

GUIDE TO RESUME WRITING

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Your Resume Is...

- An advertisement
- A highlight of your background
- An individually designed document
- Used by employers as a screening device
- Just ONE piece of the job search process

Is There Such a Thing as a Correct Resume?

NO! There is no right or wrong when it comes to resume content and format. Each resume is as unique as the individual it represents. It is up to YOU to select the appropriate content that best highlights your skills for the employment you hope to acquire, and then effectively communicate your qualifications in a format that is clear and easy to read.

What Employers Look for in Students:

- Evidence of “soft skills” (Leadership, verbal & written communication, teamwork, critical thinking, problem solving, adaptability, initiative)
- Accomplishments in student organizations, work & service experiences
- Relevant experiences to posted position opening
- Academic performance

Should I Include an Objective?

No resume topic is more debated than this one...

No! Either replace your objective with a summary or profile section or remove it entirely.

An objective statement does not tell the reader much. If you apply for the job, it's obvious you are interested. No need to reiterate that in an objective.

Getting Started...

Brainstorm

Think about the purpose of your resume--how do you want to market yourself and how will you be using your document?

Complete the Worksheet

Complete the Resume Development Worksheet included in this guide.

Headings

Decide on section headings that will best fit your background and experiences.

Format

Set your margins at 0.5" - 1.0" on all four sides, creating a "frame".

Font

Use standard font sizes between 11 - 12 point. Choose a commonly used and easily read font:

- Calibri
- Times New Roman
- Garamond
- High Tower
- Trebuchet MS

Tip:

Students often find it helpful to create a master or "exploded" resume that captures all past and present experiences. You may then extract relevant sections when writing a targeted resume.

Draft

- Create a first draft of your resume and edit to fit on one page.
- Proofread carefully for grammar and spelling!
- Be consistent in the use of punctuation, how experiences are presented and how information is highlighted (bold, italics, caps, etc.).

- The most important and relevant information should be the closest to the top and left margins.
- Content should only appear once; avoid redundancy.
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- Save your finalized resume in a PDF format to preserve your layout when sending via e-mail.
- Never overstate qualifications or accomplishments; exaggerations can damage the credibility of the entire resume. Doing so is considered misrepresentation! Only include experiences you would be comfortable talking about in an interview.

TIP:

Have your resume reviewed by a Career Services staff member, a faculty member, or someone else you trust!

The Essential Components

Section Checklist

- ✓ Name/Contact Information
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Honors/Awards
- ✓ Experience
- ✓ Campus Involvement & Community Activities

Name/Contact Information

Goal: to ensure an employer can easily contact you.

Include:

- First & last preferred name (in larger font such as 16 to 20 point), phone number, and e-mail
- Make sure information is accurate
- Include only one e-mail address to avoid confusion
- This section should always be located at the top of the page

Tip:

If you are applying for positions near your hometown, include your home address. By doing so, you may alleviate concerns employers may have about relocation costs or your level of interest in that geographic location.

Make sure that both your e-mail address & your voicemail message are professional!

Education

Goal: to convey academic qualifications & training.

Include:

- Degree-granting colleges/universities, and institutions in which courses have been completed, including study abroad experiences
- Centenary College should appear first
- Note location (city, state, country), dates of degrees or dates attended (month/semester, year), the degree earned, & your major(s)/minor(s)
- Most students include their cumulative GPA if it is over 3.0
- Students may also choose to include a major GPA if the number is higher than their cumulative GPA
- You may choose to include relevant coursework if you do not have much experience in your industry yet
- Include your high school if you are a freshman or sophomore, or if your school has name recognition with influential alumni

Honors/Awards

This section can be integrated into another section, such as Education, or can stand alone

Goal: to emphasize accomplishments that differentiate you from other applicants!

Include:

- Academic and extracurricular honors, scholarships, and fellowships
- If the title of the award does not explain the qualifications to receive it, a brief description should follow
- List dates (month/semester, year)

Experience

Goal: to highlight your skills and non-academic qualifications in a concise manner, showing their relevance to your candidacy. Draw attention to groups of experiences that resound with your target employer by breaking them into sections, creating a “targeted resume.”

Include:

- Past & present employment, extracurricular involvement, & volunteerism
- Experiences should be listed in reverse chronological order within each section, based on the end date of participation
- Include the employer or organization, location (city, state, country), dates involved (month/season, year), position title, and powerful descriptions
- Choose to list the most relevant experiences first when several have the same end date

Campus Involvement / Community Activities

Goal: to highlight leadership, volunteer, and extracurricular activities which are not listed elsewhere on your resume.

Include:

- Clubs, organizations, fraternities/sororities
- Athletics, intramural sports
- Philanthropic activities, mission trips, or service

Skills

Goal: to include skills which do not appear elsewhere on the resume, ending your resume with strength!

Include:

- Technological skills, language skills or certifications
- Indicate level of proficiency in foreign languages (e.g., native speaker, fluent, proficient, conversant)

What other documents should you submit with your resume?

A **cover letter** should always accompany a resume. See our **Cover Letter Template** for details on effective cover letter writing.

Create a separate document for your **list of references**. Use your resume contact information as your heading and list each person's name, job title, employer, contact information, and state the relationship of this person to you. You should have 3-5 references on your list.

Writing Descriptions for Your Experiences

- Begin with a strong action verb (see list in back of this guide).
- The verb tense should reflect whether the experience is ongoing (present tense) or has been completed (past tense).
- Include details of major accomplishments and core responsibilities; show your impact on the organization.
- Address the scope of your experience; provide facts/numerical figures, and indicate results achieved.
- Do not write descriptions in complete sentences; eliminate pronouns and other non-essential words.
- Descriptions are often written in bullet points. Space is limited; give preference to the most relevant experiences.
- Try to include 2-6 bullets under each experience.

Turning Job Duties into Accomplishments

Job Duty	Accomplishment
Organized recruitment activities for fraternity	Developed new rush strategies which doubled the number of prospective members
Helped run classroom activities for music students	Exposed students to meaningful musical experiences to enhance social and academic development
Helped students with their homework	Tutored five students in biology which increased test scores an average of 10 points
Worked for ABC Mission	Devoted over 100 hours to feeding the needy in High Point community
Answered phones.	Efficiently responded to customer phone inquiries on how to use specific software

Tip:

Writing descriptions is often the most challenging part of writing a resume! Partner with the Office of Career Services staff for guidance. Spell out numbers one through nine but use numbers for 10 and above. Abbreviate states with capital letters (e.g., LA, TX, AR).

Resume Development Worksheet

NAME: _____

PRESENT PHYSICAL ADDRESS

Campus Box/Apt: #/Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

PERMANENT ADDRESS (if closer to internship or job location)

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (be certain your voicemail is professional) _____

PROFILE OR SUMMARY

Include any or all of the following in either a brief statement or in bullet format: career interests, key strengths/skills/qualities/characteristics that set you apart from other candidates. Note: You will customize this section as you “target” each employer.

EDUCATION

Degree _____ Major (or double major) _____

Minor/Concentration _____

Centenary College of Louisiana, Shreveport, LA, Graduation Date _____

GPA _____ (overall, major, or both) Note: Students often choose to list if 3.0 or higher.

Use this format for previous degrees. First year students may include high school. Transfer students may list degrees completed from a community college or the number of hours completed at previous institutions.

Optional Sub-Headings Under Education:

- Study Abroad
- Academic Awards/Recognitions/Accomplishments
- Relevant Courses
- Projects/Research

For **Study Abroad** experiences, include program name, location, and dates: _____

List **academic recognitions** such as honor societies, Dean’s List, scholarships: _____

List any **advanced courses** related to your major or career interest. This is optional and helpful if it informs the reader of your progress in the curriculum or clarifies a specific area of career interest. _____

Include **projects/research** related to your major or career interest. This is **optional**, but highly recommended, if project/research is directly related to a career interest and especially if experience section is light.

EXPERIENCE

Choose experiences you want to talk about. You can “target” your resume better if you customize this heading for specific opportunities. For example: COACHING EXPERIENCE or MARKETING EXPERIENCE or ACCOUNTING EXPERIENCE.

Include paid and unpaid/volunteer experiences. Place most recent first and work backwards. Use brief “bullet point” phrases/statements starting with action verbs to describe your accomplishments. Prioritize bulleted phrases/statements within each position so that you highlight the most important and relevant information for your reader (list 2 - 6 points). You may wish to list your job title first OR the employer first:

Entry #1 (Current or Most Recent)

Employer _____ City, State _____

Job Title _____ Dates _____

- _____
- _____
- _____

Entry #2

Employer _____ City, State _____

Job Title _____ Dates _____

- _____
- _____
- _____

Entry #3

Employer _____ City, State _____

Job Title _____ Dates _____

- _____
- _____
- _____

TECHNOLOGY OR SPECIAL SKILLS

List specific technical/computer or special (such as language) skills developed through courses, work, or personal experiences. If you prefer to highlight several different skills, create 2-3 subcategories that best reflect or present these skills (Computer, Language, Laboratory, Technical, Equipment, Personal):

CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT/LEADERSHIP

List in order of commitment and/or passion. Refine list, prioritize, and either combine into one section or keep separate. Dates are not critical but are optional. Choose a title that reflects content – LEADERSHIP / SERVICE / INVOLVEMENT:

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Include community activities/volunteerism that will help an employer get to know you. Draw from community leadership, projects, athletics, service or mission trips, travel experiences, or other ways in which you have served the community:

Resume Action Verbs

The most difficult part of resume writing involves describing your experiences and what you did on the job. The best approach: begin each job description with a **Power Verb**. They stress results and impact, which are what employers want to see. You can even string power verbs together. For example, "Designed, developed and implemented..." or "Established, cultivated and maintained..." Check out the power verbs listed below.

Management Skill Verbs

Allocated, Determined, Directed, Elected, Enlisted, Formed, Founded, Governed, Hired, Initiated, Inspired, Instituted, Led, Managed, Moderated, Motivated, Operated, Oversaw, Pioneered, Presided, Produced, Recruited, Represented, Selected, Spearheaded, Sponsored, Staged, Started, Supervised, Trained

Organizational Skill Verbs

Arranged, Assembled, Collected, Centralized, Coordinated, Catalogued, Distributed, Disseminated, Enforced, Executed, Formalized, Implemented, Installed, Maintained, Organized, Planned, Prepared, Processed, Routed, Recorded, Reorganized, Scheduled, Updated

Communication Skill Verbs

Acquainted, Apprised, Answered, Briefed, Conducted, Contacted, Demonstrated, Drafted, Educated, Explained, Familiarized, Handled, Informed, Instructed, Introduced, Lectured, Listened, Presented, Reported, Responded, Spoke, Summarized, Taught, Trained, Translated, Wrote

Analytical Skill Verbs

Analyzed, Assessed, Audited, Compiled, Consulted, Detected, Discovered, Documented, Edited, Evaluated, Examined, Gathered, Identified, Interpreted, Interviewed, Researched, Searched, Surveyed, Tested

Helping Skill Verbs

Aided, Attended, Assisted, Collaborated, Contributed, Counseled, Comforted, Facilitated, Fostered, Guided, Helped, Instilled, Mentored, Provided, Settled, Supported, Tutored, Treated

Selling Skill Verbs

Arbitrated, Convinced, Dissuaded, Encouraged, Marketed, Mediated, Negotiated, Persuaded, Promoted, Publicized, Resolved, Sold, Secured, Solicited

Creative Skill Verbs

Authored, Conceived, Conceptualized, Created, Composed, Designed, Devised, Established, Invented, Originated, Revolutionized

Additional Skill Verbs

Adapted, Attained, Augmented, Awarded, Boosted, Broadened, Built, Calculated, Catered, Decreased, Developed, Ensured, Eliminated, Exceeded, Excelled, Expanded, Expedited, Fabricated, Financed, Gained, Generated, Improved, Increased, Launched, Mastered, Modernized, Published, Raised, Reconciled, Reduced, Revamped, Revitalized, Saved, Shopped, Strengthened, Supplemented, Tended, Utilized

COVER LETTER TEMPLATE

Applicant's Contact Info [use the same heading as your resume]

Date of Letter

Employer's First and Last Name – for example, John Smith

Employer's Job Title

Company Name

Company Address

Company City, State, Zip

Salutation Options:

“Good morning/Good afternoon:” Or “Dear John Smith:”

Opening Paragraph: Grab their attention with a compelling statement about why you are writing, name the position or type of work for which you are applying, and mention how you heard of the opening or organization. Connect yourself to the organization through a mutual contact (family member, friend, Centenary Alum, recruiter you have been in contact with, etc.) And/or make “connections” between you, the company/city/geographical area/industry – you want them to think you are “one of them.”

Middle Paragraph(s): Explain why you are interested in working for this employer and specify your reasons for desiring this type of work. If you have had relevant work experience or related education, be sure to point it out but do not reiterate your entire resume. Emphasize skills or abilities you have that relate to the job for which you are applying. Be sure to do this in a confident manner and remember that the reader will view your letter of application as an example of your writing skills.

Closing Paragraph: You may refer the reader to your enclosed resume, which gives a summary of your qualifications, or whatever media you are using to illustrate your training, interests and experience. Have an assertive (but appropriate) closing to pave the way for the interview by indicating the action or steps you will take to initiate an interview date.

Sincerely,

Your name typed