

WRITING YOUR

# Resume



# Writing Your Resume

A resume is a brief written summary of your select professional experience and qualifications. It is not your entire professional history, a form of self-expression, or a piece of paper that will decide your future. The main purpose of a resume is simply to get you an interview or a professional introduction.

## Effective resumes and cover letters are essential partners in your job search.

The cover letter introduces your resume, and the resume gives a more complete overview of your experience and qualifications. Together, these marketing tools show the match between you and the position. However, many hiring managers will not read the cover letter, so if something is important, make sure it's on your resume.

## 10 Tips for Writing a Resume Employers Will Read

### one

**Avoid templates or resume wizards.** Template resumes often appear identical to those of many other applicants. Using a template can make it difficult to edit your resume quickly each time you send it out.

### two

**Use a combination resume format** which highlights your marketable skills first (as in a functional resume), then adds your employment history (as in a chronological resume).

### three

**Use action verb phrases to describe your experiences.** Instead of "Responsibilities included training staff" say "Trained five new staff."

### four

**Arrange your education and experience in reverse chronological order, present to past.** For current positions, use present tense and for former positions, use past tense.

### five

**Be concise:** Omit personal pronouns and "a," "an," and "the."

### six

**Stress accomplishments and results.** Use numbers and percentages to prove your accomplishments. Do not simply list tasks or your resume will read like a job description.

### seven

**Create resumes for different jobs and audiences.** If you are applying for more than one job, you will need to use different resumes and keywords.

### eight

**Make it clear.** Avoid confusing acronyms and abbreviations. It is acceptable to use postal abbreviations for states, but be consistent and use the correct two-letter abbreviation.

### nine

**One page is standard for most new graduates and entry-level professionals.** Two pages is standard for most mid-level professionals. Be sure to focus on quality, not quantity. Pay attention to the instructions in the job posting, as some employers will request a one-page resume or items such as a list of presentations or publications.

### ten

**Some fields require specialized resume formats.** Research, scientific, federal, academia, entrepreneur and artistic opportunities may need something different than a standard resume.

*Know what skills, qualifications, and experiences you bring to the table.*

# Before you start writing your resume:

## Name and Contact Information

Know what skills, qualifications, and experiences you bring to the table. If you are having a hard time coming up with a list, ask people who know you well what your skills are, complete an assessment such as Strengths Finder 2.0 or Skills Scan, or read through past performance evaluations.

## Research the field

When applying for a job, look at the company's website, LinkedIn page, annual report, and press releases. Search job descriptions from competitors and talk to people who are current or former employees at the company. Compile the right keywords used in the industry for use in your resume.

## Analyze the description of the position for which you're applying

Pay attention to the key skills and competencies the employer is seeking. Identify specific examples in your resume that match these qualifications and stress them in your cover letter.

## Sections of Your Resume

### Name and Contact Information.

List your full name, current address, phone, email, and LinkedIn.

### Headline.

Use is to grab the recruiter's attention and show that you are the best candidate for the job. It should be a hard-hitting personal brand statement that includes the most relevant key words for the job and describes the 'return on investment' of hiring you.

### Skills or Qualifications.

Lay out the skills and qualifications you have that the employer is looking for in an obvious, clean, concise way. Include languages, computer skills, laboratory skills, equipment use, and other industry-specific competencies of interest to your reader.

### Professional Experience.

Include highlights of paid jobs, internships, volunteer work, and entrepreneurial projects. From present to past, list title,

organization, location, dates, and company website. List your accomplishments as quantifiable, results-oriented bullets that show how you improved the company and met goals. Include things like time frames, percentages, return on investments, number of people supervised, awards, quotas, key accomplishments, etc.

### Use headers that show expertise in your target field.

For example, Communications Experience, Finance Experience, Research Experience, International Experience or Non-profit Experience.

### Education and Training.

Place at the bottom of your resume – unless you have recently graduated and your education is what is going to get you the interview. From present to past, list school, location, degree, date awarded, major, and minor. Study abroad, other degrees, thesis, related courses, projects, and research papers may be included if you are a recent

graduate. If you are worried about age discrimination, you can leave off your graduation year. List any industry specific training or certifications you have.

### Honors and Awards.

Only list any recent and professionally relevant honors and awards either in your education section (i.e. graduated summa cum laude) or in a separate category (i.e. American Marketing Association Member of the Year).

### Professional Affiliations.

Only include those that are of interest in your field. Include any titles or significant roles that you have within organizations. Listing memberships that reveal your race, ethnicity, religion, political affiliation, sexual orientation, or gender identity may encourage or discourage employers from interviewing you. The choice is yours whether or not you want to reveal such information this early on.



**25**  
**action**  
**verbs**  
**for your**  
**resume**

- 01 **communicated**
- 02 **presented**
- 03 **designed**
- 04 **adapted**
- 05 **innovated**
- 06 **revised**
- 07 **supervised**
- 08 **budgeted**
- 09 **procured**
- 10 **executed**
- 11 **identified**
- 12 **generated**
- 13 **streamlined**
- 14 **indexed**
- 15 **motivated**
- 16 **trained**
- 17 **consolidated**
- 18 **refined**
- 19 **centralized**
- 20 **partnered**
- 21 **chartered**
- 22 **formalized**
- 23 **reconciled**
- 24 **boosted**
- 25 **mentored**

# Resume FAQs

**Q Do I need to put the year I graduated from Smith on my resume?**

**A** If you are worried about age discrimination, you can leave your dates of college graduation off your resume. Realize that an employer may assume that by leaving your dates off that you are older, so it is your decision based on the specific circumstances to determine which course is best.

**Q Where should I put my volunteer experience on my resume?**

**A** Your volunteer experience can go in the professional experience, nonprofit experience, or volunteer experience sections. If you are looking to switch to a nonprofit career, list your volunteer activities under a "Nonprofit Experience" heading. List the experience with a job title (that does not necessarily include the word volunteer) and a list of quantifiable accomplishments. If you volunteer for political, religious, and other possibly controversial organizations you may want to think twice about putting it on your resume. There is always the risk that the employer may make a judgment about you and whether or not you will fit in with the culture of their organization.

**Q I have a gap in my resume. How do I address this?**

**A** Add to your resume all of the additional things that you have done while being out of the workforce. If you have been volunteering during this time, taking any classes, running a home-based business, staying involved in a professional organization, or doing occasional consulting, add that experience to your resume. You want to show the employer that you used your time away from the workforce productively. If it is a short gap, you may be able to hide it by using years, and not months, for your dates of employment.

**Q I am trying to change careers to something completely different. Any advice on writing a resume geared toward a new career?**

**A** Use a headline and profile section to highlight the transferable skills you have that are most aligned with your new career. If you have been volunteering or have done some work in your new field, use sections headings to differentiate your professional experience.

**Q I am self-employed or have done a lot of freelance work. How should I list that on my resume?**

**A** If you have a name for your company, use that and list it the same way as your other jobs. If you do not have a company name, you can simply use your name, such as "Sandra Smith Consulting." Your title can be the actual task you perform, such as jewelry designer, tax accountant, artist, or owner.

**Q How do I write a resume if I am interested in more than one type of job?**

**A** You should create a different resume for each type of job you are interested in. If you are applying for more than one job within the same company, it is best to use the same resume; make your profile broad enough that it would cover the kinds of jobs in which you have an interest.

**Q Should I list hobbies and interests on my resume?**

**A** Generally speaking, no. However, if there is a strong correlation between your hobby and the job you are applying for, you may want to include it.

**Q Do I need to hire a professional resume writer?**

**A** If you have the time, writing skills, and your resume is landing you interviews, then you do not need to hire a professional resume writer. If you have not had any callbacks on your resume, you may want to consider working with a professional to update your resume. If you decide to hire a professional resume writer, do your homework and find someone who understands the industry you work in. Find out more about the writer, ask for references and be sure to know what is included in the cost.

*How does your resume differentiate you from your competitors?*

# Resume Review

First Impression of Resume:

What would you say are this person's top two or three skills?

What type of jobs do you think this person is applying for?

Please circle any technical words, jargon, or abbreviations that you do not understand.

Resume Critique	YES	NO	Sort Of	Comments
Two (or less) pages				
Easy to read				
Clear headings				
Bulleted statements				
One font only				
Font size is easy to read (11 or 12 point)				
Limited use of all capital letters				
Limited use of bold, italics, and underlining				
Margins are ½ to 1 inch				
Includes a professional email address				
Includes easy-to-find contact information				
Correct spelling throughout				
Correct grammar throughout				
Consistent formatting				
Minimal professional jargon				
Emphasizes achievements (not tasks)				
Includes sufficient quantifiable information				
Would you call this person for an interview?				

