



Resumes

Resumes are deceptively complex documents. While the finished product looks like a simple, clean summary of your qualifications, the process of writing your resume can be quite challenging.

Most people think their resume is an informational document; a basic summary of their education, experiences and skills. Not so!

To be an effective tool in your search for a job or internship, your resume should be a marketing document. It should be focused on delivering a specific and relevant message about you to your target audience. It should help the reader understand who you are, the qualifications you offer and the type of opportunities you are seeking.

In order to know what to include in your resume, you must be able to answer the following question:

What do you want employers to learn about you, your education, your experience and your skills when they read your resume?

In short, what is the core message of your resume?

If you are a college student, chances are you will have to limit your resume to one page. That means it cannot (and should not) try to tell everything there is to know about you.

What should you include on your resume? The relevant aspects of your education, experience, skills and characteristics only!

The relevant aspects of your education, experience, skills and characteristics comprise the core message of your resume.

Once you know your core message, you can begin creating your resume.

WHAT RESUME FORMAT SHOULD I USE?

There are two primary resume formats: the **chronological** resume and the **functional** resume.

Generally, the chronological resume is recommended for students with relatively little experience. In certain cases involving complex work histories, the functional format may be more suitable. Ask your career advisor for guidance in deciding on a format.



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Chronological Resume

In chronological resumes, education, experience, skills and activities are entered individually within specific categories; and these entries are made in reverse chronological order, beginning with the most recent.

Functional Resume

Functional resumes feature functional skills under their descriptive headings, such as “Marketing”, “Training & Development”, and “Research”, and illustrate these functional skills through accomplishment statements. The positions, employers and dates of employment related to these skills and accomplishments are listed separately later in the resume.

WHAT ABOUT RESUME TEMPLATES?

Resist the urge to jump directly to a resume template, such as you will find in Microsoft Word, in job search books, and on the internet. These templates, while easy to use, restrict your ability to customize the content and format of your resume. They are designed to be “one size fits all” answers, and one size rarely fits anyone very well under any circumstance. When it comes to your resume, “easy” does not necessarily equal “good.”

Resume templates can be beneficial when your education and experience align directly and clearly with your job/ internship search goals. If you are an Accounting major with accounting experience looking for an opportunity in accounting, your education, experience and other qualifications align directly with the kind of work you are seeking. A resume template may be a good option for you. If you are an English major with varied experience and are interested in training and human resources with a small, start-up company, you might want to avoid using a resume template.

Who Should Consider Resume Templates

- *Students in majors that track directly into specific professions such as engineering, accounting and computer science where qualifications can be easily described, defined or measured in quantitative terms*
- *Students applying for management trainee, sales, or other entry-level opportunities with a Fortune 500 Company or similar “bulk” employer*

Who Should Avoid Resume Templates

- *Students in majors that do not track directly into specific professions and/or whose qualifications cannot be easily described, defined or measured in quantitative terms*
- *Students applying for opportunities with required qualifications that are not directly related to their college major*



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WHAT SECTIONS SHOULD I INCLUDE IN MY RESUME?

Resume construction is a very subjective art; however, following is a list of commonly used required and optional sections.

Required sections can be renamed to suit your specific needs and focus your resume. Optional sections should be included only if they will enhance your ability to deliver your core message.

Contact Information (Required)

Your contact information is the masthead of your resume. It must include your name, phone number and email address. It may also include your personal website and your LinkedIn URL. Include your current address and/or your permanent address only if they are relevant.

Objective (Optional)

An objective places your resume in specific context. It tells your reader how to interpret the content of your resume. Objectives are not required, but if you choose to use one, be specific. For example:

- An entry-level position in sales & marketing.
- An entry-level position in advertising.
- An internship in nonprofit management.
- An opportunity in investment banking.

Summary of Qualifications (Optional)

A Summary of Qualifications allows you to briefly state your core message (your relevant experience, education, skills and characteristics) at the beginning of your resume. The purpose of the Summary is to give the reader a brief overview of the more detailed information found later in the resume.

Education (Required)

Current students and recent graduates usually put the Education section at the beginning of their resumes. Experienced candidates will usually lead with their Experience section. Your Education section should include the post-secondary institutions you attended and the degrees and programs you have completed (or are in the process of completing). It can also include your GPA, honors and awards, study abroad, relevant course work, special projects, and percentage of your education costs you self-funded. High school information is rarely kept on a professional resume unless directly relevant to your core message.



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Experience (Required)

The experience section may include internships, part-time jobs, regular positions, volunteer experience and temporary positions. Possible headings include experience, professional history, experience highlights, and relevant experience. Jobs are typically listed in reverse chronological order.

When describing your experience, focus on your accomplishments, rather than providing a job description.

Highlight the position or company, depending on which of the two you wish to emphasize. Since what you did is more important than when you did it, place more emphasis on position and company and less on dates of employment.

Ensure that verb tense matches relevant dates and use strong language **by starting every statement with an action verb!** Some Effective Resume Action Verbs include:

| | | | | |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|------------|
| Acted | Designed | Identified | Motivated | Resolved |
| Administered | Devised | Implemented | Negotiated | Revised |
| Advertised | Drafted | Initiated | Organized | Scheduled |
| Advised | Edited | Installed | Participated | Simplified |
| Analyzed | Enforced | Maintained | Prepared | Supervised |
| Arranged | Established | Managed | Produced | Supplied |
| Contributed | Executed | Mapped | Reduced | Trained |
| Coordinated | Facilitated | Marketed | Represented | Utilized |
| Created | Generated | Maximized | Researched | Wrote |

Skills (Optional)

The skills section may include technical, research, language and industry-specific skills. If interested in a technical position you may feature your production and computer skills. Language skills may be listed as bicultural/bilingual; speak, read, write, translate, interpret, including contracts, scientific and technical documents; conversationally fluent; proficient; business proficiency; intermediate; and basic. In order to facilitate reading, group your skills into appropriate sub-categories. For example:



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| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Analytical: | ROI, P/L & New Market Opportunity Analysis; Ad Performance & Behavior, App Sales, Download and Subscription Tracking |
| Business: | Sales, Marketing, Customer Service, Training, Administration |
| Computer: | Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, HTML, PageMaker |
| Creative: | Dreamweaver, Flash, FrontPage, GoLive, Photoshop, InDesign, Illustrator |
| Digital: | Adobe Omniture (SiteCatalyst & Search Center); Dun & Bradstreet Market Insight; eDialog Email Marketing; Google Analytics & Webmaster Tools |
| Language: | Proficient Spanish, Intermediate Japanese, Basic French, Basic American Sign Language |
| Marketing: | Email Marketing; Search Engine Optimization (SEO); Search Engine Marketing (SEM); Display Advertising; Mobile App & Web Marketing; Site Traffic Generation; Event Marketing |

Credits (Optional, for creative professionals)

The credit section may be used to feature personal work or freelance projects either completed or in progress. The format should follow that which is used for the resume in general. You may include awards/honors won or format of work.

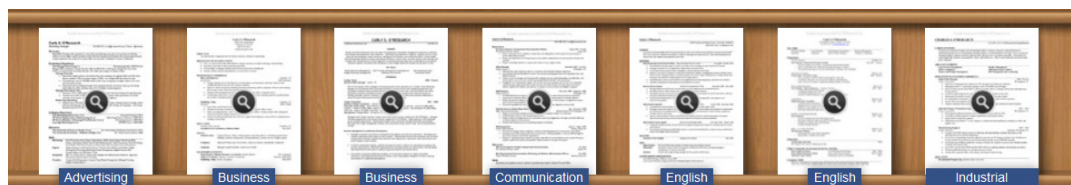
Affiliations/Honors/Leadership & Service/Activities/Interests (Optional)

These are optional sections you may include if you want to highlight certain of your extracurricular activities you feel says some important and relevant things about you.

CHECK OUT THE RESUME GALLERY FOR IDEAS

Why recreate the wheel? Check out the 100+ example resumes in the CSO Resume Gallery to get ideas for your own resume:

www.thecampuscareercoach.com/resume_gallery





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HOW AND WHERE SHOULD I LIST MY REFERENCES?

Always remember to ask permission before listing someone as a reference. Share your resume with all your references so that they may be better equipped to speak on your behalf.

Generally, references should be listed **on a separate sheet of paper** following your resume and presented only after they have been requested. Use the same page heading as on your resume to make it look like a professional package. Below that, list your references centered or flush with the left margin. **Include three to five people who can present insight into your academic and work experience and offer positive comments on your abilities.** Following is a sample reference page layout:

Charles S. O'Research

512-555-1212 • csoresearch@email.com

REFERENCES

Name, Title
Company/Organization
Mailing Address
Telephone
E-mail Address

Name, Title
Company/Organization
Mailing Address
Telephone
E-mail Address

Name, Title
Company/Organization
Mailing Address
Telephone
E-mail Address

FINAL THOUGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

So, here's the bottom line: You must be actively and personally involved in the creation of your resume. No one else can do this for you. It makes good sense to get professional assistance when crafting your resume, but you can't pay someone to make your decisions for you. You need to make the decisions regarding what your resume should/should not include and how it should look, because you will have to defend its contents and appearance to potential employers. If you don't know what your resume says about you and why and how it says it, then when an employer asks . . . you will lose credibility with that employer. Put in the time, effort and attention up front, and your resume will be a valuable marketing tool in your search for a job or internship.



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- Remember, your resume is a marketing document. Most of the information it contains should be directly relevant to the type of jobs or internships for which you are applying.
- Be concise. Keep in mind that an employer will typically spend about 15 seconds initially scanning your resume.
- Use resume grammar – not formal prose or MLA, Chicago or AP Style. Avoid first person pronouns (I, we); most of the helping verbs (have, had, may); most being verbs (am, is, are, was, were); and articles (the, a, an). Lead with action verbs, and write action verb-driven accomplishment statements.
- Focus on position and place of employment; do not emphasize dates. Employers primarily interested in what you did and secondarily in when you did it.
- Be CONSISTENT. Every entry should follow the same format. For example, if you abbreviate TX once, do it every time thereafter. The same goes for using semester and year or month and year.
- Use industry lingo and abbreviations as appropriate, but do so with caution.
- Use spacing, underlining, italics, bold and capitalization for emphasis, but do so with restraint. Less is best and, above all, be consistent in the way you use formatting.
- PROOFREAD, PROOFREAD, PROOFREAD; and then, proofread again! As you become familiar with the content of your resume you should allow someone else to edit; they will see things you won't. Remember that resume typos and errors are deadly to your candidacy.
- Use 8 1/2 x 11-inch resume paper when mailing or giving a resume in person. Resume paper can be purchased at any other office supply, copy or stationary store. Generally, white paper is your best option. Colored paper can add a nice touch of creativity, but be aware that darker colors do not photocopy well, a disadvantage when your resume is shared across many departments. When printing, use a laser or letter quality printer.
- Save your resume in document and PDF format, and double check your PDF to make sure you had a clean conversion from document to PDF. Email employers the PDF version.