

A resume is one of the most important elements of your job search, and will need to be updated periodically throughout your career as you gain new skills and experience. Your resume will serve as the first impression potential employers will have of you. Employers spend an average of less than 60 seconds reviewing any resume. For these reasons, it is essential for your resume to project a clear and concise picture of your skills, professional qualities, achievements, and goals.

The tips below will help you begin constructing your resume. They are meant solely as guidelines, and you should always check with your career services office and follow their recommendations.

Stand Out

Be cautious if you choose to use a resume wizard or template; they tend to generate resumes that all look alike. Individualize your resume, but be sure not to overdo it. You want your resume to be distinctive, but always remain streamlined and conservative for easy readability.

Structure of Your Resume

The overall structure you choose for your resume will depend on what suits your employment history and experiences best. The following are the most widely recognized resume formats:

Chronological

This is the most common resume format, and probably the easiest to prepare. The chronological resume emphasizes employment and/or experience history, listing these elements in reverse chronological order. (In other words, your most recent experience is listed first.) This format is especially useful for new graduates or those with limited work experience.

Functional (Skill-Based)

The functional resume emphasizes skills and attributes that can be applied to a variety of employment situations. Your skills are broken down into categories that quickly communicate to employers what you can do for them. This format is useful for candidates without direct employment-related experience, or for those who wish to work in fields unrelated to their academic background.

Combination

For many candidates, a combination of elements from the chronological and functional resume formats works best.

Targeted

Some candidates prefer to focus on specific job “targets,” and tailor a different resume for each target. With this format, your skills can be redirected with each resume to hit each target most effectively.

Elements of the Resume

Contact Information

List your name, address, telephone number(s), and e-mail address. Make sure your e-mail address sounds professional or neutral. If necessary, set up an alternate screen name to use for business contacts exclusively. Above all, make sure that any potential employer can easily contact you! Other personal information such as religion, age, marital status, etc. should not be included.

Objective/Summary of Qualifications

There are differing viewpoints as to whether an objective will help or hurt your chances in the job market.

Check with your career services office for their recommendations. If you decide to use an objective, state the type of position you are seeking. Also, consider including in your objective how you will benefit the employer—not what you are seeking from the employer. An alternative to an objective is a summary

of qualifications. The summary of qualifications simply includes skills/traits that you can bring to an employer.

Educational Background

List names and locations of educational institutions attended, degree(s) awarded with completion dates, majors and minors, and anticipated or actual dates of graduation.

Employment History

List employment experience in reverse chronological order, including any summer/part-time jobs and internships. Use action words to describe your duties and achievements, and be sure to indicate when and how increases of responsibility occurred.



Action Words

The following list of words is useful when describing your job duties. These words represent skill areas that you may have that would be beneficial to a prospective employer.

References

You can list references as the final major category of the resume or as an attachment page. Check with your career services office for their recommendations.

Optional Items

If any of these items are related to your objective and can help sell you as a job candidate, you may want to consider including them:

- G.P.A. (if 3.0 or above) or major G.P.A.
- Academic awards, honors, or scholarships
- Special projects/research
- Personal skills/computer skills
- Extracurricular activities/community service
- Leadership

ACTION WORDS

| | | | | | |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| accomplished | composed | earned | handled | observed | recruited |
| accelerated | conducted | edited | implemented | obtained | reduced |
| achieved | consolidated | eliminated | improved | operated | reinforced |
| adapted | controlled | established | increased | organized | researched |
| administered | created | evaluated | initiated | participated | reviewed |
| analyzed | delegated | examined | instituted | performed | scheduled |
| appraised | delivered | exhibited | launched | planned | supervised |
| assisted | demonstrated | expanded | maintained | presented | strengthened |
| budgeted | developed | expedited | managed | processed | translated |
| built | diagnosed | explained | mastered | produced | updated |
| calculated | directed | facilitated | mediated | programmed | wrote |
| charted | discovered | formulated | motivated | proposed | |
| compiled | distributed | generated | negotiated | recommended | |

Editing Your Resume

Length

Ideally, your resume should be one page. You should make certain all pertinent information is included. If your resume requires more than one page, label the second page with your name and the page number.

Appearance

The body of the resume should be an eleven or twelve point standard font of no color other than black. Fonts such as Arial, Helvetica, or Times New Roman are always a safe bet when constructing a resume that has a professional appearance. Spacing and

size of the page are key elements to ensure optimum readability. Print your resume on quality 8½" x 11" paper in white or conservative colors.

Accuracy

Proofread carefully for spelling and grammar and ask someone else to proofread your resume. Accuracy is essential; nothing stands out like spelling or grammatical errors!



Electronic/Scannable Resumes

In all likelihood, you will be submitting your resume electronically to on-line job search sites, or sending it to organizations that scan resumes and keep them on file electronically. When doing this, compose your resume according to the following guidelines:

Electronic Resumes

- Use a common word processing program such as Microsoft Word
- Pay attention to the format the employer requests. For example, some employers prefer a PDF file, others prefer a plain text file
- E-mail the resume to yourself as a test before sending it to employers
- Forward a hard copy of your resume and cover letter as a follow-up

Scannable resumes

- Print on one side of the paper only
- Use non-decorative fonts such as Helvetica, Arial, and Times New Roman
- Avoid graphics, shading italics, underlining, and boldface text
- Avoid using horizontal and vertical lines
- Use all upper-case letters to emphasize words
- Include a “Key Word” section and list words that the scanning program may be seeking (e.g., web development, administration, negotiation, html, etc.)
- Use plain white paper

Your Name
Your Address
City, State, Zip
Area Code/Phone Number
E-mail Address

Objective A position as/a position in the field of...

Education **Name of University**, City, State
Degree(s) received, Major(s), Minor(s), Date degree(s) received,
GPA (if it is a 3.0 or higher)

**Skills/
Attributes**

- List of acquired skills that supports your objective

Employment Experience **Most Recent Job Title** Dates Employed
Name of Employer, City, State

- What you did, duties performed, responsibilities, accomplishments.

Next Job Title (Before Most Recent) Dates Employed
Name of Employer, City, State

- What you did, duties performed, responsibilities, accomplishments.

Next Job Title Dates Employed
Name of Employer, City, State

- What you did, duties performed, responsibilities, accomplishments.

Honors Awards, scholarships, merits, etc. and dates received

Other Activities Extracurricular activities, club memberships, group affiliations, etc.
that support your objective along with applicable dates

References available upon request

CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME

SAMPLE

Richard Resume
1111 Main Street
(555) 555-5555
rresume@email.com

- Objective** A programmer position in the software development and engineering field.
- Education** **ABC University**, Anytown, US
Bachelor of Science, Computer Science, Business minor, 4/20__
- Languages/
Software**
- Access
 - MODULA-2
 - Oracle
 - .NET
 - Assembly
 - SQL
 - C
 - SAS
 - C++
 - JAVA
 - Visual Basic
 - FOCUS
- Hardware**
- IBM PC/AT/IT/Ps-w's and compatible
 - Ethernet networks using Novell or Windows NT servers
 - Cisco 2500, 4000, and 7000 series routers
 - AS 400 and 4380 IBM Mainframes
- Employment
Experience**
- Programmer/Analyst*** 8/20__-present
Anytown Bowling and Billiards, Anytown, US
- Developed and performed maintenance on applications in an IBM Mainframe environment. Produced user requested reports in SAS.
- Programmer*** 6/20__-4/20__
ABC University Bookstore, Anytown, US
- Developed and implemented inventory system in Access using Visual Basic and C. Responsible for the overall technical and maintenance support of the system.
- Computer Lab Assistant*** 8/20__-4/20__
ABC University, Anytown, US
- Provided technical assistance on operations and use of lab equipment. Provided tutorial help on class projects.
- Honors**
- Technical Achievement Scholarship, 20__
Distinguished Honor Graduate, US Army Leadership Course, 20__
- Other
Activities**
- Member, Association of Computer Machinery, 20__-present
Volunteer Host ABC University Career Day, 20__
U.S. Army, Sergeant/E-5, March 97-present
Volunteer, ABC Basic Programming Contest, 20__
Anytown Festival Staff, 19__-20__

References available upon request

Your Name

Your Address
City, State, Zip
Area Code/Phone Number
E-mail Address

OBJECTIVE

A position as/a position in the field of...

EDUCATION

Name of University, City, State
Degree(s) received, Major(s), Minor(s), Date degree(s) received
GPA if it is a 3.0 or higher

RELATED SKILLS

- Name of Skill** • An accomplishment that illustrates or documents this skill
- Name of Skill** • An accomplishment that illustrates or documents this skill
- Name of Skill** • An accomplishment that illustrates or documents this skill

ACTIVITIES

Extracurricular activities, club memberships, group affiliations, etc. that support your objective

EMPLOYMENT

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Most Recent Job Title , Name of Employer, City, State | Dates Employed |
| Next Job Title (<i>Before Most Recent</i>), Name of Employer, City, State | Dates Employed |
| Next Job Title , Name of Employer, City, State | Dates Employed |
| Least Recent Job Title , Name of Employer, City, State | Dates Employed |

REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

Jessica Jobseeker

1111 Main Street
Anytown, US 22222
(555) 555-5555
jjobseeker@email.com

OBJECTIVE

A challenging position requiring organizational skills and creativity to coordinate convention events.

EDUCATION

ABC University, Anytown, US
Bachelor of Science in Sociology
Minor in Spanish
Graduated Cum Laude, 4/20__ GPA 3.8

RELATED SKILLS

Event Planning

- Collaborated with students to organize and implement various campus entertainment and activities
- Promoted and advertised campus shows
- Attended programming retreats which provided information and instruction about event planning

Leadership

- Served on the Executive Board of two campus organizations
- Recruited members for a campus club
- Directed research sessions for an ABC University professor
- Facilitated group discussions as program mentor for child mentoring program
- Spoke on a panel for ABC University’s Sociology Department

Language

- Capable of communicating with native Spanish speakers
- Studied in Mexico, Summer 20__
- Resided in native home where only Spanish was spoken

ACTIVITIES

Member of Campus Productions Programming Groups
Study Abroad: Guadalajara Mexico, Summer 20__
Independent Research Project, Psychology Dept, fall 20__
Mentor, Child Education Program, Anytown School District

EMPLOYMENT

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Substitute Teacher , Anytown School District, Anytown, US | 10/ __ - 6/ __ |
| Intern , XYZ Consulting, Anytown, US | 9/ __ -12/ __ |
| Accounts Payable Assistant , A Plus Accounting, Anytown, US | 6/ __ - 9/ __ |
| Sales Consultant , Q Mart Department Store, Anytown, US | 2/ __ - 5/ __ |

REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

JANE SMITH

Present Address: 1111 Main Street, Anytown, US 22222, 555-555-5555

E-mail address: jsmith@email.com

Permanent Address: 1234 Main Street, Anytown, US 22222

EDUCATION

ABC University, Anytown, US

Bachelor of Arts in Communications, May 2003

Overall GPA 3.4; Major GPA: 3.6

Relevant Courses: Interpersonal Communication, Marketing, Psychology

Relevant Projects: Developed Marketing Strategy for local chapter of PRSSA

EXPERIENCE

Associate Manager, My Store, Anytown, US, June 2001 - present.

Supervised staff of 10 part-time employees. Increased sales 25% in 6 months. Utilized team-building, goal setting, and business knowledge to improve employees' skills.

Maintained company web site. Opened and closed store in absence of owner. Created window and in-store displays.

President, College Honor Society, ABC University, Anytown, US, August 2001- present.

Utilized leadership skills to increase membership and encourage active participation in the organization. Planned and conducted monthly meetings. Contacted guest speakers and organized fundraisers.

Salesperson, Smith County Fast Food, Anytown, US, January 1998- June 2000.

Interacted with customers and utilized suggestive selling techniques. Increased sales by 15%. Salesperson of the month twice. Created product displays. Conducted inventory.

Assisted in training new sales staff.

SKILLS, HONORS, AND ACTIVITIES

American Marketing Association, Treasurer: Managed \$16,000 budget, 2000-2001 Alpha

Phi Omega National Service Fraternity, Membership Chair, 2000-present

Graduated top 10% of high school class with 3.8 GPA; Senior Class President

80% self supporting in college; work 25 hours per week as full-time student

Big Brothers/Big Sisters Volunteer

PRSSA - Attended National Conference, 2001, 2002

Computer Skills: Microsoft Windows 2000, Microsoft Office 2000, Quattro, C++, Visual Basic

Speak fluent Spanish

Effective letters are just as important as a strong resume. Well-written letters will command the attention of prospective employers and ensure that others will remember you, helping to develop a strong network of contacts.

The following are types of letters you will be writing to prospective employers. Make sure that every letter you write is addressed to a specific person, and not a form or copied letter. If necessary, phone the organization to ascertain the correct person to receive correspondence. Write down the correct spelling of the person's name and title, and remember to proofread your letter carefully.

Inquiry Letter

This letter is written to express interest in employment within an organization and to obtain information about any possible openings. Since this letter is not written in response to a job posting, communicate flexibility while being specific about the type of job you would like. Include your resume with this letter. Indicate when you will be checking back with the organization.

Application Letter

The letter is written to express interest in a known vacancy or job posting. After expressing your interest in the specific position, briefly summarize how your background and skills relate to the job requirements. Again, include your resume and indicate when you will be checking back with the organization.

Application Status Check Letter

Two or three weeks after sending an application to or interviewing with an employer, you may want to send a letter asking about the status of your application. Recap your history of contact with the employer (dates of correspondence and interviews, etc.). Reiterate your interest in the position and express appreciation for the employer's cooperation and time.

Thank You Letter

You should always send a thank you letter within 24 hours of a job interview. This letter should be brief, but be sure to express appreciation for the interviewer's time. Mention a few key points discussed during the interview, and indicate your continued interest in the position. Thank you letters reflect well on you and may help you when hiring decisions are made.

Rejection Letter

If you decide to turn down an offer of employment with an organization, always send a letter to the employer briefly explaining the reasons for your decision, even if you have already declined verbally. This letter helps support your network of contacts; you never know when you may have to contact this employer again. Always thank the employer for the opportunity and consideration of your candidacy.

Acceptance Letter

After accepting a position with an employer, always send a letter of acceptance. Express appreciation for the opportunity of joining the organization, and briefly confirm the terms of employment (title of position, salary, responsibilities, benefits, and start date).



Your Address
City, State, and Zip Code
Date

Contact's Name
Title
Company Name
Address
City, State, and Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms. (Contact's Last Name):

Get the employer's attention in the opening paragraph and arouse interest in you. When indicating your reason for writing the letter, indicate where you received information about the vacancy or position.

In your middle paragraphs, give details of your background that will show the reader why you should be considered as a candidate. Create desire on the part of the reader.

Refer the reader to your general qualifications on your enclosed resume or other materials. Use as much space as needed to tell your story, but keep it brief and to the point.

In your closing paragraph, ask for action. Ask for an appointment suggesting a time when you will be available. A positive request is harder to ignore than a vague hope.

Sincerely,

Your Handwritten Signature

Your Typed Name

Enclosure

Cover Letter Tips:

- Always enclose a cover letter when you mail your resume
- Your cover letter should be brief—no more than one page in length
- Cover letters should be individually typed and signed and should follow standard formatting for business letters, such as the sample that appears on this page
- Proofread your letter carefully for typographical and grammatical errors

Your Address
City, State, and Zip Code
Date

John Williams
System Administrator
Superior Diagnostic Services
123 Main Street
Townsville, IN 55555

Dear Mr. Williams:

I recently noticed a vacancy at your organization for the position of Computer Programmer in a recent issue of Tech World. I have been working in a computer environment for several years, and I am anxious to learn more about this opportunity.

I recently graduated from ABC University with a Bachelor of Science in Information Technology. I have acquired a great deal of hands-on experience during the last few years through many detailed class projects. Most recently, I have developed large Access inventory systems using C++ and Visual Basic.

I believe my combination of education and experience are an excellent match for the qualifications of your position. I have enclosed my resume for your review. I am very interested in meeting you to discuss this opportunity within your organization. If you would like any additional information, my number is (444) 555-1212. I will be in the Anytown area from May 5 through June 16, and would greatly appreciate the opportunity of meeting with you during that time. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Handwritten Signature

Your Typed Name

Enclosure

Your Address
City, State, and Zip Code
Date

Name of Interviewer
Title of Interviewer
Company Name
Address
City, State, and Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms. (Last Name of Interviewer):

In the first paragraph, state when and where you had your interview. Thank the interviewer for his or her time, and reaffirm your interest in the organization.

In the second paragraph, mention something that particularly appeals to you about the prospect of working for them. Also, reinforce a point or two in support of your application.

If after the interview you thought of something you wish you had said, the third paragraph of the letter is a good place to bring that up. You can also restate your understanding of the next steps in the hiring process.

In the last paragraph, thank the employer for considering your application and ask for further communication.

Sincerely,

Your Handwritten Signature

Your Typed Name

Your Address
City, State, and Zip Code
Date

Ms. Angela Chastain
Director of Human Resources
Modern Advertising
345 Center Drive
Centertown, PA 55555

Dear Ms. Chastain:

Thank you for meeting with me last Thursday, August 8, to discuss the position of copywriter at Modern Advertising, Inc. I was quite impressed with the enthusiasm you displayed for your company's future and the helpfulness of your office personnel. Learning about Modern's present media campaign for the Pennsylvania Sausage Company was exciting and demonstrated your creative approach to advertising. Modern Advertising is a company with which I want to be associated.

Your description of the special qualifications needed for this position was especially interesting. My ability to work under pressure and meet tight deadlines has already been proven in the advertising position I held with The Slippery Rock Rocket. As I stated at our meeting, I enjoyed the challenge of a competitive environment in which success is based on achievement.

I would also like to mention that since our meeting I have received the College Reporter's Award for an article of mine published in the Rocket. This is my first national award, and I am quite encouraged by this approval of my work.

Again, thank you for considering me for the position of copywriter. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Your Handwritten Signature

Your Typed Name