



## Resume Tips

Your resume should be a concise summary of the high points of your education, work experience, and other qualifications relevant to your audience's needs and to your employment interests, not a complete history of your life. It communicates your professional qualifications to employers, to interest them in interviewing you, and it creates their first impression of you. It is a marketing tool and an introduction to you and your experiences. Do enough research about the employer and the field to decide which messages are most important to your audience, and communicate these messages succinctly and clearly in a visually appealing format. Here are some guidelines to help you do this:

### Style

- Proofread to eliminate all spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors
- Use action verbs and strong adjectives
- Make it future or present oriented, suggesting that "I am this kind of person, with these abilities, as my past record demonstrates."
- Avoid repeating words or phrases.
- Leave out unnecessary words, sentences, and phrases such as "Duties included / Hired to / Project involved."
- Avoid stilted or confusing language. Ask yourself, "Would I talk like that?"
- Don't use the first person I or any pronouns.
- Be consistent and use the same grammatical style throughout.
- Avoid self-flattering terms such as "highly skilled, outstanding, or excellent." Describe your accomplishments effectively and let readers decide for themselves that you are well-qualified.
- Be honest and accurate, but not overly modest.
- Convey through the style and content of your resume an understanding of your audience's needs, priorities, hiring criteria, and vocabulary.

### Format

- Stick to 1 page; use 2 pages if you have an advanced degree or extensive experience (10+ years).
- Make the page easy to scan and graphically-pleasing: leave sufficient white space.
- Select a format that suits your qualifications. Don't automatically follow someone else's, which may not suit what you have to say.
- Underline, bold face, and use bullets to emphasize your credentials.

### Content

- Put name, address, and phone number at the top of the page. If you have a 2nd page, repeat your name at the top.
- Highlight skills, accomplishments, capabilities, and work experience. Give evidence of your personal impact: show not only that you completed tasks but that you contributed to organizational goals.
- Include marketable and/or relevant data only; for example, include classes that have been most important in your education and are most relevant to the type of work you seek; don't provide an extensive list of courses.

## Resume Tips (continued)

- Choose topic headings that invite your readers' interest, e.g., "related experience, overseas experience, or skills" rather than "employment or other."
- Cite numbers to convey size and/or scale of project, budget, and staff supervised.
- Give examples that demonstrate desirable personality traits such as leadership, interpersonal facility, confidence, and independence.
- Minimize personal information and omit unrelated memberships, age, marital and health status, and information that is repetitive, implicit (e.g. high school graduation for a college graduate), or out-of-date. If you are a US citizen or hold a permanent resident visa, include this if readers might have reason to think otherwise.
- Generally, it is a good idea to exclude data relevant to salary expectations, religious or political affiliations, and geographic descriptions.
- References are usually omitted, although you should line up at least 3 (incl. 1 or 2 who are non-academic) at the beginning of your job search. They can be listed separately and made available when requested. Employers assume that "references are available upon request," so omit this phrase.

## Scanner-friendly Resume

When submitting your resume for employment, the chances are growing that scanning technology will be used to read it. Supplied with certain specifications, a computer checks your resume for keywords. You want to fill your resume with as many of these words as possible.

The ultimate keywords are specified by each employer for each position. You can only make reasonable assumptions about what a specific employer will ask for. Keep a log of keywords that apply to your occupation and industry.

## Quick Checklist for Resumes

- ☐ Do not use a Microsoft Word resume template. None of them scan well.
- ☐ Use a laser printer.
- ☐ It is safe to use a conservative font, such as Arial or Times New Roman.
- ☐ Use 8 1/2" x 11" paper, printed on 1 side only.
- ☐ Use high quality resume paper.
- ☐ If you have a 2nd page, put your name on top of page 2.
- ☐ Do not fold or staple the resume. Send it flat in a large envelope.
- ☐ Send a regular copy of your resume along with the scan able version.

## Final Edit

- Ask a counselor, friend, or someone unfamiliar with your background to review your resume for clarity and effectiveness.
- Tailor your [cover letter](#) and resume to the specific qualifications of the job for which you are applying and/or to the specific employer.
- Include all important information, such as dates of graduation, major, GPA, etc.
- Proofread one more time to ensure correct spelling and punctuation.