

# Crabby's gift for high school grads



It's that time of year when high school seniors are graduating, partying, and then panicking. But that last one need not be so. Here are some ideas on how to take that next step when you're getting out there in the world.

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I'm proud of you; I am! You made it through high school with your soul intact (basically) and your fashion sense enhanced (obviously). And while your grandparents may have told you that high school was the best time of your life (your parents are probably young enough to remember high school and should know better), don't believe it for a second. If this cliché were true, you'd have every right to fall into a deep, dark depression right about now (OK, well, maybe after the summer when your tan is fading and reality is rounding the bend like a freight train).

Now, since we all know that the best times of your life are yet to come, let's get started today. Some of you may be going off to college, while others may have chosen to get a job right away or perhaps wait a while before jumping back into academia. (You've been through 12 years of schooling; I don't blame you if a break is what you need.) This column is my gift to all you high school graduates, whatever you may be doing come next season. (If I were you, I'd read through this entire column; you never know when you may change your mind about what the next step in your life is going to be. College may not be all you hoped; conversely, jumping right into the old 9-5 — which, let's be honest here, is more like a 7-6 these days — may also feel less exotic than advertised.)

## For the college-bound

So you're off to college. Get your pizza money ready! A while back I wrote a [college-research column](#) about how to organize yourself and your resources when college-hunting. If you haven't already decided on a college, that may be a great place to start organizing your thoughts. There are templates for letters, ideas about keeping track of the various schools you're interested in, and tips for making the most of Office marketplace fax and mailing services. And, apparently, it's mom-approved as I've received numerous letters of gratitude from moms (and dads) of graduating seniors.

### Get your toolbox ready

If you already know where you're heading off to in the fall, let me give you some links that will, if nothing else, ensure that you're prepared, computer-wise, when you find yourself in one of those 800-student-we're-trying-to-weed-you-out Freshman organic chemistry courses:

- [Microsoft Office Home and Student 2007 Home Page](#)
- [Microsoft Office Home and Student 2007 product guide](#)
- [Microsoft Office Home and Student 2007 FAQ](#)
- [Buy 2007 Microsoft Office system products](#)

In case you're wondering:

- Yes; this edition is cheaper than the others. It's offered at one low price for everyone (meaning there isn't a difference between the upgrade price and full version price — they are one in the same). Cha-ching!
- Yes, "student of life" entitles you to this special pricing.

## Jump into the working world

For those of you who have chosen to either skip the college experience entirely or perhaps delay it, you're about to find out that not being in school doesn't mean it's now time for 100% fun and games. Hardly. Maybe you want to strike out on your own, get your own apartment, rack up some debt, and enjoy the rigors of daily ramen noodles and mac and cheese.

**TIP** Eat some fiber; you'll be glad you did. (Trust me on this one.)

I'm here to point you toward some resources — to help you build a resume, get a job, get your own place — that may make this next step of your life a little less traumatic and whole lot easier (on you and your parents).

Let's face it: The first job you're likely to land fresh out of high school probably won't be your dream job. Then again, "likely" doesn't mean for sure. I mean, who's to say? You may land yourself one sweet deal on Wall Street, on Broadway, or as a chef at the hottest new restaurant in town even before you've caught your mortarboard....

But I'm someone who truly believes in experience being just as important as schooling. And I've had my share of, shall we say, lower-paying, labor-intensive jobs where I was less than fresh at the end of the day. (I wasn't born with this fabulous hairdo and exotic job, dearie. I had to work up to it.) So my point is, you may have to take a job that isn't perfect; but no matter what it is, it will, I guarantee you, teach you things that will help you get jobs you will love down the line (not to mention give you experience in working with all sorts of people in a variety of industries). And what does this bit of advice have to do with Microsoft Office? Nothing; I just can't help remembering my first jobs (more than one involving a hairnet), and I want you to understand that you will move up in the world if you put some effort into it.

### **Entrance into the working world**

That being said, for those of you just starting out in the job world, having a good resume is a great way for prospective employers to get an idea of who you are, what you've done, and what you'd like to do. And don't worry; even if you've had virtually no experience with a paying job, you can make any resume sparkle with a little help from, you guessed it, Office Templates. And listen to me: You have more experience than you think you do. So get creative and more important, get used to using key action verbs on your resume — words like "initiated" or "augmented" or "bossed around."

- [Functional resume emphasizing education](#)
- [High school graduate resume](#)
- [Basic resumes](#)
- [Job specific resumes](#)
- [Situation specific resumes](#)
- [Reference letters](#)
- [Interview letters](#)

### **Add some glitter to your resume**

Beyond resumes and cover letters, how about making sure your skills are as up-to-date as they can be? Almost every job these days requires some sort of computer work. If you list yourself as a Microsoft Office Specialist on your resume, you can bet that title will make your resume stand out from the crowd.

- [Become a Microsoft Office Specialist](#)
- [Find a Microsoft Office Specialist Testing Center](#)
- [Get certified and prove your Office prowess](#)

### **For the entrepreneurs in the bunch**

And now, for those of you who are scoffing at my assessment of what your first job may be, here is something to really start you thinking: Start your own business — you might as well create your own reality your own way. If you've got the idea, the time, the energy, and the start-up money, you go for it. If you're still lacking that last expensive item, we probably have just the template you need to coherently organize your thoughts and aggressively lobby for your financing.

- [Business plan for startup business](#)
- [Business planning checklist](#)
- [Bank loan request for small business](#)

- [More business plan templates](#)

Whatever your plans are, I want to say congrats again. Now get out there, go fly, be free, work hard, play hard...and don't forget to write.

## Tip of the week

I once wrote a column called [Keep your imperfections private: Obliterate revision marks in Word](#), and in it I gave you tips about how to make sure all the revision marks and comments in your Word document are gone before you send off the "final" copy. This week's tip-of-the-week winner, L.H. from Texas, offered a simple and yet beautiful tip about how to make sure you *can* start inserting all those revision marks. L.H. writes:

"When you're getting crabbier and crabbier because Microsoft Word won't let you accept changes from various reviewers to your document, remember to check to be sure that the document has been unprotected: On the **Tools** menu, click **Unprotect Document**.

**NOTE** If there is no **Unprotect Document** option there, then you have nothing to unprotect and can go about your editing....

Feels good to have your document out there, flapping in the wind for everyone to add his or her comments to, doesn't it?

**"True terror is to wake up one morning and discover that your high school class is running the country." — Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.**

## About the author

[Annik Stahl](#), the Crabby Office Lady columnist, takes all of your complaints, compliments, and knee-jerk reactions to heart. Therefore, she graciously asks that you let her know whether this column was useful to you — or not — by entering your feedback using the **Was this information helpful?** tool below. And remember: If you don't vote, you can't complain.

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