



Writing an Effective Resume

What is the purpose of the resume?

The goal of your resume is to get an interview. For this reason, you want your resume to highlight the aspects of your experience that are most transferable to the opportunity you want.

A resume provides a summary of your skills, abilities and accomplishments. A resume is used for a variety of reasons (part time job, internship, scholarship, graduate school, or full time employment) and because applications vary, your resume must be tailored based on the specific purpose. Your resume should generate interest, resulting in an interview. It must also be carefully written and critiqued.

TARGETING YOUR RESUME. It's a good idea to have a long version of your resume that you save on your computer that you can pull from each time you apply for an opportunity. By having this longer document, you can then determine which information should be used for the particular position. Class projects, work experiences (even from high school), campus involvement, volunteer work, and entrepreneurial projects could potentially be needed for future resumes you are building. Focus on how the transferable skills you have obtained, even from jobs you think are unrelated, actually do relate to the position you want.

HEADING: Your heading is your personal letterhead and can also be used on your cover letter. Have freedom in the way you format (left aligned or centered on the page) and the text (font and size) – just keep it professional. Always include your phone number with area code and e-mail address. Most will include complete mailing address or the location where you are searching for work and intend to relocate. You may include links to personal website, blog, LinkedIn profile as long as your content is appropriate (in content and quality) for employers to view.

EDUCATION: Include name of school, degree or certificate earned or pursuing major area of study and graduation or expected graduation date (month year). You may include GPA, academic projects, relevant coursework, study abroad, and/or continuing education in your field. You may include certifications, licenses or teaching credentials.

EXPERIENCE: Include the name of company or organization (unless self-employed), your title, the location (city, state) and dates of involvement (month year – month year OR month year – Present). Use action verbs to describe your duties and accomplishments. List history and dates in reverse chronological order (your current or most recent work or activity first) within experience categories.

Briefly describe primary duties in a way that shows significance and skill development. Focus on transferable skills you will use again rather than specific duties that may not be part of a future job.

CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT/ VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE: List organizations you belong to. You may develop into detailed experiences by including offices you held and accomplishments or just list the name of the organization and include dates of involvement.

CREATING EXPERIENCE CATEGORIES. Additional categories might include class projects, related experience, relevant course work, research experience, leadership experience, presentations, and publications.

Consider separating your experiences to strategically place your most relevant experiences higher on the page by using headings such as “related experience” and “work experience.”

REFERENCES. References should go on a separate page that also includes the heading you used for your resume. Include contact information for at least 3 people that have said they would be willing to speak on your behalf. They should personally know about your work ethic and ability to be successful in a future position. Avoid putting “references available upon request” at the end of your resume – it takes up space and is



Resume Checklist

Overall Appearance and Content

- Makes an immediate favorable impression; easy to read
- Avoids using templates you find online – they are hard to update and look generic
- Looks appropriate for profession
- Separates info into categories for easy reading
- Makes efficient use of space
- Appropriately uses bold, underlining, etc.
- Not more than 2 pages in length
- Makes every word count.
- Supports and substantiates objective
- Does not use full sentences (no “I” statements).
- Free from grammatical, spelling, & punctuation errors
- Mentions technical, computer, or language skills
- If distributed in person, printed on high quality resume paper

Contact Information

- Is clearly presented at top of page
- Includes one telephone number(s)
- Includes one email address that looks professional
- Includes current address or desired relocation city

Objective (optional)

- Is clearly stated and conveys purpose
- Is reasonably short (1-3 lines)
- Is related to position applied or states the job title

Special Sections (may vary by major/field)

- Skills – focus on hard skills - technical, lab, tools, equipment, etc.
- Certifications - common for those with flight hours, state boards
- Licensure or Certification Assessments – list licensure received or list tests completed and scheduled (included dates) for license requirements

Organization

- Organizes categories so strongest qualifications listed first, consistent format throughout
- Related information organized together in categories
- No references listed on main resume

Education Section

- Includes degree(s), major and institution
- Includes graduation date.
- GPA is included if over 3.0
- Includes relevant coursework (no course numbers), if applicable
- Includes Study Abroad, if applicable
- Includes 1 or 2 significant honors (could be a separate section)

Experience Section

- Includes job title
- States employer name & location (city, state)
- Includes dates for each experience
- Listed in reverse chronological order within sections
- Uses concise phrases starting with action verbs
- Descriptions detail skills, accomplishments and results rather than duties

Leadership/Activities/Honors

- Shows well roundedness
- Choose most significant involvement and honors that you could elaborate on in an interview
- Emphasizes/describes leadership roles
- List **significant** scholarships
- For significant leadership roles, consider a separate category entitled “Leadership” where you describe experiences as you would a job

Submitting the Resume & Cover Letter

- **#1 Tip – Follow the directions that the employer has provided with their job - each organization will accept these materials differently**
- If an email address is provided, send a professionally written email with the resume and cover letter attached, both saved as PDFs.
- If the employer takes resumes through a web-based application, you will most likely upload the resume and cover letter as well as other materials such as references.
- Both humans and computers reading resumes look for key words from the job description.
- Employers may also ask for an application. If you're unsure of whether to provide an application or a resume, it's best to provide both.

RESUME ACTION VERBS

When describing your experiences, start each bulleted phrase with a strong action verb to demonstrate a specific skill. Avoid starting your phrases with the words "responsible for." Instead, you want to provide the reader with a visual of how you acted on the job. Use the words listed to create a clear picture of your experiences.

Management / Leadership Skills

- assigned
- attained
- chaired
- collaborated
- consolidated
- contracted
- cooperated
- coordinated
- delegated
- directed
- enforced
- enlisted
- executed
- expedited
- facilitated
- governed
- improved
- increased
- initiated
- inspired
- led
- listened
- managed
- mediated
- motivated
- oversaw
- planned
- prioritized
- produced
- recommended
- represented
- reviewed
- revitalized
- scheduled
- shaped
- strategized
- strengthened
- spearheaded
- supervised

Communication Skills

- addressed
- arbitrated
- authored
- clarified
- conveyed
- convinced
- corresponded
- directed
- drafted
- edited
- explained
- formulated
- influenced
- informed
- interpreted
- interviewed

- lectured
- mediated
- moderated
- negotiated
- persuaded
- promoted
- publicized
- reconciled
- recruited
- reported
- summarized
- translated

Research Skills

- analyzed
- calculated
- collected
- compared
- conducted
- critiqued
- defined
- evaluated
- examined
- extracted
- forecasted
- formulated
- gathered
- identified
- inspected
- predicted
- quantified
- reviewed
- summarized
- surveyed
- systematized
- tested

Technical Skills

- analyzed
- assembled
- built
- calculated
- computed
- constructed
- designed
- devised
- engineered
- fabricated
- located
- maintained
- modified
- operated
- overhauled
- programmed
- remodeled
- repaired
- solved
- supplied
- upgraded

Teaching Skills

- adapted
- advised
- coached
- communicated
- coordinated
- demonstrated
- developed
- enabled
- encouraged
- evaluated
- explained
- facilitated
- guided
- informed
- instructed
- persuaded
- set goals
- stimulated
- trained

Financial Skills

- administered
- allocated
- analyzed
- appraised
- audited
- balanced
- budgeted
- calculated
- computed
- developed
- forecasted
- marketed
- planned
- projected

Creative / Design Skills

- acted
- built
- choreographed
- composed
- conceptualized
- created
- customized
- designed
- directed
- entertained
- established
- fashioned
- founded
- illustrated
- incorporated
- instituted
- integrated
- introduced
- invented
- originated
- performed

- photographed
- planned
- revitalized
- shaped

Helping Skills

- administered
- assessed
- assisted
- clarified
- coached
- communicated
- coordinated
- counseled
- demonstrated
- diagnosed
- dispensed
- educated
- evaluated
- expedited
- facilitated
- familiarized
- guided
- monitored
- motivated
- operated
- performed
- recorded
- referred
- rehabilitated
- represented

Clerical / Detail Skills

- approved
- arranged
- catalogued
- classified
- collected
- compiled
- dispatched
- executed
- generated
- implemented
- inspected
- monitored
- operated
- organized
- prepared
- processed
- purchased
- recorded
- retrieved
- screened
- specified
- systematized
- tabulated
- validated



Resume Planning Worksheet

Use this worksheet to brainstorm your experiences. When you're ready to write your resume, include the information that best fits your objective and shows the skills required for the job.

IDENTIFYING INFORMATION:

first name, middle initial, last name

telephone number, e-mail address

address to use for applications

OBJECTIVE

Examples: A (An) x position utilizing my x, y, and z skills OR A position in x field that would provide experience for insert future oriented goal

EDUCATION (list GC first. If you completed a significant amount of coursework or received a degree from another college, list it second. High school information is not needed and should not be used beyond the freshman year).

college, city, state

Degree (B.A., B.S., B.S.N., A.S. etc)

Month & year to be received

major(s), minor(s), concentration(s)

grade point average (if above a 3.0)

related course work (maximum of 6 classes; only if applicable to objective and when you may not have related work experience)

EXPERIENCE (volunteer or paid. List most recent experience first.)

title, name of organization, city, state, and dates of employment

leading with an action verb, describe a responsibility, duty, accomplishment, or acquired skill.

leading with a strong action verb, describe another responsibility, duty, accomplishment, or acquired skill.

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SKILLS (Specify computer languages or special skills, including working knowledge, proficiency, or fluency in languages other than English. This information can be used in a skills section at the bottom of your resume or a summary of qualifications section between the objective and education. This should not be a list of soft skills.)

LEADERSHIP/ACTIVITIES (List leadership positions, memberships or affiliations. Be sure to include the Sorority LLLC program as one of the areas you describe. You may include HS activities until you take on new leadership roles in college.)

name of organization, title or position (if applicable)

If you held a leadership role, describe accomplishments, duties, responsibilities, and acquired skills

name of organization, title or position (if applicable)

If you held a leadership role, describe accomplishments, duties, responsibilities, and acquired skills

HONORS AND AWARDS (List honors toward the end of a resume, focusing on those that may be significant for your field of study or shows mastery of a valued transferable skill.)

name of honor or award, date received

name of honor or award, date received

name of honor or award, date received

INTERESTS (only list interests if they would be important to the employer and the field. For instance, photography would be useful for someone in the public relations field)

OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS (List any additional information that may fit into a new or previously listed category. Areas to consider: presentations, research projects, community service, study abroad, military, etc)

PRESENTATIONS

RESEARCH/CLASS PROJECTS

COMMUNITY SERVICE

STUDY ABROAD

MILITARY

ADDITIONAL