

Creating a Résumé That Works

Why should you write a résumé?

Your résumé presents a brief history of your accomplishments and is one of the most important tools during your job search. Below are a few basic rules to follow:

Keep It Simple

Keep the résumé neat, factual, and straightforward. Prospective employers will spend about 10 to 15 seconds determining whether they want to find out more about you, which means résumés should be kept to one page. Avoid acronyms, abbreviations, and industry jargon. Information about your personal life, including age, marital status, personal interests, and hobbies, will not help the recruiter decide if you are qualified for the position.

Find the Right Format

The most common formats are chronological and functional. Chronological résumés list your most recent job experience first (reverse chronological order). Functional résumés arrange your work experiences according to skills. Avoid getting fancy with your résumé. The format should allow the reader to skim for major points quickly.

Pay Attention to Details

Proofread your résumé as if your potential job depends on it ... because it does! Have someone else proofread your résumé as well. It is important to ensure your résumé is grammatically correct and free of errors. Most human resource personnel will disregard résumés and cover letters containing errors. They may assume you are careless and this is a possible demonstration of your performance as an employee.

Understand Résumé Writing Rules

The only absolute rule about résumés is that they must be perfect. Even the smallest mistake or inconsistency is unacceptable. Aside from this rule, there are many different ways to set up your résumé. Do the research and you will find that every author, hiring manager, and Career Services Advisor has their own opinions of the Dos and Don'ts of résumé writing. In the end, it is your résumé and you must be comfortable with how you represent yourself.

A perfect résumé does not guarantee that you will get the job, but a bad résumé will guarantee that you do not.

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What components should your résumé include?

- ▶ **Heading** Provide the following information at the top of your résumé:
 - Full name
 - Permanent address (and present address, if applicable)
 - Phone number(s)
 - Email address
 - **Note** Your email address should be professional; a separate email address just for your job search is recommended
- ▶ **Objective** The objective should be customized for the position for which you are applying
- ▶ **Education** Provide the following education information:
 - Level of education (associate's degree, bachelor's degree, diploma)
 - Major
 - Name of college, including city and state
 - Dates attended or date completed
 - Externship information, if applicableAdditional information:
 - You may list honors and/or your GPA if it is above 3.00 (example: 3.75/4.00)
 - You may want to specify related coursework you have taken that is pertinent to your major
 - It is not necessary to list your high school education if you have attended college
- ▶ **Experience** The typical set up of information is as follows:
 - Title of position and dates of employment
 - Company name, city, and state
 - Major accomplishments and responsibilities
 - **Note** Use action verbs that will get the reader's attention (see "Sample Action Words Describing your Accomplishments")
 - **Note** Bullets are easier to read than complete sentences and paragraphs

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- ▶ **Skills and Qualifications** You may want to include a skills and qualifications section on your résumé:
 - Skills such as computer applications, customer service, organization, time management, and communication
 - Qualifications such as fluency in languages other than English, research of special interest, and certifications
- ▶ **Professional Associations** List memberships in professional associations such as the American Physical Therapy Association, American Association of Medical Assistants, or New Hampshire Paralegal Association
- ▶ **Certifications/Licenses** List certifications and licenses such as CPR, First Aid, and AED; Licensed Nurses Assistant; Network+; or New Hampshire Licensed Massage Therapist
- ▶ **Honors/Awards** List awards received in and out of school such as Phi Theta Kappa, Dean's List, Who's Who, or Employee of the Month
- ▶ **Volunteer Experiences** List volunteer experiences such as chaperoning school trips, coaching a sports team, helping with fundraisers or blood drives, or serving as a scout leader