

# Resume Writing Tips

*Compiled by Career and Counseling Services, University of Houston - Clear Lake*

*A resume is a marketing tool. It can get your foot in the door, but it alone will not get you the job. Remember there are few hard and fast rules governing resumes. Your resume is not a work history it should reflect what you have achieved, demonstrated, or learned. Your resume should answer how you will benefit the employer. The following tips are offered to provide general guidance and advice for more specific assistance with your resume you may see a Career Counselor or request a resume critique.*

*A resume should be absolutely error free. All information must be accurate and easily substantiated. There is no room for errors in spelling, punctuation, or grammar. Have several others proofread for errors and readability.*

## STYLE

*Determine the type of layout that best illustrates your qualifications. There are three primary styles of resumes; chronological, functional, & combination. Additional materials illustrating these styles are available in Career & Counseling Services.*

**Chronological:** Highly recommended for conservative fields and/or positions. The chronological format works well for those with strong or relevant experience. Education, experience, and skills are arranged in reverse chronological order. When experience is limited or unrelated to an employment objective the chronological format may not sufficiently illustrate an applicant's skills and alternate styles of resumes should be considered.

**Functional:** The functional resume is perhaps the most flexible style of resume as it ignores historical sequence and stresses skills and abilities regardless of where they were developed and demonstrated. Functional resumes group education, experience and activities into categories that support specific job objectives. The functional format may be most useful for individuals with strong skills who are changing careers and/or have limited or less focused professional experiences.

**Combination:** The combination resume blends the directness of a chronological format with the highlighting of skills found in the functional format. The combination resume will provide a skill or qualifications section above the education and experience sections. This resume style is helpful in communicating skills for individuals whose experiences are limited, widely varied, or not related to their job objective. The combination resume may be most effective for individuals with well-developed skills and limited or unrelated professional experience.

## APPEARANCE

*The appearance of your resume is critical. It should be inviting and easy to read.*

- Use an easy to read serif type font such as Times New Roman (12 point is recommended).
- Use all capital letters to highlight your name and key headings.
- Use adequate spacing between lines, items, job descriptions, or sections. Effective use of white space will highlight relevant information.
- For ease in reading bullets are recommended, however, if you choose to use paragraphs, keep them brief.
- Paper should be a high quality bond white or neutral color.
- When experience or skills are extensive, resumes may be longer than one page; however, be sure to use a significant portion of the second page.
- Maintain a consistent formatting style. If one heading is in bold type, all headings should be in bold, indentations should also be consistently used.

## CONTENT

**Organization:** Organize information in a logical manner displaying key information prominently. Arrange topical sections to best illustrate your strengths. Experience would be before education for those with strong experience, whereas education would lead for those with a stronger educational preparation. Use formatting and placement to highlight key information. Bold headings or key information to draw attention to your strengths. Additionally, information placed along the margin will be highlighted.



**Contact Information:** Identifying information includes name, address, telephone (*permanent and temporary, if applicable*) and e-mail address (*if applicable*). You may elect to include a URL in this section. Web pages referenced in a resume should be current, well maintained, and a positive reflection of your abilities.

**Objective:** An objective, if used, should convey a sense of direction on your part. If you do not have a specific objective for the job in which you are applying, it is recommended to highlight the objective in a cover letter and omit it from the resume. Another alternative to an objective is to include a career or skill summary/profile. Effective summaries highlight 3 or 4 key skills the employer is seeking. This could be accomplished using bullets or a brief paragraph.

**Grade Point Average (GPA):** Include GPA in the Education section if overall or major GPA is 3.0 or better.

**Word Choices:** Use phrases that begin with action verbs. (*Examples: administer, assemble, coordinate, design, develop, establish, implement, initiate, improve, lead, manage, prepare, produce, revise, solve, supervise, and etc.*) Use descriptive titles when actual titles do not convey clear information. For politically charged activities use neutral titles. For example, use Political Student Action Group instead of Young Democrats on Campus. Avoid acronyms and abbreviations.

**Word Tense:** Use accurate word tense - use present tense verbs when referring to current activities, and use past tense verbs when referring to former activities.

**Accomplishments:** Emphasize accomplishments, rather than responsibilities, using numbers or percentages to quantify the scope of involvement or to emphasize outcome. (*You may need to ask permission from employer to reveal this information.*)

**References:** Do not include references unless they are specifically requested and then list on a separate sheet with the same heading as appears on your resume. List references who can speak about your qualifications, job performance, and professional accomplishments. Do not include personal references such as your clergy or family friends.

**Personal Information:** Do not include personal information such as hobbies or marital status. Do include activities which illustrate your job-related skills and accomplishments.

## ELECTRONIC FORMATTING

*High-tech and other large corporations may scan resumes into a database.*

- Scanners read best when the text is in a simple, easy to read serif type font like Times New Roman.
- Font should not be smaller than 10 point and no larger than 14 point (12 point is recommended).
- Do not use italics, underlining or graphics. Capital lettering may be used to make titles stand out.
- Do not fold or staple your resume.
- Always send original, never copied, resumes.
- Print resume on white or ivory paper only.
- If you must fax the resume, set the fax on "fine" or "super fine."
- Avoid using shading, and use lines sparingly or not at all. If lines are used, include at least ¼ inch of space around all lines.
- Do not use open-faced bullets such as (○) because these can be read as the letter "o" by the scanner. To avoid potential confusion do use conservative, closed-faced bullets such as (●).
- In the experience, activities, and skills descriptions, use buzzwords or keywords specific to the career field. Try to use words listed in the job posting. Scanners will search your resume for key words and then file your information under those categories.

**RESUME TEST:** Can your resume pass the 15 second test? To test the viability of your resume use the 15 second test. Have several individuals, preferably professionals in your field, scan your resume for 15 seconds and then ask them to describe the information they gleaned. Many resumes are screened in only 15 seconds. Your resume should provide even casual readers with key or relevant information about your qualifications.





University  
of Houston  
Clear Lake

## CAREER SERVICES – Sample Resume – Management Information Systems – Format: Chronological

### Sally Jones

512 Cottage St.  
Houston, TX 77058  
555-555-5555  
sally.jones@yahoo.com

## TECHNICAL EXPERIENCE

Proficient in VB Script, C, HTML, XML, CSS, Photoshop 6, Macromedia Flash 5, Dreamweaver 4, Oracle 9i, SQL Server 2000, Crontab, Oracle Forms, Terminal Services, Windows (95, 98, 2K, NT, XP), DOS, MS Word, MS Excel, MS PowerPoint

Working knowledge of IBM Mainframe, Oracle Financials, ASP, Java, Visual Basic 6, BEA Web Logic, Oracle Express, Control-M, Oracle Financial Analyzer, AML, Java Script, Sql Navigator, Toad, Perl, Front Page 2000, Networking Technologies/Network Administration, Linux, Unix, WS\_FTP, Borland C++, Telnet, MS Access, MS Outlook, MS Project, Visio 2000

## EDUCATION

### BS Management Information Systems

May 2011

*University of Houston-Clear Lake, Houston, Texas*

GPA: 3.7

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY EXPERIENCE

### University of Houston-Clear Lake, Houston, TX

Jan. 2009-Aug. 2010

*Help Desk Coordinator/IT Trainer*

- Managed 6 Computer Lab Assistants
- Conducted performance evaluations and set performance goals
- Served as Campus Cruiser Portal Administrator
- Supervised the Student Computing Lab operations
- Produced training materials for campus distribution
- Trained employees and students on various software systems

### Schlumberger LTD, Houston TX

May 2008-Dec. 2008

*MIS Intern*

- Produced Internet Usage Reporting Project for Global IT Security from an Oracle Database Server using Oracle Forms, Oracle SQL \* Plus and Perl Script
- Developed, designed and implemented SharePoint Team Services for IT interns
- Built and configured W2K Advanced Servers
- Tested ASP & VB Script code of a project survey for the Security Awareness Group

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### University of Houston-Clear Lake

- Management Information Systems Organization Jan. 2010-Present
- Mu Iota Sigma (MIS Honor Society) Jan. 2010-Present
- National Society of Leadership and Success Aug. 2009-Present