



How to Write a Resume

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Updated:

Starting a resume can be a challenging task, especially if you don't have a lot of work experience. Even if you've never had a job before, you will still have enough experience from school, clubs, and volunteering to put into a resume and impress a potential employer. Use the tips outlined in this Resume Guide to help build a professional and impressive resume.

Font

It may come across as silly that so much emphasis is placed on the type of font used in a resume, but it is a very important aspect. You only have a few seconds to grab the reader's attention, and a good font can help accomplish that.

Your font should be easy to read and appear well on screen and paper. The following fonts are considered the most effective:

Arial	Cambria	Helvetica
Bell MT	Century Gothic	Lucida Sans
Bodoni MT	Garamond	Tahoma
Bookman Old Style	Georgia	Trebuchet MS
Calibri	Goudy Old Style	Verdana

Font Size/Elements

- Don't make your font super small (anything below 10.5pt) to try fit in as much content as possible, it may lead to including unnecessary information.
- Don't make your font too large (anything above 12.5pt) to try fill up as much space as possible. Potential employers will notice this and assume you don't have enough skills.
- Try not to use *italics* because it may make it difficult for scanning systems to read.
- Only **bold** or underline section headers or job titles.
- Avoid using ALL CAPITALS (they can be used in section headers). The use of all capitals gives the illusion that you are shouting at your reader.
- Don't use colour unless you are applying into graphics or the visual arts.

Be consistent with your font. Use only one font, and stick to a couple of styles for variety (**bold**, underlined, ALL CAPS). This will keep your resume pleasing to the eye and not become visually overwhelming.

Format

There are a number of different formats for resumes. The two most common resume formats are chronological and functional. Choose a style based on what information you would like to highlight.

Chronological

- This is the most traditional format and most familiar to employers
- Information is listed in chronological order beginning with the most recent info
- Best used when previous work and volunteer experience are similar to the job you're applying to
- Highlights past employers and positions

Functional

- Information is listed by function outlining your qualifications
- Doesn't focus on who you worked for or when, but can still be included
- Best used when you have no work experience but still want to outline your skills

What to Include

Heading

Include the heading on all pages of your resume, cover letter, and reference list.

- **Name**; use your legal formal name, avoid abbreviations. Your name should be a larger font than the rest of the text in your resume.
- **Address**; use the address where you will be living when working at that job, sometimes your location can determine if you get the job over someone else.
- **Phone Number**; use the number that is the easiest for them to contact you. If it is a cell phone, ensure that your voicemail is professional and clearly states your name.
- **Email**; if you have a school email, use that one. If not, make sure your email is appropriate and not silly or offensive.

Objective Statement

- OPTIONAL
- Used to provide the reader with an idea of your career interests
- Statement must be brief and to the point
- Only provide if it will offer the reader valuable context/information

- Don't need if:
 - Providing a cover letter
 - Objective is clearly stated in resume

Summary of Qualifications

- OPTIONAL
- Used to summarize basic skills that don't necessarily fit anywhere else
- Don't go over 3-4 points

*Don't use both an Objective Statement and Summary of Qualifications.

Education

List your education in chronological order.

- High School
 - Once you are in post secondary or have completed post secondary, you no longer have to include your high school diploma on your resume.
- Diplomas and Degrees
- Certificates
- Licenses

*Only include licenses and certificates that are applicable to the job you're applying for.

Include:

- Name of school, university, institution, or organization
- Completion Year
- GPA if 3.0 or higher

Work Experience

Use this when using the chronological format. Include:

- Company Name
- Position Title
- Time frame you worked there. If it is your current job say, "Current"
- Outline responsibilities and accomplishments that are related to the position you're applying to

*Not all responsibilities need to be included. You want your resume to be as relevant as possible, so only outline the skills that they are looking for.

Skills & Responsibilities

It can be challenging to put your skills and responsibilities into words or figure out what is worth putting into your resume. Follow the tips below:

- Only include skills that are relevant to the position you are applying to. Example:
 - You have strong computer programming skills but you’re applying for a job as a summer landscaper. Although computer programming skills are valuable for many jobs, you don’t need them for maintaining grass, trees, garden beds, etc.
- Try picking out skills the job posting has highlighted, and illustrate how you have used that skill in past positions. Example:
 - The job posting is looking for candidates with good communication skills. Include in your resume when you would have used that skill: “Professionally communicated with customers in person and via telephone”
- Use bullet points when outlining your skills and responsibilities. It makes them stand out to the reader, looks organized, and is pleasing to the eye.
- Try not to use “I”, “me”, “we”, etc. anywhere in your resume. If including an Objective Statement, it is ok to use “I” in the statement.
- Use **ACTION VERBS!!!!!!** It is important to use action verbs because they describe your skills and responsibilities in a concise, persuasive manner. Example:

NO!

YES!

Was the boss of a team of six service employees

Supervised a team of six service employees

ACTION VERBS

Achieved	Assisted	Completed	Dealt with	Drafted
Accepted	Attained	Communicated	Decided	
Accumulated	Audited	Competent	Decreased	Edited
Acted	Authored	Compiled	Defined	Educated
Acquired		Composed	Delegated	Effected
Adapted	Balanced	Computed	Delivered	Elected
Addressed	Bargained	Conceptualized	Demonstrated	Eliminated
Advised	Briefed	Conducted	Designated	Employed
Alleviated	Budgeted	Contained	Designed	Enabled
Allocated	Built	Contributed	Determined	Encouraged
Amended		Controlled	Developed	Endured
Anticipated	Calculated	Consolidated	Devised	Executed
Applied	Catalogued	Constructed	Diagnosed	Enforced
Appraised	Chaired	Consulted	Directed	Engineered
Appointed	Changed	Coordinated	Dispatched	Enlarged
Approved	Charted	Contracted	Dispensed	Entertained
Arranged	Clarified	Corresponded	Displayed	Established
Assembled	Classified	Counseled	Distributed	Estimated
Assessed	Coached	Created	Documented	Expedited
Assigned	Collected	Critiqued	Dramatized	Evaluated

Examined	Innovation	Persuaded	Reviewed
Evaluated	resulted	Performed	Revised
Exhibited	Inspired	Piloted	Revitalized
Expanded	Inspected	Pinpointed	
Experience	Installed	Planned	Saved
involved	Instructed	Predicted	Scheduled
Experienced in	Instrumentalin	Prepared	Selected
all	Integrated	Presented	Serviced
facets/phases	Interpreted	Prevented	Shaped
Expertise	Interviewed	Prioritized	Shared
Experimented	Introduced	Problem-solved	Simplified
Explained	Invented	Processed	Solved
Expressed	Investigated	Produced	Specialized in
Extensive		Proficient	Specified
training	Judged	Programmed	Spoke
involvement	Justified	Projected	Sorted
Extracted		Promoted	Streamlined
Fabricated	Knowledge of	Proposed	Strengthened
Facilitated		Protected	Structured
Familiar with	Launched	Proven track	Studied
Familiarized	Learned	record	Subcontracted
Fashioned	Lectured	Provided	Successful in
Finalized	Listened	technical	Suggested
Focused	Located	Published	Summarized
Formulated		Purchases	Supervised
Founded	Made		Supported
Fund-raised	Maintained	Questioned	Surveyed
	Managed		Synthesized
Gathered	Mapped	Raised	Systematized
Generated	Marketed	Reasoned	
Guided	Measured	Recipient of	Tabulated
	Mediated	Recommended	Taught
Handled	Moderated	Reconciled	Terminated
Headed	Modified	Recorded	Tested
Helped	Monitored	Recruited	Tolerated
Hired	More than ____	Reduced	Trained
Honoured as	years	Referred	Transferred
Hypothesized	experience	Regulated	Translated
	Motivated	Rehabilitated	Treated
Increased		Reinforced	Trouble-shot
Identified	Negotiated	Repaired	Tutored
Illustrated		Replaced	Understood
Imagined	Observed	Reported	United
Implemented	Obtained	Represented	Updated
Improved	Operated	Remodeled	Upgraded
Improvised	Organized	Reorganized	Utilized
Influenced	Originated	Researched	
Informed	Oversaw	Resolved	Validated
Initially employed		Restructured	Verified
Initiated	Participated	Retrieved	
Innovated	Perfected	Reversed	Wrote

References

Do not include references on your resume and do not include “References available upon request”.

Only give resumes when:

- You are called for an interview. Take your reference list with you.
- They ask for references in the application
- Your reference is someone of importance to the company you are applying to

What to Include

- Put the same heading you used on your resume and cover letter
- Name of reference
- Contact information of reference
- Company and position
- *Optional* put a brief explanation of how you know the person, no more than one line

*Make sure you ask permission before using someone as a reference and ask them what contact information they want you to list.

Who to Ask

- Past employers
- Mentors
- Teachers
- Volunteer supervisors
- Coaches
- Personal reference (someone you know but have never worked with professionally before)

*You can have personal references, but it isn't desirable anymore because employers know personal references will most likely not reveal any of your weaknesses.