

Resume Writing Guide

- Be brief, clear, neat and honest
- Your resume should be well organized and easy to follow
- Be focused; employers do not want to make career decisions for you
- Your resume is a formal, professional document and a work sample

Common Guidelines

- ❖ Resume length: 1-2 pages. It is VERY rare and uncommon for students to have a two page resume.
- ❖ Font type and size: Arial, Times New Roman, Gill Sans, Garamond (common, easy to read types), 11-12 pt size.
- ❖ Name and section headings should be most prominent thing on page and be easy to read.
- ❖ Margins: ¾ in to 1 inch on all sides; keep sides symmetrical.
- ❖ Use bold and underline to highlight content of particular relevance and importance. Use *italics* sparingly.
- ❖ Use a consistent verb tense (past tense for past experiences and present tense for current experiences).
- ❖ Use action-oriented words to describe your experiences.
- ❖ Organize your content in a way that reflects your professional pursuits.
- ❖ Omit personal information such as height, weight, age, race, gender, hobbies, interests, and marital status.
- ❖ Minimize abbreviations to only those that are well known, i.e., states.
- ❖ Proofread your resume and have others review it for grammar and clarity.
- ❖ Name the document appropriately when saving to your computer (ex. Jane Doe Resume 2023.doc).
- ❖ Save your resume as a .pdf document for easy electronic transmission.

Typical Resume Formats

Chronological: This type of resume places emphasis on your most recent jobs and accomplishments. This is arranged beginning with your most recent experience and ending with the least recent experience.

Use this format if: 1) Your most recent education or work experience is related to your career goal; 2) your work history shows a logical progression toward your current career objective; or 3) you have a stable work history with few or no gaps.

Functional: This style highlights your skills and achievements as opposed to job titles and dates. Typical functional categories include skill areas such as Administrative, Service, Supervisory, Communications, Financial, Training, Interpersonal, Creative, Public Relations, Sales, Language and Computer.

Use this format if: 1) your work history is inconsistent; or 2) you are changing careers. Most students and young professionals do NOT use this format.

Combination: With this format, you adapt your resume to each industry or organization which you are targeting for employment. This format highlights your capabilities in relation to that specific industry, organization or job.

Use this format if: 1) you want the reader to focus on only your education and work experience that helped prepare you for their specific job; 2) you want to emphasize some past experience that is relevant to your career objective, or 3) you'd rather de-emphasize your most recent experience, which is not so relevant.

TIP: Use the Resume Templates in Microsoft Word with caution. These can be helpful, but eventually they create a document which is difficult to edit.

More than one resume?

It is common to have a few different resumes, all ready for use. One may be geared toward a job in marketing, while another may be better for a legal assistant position. Know that your resume should be tailored for the type of position you seek to pursue. Subtle differences can create a distinctive resume and one that highlights the skills and experiences you have which are most relevant to the available job or internship.

Putting the Pieces Together

The following are topic areas often included in resumes. These are typical headings, but not the only ones you can include. Use them as guidelines in developing your first draft.

NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Always include your name, phone number, and your email. Make yourself easily accessible by telephone since this is how employers will typically contact you. If you list your cell phone, be certain that your outgoing message is appropriate for potential employers. Similarly, only use professional email addresses.

PROFESSIONAL/CAREER OBJECTIVE (optional)

Make a concise, positive statement about your work goals. Indicate 1) the position or job you want; 2) the skills you will bring to the job; and 3) a combination of position and skills. The more focused you are, the better. Example: A summer internship in the media department of a large advertising agency where graphic design skills would be needed. Please note that objectives have begun to go out of fashion on resumes – many employers view them as an old, dated, unnecessary practice.

EDUCATION

- Degree and date of graduation (month & year)
- Name of college, city and state
- Major, minor and/or area of concentration
- Relevant course work (optional)- list courses that you think will add to your qualifications and may not be inferred from your major or minor; list four to six courses maximum
- Other colleges (same format) - list if you received a degree there or transferred from there. Always put most current college first
- Do NOT include high school information

EXPERIENCE

- Include job title, place of employment, city and state, dates (most recent first). Typically go back 4-5 years or summer after high school. Experience sections can include non-paid experiences like volunteering, internships, etc. – anything that relates to your objective would be appropriate.
- Provide a concise description of the job/activity/volunteer experience that clearly highlights relevant skills. This can be in brief paragraph format or with concise bulleted statements.
- Do NOT use personal pronouns.
- Use power verbs, action verbs and qualifying adjectives. If it's a present job, use present-tense verbs; if it's a past job, use past-tense verbs.
- Quantify when possible - use numbers (% , \$, etc.).
- Describe your experience as it relates to the position or field of interest.
- Use alternative headings if necessary to separate experience that is most directly related to your career objective. Examples include: Relevant Experience, Computer Experience, Sales Experience, Financial Experience, Writing Experience, Science/Research Experience, Retail Experience, Banking Experience, Teaching Experience, Foreign Travel, etc.

SKILLS

Foreign language competency, technical ability, scientific/lab experience, and certifications should be included in this section. Only list skills that you are comfortable using on a regular basis and that relate to your career objective.

RELATED PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION

Any of these can become a separate category if your background warrants:

- Co-curricular activities / leadership
- Honors, Awards, Scholarships, Fellowships
- Internships
- Affiliations with civic and community groups
- Professional organization memberships and offices held
- Licenses, certificates currently held (i.e., First Aid, etc.)
- Publications
- Research

REFERENCES

References can be handled in a variety of ways. Prepare a separate reference page with the same header as your resume and list your references' names, job titles, addresses (work), and phone numbers.

Make sure that each of your three to four references have agreed in advance to be your reference and are prepared to answer calls and emails concerning your candidacy. Professional references from work or college tend to carry more weight than personal character references.