

Resumes are deceptively complex documents. While the finished product looks like a simple, clean summary of your qualifications, the process of writing your resume can be quite challenging.

Most people think their resume is an informational document; a basic summary of their education, experiences and skills. Not so!

To be an effective tool in your search for a job or internship, your resume should be a marketing document. It should be focused on delivering a specific and relevant message about you to your target audience. It should help the reader understand who you are, the qualifications you offer, and the type of opportunities you are seeking. Your resume, as a marketing tool, should catch the employer's interest and, if successful, result in an interview.

In order to know what to include in your resume, you must be able to answer the following:

What do you want employers to learn about you, your education, your experience and your skills when they read your resume?

In short, what is the core message of your resume?

If you are a college student, chances are you may need to limit your resume to one page. Remember: resumes are not intended to be autobiographical - they cannot (and should not) try to tell everything there is to know about you.

What should you include on your resume? Only the relevant aspects of your education, experience, skills and characteristics that will be of interest to the employers with whom you share it.

The relevant aspects of your education, experience, skills and characteristics comprise the core message of your resume.

In developing your core message, think about what the employer is seeking, then target the content of your resume accordingly. Working with a career advisor can be very helpful during this process. Once you have developed your core message, you can begin creating your resume.

WHAT RESUME FORMAT SHOULD I USE?

There are two primary resume formats: the chronological resume and the functional resume.

Generally, the chronological resume is recommended for students with relatively little experience. In certain cases involving complex work histories, the functional format may be more suitable. Ask your career advisor for guidance in deciding on a format.

Chronological Resume

Chronological resumes present your experience and education in a straightforward reverse chronological format - with the most recent information listed first. Information is presented in categories such as "Education", "Work

Experience”, “Skills”, etc.

Functional Resume

Functional resumes highlight your skills and experience, and place less focus on your employment history. As opposed to chronological resumes, in which duties performed in specific positions are listed within position descriptions, functional resumes allow you to highlight specific skill sets, such as “Marketing”, “Training & Development”, and “Research”, with accomplishment statements that illustrate skills and experience gained from a variety of positions, academic experiences, etc. The positions, employers and dates of employment related to these skills and accomplishments are listed separately later in the resume.

WHAT ABOUT RESUME TEMPLATES?

Resist the urge to jump directly to a resume template, such as you will find in Microsoft Word, in job search books, and on the internet. These templates, while easy to use, restrict your ability to customize the content and format of your resume. They are designed to be “one size fits all” answers, and one size rarely fits anyone very well under any circumstance. When it comes to your resume, “easy” does not necessarily equal “good.”

Resume templates can be beneficial when your education and experience align directly and clearly with your job/ internship search goals. If you are an Accounting major with accounting experience looking for an opportunity in accounting, your education, experience and other qualifications align directly with the kind of work you are seeking. A resume template may be a good option for you. If you are an English major with varied experience and are interested in training and human resources with a small, start-up company, you might want to avoid using a resume template.

Who Should Consider Resume Templates

Students in majors that track directly into specific professions such as engineering, accounting and computer science where qualifications can be easily described, defined or measured in quantitative terms
Students applying for management trainee, sales, or other entry-level opportunities with a Fortune 500 Company or similar “bulk” employer

Who Should Avoid Resume Templates

Students in majors that do not track directly into specific professions and/or whose qualifications cannot be easily described, defined or measured in quantitative terms
Students applying for opportunities with required qualifications that are not directly related to their college major

WHAT SECTIONS SHOULD I INCLUDE IN MY RESUME?

Resume construction is a very subjective art; however, following is a list of commonly used required and optional sections.

Required sections can be renamed to suit your specific needs and focus your resume. Optional sections should be included only if they will enhance your ability to deliver your core message.

Contact Information (Required)

Your contact information is the masthead of your resume. It must include your name, phone number and email address. It may also include information such as your personal website, LinkedIn URL, etc. Include your current address and/or your permanent address only if they are relevant.

Objective (Optional)

It is important to remember that objectives are NOT required. If you choose to use an objective, it must be relevant to the position for which you are applying. An unclear or inappropriately targeted objective is worse than no objective, so think carefully before opting to use one.

An objective places your resume in specific context. It tells your reader how to interpret the content of your resume. Objectives are not required, but if you choose to use one, be specific. For example, if you are applying for a variety of similar positions, you could utilize general objective statements like these:

- An entry-level position in sales and marketing.
- An entry-level position in advertising.
- An internship in nonprofit management.
- An opportunity in investment banking.

Summary of Qualifications (Optional)

A summary of qualifications allows you to briefly state your core message (your relevant experience, education, skills and characteristics) at the beginning of your resume. The purpose of the summary is to give the reader a brief overview of the more detailed information found later in the resume

Education (Required)

Current students and recent graduates frequently put the Education section at the beginning of their resumes. Experienced candidates often lead with their Experience section. Your Education section should include the post-secondary institutions you have attended and the degrees and programs you have completed (or are in the process of completing). It can also include your GPA, honors and awards, study abroad, relevant course work, special projects, and percentage of your education costs you self-funded. High school information is rarely listed on a professional resume unless directly relevant to your core message.

Experience (Required)

Experience can include internships, part-time jobs, regular positions, volunteer experience and temporary positions. Possible section headings include, "Experience", "Professional History", "Experience Highlights", "Relevant Experience", etc. Jobs are typically listed in reverse chronological order.

When describing your experience, focus on your accomplishments, rather than providing a job description.

Highlight the position or company, depending on which of the two you wish to emphasize. Since what you did

is more important than when you did it, place more emphasis on position and company and less on dates of employment.

Ensure that verb tense matches relevant dates and use strong language by starting every statement with an action verb! Some effective resume action verbs include:

Acted	Designed	Identified	Motivated	Resolved
Administered	Devised	Implemented	Negotiated	Revised
Advertised	Drafted	Initiated	Organized	Scheduled
Advised	Edited	Installed	Participated	Simplified
Analyzed	Enforced	Maintained	Prepared	Supervised
Arranged	Established	Managed	Produced	Supplied
Contributed	Executed	Mapped	Reduced	Trained
Coordinated	Facilitated	Marketed	Represented	Utilized
Created	Generated	Maximized	Researched	Wrote

Skills (Optional)

The skills section may include technical, research, language and industry-specific skills. If interested in a technical position you may feature your production and computer skills. Language skills should be clearly listed in a way that defines your proficiency level. Here are a variety of examples: bicultural/bilingual; speak, read, write, translate, interpret, including contracts, scientific and technical documents; conversationally fluent; proficient; business proficiency; intermediate; and basic.

In order to facilitate reading, group your skills into appropriate sub-categories. For example:

Analytical:	ROI, P/L & New Market Opportunity Analysis; Ad Performance & Behavior, App Sales, Download and Subscription Tracking
Business:	Sales, Marketing, Customer Service, Training, Administration
Computer:	Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, HTML, PageMaker
Creative:	Dreamweaver, Flash, FrontPage, GoLive, Photoshop, InDesign, Illustrator
Digital:	Adobe Omniture (SiteCatalyst & Search Center); Dun & Bradstreet Market Insight; eDialog Email Marketing; Google Analytics & Webmaster Tools

Language: Proficient Spanish, Intermediate Japanese, Basic French, Basic American Sign Language

Marketing: Email Marketing; Search Engine Optimization (SEO); Search Engine Marketing (SEM); Display Advertising; Mobile App & Web Marketing; Site Traffic Generation; Event Marketing

Credits (Optional, for creative professionals)

The credit section may be used to feature personal work or freelance projects either completed or in progress. The format should follow that which is used for the resume in general. You may include awards/honors won or format of work.

Affiliations/Honors/Leadership & Service/Activities/Interests (Optional)

These are optional sections you may include if you want to highlight certain extracurricular activities that illustrate features you feel are important and relevant to potential employers.

CHECK OUT THE RESUME GALLERY FOR IDEAS

Why recreate the wheel? Check out the 100+ example resumes in the CSO Resume Gallery to get ideas for your own resume:

www.thecampuscareercoach.com/resume-gallery

HOW AND WHERE SHOULD I LIST MY REFERENCES?

Always remember to ask permission before listing someone as a reference. Share your resume with all your references so that they may be better equipped to speak on your behalf.

References should be listed on a separate sheet of paper following your resume and presented only after they have been requested. Use the same page heading as on your resume to make it look like a professional package. Below that, list your references centered or flush with the left margin. Include three to five people who can present insight into your academic and work experience and offer positive comments on your abilities. Following is a sample reference page layout:

Joe Smith

512.555.1212 joesmith@email.com

REFERENCES

Name, Title
Company/Organization
Mailing Address
Telephone
E-mail Address

Name, Title
Company/Organization
Mailing Address
Telephone
E-mail Address

Name, Title
Company/Organization
Mailing Address
Telephone
E-mail Address

FINAL THOUGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

So, here's the bottom line: You must be actively and personally involved in the creation of your resume. No one else can do this for you. It makes good sense to get professional assistance when crafting your resume, but you can't pay someone to make your decisions for you. You need to make the decisions regarding what your resume should/should not include and how it should look, because you will have to defend its contents and appearance to potential employers. If you don't know what your resume says about you and why and how it says it, then when an employer asks . . . you will lose credibility with that employer. Put in the time, effort and attention up front, and your resume will be a valuable marketing tool in your search for a job or internship.

- Remember, your resume is a marketing document. Most of the information it contains should be directly relevant to the type of jobs or internships for which you are applying.
- Be concise. Keep in mind that an employer will typically spend about 15 seconds initially scanning your resume.
- Use resume grammar – not formal prose or MLA, Chicago or AP Style. Avoid first person pronouns (I, we); most of the helping verbs (have, had, may); most being verbs (am, is, are, was, were); and articles (the, a, an). Lead with action verbs, and write action verb-driven accomplishment statements.
- Focus on position and place of employment; do not emphasize dates. Employers primarily interested in what you did and secondarily in when you did it.
- Be CONSISTENT. Every entry should follow the same format. For example, if you abbreviate TX once, do it every time thereafter. The same goes for using semester and year or month and year.
- Use industry lingo and abbreviations as appropriate, but do so with caution.
- Use spacing, underlining, italics, bold and capitalization for emphasis, but do so with restraint. Less is best and, above all, be consistent in the way you use formatting.
- PROOFREAD, PROOFREAD, PROOFREAD; and then, proofread again! As you become familiar with the content of your resume you should allow someone else to edit; they will see things you won't. Remember that resume typos and errors are deadly to your candidacy.
- Use 8 1/2 x 11-inch resume paper when mailing or giving a resume in person. Resume paper can be purchased at any other office supply, copy or stationary store. Generally, white paper is your best option. Colored paper can add a nice touch of creativity, but be aware that darker colors do not photocopy well, a disadvantage when your resume is shared across many departments. When printing, use a laser or letter quality printer.
- Save your resume in document and PDF format, and double check your PDF to make sure you had a clean conversion from document to PDF. Email employers the PDF version.