

RESUME WRITING

CASCADE CAMPUS, CAREER SERVICES, PORTLAND, OR

Your resume is your representative on paper. This summary document announces who you are, what you know, what you have accomplished, and what you can and would like to do for an employer. It provides the reader with a clear, concise, and well-structured presentation of your experience and background, and it highlights those facts that are particularly relevant to the position you desire. The fundamental purpose of a resume is to intrigue a prospective employer to the point where s/he invites you for an interview. Your resume should make a unique statement about you; present your credentials in a way that makes an impact; and convince the reader that you and the position you desire would make a great "fit."

The goal, then, is to construct a document that will distinguish you from your competition and make an effective presentation of your value to an organization.

There is no one *right* way to write a resume. Within each profession, there are expectations of what a "good" resume will look like. Some employers look for evidence of a well-rounded individual. Others look for a concrete focus supported with relevant experience, while others are impressed with accomplishments that show stability and long-term commitment. Therefore, it is a good idea to have a resume critiqued by someone in your target profession. In "market testing" your resume, ask individual readers to evaluate its impact, clarity, and appeal. If you are looking for jobs in more than one field, you will need to prepare a resume targeted to each field.

Focus

As with any successful sales campaign, it is critical to have a clear focus as to where you are directing your efforts. Think of your resume as what you want for the future and not a litany of your past. If only 20% of your past experience is relevant (transferable skills) then that is all you present on paper.

Who is your target audience? Your resume should communicate specifically to **that audience and its particular needs**. Once you are confident that you understand the needs of your audience, you then have to translate for them how you can meet those needs. You want to present a clear and consistent image in your resume as well as in person to demonstrate that you are the person they desire.

What is your objective? Preparing a resume is a self-assessment exercise which forces you to think about yourself, your qualifications, and your aspirations. The more you learn about who you are and what you have accomplished, the easier it will become for you to project an interesting and accurate reflection of your experiences and develop your marketing points that highlight what is unique about you.

Length

While length is a serious consideration, it is more important that a resume be informative, clear, and visually appealing. For some, that can be accomplished in one page; for others, two pages. In either case, within 20 seconds, a reader should be able to grasp your qualifications. For most recent graduates with little relevant work experience, one page is usually sufficient.

Appearance

Your objective, of course, is to get your resume read. It would be nice to think that content is always considered to be more important than form. However, experience has shown that resumes that are visually unattractive get tossed. This does not apply to scannable resumes.

In order to invite readership:

- Use an attractive format, making it easy for a reader to understand and absorb the information.
- Avoid lengthy paragraphs; use short, concise sentences.
- Allow for sufficient amount of “white space.”
- Incorporate bullets, italics, and boldface type when appropriate.
- Use a font size of 10-point or more.
- Use a paper stock that connotes quality and professionalism.
- Paper color should be conservative, such as white, off-white, or pale gray. Cover letters should be typed and match your resume color.

Language

- Use language that is specific, succinct, positive, persuasive, and descriptive of you.
- Emphasize the demonstrated competencies, accomplishments, and experiences that are relevant to your desired position.
- Describe your accomplishments using powerful action verbs.
- Use facts and figures to emphasize your competencies. Remember that the strongest accomplishments are measurable with achievements focusing on results. (Example: "Student Body President")
- Write for your target audience; you may use industry jargon if you are confident your reader will understand it.
- Eliminate errors; proofread several times and have others do the same to make sure there are no spelling or grammatical errors. Accuracy can be critical to your being given further consideration by an employer. Spell check will not catch incorrect numbers or words.

Accomplishments

In general, the more your background is projected as a series of potential benefits to a given employer which are substantiated by past accomplishments, the easier your job search will become. Therefore, emphasize your most applicable and impressive qualities. Essentially, your work or volunteer activity becomes an accomplishment if it satisfies one or more of these criteria.

It...

- Achieved more with the same resources.
- Made things simpler or easier.
- Increased efficiency, profits, sales, productivity.
- Reduced time, errors, costs.
- Improved systems, processes, quality, market share, morale, service.
- Introduced new products, methods, or talents.

If it is difficult to recall specific accomplishments, think of a problem you solved. What was the situation? How did you go about analyzing the problem? What alternative solutions did you consider? What did you finally decide to do and why? How did you implement your solutions? What was the outcome? What difference did your efforts make?

Career Objective

A career objective is a statement that identifies the field or position you are interested in, the skills or strengths you want to use in the job you seek, or combination of the two. Many individuals have more than one resume with several career objectives tailored to fit their various interests. If you need the space on your resume then omit the objective and make sure you have included it in your cover letter. *Think of the career objective as the thesis of your resume.*

CAREER OBJECTIVE EXAMPLES:

- Laboratory Assistant for a hospital or clinic.
- To contribute my diverse communication skills and recovery community knowledge to a non-profit serving the homeless.
- To find a paralegal position that focuses on family law.
- A Medical Assistant position with a Pediatric practice.

The remainder of the resume should support the contention that you would be an excellent “whatever” (e.g. Ophthalmic Medical Technician) and would contribute in the ways you suggest you can. The goal is to emphasize your experiences, strengths, and accomplishments that directly support your career objective.

In deciding how to structure your resume, you essentially have two options to consider:

Chronological Resume

- Most college students choose to organize their employment background and education into a historical sequence; that is, chronologically. Here, you begin with your present situation and work back, identifying and dating your positions and describing each in terms of responsibilities and, most importantly, accomplishments. *It is expected* that your resume be formatted chronologically, which is the case in such traditional venues as education, government, law, and many “Fortune 500” firms.

A chronological resume is particularly useful when:

- You have a consistent work history that relates directly to your next job target.
- Your history shows consistent growth and development.
- The names of recent and past employers are prestigious in your industry.
- Your job titles are impressive.

Functional/Combination Resume

The functional resume presents information by areas of skill, experience, or expertise, without specific reference to your employment history. It is used primarily by individuals who are embarking on major changes in their career or who prefer not to reveal a spotty job history. Because employers can be suspicious of functional resumes, you would be wise to include a brief employment history at the end of the document. This would then be considered a *combination* resume, an especially good choice if:

- You have a series of seemingly unrelated positions, but in fact you performed similar functions.
- Your work history is uneven, with gaps in employment.
- Your experience does not portray a clear-cut path of career growth.
- You have held similar positions, the functions and responsibilities of which are redundant.
- You have had many employers.
- You are re-directing your career and wish to avoid being “pigeon-holed” into a particular industry.
- Your job titles have not been indicative of the level of your responsibilities.
- You have significant accomplishments outside of your formal job duties in voluntary capacities, for instance, and you wish to highlight them.

SUGGESTED RESUME HEADINGS

Objective
Job Objective
Career Objective
Professional Objective

Areas of Knowledge
Areas of Expertise
Areas of Experience
Summary of Qualifications
Professional Summary

Language Skills
Education
Educational Background
International Study
Course Highlights
Relevant Coursework
Senior Research Project

Experience
Professional Background
Employment
Employment History
Work History
Work Experience
Related Experience
Additional Experience
Career Achievements
Part-Time and Summer Employment
Internships

College Activities
Leadership Activities
Volunteer Activities
Community Activities
Activities and Distinctions
Current Interests

Special Skills
Special Training
Travel Abroad
Computer Skills
Military Experience
Certifications/License

Scholarships
Achievements
Honors and Awards
Publications

Memberships
Professional Activities
Professional Organizations
Professional Affiliations
Professional Development

For a Functional Resume's Skill Headings :

Leadership Experience
Management Experience
Administration Experience
Counseling Competencies
Customer Service Experience
Program Development Experience
Presentation Experience
Research Experience
Writing Experience
Case Management Experience
Cross-Cultural Experience

ACTIVE AND DESCRIPTIVE WORDS AND PHRASES

CASCADE CAMPUS CAREER RESOURCE CENTER – STUDENT EMPLOYMENT, PORTLAND, OR

When job hunting, it's important to express assets, experience, and accomplishments in the best possible manner. Active and descriptive words and phrases produce a strong impact on the reader or listener. The following is list of some words and phrases that can be used in applications, resumes, cover letters, and interviews.

Personal Traits/Characteristics

able	curious	independent	reliable
achiever	dedicated	logical	resourceful
active	dependable	motivated	responsible
adaptable	determined	optimistic	risk taker
alert	diplomatic	organized	self-reliant
ambitious	disciplined	original	self-starter
analytical	dynamic	perceptive	sincere
assertive	economical	personable	skilled
attentive	effective	pleasant	sophisticated
broad-minded	efficient	poised	successful
capable	endurance	positive	systematic
challenge-oriented	energetic	practical	tactful
competent	enterprising	productive	talented
conscientious	enthusiastic	proficient	team member
constructive	far-sighted	problem solver	trustworthy
cooperative	fast learner	progressive	willing worker
courageous	firmly	punctual	work well under pressure
creative	imaginative	realistic	work well with others

Nature of Experience

broad	consistent record of...	intensive	successful
complete	(growth, promotion, achievement)	scope	varied
comprehensive	diversified	solid	
consistent	extensive	specific	

Action Verbs, Skills, and Accomplishments

accelerated	ascertained	coached	coordinated
accommodated	asserted	collaborated	correlated
accomplished	assigned	collected	counseled
accumulated	assimilated	communicated	created
achieved	assisted	compared	crisis intervention
acted	assured	compiled	dealt
activated	attained	completed	decided
adapted	audited	composed	decreased
adhered	augmented	computed	defined
adjusted	authorized	conceived	delegated
administered	bilingual	concluded	demonstrated
adopted	bought	conducted	designed
advised	brought	conferred	detailed
advocated	budgeted	confronted	detected
alleviated	built	consolidated	determined
analyzed	calculated	constructed	developed
anticipated	chaired	consulted	devised
applied	chartered	contributed	directed
appraised	checked	controlled	disbursed
approved	circumvented	convened	discharged
arranged	classified	converted	discovered

discussed
distributed
documented
earned
economized
edited
elicited
eliminated
embellished
enacted
encouraged
enforced
engineered
enhanced
enlisted
enriched
entrusted
enumerated
equated
equipped
established
estimated
evaluated
evolved
examined
excelled
executed
exemplified
expanded
expedited
experienced
experimented
expounded
extracted
fabricated
facilitated
filed
financed
fixed
followed
forecasted
formulated
founded
furnished
gathered
gave
generated
got
governed
grappled
guided
handled
harmonized
headed
helped
hired

identified
illustrated
implemented
improved
improvised
inaugurated
increased
indexed
induced
influenced
informed
initiated
innovated
inspected
inspired
installed
instigated
instituted
instructed
integrated
interpreted
intervened
interviewed
introduced
invented
inventoried
investigated
isolated
issued
judged
justified
kept
keynoted
key worded
launched
lectured
led
listed
logged
made
maintained
managed
manipulated
mediated
memorized
mentored
modeled
modified
motivated
negotiated
notified
observed
obtained
operated
ordered
organized

originated
participated
paved
perceived
perfected
performed
perpetuated
persuaded
pioneered
planned
practiced
prepared
presented
presided
prevented
prioritized
produced
programmed
progressed
projected
promoted
provided
published
purchased
queried
questioned
raised
reasoned
received
reciprocated
recognized
recommended
reconciled
recorded
reduced
reevaluated
regulated
reinforced
rejected
related
released
remunerated
rendered
renegotiated
reorganized
reported
represented
researched
responded
restored
restricted
resulted in
reviewed
revised
saved
scheduled

screened
secured
selected
served
setup
shaped
signed
simplified
simulated
sold
solved
specialized
specified
spoke
sponsored
stabilized
staffed
standardized
stimulated
strategized
streamlined
strengthened
structured
studied
submitted
substantiated
succeeded
summarized
supervised
supplied
surpassed
surveyed
synthesized
taught
tested
theorized
trained
transformed
translated
traveled
tutored
typed
unified
updated
understood
utilized
validated
verified
vindicated
wrote