

Resume Writing Tips

A resume is:

- An organized compilation of your education, experiences and achievements
- Your own personal marketing piece designed to give a picture of
 - Who you are
 - What you have accomplished
 - Your ability to successfully perform meaningful work
- Often the first impression an employer will have of you
- A job search tool that should elicit an invitation to interview
- A living document that will grow and change to reflect your own development

Resume Design Basics

- Formatting and Appearance
 - Clear, concise, inviting to read and easy to access information
 - Margins: 1 inch on all sides
 - Length: generally 1 page, no more than 2
 - Use standard fonts (Times New Roman, Calibri, Arial)
 - Type Size: 10 – 12 point
 - Paper: White, beige or light gray quality bond paper – same color paper should be used for your cover letter and envelope
 - Use consistent forms (italics, bold, underline, CAPS)
- Content
 - Include standard contact information (Name, Address, Phone, email)
 - Highlight relevant information; eliminate unrelated information
 - Link transferable skills that relate to position
 - Focus on the needs of the position or employer
 - Indicate your contributions and emphasize results
 - Use quantifiable information (specific numbers) whenever possible [e.g. increased sales by 50%, operated 10-line switchboard, provided clerical support for ten staff members]
- Grammar and Punctuation
 - Begin statements with action verbs and be consistent with verb tense
 - [use present tense for current positions, past tense for previous positions]
 - Avoid “I”, “the”, pronouns and prepositions
 - Omit periods unless you have a complete sentence

Resume Components

Below are components that are parts of a resume listed in the order suggested for new or recent college graduates.

Resumes do not have to include ALL of these components.

HEADING:

- The top of your resume must begin with your name, address, e-mail and a phone number where you can be reached. Make sure your voicemail and e-mail are professional.

OBJECTIVE:

- A clear and concise statement of what job title or type of position you are targeting
- Should be tailored for each position
- Optional to include, but suggested

EDUCATION:

- List all colleges in reverse chronological order, beginning with the one you are presently attending. Include your degree, certification and your major. Your grade point average is optional, and should not be included if it is below a 3.0.
- May incorporate RELATED COURSEWORK by providing titles of courses you’ve taken (may also include current courses)

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS:

- Bulleted list that can summarize multiple aspects of your background and provides a description or overview of relevant functional skill set
- Short list of both “hard” and “soft” skills
- Include computer and language skills
- Use keywords related to field or industry
- Can incorporate RELATED COURSEWORK by providing descriptions of what you learned in those classes instead of just the title

EXPERIENCE:

- Should include related employment (full-time or part-time), internships (paid or unpaid), co-op, service learning, volunteering, projects or academic research, work experience abroad, capstone projects
- List employers in reverse chronological order
- May create 2 sections:
 - PROFESSIONAL/RELATED EXPERIENCE
 - ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

ADDITIONAL COMPONENTS: (optional- include those relevant to position)

ACTIVITIES:

- Leadership activities, student organizations, professional memberships, volunteer work that doesn’t fit well in experience

HONORS/AWARDS/SCHOLARSHIPS/RECOGNITION

PUBLICATIONS/RESEARCH

Resume Tips:

- Employers spend 30 – 45 seconds initially reviewing your resume, forming an impression of you and making the decision to keep you in or weed you out
 - Focus on the format and appearance of your resume so your message (content) can make a positive impact
- Use bulleted lists instead of paragraphs
- Chronological components of resume (EDUCATION and EXPERIENCE) should be listed in reverse order (most recent first) and should include:
 - What (Degree/Major for ED & Job Title for EXP)
 - Where (School name for ED & Company name for EXP)
 - Location (ONLY City and State)
 - Time frame (use consistent format)
 - MM/YY – MM/YY
 - Y – Y
 - # Years
- Use consistent formatting (**bold**, *italics*, underline, CAPS, SMALL CAPS, or any combination) for similar things:
 - **Degree/Major** and **Job Title** (bold)
 - *School Name* and *Company Name* (italics)
 - **RESUME COMPONENTS** (bold and CAPS)
- Brainstorm skills and experiences you have gained from all areas of your life, then edit out the irrelevant ones
- Employers form impressions of you based on your email address and phone voicemail
 - Make sure you have a professional email address (yourname@gmail.com)
 - No slang, profanity, music, overly religious or silly comments should be a part of your voice mail greeting
 - Always respond in a timely manner to employer contacts (phone or email)
- Always ask someone to proofread your resume!
- Reference Page (if requested)
 - Do not include “References Available Upon Request”
 - Reference addendum, with contact information for a minimum of 3 professional references, is a separate page that should complement resume
- Electronic / Email Resumes
 - Always include your name when saving your resume to email to an employer (i.e. Sandra Smith resume.pdf)
- Scannable resumes:
 - Use American Standard Code for Information Interchange (ASCII) format, can be done in notepad or save as Rich Text Format

Standout Resumes

Do:

- Quantify your information whenever possible
- Focus on the employers’ needs
- Take inventory of your skills and promote those relevant for the job
- Include a cover letter
- Be prepared to elaborate on resume info in an interview
- Use action verbs
- Use consistent formatting
- Limit or avoid abbreviations
- Omit articles (a, an, the)
- Have your resume reviewed and critiqued

Don’t

- Use “I” on your resume
- Include unrelated information
- Ever exceed 2 pages
- Fabricate, exaggerate or misrepresent
- Fail to convey your knowledge, skills and abilities
- Make your resume difficult to read
- Use paragraphs or large blocks of text
- Use passive descriptions
- Number items, instead use bullets
- Use excessive punctuation

Suggestions

- Keep an “experience” journal so as you gain knowledge, skills and experiences you can record them (especially quantifiable information) and have a resource to use as you regularly update your resume
- Make sure resumes you post online are privacy safe and searchable
- Attend the Employment Prep Conference (held in the beginning of the fall and spring semesters) to have an employer critique your resume, make a professional contact and strengthen your networking skills
- Get your resume critiqued at Career Services (drop-in hours during semester: 10 am - 3 pm)
- Post your final resume, critiqued and free of errors on KnightLink
- Understand your resume doesn’t get you a job... it gets you an interview