

How To: Resumes

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The Basics

1. The following are only guidelines. **There's no ONE way to write a resume**—pick what works for you and your future career.
2. Put your most relevant experiences toward the top of your resume.
3. One to two pages maximum —your resume should not be an autobiography.
4. Describe your accomplishments positively and accurately. Do not be modest or exaggerate.
5. Don't limit the content to just your work experience. There are many transferable skills that can be developed through volunteer positions, involvement in student and professional organizations, and through class projects.
6. Omit personal pronouns, such as “I,” “me,” “my,” etc.
7. Do not include personal data, such as height, weight, marital status, age, health, etc.
8. Do not include personal references as a part of your resume. Have it as a separate sheet.
9. Make sure there are no typos! Employers cite this as the first reason they eliminate applicants.
10. When sending your resume, look carefully for directions from the employer. If you are unsure how to send your resume, PDF is typically the safest way.

Getting Started

1) **Use a blank worksheet and start fresh.** Don't use a template—they're hard to edit and your resume will end up looking similar to everyone else's.

❖ **Education:**

- List schools attended, dates, courses taken, degrees, special projects, subjects, extra-curricular activities, special skills developed, and academic accomplishments.

❖ **Work History:**

- Start with your most recent job and work backwards.
- List such information as the name, city, and state of your employer, job title, dates of employment, duties, skills developed and accomplishments.
- **Sell yourself.** An employer knows what a Cashier does, for example, so communicate what makes you stand out above others and what you excelled at.

❖ **Additional Data:**

- List relevant volunteer activities, special talents, or skills (such as leadership skills, travel, foreign languages, computer skills, musical abilities, etc.).

2) **Develop a rough draft.** Do not just copy the samples you see here or receive from the office. Those are real resumes so copying is considered plagiarism.

3) **Have someone critique your resume draft.** Look for the following:

❖ **Overall Appearance:**

- Clean & crisp! An employer can find what they'll want to know easily. Connect your student and work experience to what they need. Make sure your spacing, layout, bullets are all aligned properly. Consistency is key!

❖ **Length:**

- Could anything be deleted, shortened, or combined? One-page resumes are still preferred by employers however two-pages are acceptable as long as the information is relevant.

❖ **Action Orientation:**

- Do the phrases begin with action verbs? See the list of action verbs in this handout for examples. Do descriptions give an active impression?

❖ **Specificity:**

- Does the resume highlight specific skills, accomplishments, and areas of knowledge? Are accomplishments quantified wherever possible?

❖ **Completeness:**

- Is all the important information included? Could anything be added without distracting the reader?

❖ **Effectiveness:**

- How well does the resume accomplish its purpose? Does the resume suggest a "fit" with the job tasks and requirements of your targeted area?

4) **Have your resume critiqued by someone working in your target profession** – preferably someone who reviews resumes of job applicants.

Common Resume Elements

Name Block:

- It is preferred for you to use your full first name.
- Avoid using nicknames, which are “cutesy” or “pet names.”
- Your address should not contain abbreviations.
- Provide a phone number where you have a professional sounding voice mail.
- Add an email address if you check it frequently and it’s professional (not partygirl@hotmail.com)
- Make sure your name stands out – use a slightly larger, bolded font.

Objective:

- An objective should be included only if you have a specific goal in mind.
- Should be concise, not flowery and philosophical.
- The objective is an optional part of your resume because this is typically included in the cover letter.

Skills Summary/Profile of Qualifications:

- This is an overview of the qualifications and accomplishments, highlighting skills which support your objective.
- It is an optional part of the resume, but can be very effective in focusing the attention of the employer.
- Include key skills, related accomplishments, and positive personal attributes that are relevant.

Education:

- Your education section should go first as you prepare for internships and life beyond college. This is a huge selling point!
- State the full degree/major you are seeking, the institution, and location (city and state).
- Omit your high school diploma if you have taken any higher education classes.
- Include any courses you have completed related to your career or graduate school interest

Employment History:

- List your most recent job first, and include jobs you have had in the last ten years.
- Since the employer will read your resume from the top to the bottom, it may be better for you to highlight your most relevant experience first, followed by your other experiences.

Organizations/Affiliations:

- List organizational memberships, which are related to your goals and show professional standings.
- Generally, it is best **not** to mention any involvement with a specific religious or political affiliation, or other potentially controversial groups unless they directly relate to the job you want.

Awards or Recognition:

- Let the employer know of any awards or recognition you may have received (such as “employee of the month,” etc.), if it is timely and relevant.

Suggested Resume Headings

Most individuals are surprised to learn that there are *many different* ways to organize the information you include on a resume. Ideally, your resume should be organized to highlight areas of *relevancy* to the type of job or career to which you are applying, emphasizing the skills, experience and personal attributes sought by the employer.

Objective:

- Objective
- Job Objective
- Career Objective
- Professional Objective

Qualification & Accomplishments:

- Areas of Knowledge
- Areas of Expertise
- Computer Skills
- Language Skills
- Background Highlights
- Career Highlights
- Professional Skills
- Personal Skills
- Summary of Qualifications
- Experience Summary
- Experience Highlights
- Achievements
- Career Achievements
- Part Time and Summer and Employment
- Special Skills
- Special Talents

Education:

- Education
- Educational Background
- Educational Preparation
- Academic Background
- Academic Training
- Special Training
- Certification
- Credentials
- Areas of Knowledge
- Educational Highlights
- Course Highlights
- International Study
- Senior Research Project
- Scholarships

Relevant Experience:

- Experience
- Professional Background
- Employment History
- Work History
- Employment
- Additional Experience
- Related Experience
- Internships
- Work Experience
- Volunteer Activities
- Leadership
- Military Experience
- Travel Abroad
- Areas of Experience

Other Related Experience:

- International Study
- Related Activities
- Leadership
- Travel Abroad
- Travel
- Language Competencies
- Presentations
- Publications
- Areas of Experience
- Conferences Attended

Activities & Memberships:

- Civic Activities
- Professional Activities
- Community Activities
- College Activities
- Membership
- Professional Organizations
- Professional Memberships
- Professional Affiliations

Awards & Honors:

- Activities
- Special Honors

- College Distinctions
- Honors & Distinctions
- Honors/Awards

Writing Effective Skills Phrases: Sell, Don't Tell!

Different Versions of Skills Statements

Mediocre

- ✓ Managed office
- ✓ Taught Chemistry to students
- ✓ Managed farm

Better

- ✓ Managed office operations and staff of twelve
- ✓ Taught the gas laws to a group of high school students
- ✓ Managed 50 head of dairy cattle on farm

Best

- ✓ Managed sales office operations and staff of twelve to record productivity
- ✓ Utilized cooperative learning in teaching the gas laws to 25 high school students
- ✓ Managed 50 head of dairy cattle and utilized ration balancing which enhanced milk production by 37%

Skill Phrases With Results

Meeting or Surpassing Goals/Standards

- ✓ Exceeded sales department's yearly goals by 150% over a nine-month period.
- ✓ Learned all aspects associated with sales office, including functions of cashier, wire operator, order desk and research library assistant.
- ✓ Designed complete computer software to replicate the four-phase mode of the human heart as an intern.
- ✓ Co-wrote and edited a training manual for the Carbonate Rock Society. Three years later, the manual is still in use.

Promotion or Increased Responsibility

- ✓ Created new position of Public Relations Director to fill corporate need.
- ✓ Promoted to Staff Trainer after working as a waitress for three summers.

Increasing Efficiency, Cutting Time Spent On Tasks

- ✓ Organized computer system to log approximately 200 grant proposals per month, resulting in a 20% reduction in the time spent on this task.
- ✓ Restructured sanding department work priorities, which resulted in a 4-fold increase in efficiency during a summer job.

Initiating Change/New Idea That Was Utilized

- ✓ Designed and implemented magnet setting in new classroom, which has now been adopted by the entire school.
- ✓ Organized recreational, social and education programs for housing project. Increased program from 2 to 24 classes.

Action Verbs

Management Skills

Administered
analyzed
assigned
attained
chaired
contracted
consolidated
coordinated
delegated
developed
directed
evaluated
executed
improved
increased
organized
oversaw
planned
prioritized
produced
recommended
reviewed
scheduled
strengthened
supervised

Research Skills

clarified
collected
critiqued
diagnosed
evaluated
examined
extracted
identified
inspected
interpreted
interviewed
investigated
organized
reviewed
summarized
surveyed
systematized

Technical Skills

assembled
built
calculated
computed
designed
devised
engineered
fabricated
maintained
operated
overhauled
programmed
remodeled
repaired
solved
trained
upgraded

Teaching Skills

adapted
advised
clarified
coached
communicated
coordinated
developed
enabled
encouraged
evaluated
explained
facilitated
guided
informed
initiated
instructed
persuaded
set goals
stimulated

Financial Skills

administered
allocated
analyzed
appraised
audited
balanced
budgeted
calculated
computed
developed
forecasted
managed
marketed
planned
projected
researched

Helping Skills

assessed
assisted
clarified
coached
counseled
demonstrated
diagnosed
educated
expedited
facilitated
familiarized
guided
referred
rehabilitated
represented

Communication Skills

addressed
arbitrated
arranged
authored
corresponded
developed
directed
drafted
edited
enlisted
formulated
influenced
interpreted
lectured
mediated
moderated
motivated
negotiated
persuaded
promoted
publicized
reconciled
recruited
spoke
translated
wrote

Creative Skills

acted
conceptualized
created
designed
developed
directed
established
fashioned
founded
illustrated
instituted
integrated
introduced
invented
originated
performed

Detail Skills

approved
arranged
catalogued
classified
collected
compiled
dispatched
executed
generated
implemented
inspected
monitored
operated
organized
prepared
processed
purchased
recorded
retrieved
screened
specified
systematized

Resume Formats to Consider

1. Chronological Resume

- a. Presents information in a fast and easy-to-read manner and is also the easiest to write. Jobs are listed in chronological order, starting with the most recent or present and working back through the years.

Advantages

- ❖ Professional interviewers are most familiar with it
- ❖ It is the easiest to prepare since its content is structured by familiar dates, companies and titles
- ❖ A stable employment record (without much job hopping) is put into the best perspective
- ❖ It provides the interviewer with an easy guide for discussing work experiences

Disadvantages

- ❖ It draws attention to employment gaps
- ❖ It may put undesired emphasis on job areas that an applicant wants to minimize
- ❖ Skill areas are difficult to spotlight unless they are reflected in most recent jobs

2. Functional Resume

- a. Allows more flexibility than the chronological but is not typically preferred by employers. Job skills are featured by grouping similar skill phrases together regardless of where or when the experience was gained.

Advantages

- ❖ It stresses selected skill areas which are marketable or in demand
- ❖ It can help to camouflage a spotty employment record
- ❖ It allows you to emphasize professional growth
- ❖ Positions not related to current career goals are not highlighted

Disadvantages

- ❖ Many employers want to see additional work history information
- ❖ It doesn't allow you to highlight companies or organizations you've worked for

3. Combination Resume

- a. This resume contains elements similar to both the chronological and functional formats. Work experiences are presented chronologically, but you can also set aside relevant skill areas in separate categories. This allows you to highlight related areas of expertise and at the same time satisfies the employer's desire to know names and dates.

Advantages

- ❖ Provides a good opportunity to emphasize relevant skills and abilities
- ❖ Gaps in employment can be de-emphasized
- ❖ It can highlight a steady work history, while also specifying relevant skills and experience

Resume Critiquing Guidelines

Layout/Appearance:

- Is it neat, concise and easy to read?
- Do topic headings (and your name!) stand out?
- Is your resume free of typographical errors and misspelled words?
- Is the resume well organized and professional looking?
- Were you consistent with verb tenses and placement of headings and content?
- If your resume is more than one page, is the most important information on the first page?
- Can your layout be modified to get everything to fit on one page?

Content:

- Is the information provided the best way to contact you—phone and email?
- If there is an objective, is it clearly stated?
- Have you presented schools, degrees, concentration, relevant academic experiences, courses, and honors?
- Have you included all experiences that project skills, accomplishments, and show results (noting facts and figures when appropriate)?
- Did you describe experiences in action phrases?
- Does your resume match your best skills with the needs of the employer?
- Are experiences grouped according to topics that relate to your goals or objectives?
- Have you presented experiences in reverse chronological order? If not, is there logic behind the presentation?
- Have you presented your skills in the language of potential employers, industry or profession?
- Have you listed appropriate activities, noting leadership positions?
- If you included organizations that might be controversial, have you considered how a potential employer might react?
- Did you leave out personal information that could be viewed negatively or used to discriminate against you?
- Does it lead with your strengths and accomplishments, and focus on relevant experience?
- Will your resume make a strong, positive, and professional impression on the reader?
- Is your resume the most professional presentation of your ability to complete a task effectively and successfully?

BASIC RESUME EXAMPLE

First Name Last Name
Address
City, Texas ZIP
(210) 555.5555
lname@uiwtx.edu

SKILLS & QUALIFICATIONS

- PC & Mac proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, Outlook, Power Point, Appleworks, Firefox, Internet Explorer, Microsoft Publisher, Microsoft FrontPage
- Excellent interpersonal skills
- Able to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts in **Art**, Minor in **Marketing**
University of the Incarnate Word, San Antonio, Texas
Graduation Pending May 2007
Grade Point Average: 3.9, 4.0 in major
**Maintained a 3.9 GPA while working 35 hours per week*

EXPERIENCE

Senior Resident Assistant

University of the Incarnate Word-Residence Life, San Antonio, Texas
August 2005-present

- Ensured safety of all residents by strictly enforcing all university rules and guidelines
- Responsible for timely completion of all paperwork to include accuracy and thoroughness
- Maintained healthy relationships with residents and other resident assistants
- Required to perform problem-solving in fast-paced environments including conflict resolution
- Created presentations and activities about topics affecting today's college students
- Successfully lead a team of four Resident Assistants in all functions of the position

Senior Student Assistant

University of the Incarnate Word-Office of Career Services, San Antonio, Texas
July 2004-present

- Greeted & assisted students with questions regarding all aspects of career planning, resumes, cover letters, and internships

First Name Last Name

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- Ensured accurate upkeep of online & in-office job databases
- Designed and created numerous PowerPoint presentations covering a wide array of topics

Cashier/Trainer

Party City, San Antonio, Texas

July 2003–August 2005

- Responsible for properly training incoming cashiers in all facets of job function (up to 10 cashier trainees at one time)
- Created numerous checklists and training aids, increasing levels of retention
- Designed and implemented alternative training programs to fit individual & specialized needs of new cashiers
- Maintained customer relationships and resolved customer complaints
- Was promoted in September 2004 to Lead, requiring performing a managerial role
- Prepared nightly accounting reports, ensuring all records were complete & accurate
- Created organized lists of all product sold throughout store in order for employees to increase product placement knowledge
- Detected employees not adhering to and enforced policies & procedures, including write-ups and other managerial actions as necessary
- Responsible for ensuring timely completion of all assigned projects for myself and trainees

AWARDS & HONORS

Dean's List, University of the Incarnate Word, all semesters 2011-current

University of the Incarnate Word Resident Assistant of the Year, 2005-2006

University of the Incarnate Word Resident Assistant of the Month, August 2005

Party City Employee of the Month, July 2004 and June 2005

UIW Academic Scholarship, \$11,200

References Available Upon Request

COMBINATION RESUME EXAMPLE

Darryl Hannah

555 555th Avenue North West, Andover, MN 55304
(763) 555-5555, madison@yahoo.com

OBJECTIVE: Marketing Department Spanish-speaking position within an international mid to large size corporation

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science, **Business Administration and Spanish**
University of Wisconsin – River Falls (UW-RF), 2002
Dean's List, Cumulative GPA 3.79/4.0

SPANISH EXPERIENCE

- Completed ten years of in-class oral and written Spanish experience
- Traveled for three months to expand my knowledge of the of Mexican culture and to improve my Spanish speaking and written skills
- Spoke Spanish with District del Sol Hispanic business owners to discuss advertising possibilities to increase the profitability of their businesses
- Created four PowerPoint presentations in Spanish and effectively delivered to large audience
- Engaged in conversation with professors, exchange students, and fellow students to enhance my Spanish speaking ability

MARKETING EXPERIENCE

Marketing Assistant Intern, Summer 2001

Riverview Economic Development Association, St. Paul, MN

- Developed ideas for projects to rebuild and increase community awareness of the District del Sol
- Researched city demographics using planning and marketing skills to devise a SWOT analysis
- and produce community events such as Oktober Fiesta and Adopt-a-Trashcan
- Compiled information from Cinco de Mayo into a database and spreadsheet to make it easily accessible for future use

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Career Peer Advisor, 2001 – Present

Career Services, UW-RF, River Falls, WI

- Increased public speaking skills by giving workshops to students such as: Job Searching and
- Interviewing Strategies, Resume and Cover Letter Writing, and Portfolios
- Contributed to the planning, promoting, and facilitating of a career fair, walk-thru workshop, presentations and outreach tables
- Assembled bulletin boards monthly to advertise upcoming Career Services events
- Enhanced written communication skills by critiquing resumes, cover letters, and portfolios for students and alumni

References Available Upon Request

EDUCATION RESUME EXAMPLE

Liv Tyler

555 Brookview Drive
Talahasee, MN 55555
(555) 555-5555

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science, Secondary Education-Broad Area Social Studies Coaching Minor

University of Wisconsin-River Falls, 2003

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Grades 7, 8, & 9 Social Studies Teacher

Cottage Grove Junior High School, Cottage Grove, MN, 1995-1996

- Introduced computer technology to enhance various projects, such as using the Internet
- Developed a classroom management program that fostered a stable learning environment
- Instructed a year-long lesson that studied a different culture of the world each week
- Advised the 7th & 8th grade Down Hill Ski Club
- Refereed 8th grade boys and girls basketball games
- Chaperoned after school activities including dances and activity nights

Grades 7 & 9 Social Studies Teacher

Woodbury Junior High School, Woodbury, MN, 1992-1995

- Facilitated cooperative learning by planning at least one group lesson each week
- Incorporated supplemental readings from magazines, periodicals and novels to enhance lessons and learning
- Coached 8th grade boys light-weight football

Grades 7 & 8 Students At Risk Teacher

Oltman Junior High School, Oltman, MN, 1990-1992

- Team coordinator for School Within A School (SWAS) program
- Facilitated learning for students with high risk social and academic behaviors
- Guided students through behavior modification curriculums and helped them set attainable academic and behavioral goals, and recorded and rewarded their progress
- Developed modified lessons for English, math, & social studies

Grade 10 Student Teacher

Rosemount High School, Rosemount, MN, 1986-1990

- Instructed U.S. History and American Studies advance placement
- Integrated multi-media approaches in lessons, including popular music, computer programs, magazines and novels
- Arranged for a guest speaker to speak to classes about multi-culturalism

References Available Upon Request