



How to Create a Winning Resume

What is a resume?

A resume is a document used to introduce yourself to employers and to market your skills, accomplishments, and educational background relevant to the position. On average, employers spend 7-20 seconds reviewing resumes, so it is important that you create a document that aligns your best qualifications with the position you are seeking.

Resume Formats

Chronological: A Chronological resume is designed to showcase your education, activities and your work history, highlighting your most recent experiences first, followed by additional information organized in reverse chronological order.

Functional: A Functional resume is designed to draw attention to key skills, lessening the emphasis on graduation dates or dates of employment. This format is typically used by those who have diverse work experiences, or who have noticeable gaps in employment history.

Chrono-Functional or Combination: A Chrono-Functional resume maintains the emphasis on skills and notable accomplishments, including a brief section that outlines work history and dates of employment.

What to include in your document:

Your resume should demonstrate your qualifications in a clear and concise manner, highlighting the most valuable experience that you can offer an employer. The following are examples of sections that can be used to categorize your contact information, relevant qualifications, work history and activities in your document:

- Demographic information (includes your name, address, phone, email, web address, etc.)
- Objective, Summary of Skills, or Professional Qualifications section (optional)
- Education
- GPA (only recommended if 3.0 or higher)
- Study Abroad Experience
- Relevant Coursework (if lacking in work experience)
- Work History
- Internship Experience
- Special Skills
- Technical Skills
- Languages
- Certifications
- Interests (if relevant to the position)
- Professional Organizations
- Honors and Awards
- Availability
- Geographic Preference
- Leadership Experience
- Community Service

Resume Layout

- Use a font that is easy to read both in print and electronically, such as Times Roman, Arial, Calibri, etc.
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- We recommend a 10-12 pt. font for the body of your document. You can enlarge your name to stand out on your resume (14-16 pt. font), and you can elect to use a smaller font for your demographic information, depending on the style you select to create your heading.
- Use **bold** or *italics* to make key information stand out in your document.
- Organize your information in a consistent manner throughout the document, making it easy for the reader to find key information. Either a bulleted format or a paragraph-style format is appropriate.
- Create a layout that has an uncluttered appearance, with white space remaining on the page. Use 1" margins, but no less than .5" margins.

Do's and Don'ts for Writing Your Resume

The Do's

1. Place your strongest material in the two-inch visual space that begins about 2 5/8 inches from the top of your resume. Make sure you include your most impressive, impactful achievements and qualifications in this "primetime" space. It's where the reader's eyes will focus first.
 2. Using the company's job description, address keywords from their description in your "summary of qualifications" section. Many companies scan their resumes and computer software does the initial screening. If certain words aren't included in an applicant's resume, they are quickly removed from the screening process.
 3. Give the most weight to your most recent professional positions. The section of the resume for your most recent position should contain more bulleted accomplishments than your previous positions. For each position, rank the accomplishments in order of decreasing relevance to the employer you are targeting. Each entry should contain a minimum of two bullet points.
 4. Use stats to increase your impact on the organizations you have worked for. If you reduced expenses or increased sales, discuss by what percentage. If you supervised a project, say how many were on your team. Always ask yourself how you helped the organization, and insert the numbers that demonstrate that impact.
 5. Resumes can take on many different appearances. The key is to remain consistent. For instance, if you choose to bold company names, make sure you do this for each. If you italicize dates, verify that each date is italicized. Pay as much attention to your resume's design as you do to its content.
 6. Include publications, patents, presentations, honors, relevant volunteer experiences, and professional licenses or certifications in your resume, particularly if they are relevant to the position you seek. These "extras" can sometimes be the factor that wins you the interview.
 7. Be sure to edit your resume. So many of our employers tell us they will allow only one mistake on a resume. If a resume contains two mistakes, they are quickly removed from consideration. Some employers say they do not allow any mistakes. For this reason, it's never too careful to have your work reviewed by your peers, faculty, and the Career Center Staff.
 8. Place your education after your experience if you've been in the workforce for more than five years. If the degree you earned is the most relevant or impressive detail of your education section, highlight it. If the school you attended is the selling point, emphasize it.
 9. Most employers will ask for a one-page resume. However, it is okay to have two if you can demonstrate related work experience, transferable skills, and campus involvement. Once you've been in the workforce for a period of time, your resume will be expected to grow in length.
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10. When submitting resumes via e-mail, always submit in pdf. form to “lock in” your formatting. If you are asked to submit it to resume screening software, remove all of your formatting by saving the document in a .txt file (plain text) or .rtf (rich text format) before copying and pasting it on the application website.

The Don'ts

1. Never lie or falsify previous position titles or length of employment. This is good cause for termination of employment.
2. Never use the same resume for every job you apply to. Remember, employers are looking for specifics items unique to their company and job. Be sure you address those items in your resume. Tailor each resume to meet that company's expectations.
3. Don't use pronouns ("I") or articles ("a," "the").
4. Don't provide personal data. Marital status, date of birth, height/weight, and similar non-work-related information can be used to illegally discriminate against applicants, and they rarely add anything of value to your qualifications.
5. Don't repeat the same action words throughout the resume. See the “Action and Descriptive Words” at the end of the handout.
6. Make sure your dates are accurate. Employers routinely call Human Resources offices to verify an applicant's length of employment. If you have doubts, contact HR and check your dates before including them on your resume.
7. Don't use more detail than you need to convey your accomplishments. If an employer sees paragraph-sized bullet points, they generally will not read them. A good rule of thumb is to limit each bullet to one to two lines of text with three to five accomplishments for each position.
8. Don't make your resume a list of your job duties — make it a list of your accomplishments! Weave your job responsibilities into your descriptions of your accomplishments.

When is a CV appropriate?

In the United States, the Curriculum Vita is used in academic and medical careers instead of the resume. The main difference between a resume and CV is that the CV is much more comprehensive, whereas resumes focus on the most relevant qualifications only.

Parts of a Curriculum Vitae

- Education & Honors
- Summary of Qualifications
- Research Interests
- Teaching Areas
- Relevant Work Experience
- Other Work Experience
- Publications
- Presentations
- Service
- Awards/Honors
- Grants
- Other Important Information (will vary based on field and professional)

All CV's are different, so do not worry about having all the sections listed above to be competitive. Start off by brainstorming for each of these sections and then make an appointment to have an advisor critique it. Alternatively, you could drop it off at the front desk for our drop off critique service. Also visit The Chronicle of Higher Education CV Doctor (chronicle.com) for a great sample CV's for different fields.



Descriptive & Action word lists

Combine your qualifications and transferable skills with active and descriptive words to make your resume pack punch! Here's a cheat sheet to get you started:

Action Words

Accelerated, Accomplished, Achieved, Activated, Adapted, Adjusted, Administered, Adopted, Advanced, Advised, Analyzed, Applied, Approved, Arbitrated, Arranged, Assembled, Assisted, Attained, Audited, Balanced, Built, Calculated, Chaired, Collected, Communicated, Compared, Completed, Composed, Conceived, Conducted, Consolidated, Constructed, Consulted, Contributed, Controlled, Convinced, Coordinated, Corresponded, Counseled, Created, Dealt, Decided, Defined, Delegated, Delivered, Demonstrated, Designed, Detected, Determined, Developed, Devised, Diagnosed, Directed, Discovered, Dispensed, Disproved, Distributed, Edited, Effected, Eliminated, Encouraged, Enlarged, Enlisted, Established, Estimated, Evaluated, Examined, Executed, Expanded, Expedited, Explained, Financed, Fixed, Forecasted, Formed, Formulated, Founded, Generated, Guided, Hired, Implemented, Improved, Increased, Influenced, Informed, Initiated, Inspected, Installed, Instituted, Instructed, Interpreted, Interviewed, Invented, Investigated, Launched, Lectured, Led, Logged, Maintained, Managed, Mediated, Monitored, Navigated, Obtained, Operated, Ordered, Organized, Originated, Oversaw, Participated, Perceived, Performed, Persuaded, Pinpointed, Planned, Predicted, Prepared, Presented, Processed, Produced, Programmed, Projected, Promoted, Proposed, Protected, Proved, Provided, Purchased, Raised, Received, Recommended, Recorded, Recruited, Reduced, Reevaluated, Referred, Reinforced, Reorganized, Reported, Represented, Researched, Resolved, Restored, Revamped, Reviewed, Revised, Scheduled, Selected, Served, Set Up, Sold, Solved, Stimulated, Streamlined, Strengthened, Structured, Studied, Succeeded, Suggested, Summarized, Supervised, Supplied, Supported, Tabulated, Taught, Tested, Trained, Transferred, Translated, Traveled, Updated, Valued, Won, Wrote

Descriptive Words

Accurate, Accurately, Active, Acuity, Adaptable, Adept, Alert, Ambitious, Analytical, Artful, Assertive, Astute, Attentive, Attractive, Aware, Bright, Broad, Broad-based, Broad-minded, Calm, Caring, Challenging, Competent, Conscientious, Consistent, Constructive, Contagious, Contributed greatly, Courageous, Creative, Deep Insight, Deft, Dependable, Determined, Diplomatic, Diplomatically, Disciplined, Discrete, Distinctive, Diverse, Driving, Dynamic, Earning Respect, Economical, Efficient, Efficiently, Energetic (Energetically), Enriching, Enterprising, Enthusiastic, Exceptional, Expert, Extensively, Extroverted, Fair, Firm, Forceful, Helpful, Highest, High-level, Highly, Honest, Honestly, Humanizing, Humorous, Imaginative, Increasingly Able, Independent, Innocent, Innovative, Instrumental, Kind, Lead, Leading, Lifelong, Logical, Loyal, Masterful, Mature, Methodical, Natural, Never Forgets, New and Improved, Objective, Observant, Open-minded, Optimistic, Outgoing, Outstanding, Perceivable, Perceptive, Persistent, Persistently, Personable, Pioneering, Pleasant, Positive, Productive, Proficient, Punctual, Quick, Readily, Realistic, Refined, Reliable, Repeatedly, Resourceful, Responsible, Responsive, Self-reliant, Self-trained, Sensible, Sensitive, Significant, Significantly, Sincere, Sophisticated, Stimulating, Strong, Strongly, Successful, Sympathetic, Systematic, Tactful, Talented, Thoughtful, Trained, Uncommon, Unique, Unusual, Unusual Grasp, Urgently, Versatile, Vigorous, Well-balanced, Well-rounded
