

RESUME AND CAREER WRITING

RESUME GUIDELINES

Your resume should be a concise summary of the high points of your education, work experience, and other qualifications relevant to your audience's needs and to your employment interests, not a complete history of your life. It communicates your professional qualifications to employers, to interest them in interviewing you, and it creates their first impression of you. It is a marketing tool and an introduction to you and your experiences. Do enough research about the employer and the field to decide which messages are most important to your audience, and communicate these messages succinctly and clearly in a visually appealing format. Here are some guidelines to help you do this:

Presentation Checklist

- Do not use a Microsoft Word resume template. None of them scan well.
- Use a laser printer.
- It is safe to use a conservative font, such as Arial or Times New Roman.
- Font size should be 10-12 points.
- Use 8 1/2" x 11" paper, printed on one side only.
- Use high quality resumes paper.

Format

- Stick to one page; use two pages if you have an advanced degree or extensive experience (10+ years).
- Make the page easy to scan and graphically pleasing: leave sufficient white space.
- Select a format that suits your qualifications. Do not automatically follow someone else's, which may not suit what you have to say.
- Avoid underlining, may use bullets to emphasize your credentials.
- Use bold face sparingly for headings and employer information

Content

- Put name, address, and phone number at the top of the page. If you have a second page, repeat your name at the top.
- Choose topic headings that invite your readers' interest, e.g., 'Experience', 'Leadership', 'Skills', 'Activities/ Honors' rather than "employment" or "other."
- Include marketable and/or relevant data only; for example, include classes that have been most important in your education and are most relevant to the type of work you seek; do not provide an extensive list of courses.

- Highlight skills, accomplishments, capabilities, and work experience. Give evidence of your personal
- impact: show not only that you completed tasks but that you contributed to organizational goals.
- Cite numbers to convey size and/or scale of project, budget, and staff supervised.
- Give examples that demonstrate desirable personality traits such as leadership, interpersonal facility, teamwork, and initiative.
- Minimize personal information and omit unrelated memberships, age, marital and health status, and information that is repetitive, implicit (e.g., high school graduation for a college graduate), or out-of-date. If you are a US citizen or hold a permanent resident visa, include this if readers might have reason to think otherwise.
- Generally, it is a good idea to exclude data relevant to salary expectations, religious or political affiliations, and geographic descriptions.
- References are usually omitted. Employers assume that “references are available upon request,” so leave this phrase off.

Style

- Proofread to eliminate all spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors.
- Use action verbs and strong adjectives. (See “Action Verbs.”)
- Make it future or present oriented, suggesting that “I am this kind of person, with these abilities, as my past record demonstrates.”
- Avoid repeating words or phrases.
- Leave out unnecessary words, sentences, and phrases such as “Duties included / hired to / Project involved.”
- Avoid stilted or confusing language. Ask yourself, “Would I talk like that?”
- Do not use the first person I or any pronouns.
- Be consistent and use the same grammatical style throughout.
- Avoid self-flattering terms such as “highly skilled, outstanding, or excellent.” Describe your accomplishments effectively and let readers decide for themselves that you are well qualified.
- Be honest and accurate, but not overly modest.
- Convey through the style and content of your resume an understanding of your audience’s needs, priorities, hiring criteria, and vocabulary.

Final Edit

- Ask a counselor, friend, or someone unfamiliar with your background to review your resume for clarity and effectiveness.
- Tailor your resume to the specific qualifications of the job for which you are applying and/or to the specific employer.
- Include all-important information, such as dates of graduation, major, GPA, etc.
- Proofread one more time to ensure correct spelling and punctuation.

The Top 10 Pitfalls in Resume Writing

- Too long. Restrict your resume to one page.
- Typographical, grammatical, or spelling errors. Have at least two people proofread your resume.
- Hard to read. Keep it simple with clean lines and white space.
- Too verbose. Say as much as possible with as few words as possible, avoid use of jargon.
- Not enough information. Give dates describing related work experience, be specific about skills, accomplishments, activities, interests, and memberships.
- Irrelevant information. Customize each resume to each position you seek (when possible). Of course, include education and work experience, but emphasize relevant experience, skills, accomplishments and activities.
- Do not include marital status, age, sex, children, height, weight, health, church membership, etc.
- Obviously generic. Tweak each resume according to the job description. The employer needs to feel that you are interested in that particular position with his or her company.
- Too fancy. Of course, use good quality bond paper, but avoid exotic types, colored paper, photographs, binders, and graphics. Electronic resumes should include appropriate industry keywords and use a font size between 10-12 points. Use italics and bolding sparingly.
- Too static. Make your resume as dynamic as possible.
- Begin every statement with an action verb. Use active verbs to describe what you have accomplished in past jobs. Take advantage of your rich vocabulary and avoid repeating words, especially the first word in a section.
- Too modest. The resume showcases your qualifications in competition with the other applicants. Put your best foot forward without misrepresentation, falsification, or arrogance.

Action Verbs

Management Skills

Administered
Analyzed
Assigned
Chaired
Consolidated
Contracted
Coordinated
Delegated
Developed
Directed
Evaluated
Executed
Organized
Oversaw
Planned
Prioritized
Produced
Recommended
Reorganized
Reviewed
Scheduled
Supervised

Communication Skills

Addressed
Arbitrated
Arranged
Authored
Co-authored
Collaborated
Corresponded
Developed
Directed
Drafted
Enlisted
Formulated
Influenced
Interpreted
Lectured
Mediated
Moderated
Negotiated
Persuaded
Promoted
Proposed
Publicized
Reconciled
Recruited

Spoke
Translated
Wrote

Research Skills

Clarified
Collected
Critiqued
Diagnosed
Evaluated
Examined
Extracted
Identified
Inspected
Inspired
Interpreted
Interviewed
Investigated
Organized
Reviewed
Summarized
Surveyed
Systemized

Technical Skills

Assembled
Built
Calculated
Computed
Designed
Devised
Engineered
Fabricated
Maintained
Operated
Pinpointed
Programmed
Remodeled
Repaired
Solved

Teaching Skills

Adapted
Advised
Clarified
Coached
Communicated
Conducted
Coordinated

Developed
Enabled
Encouraged
Evaluated
Explained
Facilitated
Guided
Informed
Instructed
Lectured
Persuaded
Set goals
Stimulated
Taught
Trained

Financial Skills

Administered
Allocated
Analyzed
Appraised
Audited
Balanced
Budgeted
Calculated
Computed
Developed
Managed
Planned
Projected
Researched

Creative Skills

Acted
Conceptualized
Created
Customized
Designed
Developed
Directed
Established
Fashioned
Illustrated
Instituted
Integrated
Performed
Planned
Proved
Revised

Revitalized
Set up
Shaped
Streamlined
Structured
Tabulated
Validated

Helping Skills

Assessed
Assisted
Clarified
Coached
Counseled
Demonstrated
Diagnosed
Educated
Facilitated
Familiarized
Guided
Inspired
Motivated
Participated
Provided
Referred
Rehabilitated
Reinforced
Represented
Supported
Taught
Trained
Verified

Clerical or Detail Skills

Approved
Arranged
Catalogued
Classified
Collected
Compiled
Dispatched
Executed
Filed
Generated
Implemented
Inspected
Monitored
Operated

Ordered
Organized
Prepared
Processed
Purchased
Recorded
Retrieved
Screened
Specified
Systematized

Stronger Verbs for Accomplishments

Accelerated
Achieved
Attained
Completed
Conceived
Convinced
Discovered
Doubled
Effectuated
Eliminated
Expanded
Expedited
Founded
Improved
Increased
Initiated
Innovated
Introduced
Invented
Launched
Mastered
Originated
Overcame
Overhauled
Pioneered
Reduced
Resolved
Revitalized
Spearheaded
Strengthened
Transformed
Upgraded