

GETTING STARTED AND GENERAL FORMATTING

A resume is one of the first and most important tools at your disposal to capture the interest of employers. It begins the process of convincing an employer that you offer relevant experience, knowledge, and enthusiasm. Craft your resume as you would a piece of persuasive writing: follow formatting rules and conventions, highlight your best attributes, be descriptive and engaging. Be accurate, tailor to your audience, and purge distracting typographical errors and formatting inconsistencies. If you are applying to different industries or types of positions, you should create a tailored resume for each.

It is important to have someone review your resume for formatting, persuasiveness, and appropriateness. Other people can give helpful feedback on how things look that you might not see yourself - including: **typographical, spelling, and grammar mistakes**. Employers will not consider resumes with errors in spelling or grammar. Proofread your resume several times, including backwards. Pay particular attention to proper names, employers, cities, acronyms, etc. Carefully examine it to ensure accurate punctuation, telephone, and email information. Ensure you use consistent verb tense and visual formatting. **Your computer's spell checker will not catch such errors**. Consider feedback carefully. Do not adopt suggestions without review and consideration.

The average employer spends **seconds** reviewing a resume. Therefore, information should be where employers expect to find it. Your resume should be free of clutter, pleasing to the eye, and follow traditional, conservative formats. Below are guidelines to assist you in crafting an effective resume. Keep in mind professional resumes are generally understated and follow a particular order. **Trying to stand out with flashy graphics, elaborate fonts, or an avant-garde layout will frustrate employers and may distinguish you in a negative way.**

The top of your resume should include your contact information. For **most students**, that will be followed, in order, by education, experience, and interests. For **graduates who have been out of school for more than a year**, contact information will generally be followed, in order, by experience, education, and any other relevant sections such as professional memberships, awards, or publications.

Every resume should be:

- **one page, single-sided - no exceptions!**
- printed on white, off-white, or beige resume-quality paper
- written in a font size between 10 and 12 points, depending on the font
- free of typographical, punctuation, capitalization, or grammatical errors
- printed with a laser printer

CONTACT INFORMATION

Provide employers with accurate, current contact information. **Never force an employer to struggle to reach you.** In particular:

- use the name you wish to be referred to at work
- if you go by your middle name, list your first initial, middle name, then surname
- when saving your resume on your computer, use only your name and the word "resume" to title the file - be sure to **convert it to PDF** format before emailing it to any prospective employers
- use your **current** mailing address. If you are targeting employers in your hometown and want to emphasize your ties to that city, list your local address as a second address, labeled "permanent address"
- list a phone number where an employer can reach you during business hours - be sure that your voice mail is functioning, the **greeting is one that you would want a prospective employer to hear**, and check your messages daily
- use an email address **appropriate for business communications**, and check your inbox at least once daily

The following headings and information should

NOT BE INCLUDED on your resume:

- job or career objective
- **relevant course work**
- summary of qualifications or skills
- references, or the statement "references available upon request"
- personal information such as: age, height, weight, sex, hair color, marital status, or a photograph of yourself.

EDUCATION SECTION

This section should include a concise summary of your educational experience. Begin with your most recent education, and list, in the following order:

- your degree and the date it was conferred or you expect it to be conferred (i.e. list as "expected June, 2014")
- grade point average - list your overall G.P.A. as well as your major G.P.A. if it is **higher** than your overall G.P.A. Each G.P.A. should appear on a separate line and be clearly labeled
- academic honors, scholarships, teaching assistantships, and other awards or recognitions (do not save these for a separate awards section, the employer will be more likely to read your education section)
- memberships in student organizations and school related activities in which you were regularly active or hold an office or title
- **do not list your high school education** unless you attended a particularly competitive, prestigious, or specialized high school program

EXPERIENCE SECTION

You should portray your work experience to employers in the best possible light. Your resume is the first opportunity an employer has to evaluate how your skills and knowledge will benefit the company. As you consider your experience, consider the position you to which you are applying. Think about the characteristics and qualifications of the employer's ideal candidate as you describe your experience and qualifications. This may differ between employers. These differences highlight why you may benefit from creating more than one resume. For example, a resume aimed at public interest positions would emphasize community involvement, whereas a resume aimed at corporate jobs would emphasize professional business experience.

When listing the duties you've performed, be descriptive and specific. Have you: performed research? compiled statistics? analyzed and solved problems? made oral presentations? drafted a proposal? negotiated with and influenced others? dealt with clients, the general public, or constituents? liaised between groups? delivered results under pressure and within deadlines? started your own business? founded an organization? written reports? Use **industry specific business terms**. If you were an office manager who ordered supplies and worked with vendors, consider saying "managed supply chain" instead of ordered supplies, as long as it is still true. Notice the use of **past tense of above suggestions** – you have done these things, you are not doing them while being interviewed.

Provide employers with relevant, informative details:

- Select words that convey the most information possible about what you did. It is more effective (and interesting) to use active language that describes the specific tasks you completed.
- Quantify your experience when possible. Let the employer know how many clients you served, the size of the budget you prepared, how quickly you were promoted, or the percentage of sales you increased or made.
- Use an **active voice**: "performed research," "drafted memoranda," "prepared financial reports." Avoid using "responsibilities included: . . ." Highlight how your experience evidences initiative, independence, attention to detail, ability to follow direction, and other desirable traits. Allot more space to recent positions.
- Describe not only paid employment, but also internships, including volunteer work. Do not neglect these valuable positions. If you have a future experience lined up, add it to the top of your experience section, and include a short general description of what you expect to do at the internship. Describe expected experiences with the word "Anticipate."

AWARDS, SCHOLARSHIPS & GRANTS

List scholarships and awards by exact name and indicate when or how often the honor was received, if not obvious from the title. If the purpose, accomplishment recognized by, or source of the award is not obvious, provide a brief description.

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS, MEMBERSHIPS & ACTIVITIES

List only the names of organizations of which you are or have been an active member. **Be prepared to discuss your contributions to the organization in an interview.**

COMMUNITY SERVICE & VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES SECTION

Highlighting your involvement in charitable and community activities serves several purposes: demonstrating an interest in and dedication to helping others; bolstering a resume that lacks significant work experience; and, providing an unexpected connection to the person reviewing your resume. If your service was extensive, it showcases the same skills as those of paid positions, such as leadership, initiative, organization, responsibility, commitment, and business savvy. Unless your experience is especially lengthy or otherwise involved, keep this section brief and give more priority to your education and/or paid experience. **List volunteer activities in which you are or were actively involved following the guidelines above regarding "experience."**

LANGUAGES & SPECIAL SKILLS SECTION

List the languages you speak in addition to English and accurately indicate your level of proficiency. **Examples**: fluent Spanish, conversational spoken French, native fluency in Hungarian, enrolled in beginning Italian. List other distinctive accomplishments that may be relevant to a professional position, such as skills in specific computer programs **if they are unique or industry specific** (i.e. **do not say** you are proficient in "Office" or "Word." However, you can say advanced in "Excel" or "STATA" if that is the case).

INTERESTS SECTION

Having an interest or hobby in common with an interviewer can draw a fuller picture of you as an individual. List no more than three to four activities that you sincerely enjoy. **Be prepared to discuss what you list in an interview.** Ideally, your interests should be balanced between athletic, recreational, cultural, and intellectual activities. Also, be cognizant of the employers you are targeting, and the impressions they will form of you based on your listed interests. **Examples**: distance running, Italian architecture, sailing, jazz piano, Russian literature, Greek mythology, European backpacking, golf, pick-up soccer, etc.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Before you send out a single resume, **Google yourself**. Consider the image you convey on various social media websites. Employers will likely do an internet search prior to scheduling an interview or before extending an offer. Thoroughly review your posts and pictures on Facebook, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn, etc. Make sure what you find reflects the same professionalism as your resume.