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What is a Resume?

A resume is a one or two page summary of your education, skills, accomplishments, and experience. Your resume's purpose is to get your foot in the door. A resume does its job successfully if it does not exclude you from consideration.

To prepare a successful resume, you need to know how to review, summarize and present your experiences and achievements on one page. Unless you have considerable experience, you don't need two pages. Outline your achievements briefly and concisely.

A resume is always growing and changing. As your career goals shift or the job market changes—as you grow personally and professionally—chances are you will need to re-write your resume or at least create new versions. Writing a resume is a lifelong process.

Your resume is your ticket to an interview where you can sell yourself!

Seven Tips for Effective Resume Writing

1. Pay attention to detail—Don't cut corners by, for instance, not proofreading the cover letter, failing to include information the hiring manager asked for, or beginning the cover letter "Dear Sir or Madam" when the hiring manager's name is on the company web site. Take the time to make sure the correspondence and information sent is correct and error-free.
2. Do the basics—proofread for spelling, grammar, and tone, and make sure you have followed the instructions of the employer. Firing off an e-mail is a convenient method of communication. However, don't let the sloppy nature and informality of e-mail correspondence seep into your communication—whether it's emailed or written—with potential employers.
3. Construct an effective resume—Organize your information in logical fashion and keep descriptions clear and to the point. Include as much work experience as possible, even if it obviously doesn't relate to the job you are seeking. Also, use a simple, easy-to-read font.
4. Customize their response—Address the hiring manager directly, and include the name of the company and the position for which it is hiring in your cover letter/e-mail response.
5. Make it easy for the hiring manager—Use your name and the word "resume" in your e-mail header so it's easy to identify. If the employer asks for information—such as references or writing samples—provide it.
6. Focus on what you bring to the employer, not what you want from the job—This is an opportunity for you to market yourself and stand out from the other candidates. What can you do to make the hiring manager's life easier? What can you do to help the company?

7. Be professional—You won't be taken seriously if you don't have e-mail or voice mail/answering machine. If you don't have e-mail, set up a free account through Yahoo! or Hotmail. Provide the recruiter with a cell phone number if your voice mail/answering machine doesn't pick up when you are online. Also, it's a good idea to ditch the cute e-mail address or voice mail/answering machine messages in favor of something that sounds professional.

What works, what doesn't!

Make your resume easy to read and well organized, making it easier for employers to zoom in on those areas of most interest.

By providing a permanent address and by indicating how long your current address is valid, it is easier for employers to contact you.

Your objective should be specific, which lets your employer know, at a glance, what area you are interested in. Some employers, however, think including an objective limits you.

Ten Keys to Dynamite Resumes!

To help you construct a better, more powerful resume, here are ten overall considerations in regard to your resume's content and presentation:

1. Position title and job description. Provide your title, plus a detailed explanation of your duties and accomplishments. Since job titles are often misleading or their function may vary from one company to another, your resume should tell the reader exactly what you've done.
2. Clarity of dates and place. Document your work history and educational credentials accurately. Don't leave the reader guessing where and when you were employed, or when you earned your degree.
3. Explicitness. Let the reader know the nature, size and location of your past employers, and what their business is.
4. Detail. Specify some of the more technical, or involved aspects of your past work or training, especially if you've performed tasks of any complexity, or significance.
5. Proportion. Give appropriate attention to jobs or educational credentials according to their length, or importance to the reader. For example, if you wish to be considered for an engineering position, don't write on paragraph describing your current engineering job, followed by three paragraphs about your summer job as a lifeguard.
6. Relevancy. Confine your information to that which is job-related or clearly demonstrates a pattern of success. Concentrate only on subject matter that addresses the needs of the employer.

7. Length. Fill up only a page or two. If you write more than two pages, it sends a signal to the reader that you can't organize your thoughts, or you're trying too hard to make a good impression. If your content is strong, you won't need more than two pages.
8. Spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Create an error-free document that's representative of an educated person. If you're unsure about the correctness of your writing (or English is your second language), consult a professional writer or editor.
9. Readability. Organized your thought in a clear, concise manner. No resume ever won a Nobel Prize for literature; however, a fragmented or long-winded resume will virtually assure you of a place at the back of the line.
10. Readability. Be sure to select a conventional type style, such as Times Roman or Arial, and choose a neutral background or stationery. If your resume takes too much effort to read, it may end up in the trash, even if you have terrific skills.

Resume Design: Tips That Get Results

Employers prefer clean looking resumes that get to the point. By using the example on this page as a template, you'll improve both the style and the substance of your resume.

Layout

Add interest and clarity by using bullets, indent and varying font styles (such as bold and italic letters). Avoid using unconventional fonts or adding photos or graphics.

Length

The general rule is: one page for early-career (entry level to 5-10 years); two pages for mid-career candidates.

Job Data

Provide the reader with relevant detail about your past and present employers, such as product information, size and physical location.

Measurable

Quantify your job duties, reporting relationships and achievements with actual numbers.

Job and Education Dates

Make sure the dates are clear and without gaps. If you're a mid-to late-career candidate, you can save space by lumping early-career jobs together.

Degree Credentials

Please be accurate—be honest. Misrepresenting your degree is unethical, and could result in consequences that are embarrassing—or worse.

A Stronger Resume Will Increase Your Odds

Reality Check: Given the choice of two candidates of equal ability, hiring managers will always prefer to interview the one with the most artfully constructed and attractive resume. For that reason, candidates with superb qualifications are often overlooked. And companies end up hiring from a more shallow pool of talent; a pool made up of those candidates whose experience is represented by powerfully written, visually appealing resumes.

Of course, many of the best candidates also have the best resumes; and sometimes, highly qualified candidates manage to surface through word-of-mouth referral. In fact, the referral method is the one I use to present talented people to my client companies.

But unless you can afford to rely on your “reputation,” or on the recommendation of a barracuda recruiter, you’ll need more than the right qualifications to get the job you want—you’ll need a dynamite resume.

In today’s competitive employment market, your resume has to stand out in order to get the attention of the decision maker and create a strong impression. And later on, when you meet the prospective employer face to face, a strong resume will act as a valuable tool during the interviewing process.

Truth in Advertising

The best way to prepare a dynamite resume is not to change the facts, just to make them more presentable. This can be accomplished in two ways: 1] by strengthening the content of your resume; and [2] by enhancing its appearance.

Although there’s no federal regulatory agency like the FDA or FCC to act as a watchdog, I consider it to be ethical common sense to honestly and clearly document your credentials. In other words, don’t make exaggerated claims about your past.

Remember, your resume is written for the employer, not for you. Its main purpose, once in the hands of the reader, is to answer the following questions: How do you present yourself to others? What have you done in the past? And what are you likely to accomplish in the future?

In addition to providing a factual representation of your background, your resume serves as an advertisement. The more effective your 30-second commercial, the more the customer—the employer—will want to buy the expertise you’re selling.

Beefing Up an Anemic Resume

To get the most mileage out of your resume, you'll want to emphasize certain aspects of your background. By doing so, you'll present your qualifications in the most favorable light, and help give the employer a better understanding of your potential value to his or her organization. To build a stronger case for your candidacy, try highlighting the following areas of interest:

Professional achievements of particular interest. For example, if you're in sales, the first thing a hiring manager will want to know is your sales volume, and how you rank with your peers. If you've won awards, reached goals or made your company money, let the employer know.

Educational accomplishment. List your degree(s) and/or relevant course work, thesis or dissertation, or specialized training. Be sure to mention any special honors, scholarships, or awards you may have received, such as Dean's List, Com Laude, or Phi Beta Kappa.

Additional areas of competency. These might include computer software fluency; dollar amount of monthly raw materials purchased, or specialized training.

Professional designations that carry weight in your field. If you're licensed or certified in your chosen profession or belong to a trade organization, by all means let the reader know.

Success indicators. You should definitely include anything in your past that might distinguish you as a leader or achiever. Or, if you worked full time to put yourself through school, you should consider that experience a success indicator, and mention it on your resume.

Related experience. Anything that would be relevant to your prospective employer's needs. For example, if your occupation requires overseas travel or communication, list your knowledge of foreign languages. If you worked as a co-op student in college, especially in the industry you're currently in, let the reader know.

Military History. If you served in the armed forces, describe your length of service, branch of service, rank, special training, medals, and discharge and/or reserve status. Employers generally react favorably to military service experience.

Security Clearances. Some industries require a clearance when it comes to getting hired or being promoted. If you're targeting an industry such as aerospace or defense, give your current and/or highest clearable status, and whether you've been specially checked by an investigative agency.

Citizenship or right to work. This should be mentioned if your industry requires it. Dual citizenship should also be mentioned, especially if you think you may be working in a foreign country.

In a competitive market, employers are always on the lookout for traits that distinguish one candidate from another. Not long ago, I worked with an engineering manager who mentioned the fact that he was a three-time national power speed boat champion on his resume. It came as no surprise that several employers warmed up to his resume immediately, and wanted to interview him.

The Dangers of Resume Overkill

Nearly everything written about resume design concentrates on what you should put in. But let's look at what should be left out, or at least minimized.

Item #1: Salary history or salary requirements.

I've never heard of one good reason to mention your past, current, or expected salary. If you see a classified ad that says, "Only resumes with salary history will be considered," don't believe it. If your resume is strong enough, you'll be contacted. Once contacted, be forthright.

Item #2: References.

If you have high-impact or well known professional references, fine. Otherwise, "References: Available Upon Request" will do just fine. Avoid personal references like your minister or your attorney unless they happen to be Billy Graham or Sandra Day O'Connor.

Item#3: Superfluous materials.

When submitting a resume, avoid enclosing such items as your thesis, photos, diplomas, transcripts, product samples, newspaper articles, blue prints, designs, or letters of recommendation. These are props you can use during your interview, but not before. The only thing other than your resume that's acceptable is your business card.

Item #4: Personal Information.

Leave out anything other than the absolute essential such as, "Married, two children, willing to relocate, excellent health." By listing your Masonic affiliation, save-the-whales activism or codependency support group, you could give the employer a reason to suspect that your outside activities may interfere with your work.

Remember, the greater the relevancy between your resume and the needs of the employer, the more seriously your candidacy will be considered. Say what you need to get the job—and nothing more.

Choosing the Best Resume Format

Your resume can be arranged in one of two basic formats: summary or chronological.

- The summary (or functional) resume distills your total work experience into major areas of expertise, and focuses on the reader's attention on your accumulated skills.
- The chronological resume presents your skills and accomplishments within the chronological resume, since your last job should always appear first.)

Although the information you furnish the reader may essentially be the same, there's a big difference in the way the two resumes are constructed, and the type of impact each will have. My experience has shown that the chronological resume brings the best results since it's the most explicit description of the quality and application of your skills within a specific time frame.

The summary resume, on the other hand, works well if you've changed jobs or careers often, and wish to downplay your work history and highlight your level of expertise. If a prospective hiring manager is specifically interested in a steady, progressively advancing employment history (as most are), then the summary resume will very likely work against you, since the format will seem confusing, and might arouse suspicions as to your potential for longevity.

However, if the employer's main concern is your technical or problem-solving ability, the summary resume will serve your needs just fine. Either way, you should always follow the guidelines mentioned earlier regarding content and appearance.

Crafting Your Resume "Objective"

Most employers find that a carefully worded statement of purpose will help them quickly evaluate your suitability for a given position. An objective statement can be particularly useful as a quick-screen device when viewed by the manager responsible for staffing several different types of positions. ("Let's see; programmers in this pile, plant managers in that pile...")

While a stated objective gives you the advantage of targeting your employment goals, it can also work against you. A hiring manager lacking in imagination who's hard pressed for time will often overlook a resume with an objective that doesn't conform to the exact specifications of a position opening. That means that if your objective reads "Vice President position with a progressive, growth-oriented company," you may limit your options and not be considered for the job of regional manager for a struggling company in a mature market—a job you may enjoy and be well suited to.

If you're pretty sure of the exact position you want in the field or industry you're interested in, then state it in your objective. Otherwise, broaden your objective or leave it off the resume.

Your Resume: General Concerns

Developing your content

After completing a job search, self-analysis, and researching the company and position, you can begin identifying which of your experiences and goals are most relevant for you tailored resume. To help identify which of your credentials are most relevant, create two columns on a blank piece of paper. In one column list your general qualifications, skills, or experiences. In the other column, write down the qualifications most desired by the company that interests you.

The goal, of course, is to identify matches between the two columns. Once you have identified some matches, you can begin developing each of these qualifications in your resume. For example, if you listed good communication skills in both columns, then you'd start listing different experiences you've had that prove you have these skills.

Maybe you worked as a Customer service representative or took a class in business writing. In either case, you'll want to start listening the details of these experiences. Try to answer all the "journalistic questions" for each experience.

Use the journalistic questions

Who? - write down position titles, name of your supervisors, leaders, etc.

What?-list your responsibilities and duties, special projects, etc.; describe the nature of your experience (volunteer, intern, academic, work, etc.)

Where?-indicate place where you acquired such experience (the organization, program, department, division, etc.)

When?-write down important dates (starting date, ending date, dates of promotion, etc.)

Why?-write down the goals—personal, professional, or organizational—you were trying to achieve

How?-itemize different procedures, techniques, technologies, etc. you used to achieve goals

Use the skills list

Another way to generate content for your resume is to look over the skills list. Go through the entire list of action words and put a check mark next to all those that apply to you. Next go through the list again and check all those you think are most desired by employers hiring in your field. All those skills checked twice are the ones you want to develop and emphasize most in your resume. Apply the journalistic questions (above) to each skills word that was double-checked.

Tailoring for your audience

A tailored resume shines light on those qualifications a particular employer most wants to see. As you might expect, tailored resumes are most likely to get you an interview. To tailor your resume, though, you'll need to do some research into specific companies and positions. If you are unsure how to conduct research or what to look for, please see read more about the job search.

Regardless of the approach you take to writing your resume (generic or tailored), if you are creating a traditional print resume, you should write with two kind of reader in mind:

1. **Skimmers:** Resume readers are usually very busy and will probably not read every word. Especially on their first reading, busy readers will scan for desired information. Try to make such information easy to find “at a glance.” Give your resume the 15-second test: What information stands out? What information gets lost in the rush?
2. **Skeptics:** Once your resume has been skimmed, resume readers will look more closely and critically. Your resume may leave a good first impression on readers, but how will it look on closer inspection? Do you provide evidence and details for the careful reader? How can you make your resume look convincing “under the microscope”?

How can you write for both kinds of readers at once? A key strategy involves using organization and page design to create a resume that can be skimmed easily and read critically.

Guide to Resume Writing

How to Prepare an Effective Resume

1. Resume Essentials

Before you write, take time to do a self-assessment on paper. Outline your skills and abilities as well as your work experience and extracurricular activities. This will make it easier to prepare a thorough resume.

2. The content of your Resume

Name, Address, Telephone, E-mail address, Web site address

All your contact information should go at the tope of your resume.

- Avoid nicknames
- Use a permanent address. Use your parents' address, a friend's address, or the address you plan to use after graduating.
- Use a permanent telephone number and include the area code. If you have an answering machine, record a neutral greeting.

- Add your e-mail address. Many employers will find it useful. (Note: Choose an e-mail address that sounds professional.)
- Include your web site address only if the web page reflects your professional ambitions.

Objective or Summary

An objective tells potential employers the sort of work you're hoping to do.

- Be specific about the job you want. For example: To obtain an entry-level position within a financial institution requiring strong analytical and organizational skills.
- Tailor your objective to each employer you target/every job you seek.

Education

New graduates without a lot of work experience should list their educational information first. Alumni can list it after the work experience section.

- Your most recent educational information is listed first.
- Include your degree (A.S., B.S., B.A., etc.), major, institution attended, minor/concentration.
- Add your grade point average (GPA) if it is higher than 3.0
- Mention academic honors.

Work Experience

Briefly give the employer an overview of work that has taught you skills. Use **action** words to describe your job duties. Include your work experience in reverse chronological order—that is, put your last job first and work backward to your first, relevant job.

Include:

- Title of position.
- Name of organization
- Location of work (town, state)
- Dates of employment
- Describe your work responsibilities with emphasis on **specific skills** and achievements.

Other information

A staff member at your career services office can advise you on other information to add to your resume.

- Key or special skills or competencies
- Leadership experience in volunteer organizations
- Participation in sports

References

Ask people if they are willing to serve as references before you give their names to a potential employer.

Do not include your reference information on your resume. You may note at the bottom of your resume: "References furnished on request".

3. Resume Checkup

You've written your resume. It's time to have it reviewed and critiqued by a career counselor. You can also take the following steps to ensure quality.

Content:

- Run a spell check on your computer before anyone sees your resume.
- Get a friend (an English major would do nicely) to do a grammar review.
- Ask another friend to proofread. The more people who see your resume, the more likely that misspelled words and awkward phrases will be seen (and corrected)

Design:

These tips will make your resume easier to read and/or scan into an employer's data base.

- Use white or off-white paper
- Use 8-1/2x11-inch paper
- Use a font size of 10 to 14 points
- Use no decorative typefaces
- Choose one typeface and stick to it
- Avoid italics, script, and underlined words
- Do not use horizontal or vertical lines, graphics, or shading.
- Do not fold or staple your resume.
- If you must mail your resume, put it in a large envelope

Work Style-Characteristics

Before writing your resume, take a look at yourself, and check the qualities that characterize your work style.

Take Initiative	Dedicated
Plan Ahead	Good Humored
Good Communicator	Set Goals Clearly
Motivate Others	Energetic
Responsible	Think Quickly
Positive	Leader
Strategic Sense	Analytical

Persistent	Articulate
Innovative	Well Organized
Contribute Ideas	Resourceful
Meet Challenges	Disciplined
Adaptable	Knowledgeable
Persuasive	Enthusiastic
Imaginative	Decisive
Cooperative	Committed
Ambitious	Risk Taker
Friendly	Learn Quickly
Precise	Creative
Good Business Sense	Team Player

Resume Action Verbs

Strong action verbs can really help drive home your previous success and career achievements. Often times, we draw a blank on which verbs to use. This page provides an alphabetical index of power verbs that can be used in a resume, mainly to start action oriented statements.

Accomplish	Assessed	Communicate
Achieve	Assigned	Compared
Acted	Assisted	Compiled
Adapt	Attained	Completed
Administered	Balanced	Composed
Advertised	Budgeted	Conceived
Advised	Build	Conceptualized
Analyzed	Calculated	Conciliate
Apply	Catalogue	Condensed
Approach	Chair	Conducted
Approved	Clarify	Consolidated
Arrange	Collaborate	Constructed
Assembled	Collected	Consult

Contract	Guide	Oversee
Controlled	Handled	Participated
Converted	Headed	Perceive
Cooperate	Helped	Perform
Coordinate	Hired	Persuade
Corrected	Identified	Planned
Counseled	Illustrated	Prepared
Created	Implement	Presented
Decide	Improved	Preside
Decreased	Increase	Process
Defined	Index	Produce
Delegated	Influenced	Program
Demonstrated	Informed	Projected
Designed	Initiate	Promote
Detail	Innovated	Propose
Determined	Inspected	Provide
Developed	Installed	Publicized
Devise	Institute	Published
Directed	Instruct	Qualify
Distribute	Integrate	Quantified
Documented	Interpret	Questioned
Drafted	Interview	Raised
Edited	Introduced	Realized
Eliminated	Invent	Recommended
Employ	Investigate	Reconcile
Encourage	Lead	Record
Enlarge	Learned	Recruit
Enlist	Led	Rectify
Ensured	Maintained	Redesign
Establish	Managed	Reduce
Estimate	Manipulate	Regulate
Evaluate	Mapped	Reinforce
Examined	Market	Relate
Exchange	Mediate	Renew
Execute	Met	Reported
Exhibit	Moderate	Represented
Expand	Modify	Reorganize
Expedite	Monitor	Research
Explained	Motivate	Resolved
Facilitated	Negotiated	Review
Familiarize	Observed	Revise
Finalized	Obtain	Scan
Forecast	Operate	Scheduled
Formulated	Order	Screen
Generated	Organized	Selected
Govern	Originate	Selected

Sell	Standardize	Systemized
Served	Stimulate	Tabulated
Settle	Streamlined	Teach
Showed	Studied	Tested
Simplified	Submitted	Train
Sketched	Summarized	Transacted
Sold	Supervised	Transmitted
Solved	Support	Updated
Speak	Synthesize	Verified
Staffed	Systematize	

A Resume for Success!

Functional Resume

This type of resume gives you the opportunity to make sense out of your work history by stressing skills and accomplishments that might not be obvious in a traditional format.

This Format is effective for people

- Who are new to work force
- Who have held only one position for a long period of time
- Who have varied work history of many unrelated positions
- Who are re-entering the work force after a work gap
- Who have held positions with job titles that don't reflect the level of skills learned

Functional Resume Outline

- Personal Data
- Employment Objective (optional)
- Skills and Accomplishments
- Education
- Work Experience Chronology (optional)
- Miscellaneous (possibly awards, extracurricular activities, volunteer work, etc.)
- References (optional)

Chronological Resume Outline

- Personal Data
 - Name
 - Address
 - Telephone number
 - E-mail address

- **Employment Objective (optional)**
State the type of job you want.

- **Education**
Your college and high school education, plus other courses/training (list highest degree first):
 - Dates of graduation or leaving school
 - Degrees of certificates received (list major and minor courses of Study)
 - Scholarships, honors, and awards

- **Work History, by Job or Position**
List each job (even if the jobs were in the same company).
Start with your most recent job and work backwards. For each job list:
 - Dates of employment
 - Name and location of employer
 - Your position title
 - Specific job duties and the responsibility
 - Special skills learned: computer and technology skills, grant writing, certificates, workshops, etc.
 - Accomplishments, backed up by facts and figures
 - Military Experience
Unit, length of service, and rank
 - Major duties
 - Any pertinent military training

- **Miscellaneous**
 - Your knowledge of foreign languages; volunteer work; civil clubs; organizations; activities or hobbies.

- **References (optional)**
 - Provide the names, addresses, and phone numbers of 3-5 people who have knowledge of your work competence. If you are still in college you may list your instructors who are familiar with your school work or volunteer work. Always obtain permission from the people you list as references. You can choose to only provide references when requested.

Designing Your Page

Choosing the right paper

You may want to purchase a special paper for your resume. While white and off-white are fairly standard, other papers may work as long as they do not distract from the text of your resume. If you use a textured paper or one with a background pattern, check to see what your resume looks like photocopied. (Some papers photocopy very poorly). One last tip: try to coordinate your resume paper with your cover letter paper (and envelope) for a more professional application.

Using a consistent format

No matter which combination of page design strategies you use, try to use it consistently for all sections of your resume. Create a template for your resume or simply jot down your design choices for

- Major Headings
- Subheadings (and sub-subheadings, if used)
- Text/Body Sections (and subsections, if used)

For example, you may decide you want to use 11pt. Helvetica Boldface Caps for major headings, 10pt. Palatino underline for subheadings, and 10pt. Palatino Normal Indented for Text/Body Sections, then you'll want to do so for all sections that contain similar lists. Also, if you are using columns in more than one section of your resume, make sure they are aligned across sections, if at all possible.

Using the whole page

When resumes fill only three-quarters or half a page, leaving white space to the right or bottom of the page, they seem underdeveloped. By using the whole page, you give prospective employers the impression you have much to offer. However, if you put too much on the page, readers will likely get frustrated trying to read it. With the one-page resume now nearly standard, your challenge is to get the most into an 8 1/2" x 11" space without bogging down your reader.

Try the following test: fold your resume draft from top to bottom and then from left to right. Your page will now be divided into four equal sections or quadrants, like this:

Creating a visual hierarchy

Options	Sample	Tips
<p>Using headings and subheadings to make it easier for readers to find desired information</p>	<p>Managerial Experience Assistant Manager Management Intern</p> <p>Education B.S. in Aviation Technology Relevant Coursework</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customize headings if possible (see "Organizing your sections") • Make sure headings match section content • Use subsections and subheadings, if necessary, (for example, if you held two jobs at the same place, create a subsection listing each position beneath)
<p>Using Bullets to break up dense prose passages that slow down the eye and make it difficult for readers to process information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed department inventory database system • Assisted students with technical problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to limit to 2-5 bullets if possible (6 or more reduces effectiveness) • Use descriptive phrases rather than complete sentences (periods, caps ,etc unnecessary) • Experiment with other kinds of bullets besides the standard ones used here
<p>Using Indents and line breaks to indicate your organizational scheme</p>	<p>Field Experience Westminster Village Planned activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize punctuation when using line breaks and indents (white space "punctuates" instead) • Play with margins or tabs to indent more or less than the standard 5 spaces

<p>Varying fonts-<u>font choice</u> (Times Roman, Geneva, Arial, Helvetica, etc.) <u>front size</u> (12pt., 10pt., etc.) and <u>font style</u> (bold, italics, underline, caps, etc.)</p>	<p>Work Experience</p> <p><i>Research Assistant</i></p> <p>New Crops and Plants Product</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit to a couple font choices: one for headings (sans serif fonts-that is fonts like <u>this</u>-work well because they stand out) and one for rest (serif fonts like <u>this</u> are a great choice because they are more readable.) • Avoid font sizes much smaller than the 9 or 10pt • Avoid over-highlighting by, for example, using caps, boldface, italics, and underline all on the same text.
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Organizing Your Sections

Now you can begin to cluster your experiences, skills, and goals into separate sections and begin to think about how to arrange your sections on your page. If you were simply to list all your various qualifications, nothing would stand out and readers would have a difficult time finding specific information.

To make your resume readers' job a little easier, you should consider developing a two-level text, using

1. headings to help skimmers find what they are looking for
2. details to convince skeptical readers you really have the qualifications you say you do.

One of your first steps involves finding the right headings for your resume, those which will enable you to organize the content you've generated.

A common approach to organizing sections is to use the following scheme:

- **Objective Statement** (or Career Goal, Professional Objective, etc.)
- **Education**
- **Work Experience** (or Work History, Professional History, Experience, etc.)
- **Honors and Activities** (or Activities, Hobbies, etc.)

However, what if you want to emphasize your extracurricular leadership activities, your language proficiency, volunteer work, publications, or technical skills? The above scheme doesn't leave a space for you to emphasize such qualifications. What should you do? Simply create your own headings to match the content of your resume and the job ad. You can do this by modifying, for example, Experience or Activities with descriptive adjectives that describe your skills more accurately (like Supervisory Experience, Leadership Activities, etc.)

Or you may use altogether different headings. Here are some others to consider:

Alternative Headings

honors and awards	continuing education
publications	advanced career training
language proficiency	specialization
presentations	special projects
in-house seminars	career-related skills
achievements	familiar computer applications
internships	technical training
military experience	licenses and certification
qualifications	accomplishments
career profile	skills summary
community service	volunteer work
relevant coursework	memberships

Writing the Contact Info Section of your Resume

This section of your resume is definitely the easiest to write, but you do have a few options for design and content.

What is a contact information section?

Unlike other sections of your resume, this section does not have a special heading like "Contact Information". Instead it simply lists the information below at the top of the page:

- Your full name
- Your permanent address
- Your local or campus address (if applicable)
- Your phone number(s)

You may also include

- Your e-mail address
- Your web address/URL
- Your fax number, etc.

Of course, as with the rest of your resume, you'll want to double-check that all the information you include is current and accurate. Mistyping your phone number could easily cost you an interview! Also, if you list an e-mail address, be sure to check your e-mail regularly or you may miss an important message.

Sample:

Firstname M. Lastname

Campus Address

123 Resident Hall
Anytown, IN 12345
555-555-5555
lastname@email.com

Permanent Address

987 Main Street
Anytown, IN 12345
555-555-5555
http://webaddress.com

Why write a contact information section?

To provide employers with essential information so you may be contacted for an interview or to answer questions.

How to design your contact information section

Employers will probably look first and last at your contact information section, so it's well worth your time to make this section easy-to-read and appealing to the eye. Whatever design choices you make, try to coordinate them with the rest of your resume. Here are some specific design options:

1. **Use page design strategies** to present information in a usable format. For example, to help readers find desired information, you might place your name in a larger font size, center it, boldface it, etc. If you have a permanent and local address, you might want to play with columns
2. **Add a graphic element** such as a horizontal line to help section off your contact information. Some resumes also include tasteful clipart or a simple image in this section.
3. **Coordinate with your cover letter.** One way to make your application documents seem like a professional package is to match your cover letter and your resume. You might do this by creating stationary or a letterhead for both documents. For instance, if you use two columns for your address and a double line on your resume header, you might adapt it for the top of your letter as well.

Writing the Objective Statement for Your Resume

Writing objective statements can be one of the most challenging parts of creating an effective resume. Below you'll find some strategies and options to help you make the most of yours.

What is an Objective Statement?

Immediately below the top section of a resume (containing your name, address, etc.), there is usually a short section with one of these headings: "objective," "professional objective," "resume capsule," or "career goals." Most often the objective statement includes 1-3 lines of text, summarizing the position(s) you are applying for and/or your main qualifications. While some writers choose to use a sentence format, many objective statements are simply descriptive phrases with minimal punctuation.

Why Write an Objective Statement?

Objective statements improve your resume by helping you

- Emphasize your main qualifications and summarize them for readers
- Inform your readers of the position(s) you are seeking and your career goals
- Establish your professional identity

Tailoring for Your Audience

To improve your chances for success, it's always a good idea to tailor your objective statement (as well as your whole resume and cover letter) to particular organizations and/or positions. This means, for example, calling a position by the name the company uses to describe it. You might even indicate the organization's name in the statement. Strive to match your qualifications with those desired by the organization. If you are unsure what your resume's readers will be looking for, you'll need to do some research to give your objective statement a competitive edge.

Questions to Ask

Before drafting or revising your objective statement, you will find it helpful to answer as many of the following questions as possible.

About You	About the Company or Organization
What are your main qualifications (strengths, skills, areas of expertise)	Which of your qualifications are most desired by your resume's readers?
What positions (or range of positions) do you seek?	What position titles (or range of positions) are available?
What are your professional goals?	What are some goals of the organizations that interest you?
What type of organization or work are you interested in?	What types or organizations or work settings are now hiring?

Being Specific

The most common mistake made in writing objective statements is being too general and vague in describing either the position desired or your qualifications. For example, some objective statements read like this:

An internship allowing me to utilize my knowledge and expertise in different areas.

Such an objective statement raises more questions than it answers: What kind of internship? What knowledge? What kinds of expertise? Which areas? Be as

specific as possible in your objective statement to help your readers see what you have to offer “at a glance.”

Writing the Education Section of Your Resume

Education sections vary tremendously on resumes—sometimes they are only a couple lines while other times they span half a page. What’s the best way for you to approach yours? Read below for some options.

What is an education section?

An education section highlights your relevant schooling and academic training. If you have substantial work experience, this section may be very brief, simply listing the information below. If you are a currently enrolled college student or a recent graduate, however, you may want to build this section substantially.

The education section usually includes information about

- Schools you have attended such as universities and 4-year colleges, junior and community colleges, as well as professional and technical schools (rarely high schools, unless somehow relevant)
- Location of schools
- Date of graduation, actual or anticipated
- Degree(s) earned
- Grade point average (GPA)

Some people choose to withhold their GPA because they feel it is irrelevant or not high enough. If a company specifically requests your GPA, however, you may want to include it regardless. In such cases, not including your GPA, ironically, call attention to it.

Sample:

Bachelor of Science in Management	May 1999
Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana	GPA: 2.9/4.0

Please see the section below on how to build this section ways to develop additional content.

Why write an education section?

- To persuade employers your educational background will help do your job more effectively
- To provide evidence of your qualifications
- To foreground your areas of expertise

Where should you place this section?

Education sections, like experience sections, are usually placed middle of a resume, somewhere between the objective statement and then honors & activities section.

If your educational background is your strongest qualification or may help your resume "stand out," then you'll probably want to put it near the top. Especially if you are a recent graduate, this section may be a major focus for recruiters. On the other hand, if your experience sections are stronger, then you'll probably want to move your education section below them.

How to Build your education section

If you have the space on your resume and/or if your educational background is particularly relevant, you may want to expand this section by including some of the content listed below as it applies to your experiences and career goals.

NOTE: If you have enough information, you may wish to turn some of the content below into subsections or even into separate sections. For example, if you know several relevant computer technologies, you might want to list them under the heading "Computer Proficiency" rather than tuck them under your Education section.

Other content to consider	Samples
major/minor grade point average (GPA)	Major GPA: 2.9/4.0 Minor GPA: 3.1/4.0
major and minor areas of study, concentrations, emphases or specializations	Minor: Management Information Systems Concentration: Professional Writing Emphasis in Individual and Family Development
special projects	Special Course Project, Business Writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determined feasibility of upgrading communication technologies in local business Thesis: “Diversity Training in the Workplace”
relevant coursework	Relevant Coursework: Structured Programming Client/Server Computing, Object Oriented Programming, Local Area Networks
familiar computer applications	Computer Literacy: Internet; E-mail; Windows: Microsoft Office; Macintosh: PageMaker
continuing education courses, programs, training units, etc.	In-House Training Workshops: Diversity Training, Crisis Management
academic honors	Bachelor of Arts, Philosophy (Magna Cum Laude) Graduate with distinction
funding	B.S. in Aviation Technology (provided 100% of Funding) Full-ride scholarship
certifications	First Aid Certification Teacher Certification

Questions to Ask

About you	About the company or organization
What institutions, programs, schools, etc. have you attended?	What can you expect the company to know about your degree program, coursework, training background, etc.? What might you need to describe or elaborate?
What educational training beyond traditional schooling and coursework have you had, if any?	What non-traditional education experiences would the company want to know about you?

Tailoring for your Audience

To improve the effectiveness of your education section, you will want to know what content will be most valued by the company hiring. You can get a good sense for which of educational qualifications are most relevant by analyzing job ads and company literature as part of your job search.

You may tailor you education section in three main ways:

1. **Select and include only your most relevant education content:** Based on your career goals and the qualifications called for in job ads, you may choose to include or omit certain kinds of information. For example, if you earned a degree in a very specialized field (one employers may need to know more about) or have taken specific courses directly relevant to the position, then you'll want to include a listing of coursework. However, if your degree is self-explanatory and employers likely will know your more specific credentials, then you may omit this section.
2. **Emphasize content through placement and design:** Since the eye is drawn to section headings and the uppermost impressive and relevant educational experiences in either (1) their own sections/subsections, or (2) near the top of a section. For instance, if you have substantial computer skills or have undertaken a special project, you may choose to put this information in its own section rather than simply list it beneath "Education".
3. **List most relevant schooling first:** While you may wish to use reverse chronological order (most recent schooling first), you also have the option of placing your most relevant educational experiences first.

Writing the Experience Section of Your Resume

Many job ads call for individuals with relevant experience, and all employers prefer experienced people to inexperienced ones. Your experience section can be the “heart” of your resume. How can you put your experiences in the best light? Read below for some strategies.

What is an Experience Section?

An experience section emphasizes your past and present employment and/or your participation in relevant activities. Sometimes this section goes under other names such as the following:

- Work Experience
- Professional Experience
- Work History
- Field Work
- Volunteer Work

Feel free to customize your headings for this section, especially if you are writing a tailored resume. For example, if the job ad calls for someone with editorial experience, you may want to create a section with the heading “Editorial Experience”. Even the busiest reader will notice.

Also, you may discover you need more than one section to organize your experiences. For instance, you may want a section for volunteer work and another for your work history or one for technical experience and another for supervisory experience.

The usual content for an experience section includes

- company or organization, location
- position title
- dates of employment or involvement
- descriptions of responsibilities and duties

Sample:

Subaru-Isuzu Automotive Inc., Lafayette, Indiana

Security Officer, January 1997 to present

- Assisted with loss prevention, access control, fire prevention, and medical response

However, you need not put all this information in this order. For example, if you wish to emphasize the jobs you held rather than the place of employment, you may want to list position titles first.

Why Write an Experience Section?

- to convince employers your experiences will help you do your job more effectively
- to provide evidence of your qualifications
- to list and describe your experiences in the most impressive and relevant way possible

Where should you place this section?

Where on your resume should you place your experience section? Most people put their experience somewhere in the middle of the page, between their objective statement and their activities. If you have significant experiences you may wish to emphasize them by placing your experience section close to the top of your page. If your experiences are not obviously relevant, however, you may want to put your experiences beneath, for example, your education section.

Tailoring for your Audience

With some research into the company hiring and the position advertised, you will soon get sense for what resume readers will want to see in your experience section. Analyzing company literature as part of your job search, for example, will reveal qualification, credentials, organizational goals, current projects, technologies, etc. most relevant to company. The more you know about the company, the easier it will be to tailor—so be sure to profile the company as part of your job search.

You may tailor your experience section in three main ways:

1. **Select and include only your most relevant experiences:** Based upon your career goals and the qualifications desired by the company, you will likely find that certain experiences are less relevant. For example, if you are applying for civil engineering positions, your part-time work at a fast-food restaurant may not interest your resume's readers. Why waste the space?
2. **Place your most relevant experiences first:** Since readers are most likely to read information closer to the top of the page, place your most impressive experiences first. If you had an internship at the same company you are applying for a permanent position, you'll want to make sure your readers know it.
3. **Incorporate keywords used (and values appealed to) in company literature and job descriptions:** If the company, for example, values problem solving or taking the initiative or being a team player, then you should consider working these words into your description. Paint a picture of yourself, so to speak, with the company's colors.

Developing your descriptions

As indicated above, the wording of your descriptions should mirror as much as possible that of the job advertisement. You might do this very deliberately by listing or circling all the keywords or phrases used in the company literature and then working them one by one into your resume as they apply. Or you may choose to describe only those experiences—or aspects of a given experience—that seem most relevant.

Another way to be strategic in your choice of wording is to use action words such as those on the skills list. By describing yourself with action words or verbs, past or present tense, you show yourself in action, thus emphasizing your skills. For example, if your description indicates that you “coordinate funeral arrangements for families,” you emphasize that you have the ability to coordinate.

Using wording to sell yourself

To “sell” your work skills and experiences, you’ll want to use wording strategically. Here are two pitfalls to avoid when you write descriptions:

- Being too brief, not including enough detail
- Understanding your qualifications, selling yourself short

Using select journalistic questions (who?, what?, why?, where?, when?, how?), you can easily expand your descriptions to include enough detail. Consider the following examples:

before	questions asked	after (questions answered)
tested equipment	how? what kind?	conducted compatibility testing and evaluation of mechanical equipment
planned activities	what kinds? how? when? for whom?	planned arts, crafts, activities, and exercises weekly for teenage girls

Make sure your descriptions are carrying their weight for you. Sometimes it helps to re-see your experiences as a professional would. Compare the following example. Which seems more impressive to you?

understated	seen through professional eyes
answered phone	acted as liaison between clients and legal staff
performed various tasks	developed awareness of library operational procedures
wiped tables	Created healthy environment for customers and maintained positive public image

Making your descriptions parallel

Since resume readers are busy, you'll want to do everything you can to make their job easier. One way to do this is to use parallel structure in your descriptions. If you set up a pattern and stick with it, your readers will be able to process information more quickly. Notice how the all the verbs in the parallel example below "agree" with one another. Because all descriptions are in past tense, readers don't have to struggle to make sense of them. Similarly, if you use present tense verbs or gerunds (-ing words), try to do so consistently.

not parallel	parallel
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recording OSHA regulated documents • material purchasing and expediting • prepared weekly field payroll • responsible for charge orders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>recorded</u> OSHA regulated documents • <u>conducted</u> material purchasing and expediting • <u>prepared</u> weekly field payroll • <u>processed</u> charge orders

Writing the Honors & Activities Section of Your Resume

What's the best way for you to approach yours? Read below for some options.

What is an honors & activities sections?

This section of the resume highlights the relevant activities you have been involved with and the honors you have received that you could discuss with your prospective employer or that have given you valuable experience or skills.

An honors and activities section might include the following:

- academic awards and scholarships
- membership in campus, national, or international organizations
- leadership positions held in campus, national, or international organizations
- university and community service positions
- date of award or dates of involvement in an activity

Sample:

Firstar Outstanding Student Scholarship	1998
Copy Editor, Purdue University's student newspaper	August 1999- December 1999
Coach, local middle school soccer team	August 1998- December 1998
Vice President, Golden Key National Honor Society	August 1999- May 2000

Why write an honors & activities section?

- To customize your resume for specific positions
- To provide evidence of your qualifications
- To demonstrate that your work has been recognized as of a high quality by others
- To provide evidence that you are a well-rounded person
- To reflect your values and commitment

Where should you place this section?

The honors and activities section is generally placed after the education and experience section of the resume. Since this section is usually the last one on the resume, you can include as many or as few honors and activities as space permits.

How to build your honors & activities section

It is best to brainstorm a list of all your honors and activities before you write the honors section of the resume. Then you can choose the most relevant and recent honors and activities from your list. Remember that this section is supposed to help you stand out from the crowd and demonstrate your qualifications for a position; consequently, you may not need or want to include all of the honors and activities from your list on the resume.

Content to consider	Samples
Scholarships	Robert C. Byrd Four-year Academic Scholarship 1998-2002 Alfred H. Nolle Scholarship by the Alpha Chi National Honor Society 1997-1998
Academic Honors	Dean's List 1998-present Who's Who Among College and University Students 2000
Leadership Positions	Phi Kappa Delta (International Speech Honor Society) Vice-President 1999-2000 Secretary of Correspondence of Purdue University's Chapter or the Golden Key Honor Society 1999-2000
Membership in Professional Organizations	Eta Kappa Nu (Electrical Engineering Honor Society) 1998-present
University Service Positions	Freshmen Engineering Academic Counseling 1998-1999 Resident Hall Freshmen Council 1997-1998
Community Service Positions	Boy Scouts of America Assistant Scoutmaster 1997-present Tippecanoe County Adult Reading Program Tutor 1999-present

Tailoring for your audience

The activities and honors section of the resume is a great place to tailor the resume for specific positions and companies. This section can easily become customized for specific positions since you will probably not include all of your activities and honors but only those that make your resume stronger. To tailor this section for your audience, you should apply the same principles that you used in tailoring the experience section your resume.

You should:

1. **Select and include only your most relevant experiences:** Based upon your career goals and the qualifications desired by the company, you will likely find that certain activities and honors are less relevant for specific positions. For example, if you are applying for a mechanical engineering position, your role as a youth leader in a local group may not interest your audience. If you are applying for a teaching position, however, this same activity might be very relevant.
2. **Place your most relevant experiences first:** Since readers are most likely to read information close to the top of the page, place your most impressive experiences first.
3. **Appeal to your company's values:** If the company values problem solving, for example, or taking the initiative or being a team player, then be sure to include activities and honors from your list that demonstrate that you possess those skills.

Reference Tips

Who should serve as your references?

In selecting people to ask to serve as references for you, think about what does those individuals know about you and if they can discuss your work-related qualities.

- Past and present employers usually know about such things as your reliability, initiative, quickness to learn and take on responsibility, and your ability to work with others. This type of information is valuable, even if your employment was not career-related.
- Faculty members may know about your academic ability, productivity, and timeliness, and perhaps have observed how you work with others.
- Advisors and coaches may also be aware of information about you that could be relevant to a potential employer—such as maturity, initiative, interpersonal skills or leadership qualities.
- Don't list references who only know you in a social capacity. While family friends may have nice things to say about you, employers don't place value on these kinds of references.

- Obviously you do not want to offer as a reference to someone who would not speak about you in positive terms or who doesn't know you well enough to give a strong reference. If an individual is neutral or has a reservation about serving as a reference for you, look elsewhere. This is one of the critical reasons for seeking permission from potential references in advance
- **Never list close family or friends as references even if they have high level careers!**

Getting permission from your references

- DO contact each individual whom you are asking to serve as your reference. Secure his/her permission IN ADVANCE.
- DON'T ever give someone's name as a reference without that person's permission. If will not advance your cause of becoming employed if a prospective employer calls a person you have listed as a reference, only to find out the reference is surprised to be called. Before you give a name of a reference, make sure that person is comfortable with serving in that capacity. Don't assume anything.
- When you secure permission, verify all details of your references' contact information, including spelling of names, titles, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses.
- Give each person who agrees to serve as a reference for you a copy of your resume. This lets your references know about your academic skills and an employer may know your on-the-job characteristics, but each may not be aware of the other facets of your background. Keeping your references well-informed will help them serve as a better reference for you.
- Keep you references posted on your activities and progress. Tell your references the names of persons organizations to whom you've given their names. When possible, give them a copy of the job description for the positions for which you are applying. This helps your references be prepared for phone calls and letters they may receive.
- Thank each reference in writing or by e-mail for his/her assistance.
- DON'T view communicating with your references as bothering them. Brief, cordial e-mail or phone messages show that you are businesslike about your job search, and that you appreciate your references. Communicating makes it easier for your references to help you.

When to give your references list to a prospective employer

- Provide reference information when you are asked to provide it. If you reach the interview stage and have not been asked for references, you may offer your **reference list**.
- Generally do not mail reference information with your resume unless it has been specifically requested.

- Contacting references is time-consuming, and most employers will do some initial screening of candidates—by interviewing resumes and conducting interviews—before contacting references.
- For most undergraduates, employers will not be contacting references prior to interview.

Where to list references

- **On a resume DON'T.** It is unnecessary to state “References available upon request”—and is often a waste of valuable space—because most employers assume you can supply references. They expect them on **separate page** when requested.

Reference Page

- DO create a reference page to list your references.
- **For each reference person, include full name, title, organization with which the person is affiliated, complete address, phone number and email address.**
- Make absolutely sure you have spelled your references' names correctly.
- Your name and contact information should be at the heading of the page—just like it appears on your resume.

How to create a scannable resume

More and more employers now request that you include a scannable resume when applying for a job.

What's a scannable resume?

In 2000, up to 50% of large corporations scan resumes into a computer database before calling applicants. This means that your resume is seen by a computer first. And computers read resumes differently than people.

After these hundreds (or thousands) of resumes are scanned, hiring managers search the database using keywords that describe the job they're trying to fill. If your resume has enough of the keywords that the manager is using, your resume will pop up during this search. Thus, your chances of getting a job interview increases accordingly.

This is a growing trend that's expected to cover up to 80% of all companies by the year 2000, according to one report.

To format your resume and make it easier for employers to scan, do the following:

1. Change the typeface to Arial (10-12 point type).
2. Eliminate all underlining, bold, italics and graphics.
3. Ensure that your name is at the top of the page, as scanners assume that whatever comes first is a name. If your resume has two pages, put your name and Page Two on the second page.
4. Include a keyword section after your name, on page one. This is a noun-intensive description of your experience and skills.
Example keywords: manager, managing, management, BS Computer Science, mainframes, programming, programmer.
See example keyword resumes in our resume templates directory.
5. Use a high quality laser printer.
6. Print the resume on white paper.
7. Attach two pages with a paper clip—never use staples.

How to Proofread

Your resume must be error-free.

Just one misspelled word or punctuation error can ruin all your hard work.

I've spoken with several managers who say they won't call a candidate whose resume contains typos.

You should proofread your resume four times for four areas:

1. Spelling
2. Spacing
3. Punctuation
4. Content

Print the resume before you proofread it.

This makes it much easier to read. You'd be surprised how many errors become visible on a printed page versus a computer screen.

Professional Proofreading Checklist

Proofread your resume twice for each section below.

- **Spelling.**
Use your word processor's spell checker AND read it yourself. Most misspelled words occur in the headings and in software/business names.
- **Facts and figures.**
Check all years and numbers in the resume and cover letter. Do they add up? Are they consistent?
- **Spacing.**
Make sure the space between each sentence and section is the same.
- **Punctuation.**
Read the resume BACKWARDS, looking for missing or incorrect punctuation, such as commas, dashes between dates, apostrophes, etc.
- **Clarity and content.**
Read the resume aloud for awkward, missing or extra words.
- **Contact information.**
Verify your name, address, ZIP code and phone are correct.
- **Layout.**
Are the upper and lower margins even and pleasing to the eye? Is there white space throughout the document, or is the text too dense? Print the resume and show it to friends for their comments.

Examples and Worksheets