6: Stand Out from the Crowd.**

Another frequent shortfall in resumes is claiming credit for attributes an employer expects or characteristics applicable to a multitude of people. The litmus test is this – if what you wrote applies to almost everyone, you inadvertently placed yourself in the middle – not in front – of the crowd. The items below, found in actual resumes, are akin to breathing – you don’t get credit for that.

- *Consistently demonstrates a tireless devotion to duty*
- *Does what is right and takes personal responsibility*
- *Treats everyone with kindness and respect*
- *Committed to delivering quality customer service*
- *Will provide outstanding support as a valued subject matter expert*

Really, who would not advocate *treating everyone with kindness and respect?*

### **Strategy #7: Don't Write Bullets Like Job Descriptions.**

Some people actually incorporate into the resume lines extracted from the position announcement to which the resume responds. Do you think the potential employer won't notice? I found these bullets in resumes:

- *Experience with and/or demonstrated understanding of agency policies and customer base is a highly desired factor*
- *Responsible for writing standard operating procedures for the division's major functions*
- *Responsible for ensuring electronic and hard copy records are maintained and tracked*

### **Strategy #8: Scope the Story.**

Infuse your input with detail to add depth, dimension, and context. Detail makes the story *POP!* and provides the reader a mental yardstick to grasp the significance of your message. Alternatively, lack thereof results in a partially told story and lost opportunity.

Quantify by addressing how many, how soon, accomplished ahead of schedule (by how much), finished under budget (by how much), or improved production (by what percent), etc. Note the tremendous difference in the example below. The added detail in the After version is bolded to illustrate the teaching points:

**Before:** *Led a team that managed the organization's relocation to a new headquarters building. Developed and successfully executed a master schedule to accomplish the move*

**After:** *Led an **8-person** team that managed the relocation of **3,500 personnel and IT equipment valued at \$75M** to a new headquarters building. **The CEO formally lauded the team for its diligence demonstrated throughout the 10-month process***

- *Developed, executed, and tracked a master schedule of **7,090 tasks***

### **Strategy #9: Send Subliminal Messages.**

Leverage words that connote selection. These effectively mark you as an exemplary employee and set you apart from the crowd. Connote a culling process with verbs such as *chosen, garnered, selected, and nominated for*. Other words, which I characterize as differentiators, can also separate you from the competition, such as *one of only XXX, in an agency-wide selection, in a competitive process, and chosen personally by the XXX*. An opportunity can also be a differentiator. For example, *Selected as a White House intern* speaks volumes.

### **Strategy #10: Triage Your Data.**

After gathering the data, prioritize it. Like a budget – household or organizational – some things fall above the cutline, others below. Determine what to mention based on the scope of impact. These criteria can help cull the data:

- **Relevance to the vacancy announcement.** I reviewed a resume for an administrative position. The applicant was a talented geopolitical analyst and spoke several languages, but inappropriate for the job.
- **First such occurrence.** Breaking new ground is often noteworthy.
- **Set the benchmark.** Did others emulate your program? Look internally and externally to your immediate organization.
- **Demonstrated leadership, teamwork, flexibility, and initiative.** Employers seek these attributes; highlight them in your resume.
- **High visibility.** Was your accomplishment visible to and favorably assessed by upper echelons of your organization? Other organizations?

### **Strategy #11: Triage Your Data ... Again.**

Items gathered by applying Strategy #10 all deserve mention. However, don't list them haphazardly; instead, establish a pecking order. When listing items, lead with your strongest accomplishment – the bell ringer. Conclude with the **second** strongest item. Why? The opening and closing items in a list are prime real estate in communication. The former establishes the initial impression. The latter leaves the final impression. This psychology applies to many products, not just resumes.

### **Strategy #12: Don't Bury the Gold Nugget.**

Closely related to #11 above is the admonition to avoid inadvertently burying the most important fact—the golden nugget—in the center of a paragraph, smothered by a mass of less important information. Elevate it and follow with amplifying information. Can you find the gold nugget in the Before version? I extracted this verbatim from a resume – please don't write like this.

**Before:** *Demonstrated the ability to synthesize data and prepared, designed, budgetary analysis, manpower data, procurement cost and presented a proposal for a supply depot with cost estimate of \$750K to senior-level executives*

**After:** *Prepared and presented to senior executives a proposal for a supply depot estimated at \$750K. Expertly synthesized and analyzed data on finances, manpower, and procurement costs. The board accepted the proposal*

## Chapter 3 – Word Sculpting Tools ... Make Each Word Count

I define Word Sculpting as, “Choosing each word to concisely convey maximum meaning. Powerful writing ... Precision writing.” To explain, imagine you are a master sculptor facing an eight-foot block of marble. Your challenge—carefully chip and discard extraneous bits, allowing the envisioned image to emerge.

Word Sculpting parallels this except your draft replaces the marble. As the author, you know your message and the response you hope to elicit from the reader. Apply Word Sculpting Tools sentence by sentence to find, chisel, and discard excess words, redundancies, and other ineffective text. The more effectively you sculpt, the more succinct your product.

Ten Word Sculpting Tools constitute Part 2 of my book “Write to Influence!” I share three tools below to compose that standout resume.

### 1. Word Sculpting Tool #5: Verbs Are Your Friends – Rely on Them.

Leverage hard-hitting, action-oriented verbs to retain the reader’s attention, e.g., *developed, implemented, validated, initiated, directed, and composed*. Avoid vacuous verbs such as *[is] responsible for, supported, contributed to, and assisted with*. These prompt the question “*What precisely did you do?*” and waste valuable space to describe actual accomplishments and demonstrated skills. Moreover, being “responsible for” something explains nothing about how well you preformed that responsibility or if you did so, at all. Describe your achievements in clear, unambiguous terms.

Another flaw in resumes is inconsistency in words that open bullets. This, by the way, applies to bulleted lists in all products. If opening a bullet with a verb, do so throughout that set and use the same tense, i.e., don’t mix present and past tenses. Similarly, if a bullet begins with a noun (atypical for resumes), other bullets in that set should follow suit, i.e., don’t mix nouns and verbs.

Bullets should flow smoothly, like an aircraft’s flawless landing, with zero snags. To exemplify, you’ll find below two sets of words that open bullets, each extracted from a single resume. Read them aloud – really, do so! You’ll *hear* the snags in the first that detract and distract from your message, like potholes in that paved runway.

- *Provided, Extensive knowledge of, Assist technical staff, Provide, Excellent communication skills, Extensive event planning, Coordinate*

What follows next is the benchmark. Do you hear the rhythm? Boom, boom, boom! As a side note, it acceptable to occasionally open with an adverb, e.g., *expertly*.

- *Implemented, Developed, Validated, Formulated, Composed, Briefed, Led a corporate review of, Launched a prototype, Created, Directed, Executed a budget of, Expertly arranged, and Met the twin challenges of*

Follow each verb with equally hard-hitting facts and “so what” statements that clearly convey your impact and value added.

- *Simultaneously managed two divisions and supervised more than 50 people; ensured each division met mission requirements without conflict of priorities*

## **2. Word Sculpting Tool #6: Avoid Gibberish – It’s Confusing.**

In my book “Write to Influence!” I address four types of gibberish that will derail your message: 1) Job-related jargon inappropriate to the audience, 2) Unnecessary or overly detailed information, 3) Nouns ... upon nouns ... upon nouns, and 4) Incomprehensible bureaucratic blather. Here is an example of Type 2 taken from a resume:

**Before:** *Managed the security program for the Office of Project and Fixed Asset Management, Office of Defense Programs Maintenance and Facilities, and the Office of Environmental Oversight in agency ABC*

**After:** *Managed the security program (physical, personnel, and IT) for 1,400 people in three divisions of agency ABC. His many initiatives made this program the best in the agency*

**Analysis:** I condensed the verbose office names (21 words) into three words ... *in three divisions* ... and completely reoriented the story, expounding on the scope of the program, number of people supported, and the individual’s impact.

## **3. Word Sculpting Tool #10: Revise, Edit, and Proofread.**

This final advice is so intuitive, you might be inclined to disregard it. Don’t! Each step is distinct; each is required. Failure will likely compromise potential employment opportunities. I’ve seen resumes replete with typos, grammatical errors, unexplained and inconsistently used acronyms, and text repeated verbatim on subsequent pages – in one instance, four inches of repeated text!

**Don’t falter now ... you’re in the home stretch!**

## Chapter 4 – Write to Win ... In a Nutshell

The premise of “Write to Influence!” is simple: **Every author is constrained by two things: time and space.** The reader is busy ... time (and attention) is fleeting; space is often limited. **The individual who leverages both most effectively often wins.** The following tips pertain to composing resumes and other products, as well:

1. **Use strong verbs.** Be consistent in tense, e.g., *reported, recruited, sourced, submitted, received, and increased by X percent.*
2. **Frame your message with detail.** This sets the context for the reader, e.g., *global operations, full-service management firm, all contract requirements nationwide, 95% of requirements, within 24 hours, 9 offers per quarter, and bested 20+ other vendors.*
3. **Leverage subliminal messages.** These are puissant tools, e.g., *reported directly to the CEO and Director of Operations and sole recruiter trusted with building this recruiting pipeline.*
4. **Highlight your impact.** Here are excellent examples: *advanced to #1 of 15 vendors, exceeded quota by 50%, doubled the company’s previous placement record, and increased candidates from 350-700.*
5. **Word Sculpt your draft.** Ensure each word helps convey the message. Purge useless words, redundancies, and words that hog space. These are three of my 10 Word Sculpting Tools ... use them all!
6. **Revise, edit, and proofread.** This is the last Word Sculpting Tool. Set the draft aside and revisit it later with renewed energy and a fresh perspective. This advice applies to any significant document. Several revisions are often necessary. Like a gem, the more you polish, the brighter it shines!

## Chapter 5 – The Journey Continues

I'm delighted our paths crossed and hope our journey together continues. I can further help you gain the competitive edge to achieve your goals with the options below:

- **Sign up for my newsletter** (via my web site) to receive additional tips on powerful writing
- **Follow me on social media:**
  - <https://www.linkedin.com/in/carlabass/>
  - <https://twitter.com/carlabasswrite>
  - <https://www.facebook.com/WriteToInfluence.01/>
  - [https://www.instagram.com/Write\\_To\\_Influence/](https://www.instagram.com/Write_To_Influence/)
- **Visit my website** (<https://www.WriteToInfluence.Net/>). The [Free Tips page](#) offers a virtual library of my articles on many career and business-related topics and interviews on TV, radio, and podcasts.

### **I conclude with two requests:**

First, please share this e-book with the young adults in your lives. Those preparing to enter or newly arrived into the workforce will benefit from these strategies by which I propelled careers of so many deserving individuals.

Second, please share your success story with me if this complimentary e-book or “Write to Influence!” helped you. Your testimonial might inspire others!

Thank you for entrusting me with your time. May this e-book open doors to new opportunities!

Cheers ... Carla

Carla D. Bass  
Colonel, USAF (Ret.)

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[Carla@WriteToInfluence.Net](mailto:Carla@WriteToInfluence.Net)

## About the Author

Carla D. Bass served 30 years in the Air Force and retired as a colonel—one of the few women of her generation to reach this rank. Since retiring from the military, she has worked for a federal agency in Washington, D.C.

Central to Carla's success was the ability to write powerfully. Throughout her career, she has authored products sent to the White House and members of Congress. She has composed hundreds of personnel reviews, award nominations, budget justifications, and other executive correspondence for top leaders. Each required communicating with focused precision.



Carla authored the multiple award-winning book “Write to Influence!” ... now in its second edition ... to share her proven writing methodology.

Today, she teaches individuals and organizations the craft of persuasive communication, enabling them to achieve their goals through the power of influential writing. Her training is available via several venues: webinars, workshops, private coaching, and her Master Class. To learn more, visit: <https://www.WriteToInfluence.Net>

### Career Highlights:

**Most delightful:** Special Security Officer, Wiesbaden, Germany. A dream come true! I set my course for the Air Force while in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. This was my first tour of duty in a 30-year journey.

**Most fascinating:** Defense and Air Attaché to Bulgaria. I represented senior leaders of the U.S. military to our Bulgarian counterparts and other foreign attachés accredited to that country.

**Most fulfilling:** Commander, 324<sup>th</sup> Intelligence Squadron. I transformed the most losing unit in statewide quarterly and annual professional awards into the one to beat! How? I taught my 480 people to write winning nominations! By popular demand, I presented that one-hour workshop for the next 15 years to thousands of Air Force members.

## Get Expert Help with Your Writing

### Have you ever encountered these problems?

- Deserving people are not promoted. Why?
- Brilliant ideas remain on the drawing board. Why?
- Businesses that ought to succeed often fail. Why?

The inability to present a persuasive case often impedes them. What is the solution? Strategize the message, then replace bureaucratic blather with text that is clear, concise, and compelling.

## Write to Influence! Master Class

Empower yourself with my Write to Influence! Master Class, infused with 40-plus years of expertise practiced at the highest levels in government, business, and academia. You will learn to:

- **Craft a stellar resume** ... to land that dream job
- **Nail input to performance reviews** ... to score a big promotion
- **Write winning proposals** ... to secure contracts and grants
- **Project a web presence** ... to energize new business
- **Compose email** ... to elicit a prompt, thorough response
- **Justify resources** ... to launch new or expand existing projects

This instruction is tailored to your specific needs and experience level. Work with me in person or receive instruction via live video sessions. Include your team and multiply the benefits!

**For details on the Write to Influence! Master Class, visit:**  
<https://writetoinfluence.net/write-to-influence-master-class/>

## Personal Coaching Sessions

Do you prefer private coaching? Schedule a personal coaching session that includes direct access to ask questions and learn how to improve your writing. Using live video screenshare technology, I will walk you step-by-step through everything you need to know.

**For details about purchasing a 90-minute Coaching Session, visit:**  
<https://writetoinfluence.net/private-coaching-sessions/>

## Webinars and Workshops

This method of instruction is interactive, engaging, fun, and effective! Each workshop is approximately 60-90 minutes in duration, with one exception. Write to Influence! – Demystify Commas and Semicolons lasts about 15 minutes and can be added to any of the other workshops for an additional fee.

- **Powerful Writing for Professionals**
- **Powerful Writing for Academia**
- **Master the College Application Essay**
- **Secure that Grant**
- **Nail that Resume**
- **Ace Your Performance Review**
- **Tips to Catapult Your Career**
- **Spin that Captivating Tale (for fiction authors)**
- **Demystify Commas and Semicolons**



For details about purchasing a webinar or workshop visit:

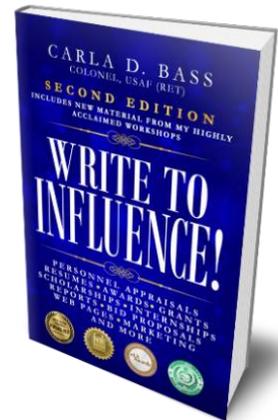
<https://writetoinfluence.net/webinars-and-workshop/>

## Other Books by Carla D. Bass

### **“Write to Influence!” (Second edition)**

#### **Winner of 5 national-level awards:**

- **2020 eLit Book Awards – Gold Medal:** Education/Academic/Teaching
- **2018 eLit Book Awards – Bronze Medal:** Business/Careers/Sales
- **2017 Next Generation Indie Book Awards – Finalist:** Careers
- **2017 Best Book Award – Finalist:** Careers
- **2017 Reader’s Favorite Award – Honorable Mention:** Occupation



**Want to learn more? Grab a copy of the second edition of the multiple award-winning book “Write to Influence!”** Carla shares her techniques, proven during 40 years composing for the White House, Congress, generals, and ambassadors and presented in workshops to academia, corporations, private business, NGOs, and federal agencies.

Strategize your message, then hone your draft to achieve text that is clear, concise, and compelling. Practice these skills with 200 exercises (answers provided). Learn to:

- **Craft a stellar resume ...** to land that dream job
- **Nail input to performance reviews ...** to score a big promotion
- **Write winning proposals ...** to secure contracts and grants
- **Project a web presence ...** to energize new business
- **Compose email ...** to elicit a prompt, thorough response
- **Justify resources ...** to launch new or expand existing projects

**Light-hearted, engaging, and effective ... it’s not your mama’s grammar book!**

**Available in e-book and paperback formats. Purchase wherever books are sold online. For more information, visit: <http://getbook.at/WriteToInfluence>**

**For more information about Carla’s writing and consulting services visit:**

**<https://WriteToInfluence.Net/>**