

Resume Tips

Make a List of What Makes You Awesome

Your resume may be the only you that a recruiter or potential manager every meets. You want to make sure that anything unique and cool about you makes it onto that sheet of paper.

Common Resume Sections

- Education
- Skills
- Relevant Coursework
- Experience
- Projects
- Volunteer
- Activities

Must Haves

- Name big at the top
- Email address
- Phone number
- Degree plan (BA, BS or BSA)
- Graduation Date
- Dates for all experience and projects
- Locations for all experience

Keep it to One Page

Seriously, no one is going to flip over your resume or deal with 2 sheets of paper stapled together. Unless you have a PhD your resume should only be 1 page. It's better to leave something less important off then put it on and come off as less professional. Also, don't go below size 11 on your font size, it also won't help if they can't read your resume.

Remember: You Get 30 Seconds

Recruiters look at a ton of resumes every day, especially if you just upload your resume to their website or talk to them at the career fair. I've always heard they look at each resume for an average of 30 seconds before they decide whether to go forward or not. This means your resume needs to be easy to skim and parse visually. If your formatting is too funky the recruiter won't be able to get the information they are looking for quickly. Be sure to make judicious use of things like different font size, bold lettering, tab stops, and italics to make the different parts of your resume distinct and obvious. Also, avoid big blocks of text, the recruiter will get bored about 20 words into your giant paragraph. Use succinct bullet points with powerful verbs and such instead. Resume format can truly make or break your interaction with a recruiter.

The Top Half Rule

Basic rule of humans, we get bored easily. To combat this there is an fairly simple way to make sure what you want to get seen will actually be notices. Take a printed copy of your resume and fold it in half hamburger style. Everything you absolutely want the recruiter to see should be in the top half.

Why Include Relevant Coursework?

Sadly, sometimes it is a robot looking at your resume and not another human. The robots are stupid though and most really only do an advanced form of keyword searching. Including the titles of courses you've taken (and done well enough in to talk about) can help you get pinged by this search. For instance, if you want to get a job in mobile development you probably want to put that you took iOS Development.

Always Proofread a Hard Copy

Some errors are really hard to catch when you are reading your resume on a computer screen. It's always a good idea to print out your resume and take a red pen to it. This is also the format that you will be handing it to people in so it's a good idea to make sure you like it before you give it to a bunch of people. Be wary of errors like misspellings and mismatched spacing. You'd be surprised on visually annoying it is for the alignment of things to be the slightest bit off (like imagine if this paragraph was indented in when the rest of the paragraphs in this document were not). Basically, you want your resume to be as clean and polished as possible.

Get Someone Else to Proofread It

This is especially helpful if the person is an upper classman or a real adult. In my experience it's much more likely that someone else will find an error in my work than I will. The department also hosts events around career fair time where strangers will look at your resume and tell you what to tweak. This is great because they have no reason to sugar coat anything! Just be sure to take whatever they say with a grain of salt, a lot of resume stuff is purely subjective and doesn't make that much of a difference in the end.

Don't Include Stuff You Can't Talk About

What I've always heard is that you shouldn't include anything on your resume that you can't talk about for at least 3-5 minutes. You don't want to be asked about something and sit there like "uh.... Yeah I totally did that". Looking forgetful or like you're lying is worse than not having it on there in the first place.

Name Your Projects

This may seem silly but I find it very helpful to put titles in my project section. It's much easier to talk about the multiple projects on your resume by the names you give them as opposed to something awkward like "the 3rd bullet point". I also think names just make the projects seem more real and professional somehow.

Consider Using a Google Doc

Putting your resume in a Google Doc can be really helpful because it always you to access from any computer at anytime without worrying about if it is the most up to date version or if that computer will have the right program to let you edit it. Also it allows you to send a link to someone else and have them comment on places they see room for improvement without having to edit the document.

Common Questions

Should I include my GPA?

Only if it is above a 3.0, anything less than that will just make you look bad. If the company really cares about GPA the recruiter will just ask for it when you hand them your resume.

Should I include non-CS experience?

Only if you don't have any CS related work to put on there.

Should I put things from high school on my resume?

Only if you are a freshman. Once you are a sophomore high school was too long ago for anyone to care about.

Can I put class projects on my resume?

Yes! Just be sure they are significantly involved/ impressive enough for you to answer questions about them like:

- What challenges did you experience with this project?
- What was your favorite part?
- How long did it take you to implement?

How well do I have to know a language to put it under skills?

This really depends. I would say only put a language on your resume if you know it well enough to code something basic in it without having to look up documentation.

Does font really matter?

YES! Imagine if someone handed you a resume that used Comic Sans. The font you choose should be easy to read and you should use the same font throughout all of your resume.

Is it alright to have color on my resume?

Yes, but not too much. I would only suggest doing it if you are going for some kind of UX/UI or frontend role within a company. Also remember, color copies are more expensive than black and white copies.

How many copies should I make for the career fair?

This really depends on how many companies you are planning to talk to. I would say err on the side of having too many rather than not enough. Nothing sucks more than wanting to go impressive a company and being out of resumes.

Where do I go for good resume advice/ critique?

Find a friend who has impressive experience. Also the CNS Career Center is a pretty good resource for this kind of stuff.

Do companies care about my volunteer work and activities?

Yes! A lot of companies in our industry want to see that you are well rounded and want to give back to the community. Most companies at least project that they care about their communities and are actively involved.