Creating an ATS Resume

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Covenant College, September 2016

We are so excited you are starting this process. To begin with, you need to consider the intended reader, such as potential employers, grad schools, etc. You will need to ask yourself a few questions. How will you send it, in person, via email, or through a website? Are you trying to break into a new field? How much relevant experience do you have? Your potential reader (employer/grad school) will want to know that their position is the one of your dreams and that you are willing to do the work to make it easy for them to hire you.

This guide will teach you how to write an **advanced and targeted resume**. Since resumes are considered living documents, this guide is the first step in marketing yourself to potential employers. To learn how to kick your resume to the next level, I would encourage you to read the section on ATS friendly resumes. **ATS is an acronym for Applicant tracking system:** *computer software designed to screen your resume, application, and more, during the hiring process*. Common ATS software names include: Taleo, BambooHR, Tribehr, Kronos, Vibe, and many more.

ATS allows employers to:
- Receive and review resumes and job applications
- Screen and test potential candidates
- Schedule interviews
- Send follow-up emails
- Check references
- Facilitate the hiring process
- Onboard new hires
- Track and maintain regulatory compliance

Employers program each job description into their ATS software and tag specific keywords required for each position. **By using the same keywords, accurately and honestly, you help yourself move through the hiring process.** Yes, that means you will need to customize your resume for each intended recipient. Don't let that overwhelm you; once you have created a master document it is easy to target it to potential employers.

Once you have a working resume and cover letter, email them to resumes@covenant.edu. A student assistant will review your submission, send you initial feedback, and schedule a meeting for you with our Certified Professional Resume Writer. We can also be reached at *706-419-1160 or in Carter 106*.

- Remember, the goal of a resume is to make it **easy** for employers to imagine your "fit" within their needs, and know if they should invite you in for an interview.
- Potential employers will spend **5-7 seconds** looking at your resume.
- Be consistent, concise, and accurate. Convey a picture, of **how** you work, in the reader's mind.
- When you actually apply, we recommend you submit your resume to potential employers in PDF format. Some ATS will require a .txt or .docx format, but such a requirement will typically be specified.
- Read and follow each of the employer's directions closely.
- Review and look for typos, inconsistencies, verb tense consistency, and grammatical errors!
- Unless you are an education student, do not include reference on your actual resume. Save them for a separate attachment with the same header.
- People care about your experience, not whether or not you were paid. Include related volunteer experience; they care about how your experience is relevant to their needs.

▪ Access our Cover Letter Guide to learn more about writing effective supporting documentation that builds a bridge with potential employers and graduate schools.

ATS Friendly Template

Insert your header with contact information

Boxes will be removed on your final version!

Pick one: Objective (a statement) / Profile Summary (descriptors)

Your concise and targeted objective here. See the **Your Professional Objective** section for guidelines.

Pick one (Skills Related to a Specific Position): Qualifications or Profile Summary

*Incorporate **keywords** from the job description and show your relationship to them. This will illustrate what you have to offer to the specific position. These statements can be centered with dividers (– or |) or bulleted.*

Education

Bachelor of Arts, Insert your major here, Expected Graduation: Month 20XX
Minor: Subject
Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, GA
GPA: x.x/4.0; Dean's List: Fall 20xx, Spring 20xx
Self-funded approximately 40% of tuition and college expenses (*do not state this if percentage is less than 40%)
Bachelor's Thesis: Insert Sip Title
(*Once you are out of school and working, the education section will move to the bottom of your resume.)
Relevant Coursework: Only list classes if they directly apply to your objective. **(separate with ; or – or |)**

Relevant Coursework (example below)

Computer Programming Methodology – Advanced Programming Methodology – Computer Organization – Discrete Structures in Computing – Data Structures and Algorithms – Computer Information and Security – Operating Systems – Ethics in Computing – Cryptography – Networking

Presentations

Cochran, Diana and Wiersema, Anna. *Fostering Spiritual Development Through Entering Unamuno's "San Manuel Bueno, Martir."* North American Christian Foreign Language Association Conference. Point Loma Nazarene University. 28 March 2009.

Wiersema, Anna. *Langue et identité dans la littérature maghrebine*. Senior Integration Paper Presentation. Covenant College. April 2012.

Related Experience

Job Title, Month Year - Month Year
ORGANIZATION, City, ST
● Do not simply list job tasks or job description. Instead, focus on specific transferrable skills, knowledge gained, quantifiable results, and accomplishments. **USE KEYWORDS.**
● Start with an action verb and retire it, using it only once per document; write bullets in past tense
● Keep punctuation consistent
● 3-5 bullets maximum

Departmental Intern, May 2009 - August 2009 (seasonal)
ORGANIZATION, City, ST
● Everything listed is in support of written or invisible objective statement
● NO first person language allowed
● Don't tell them, show them how you have accomplished work and met goals that are relevant to this position

Appropriate Section Header (such as: Community Service)

Title or Role, Organization, Location, Consistent Time Frame Format
Vice President, Campus Stewardship Committee, Covenant College, August 2009 - Present
Regular Contributor, Student Newspaper – The Bagpipe, Covenant College, April 2009 - Present

Other Appropriate Section Header

Volunteer, Widows' Harvest International, Chattanooga, TN, Month Year - Month Year
Senior High Youth Leader, Some Church, City, ST, June 2008 - May 2009

Highlights of an ATS-Friendly Resume

Please note: These were already incorporated into the guided template on the previous page.

1. The best place to start is with keywords. **It is critical that you identify the keywords** necessary for each position you are applying for. We suggest that you print the job description and **underline the keywords** you think they are looking for, that also apply to you. **Try to integrate their lingo and keywords into your documents, but only if they are consistent with your experience and what you have to offer.**
2. Design your resume for both the human eye and the computer to read.
3. DO NOT USE: italics or underlines, graphics or logos, charts or graphs, tables or columns; or fancy bullets.
4. DO USE: Capitals, Small Capitals, Bold.
5. Instead of using columns, create lists in a single word string, with an "em dash" or vertical line to separate info that would have been in columns, examples of both "–" and "|" :
   > Accounts Payable – General Ledger Reconciliation
   > Community Development | Intercultural Experience
6. Use only standard fonts:
   1. Serif: Times New Roman, Cambria, Garamond, Georgia, or Palatino Linotype
   2. San-serif: Calibri, Arial, Arial Narrow, Tahoma, Trebuchet, or Verdana
7. Use common section headings

Summaries and Qualifications

If your experience is foundational and you are trying to break into a new field, or you don't have relevant experience, you may still need a written objective. However, in an ATS resume, your objective is typically invisible, meaning that everything supports your objective, but you spend more time writing other sections that highlight your skills, qualifications, and experience relevant to the position for which you are applying. Headers are completely customizable and should orient the reader to the information they will read. **See examples below:**

(Descriptor format #1)
International Basketball Coach | Strength & Conditioning Coach | NCCAA Division 1 Basketball Scholar-Athlete
Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society Member | Selected to the National Association of Basketball Coaches Honors Court

(Descriptor format #2)
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY STUDENT – TRAINED IN CYBER SECURITY – PROGRAMMER
Java – HTML – CSS – JavaScript – AJAX – PHP – Python – Assembly

(Profile/Summary, or Qualifications formats)

PROFILE
- Elementary teacher available for full-time hire July 2015
- Interested in contributing to school community by serving as an extra-curricular leader
- Comfortable using technology to make instruction more interactive and engaging
- Certified to teach in Georgia
- Willing to attain Tennessee Teacher Certification

QUALIFICATIONS
- Advanced knowledge in biological and chemical fields of science
- Speaks fluent Spanish and enjoys interacting with people from various cultures
- Experience using Microsoft Excel to generate reports; Self-taught HTML and Javascript
- Possesses solid organizational, interpersonal, and management skills
- Formally trained in music for over ten years

(Objective statement format)

To secure a copywriter and proofreader position at True North where I can collaborate with others to create effective and consistent copy.

Extra Help and Examples

Note: There are various ways to make text stand out: **Bold**, ALL CAPITALS, and SMALL CAPTIALS. Some examples are shown below, in the left hand column. Whichever one you choose, it should be consistent throughout your document. **Do not use color, unless you are a graphic designer or artist.** *Note: the examples below are listed in a Non-ATS format, but they could easily be incorporated into the ATS format by placing the header on a line above the section.*

<p align="center">(Related Work Experience)</p>

Arts Editor of Student Newspaper, January 2011-Present **(This example directly correlates to the objective listed above.)**

Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, GA

- Worked as part of the editing team to prepare content within weekly deadlines
- Applied newspaper style guide to maintain a consistent stylistic voice
- Mentored student contributors to constructively critique and improve their submissions

<p align="center">(Work Experience)</p>

Resident Assistant, August 2009-May 2010

COVENANT COLLEGE, Lookout Mountain, GA

- Responsible for enforcing school policies and ensuring good condition of facilities
- Cooperated with staff members to organize events and foster community among residents

<p align="center">(Credentialing)</p>

Education Teacher Proficiency Assessment (EdTPA) Participant
Passed the GACE assessment on a Professional Level
Completed the Georgia Ethics Program and Test
Eligible for Georgia Certification; Anticipated in July 20xx

<p align="center">(Publications)</p>

Sealy DP, Pekarek L, Russ D, Sealy CD, Goforth G. Vital Signs and demographics in the Preparticipation Sports Exam: Do They Help Us Find the Elusive Athlete at Risk for Sudden Cardiac Death? <u>Cur Spor Med Rep,</u> 6:9 Nov/Dec 2010, pg338-341.

<p align="center">(Psychology Research)</p>

Research Assistant/Intern, June 2010- July 2010

HARVEY A. FRIEDMAN CENTER FOR AGING, Washington University, St. Louis, MO

- Researched articles related to neuropsychology, the brain, and aging; Submitted findings for review
- Utilized SPSS and Sigma Plot
- Interacted with human research subjects from scheduling and completing informed consent documentation to administering individual research tests and recording results
- Delivered a presentation on research data analysis, *Age Effects on Spatial Navigation Strategies: Pilot Data*; Successfully identified and addressed issues related to ongoing study

Operant Conditioning Experiment, August 2008-December 2008

GENERAL PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT, Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, GA

- Completed Skinner Box Operant Conditioning (positive reinforcement and extinction)

Section Headers

Remember, it is typically to your advantage to limit your resume to one page; however, there are times when it is necessary to venture onto a second page. When you do that, you will need to include a minimized version of your header on the second page.

The headers you use for each section are largely customizable. In addition to Education, Experience (Related or other) and something such as Qualifications or Profile, there are many other headers you may want to consider adding if they are relevant to your experience.

Typical ATS headers might include:

SUMMARY OR PROFILE | RELEVANT EXPERIENCE AND/OR WORK EXPERIENCE | CERTIFICATIONS
EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES | COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT | PUBLICATIONS OR PRESENTATIONS
TECHNICAL SKILLS OR LANGUAGES | EDUCATION OR EDUCATIONAL TRAINING

General Headers	Musician or Theatre Specific	Artist Specific
Contact Information	Performances	Education
Objective (optional)	Roles	Exhibitions (solo, two-person, group)
Education	Nominations and Recognitions	Selected Exhibitions/Screenings/ Performances
Relevant Experience	Instruments or Voice Type	Commissions
Research Experience	Major/Principal Teachers	Installations
Teaching Experience	Master Classes	Curatorial Projects
Relevant Coursework (can include CEUs)	Compositions	Collaborative Projects
Honors/Achievements/Awards	Recordings and Broadcast	Collections
Thesis/Dissertation Abstract	Recitals/Conducting	Bibliography
Research Interests	Orchestra, Solos, Chamber	Print Media
Publications	Study Abroad	Radio/Television (other media)
Presentations	Freelance	Website
Professional Associations or Memberships	Tours	Blogs
Specialized Skills (computer software or equipment)	Competitions	Teaching or related experience
Leadership Activities	Affiliations and Memberships	Lectures
Languages	Language proficiency	Gallery Affiliations
Community Service	Community Service	Client List
Citizenship status (if an issue)		
Other Interests		
Other Experience		
Achievements		

Power Words

absorbed	complied	explained	lessened	ordered	**S**
accelerated	composed	explored	leveraged	organized	scheduled
accommodated	concentrated	expressed	licensed	oriented	screened
accomplished	conceptualized	extended	lifted	originated	secured
accounted for	condensed	extracted	limited	oversaw	selected
achieved	conducted	**F**	linked	owned	served
acquired	connected	facilitated	liquidated	**P**	simplified
acted	conserved	factored	listened	participated	solved
adapted	considered	familiarized	litigated	partnered	spearheaded
addressed	consolidated	fielded	loaded	passed	specialized
adhered	constructed	focused	logged	perceived	specified
adjusted	consulted	founded	**M**	perfected	spoke
administered	contacted	fulfilled	made	performed	sponsored
advanced	continued	functioned as	maintained	persuaded	standardized
advertised	contracted	**G**	managed	photographed	streamlined
advised	contributed	gained	mandated	pinpointed	strengthened
advocated	controlled	generated	maneuvered	planned	structured
affirmed	cooperated	guided	manipulated	prepared	studied
alerted	coordinated	**H**	manufactured	presented	submitted
alleviated	corresponded	handled	mapped	preserved	succeeded
amended	counseled	headed	marked	prevented	summarized
analyzed	created	held	marketed	prioritized	supervised
answered	critiqued	helped	mastered	processed	supplied
anticipated	cultivated	hired	maximized	procured	supported
applied	customized	honed	measured	progressed	surpassed
appointed	**D**	hosted	mediated	projected	systemized
appraised	decreased	**I**	memorized	promoted	**T**
approved	dedicated	identified	mentored	proofread	targeted
arbitrated	delegated	implemented	merged	provided	taught
articulated	delivered	improved	merited	publicized	trained
ascertained	described	improvised	met	purchased	transitioned
aspired	designated	increased	minimized	pursued	translated
assembled	designed	influenced	mobilized	**Q**	traveled
assessed	developed	informed	modeled	qualified	treated
assigned	differentiated	installed	moderated	quantified	tutored
assimilated	directed	integrated	modified	**R**	**U**
assisted	drafted	interacted	molded	raised	updated
assured	**E**	interpreted	monopolized	ranked	upgraded
attended	edited	invented	motivated	rated	utilized
audited	educated	inventoried	mounted	reached	**V**
authored	effected	invested	moved	received	validated
awarded	eliminated	investigated	multiplied	recognized	verified
B	enabled	invigorated	**N**	recorded	visualized
balanced	encouraged	invited	named	recruited	volunteered
began	equipped	involved	narrated	reduced	**W**
benchmarked	established	isolated	navigated	registered	wrote
benefited	estimated	issued	negotiated	regulated	
built	evaluated	itemized	netted	reinforced	
C	examined	**J**	neutralized	reported	
calculated	exceeded	joined	nominated	represented	
cared for	executed	judged	normalized	requested	
catalogued	exercised	justified	notified	researched	
collaborated	exhibited	**L**	nurtured	restored	
communicated	expanded	launched	**O**	retained	
compiled	expedited	learned	observed	retrieved	
complemented	experienced	lectured	obtained	reviewed	
completed	experimented	led	optimized	revised	

Useful Nouns and Modifiers

Remember to not just tell someone something, but to show them what you bring to the table.

Ability	Strong
Accurate	Team-player
Achievement-oriented	Technical
Actively	Thorough
Adept	Versatile
Adaptable	Vigorous
Ambitious	
Articulate	
Assertive	
Attentive	
Avid	
Capacity	
Concise	
Confident	
Consistent	
Conversant	
Creative	
Decisive	
Demonstrates	
Dependable	
Diligent	
Direct	
Dynamic	
Effective	
Energetic	
Enjoys	
Experience	
Fluent	
Foundational	
Functions well in	
Initiates	
Knowledge	
Persistent	
Persuasive	
Possesses	
Proficient	
Persuasive	
Proficient	
Proven ability to	
Qualified	
Resourceful	
Responsible	
Substantially	
Self-motivated	