

BUILD AN EFFECTIVE RESUME

The most powerful tool for getting an interview is a well-prepared targeted resume. If you have not written a resume before, this section covers some of the best practices for creating this essential tool.

Resume Formatting

Traditional Paper Resume

- Professional look and feel, good visual appeal
- White space for readability and note taking by the business during the interview
- Page length – 1 to 2 pages in most circumstances
- Font – Tahoma, Arial, Times New Roman, or Verdana
 - Font size – 10 to 12 points; section titles can be bolded or larger print
 - Font styles – bold, italics, and capitalization to highlight key areas
- Paper color – white, light gray or ivory
- Proofread and spell check – absolutely no spelling or grammatical errors
- Place your name and a page number on the top of all subsequent pages
- Always write in first person – No “I” (it is assumed)
- Resume paper often has a watermark, ensure the watermark is upright

Electronic Resume

Resumes can be submitted electronically. Resumes sent as email attachments are best sent in a pdf version to eliminate formatting issues. Resumes can also be sent in the body of an email message, or on a company website.

Targeted Resume Styles

There are a few different ways to organize the information on your resume which include:

- Chronological
- Functional
- Combination

Targeted Resume Comparison Chart

Resume	Advantages	Disadvantages	Best Used By
Chronological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Widely used format -Logical flow, easy to read -Showcases growth in skills and responsibility -Easy to prepare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Emphasizes gaps in Employment; job changes -Not suitable if no work history -Emphasizes lack of related experience and career changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Individuals with steady work record
Functional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Emphasizes skills rather than employment -Organizes a variety of experience (paid and unpaid work, other activities) -Disguises gaps in work record or a series of short-term jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Viewed with suspicion by employers due to lack of information about specific employers and dates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Individuals who have developed skills from other than documented employment and who may be changing careers -Individuals with no previous employment -Individuals with gaps in employment -Frequent job changers
Combination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Highlights most relevant skills and accomplishments -De-emphasizes employment history in less relevant jobs -Combines skills developed in a variety of jobs or other activities -Minimizes drawbacks such as employment gaps and absence of directly related experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Confusing if not well organized -De-emphasizes job tasks, responsibilities -Requires more effort and creativity to prepare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Career changers or those in transition -Individuals reentering the job market after some absence -Individuals who have grown in skills and responsibility -Individuals pursuing the same or similar work as they've had in the past

Sections of a Resume

We will now identify best practices for writing targeted resumes that will solicit interviews from potential employers. The three “Rs” of resume writing are Research, Research, Research. In each section of your resume you want to show your research of the company and the position and tie your research to your personal experience that relates to the job.

The main sections or headings of a resume include:

- Contact Information
- Career/Job Objective Statement
- Summary
- Areas of Expertise
- Experience
- Employment History
- Education/Training

There may be other headings used, such as Technical Skills Summary or Awards. These headings should be used when appropriate.

Contact Information

- Located at the top of the resume
- Be sure to include at least your name on each page of the resume (follow the specific instructions if provided)

Career/Job Objective Statement

An **objective statement** is one of the first sections used on a resume – if at all.

It is not a description of duties or a vague description of a job, but rather it is to identify a specific job and company. Well-written career objectives:

- Concise, short and to the point
- Answers the question “What position are you applying for?”
- List the specific job and company to which you are applying

Examples of clearly written targeted career objectives:

- Seeking a position as an armed security guard for Pinkerton Services
- Seeking a position as a Licensed Vocational Nurse for St. Mary’s Hospital
- Position as a Security Guard for Brinks International

If done right, the rest of the resume should speak directly to the qualifications and benefits inside the objective statement.

Areas of Expertise

This is the first section that provides a resume reader a sense of what you can do for the company. This area is sometimes referred to as the **Summary of Qualifications**.

This section accomplishes the following:

- Highlights key skill areas – draws attention to specific skills
- Addresses key words and qualifications from the job description
- Lists certifications and/or licenses

When writing this section list:

- 6 – 12 of your matching skills
- Job-related or transferable skills/knowledge
- For a specific job, refer to the job posting and list your matching skills

Experience

The experience section of the resume provides the detail that supports either your objective statement or your summary and areas of expertise sections. This section should:

- List your results and/or achievements that relate to the desired position
- Not be a job description
- Use numbers, percentages, and examples to illustrate your achievements

Writing Accomplishment Statements

- Use common terms; no acronyms (unless described)
- Begin with an action verb or dynamic adjective
- Write in past tense
- Quantify results when possible (use numbers, percentages, and statistics)
- Include examples
- Avoid use of personal pronouns, “I” “We” “Her” “Him”

Example Accomplishment Statements using the SAR method:

A well-formulated accomplishment statement includes **SAR**:

Situation—context or scenario, can be implied for some statements

Action—demonstrable skill utilized

Result—impact on situation or task

Education and Training

The following are the general guidelines:

- List most recent first
- Put the word “Attended” if you haven’t graduated
- List special honors you achieved such as: graduated Cum Laude, with Honors, or possibly list your grade point average (GPA)
- Include certifications, licenses, and course work relevant to the job

- Include all degrees achieved beyond high school, highest to lowest
- Include any additional training and coursework that is related to the job
- If degree-award date is within nine months, indicate expected graduation date

Prepare References

It is recommended that job seekers have six professional references ready to provide to the employer. References are an important part of the job search process, and because they are at the end of the interview cycle, they can be an afterthought until requested. You will need to get permission, discuss your job search and ensure that you have the correct contact information.

Top Ten Pitfalls in Resume Writing

1. **Too long.** Most new graduates should restrict their resumes to one page.
2. **Typographical, grammatical, or spelling errors.** Errors suggest carelessness. Have someone proofread your resume. Don't rely on computers.
3. **Hard to read.** A poorly formatted, typed, or copied resume looks unprofessional. Bullets, underlining, boldface type and italics should be used to make the document easier to read.
4. **Too verbose.** Do not use complete sentences or paragraphs. Say as much as possible with as few words as possible. Be careful in your use of jargon and avoid slang.
5. **Too sparse.** When describing related work experience, skills, accomplishments, activities, interests and club memberships be sure to give employers the important information.
6. **Irrelevant information.** Customize each resume to each position you seek (when possible). Include all education and work experience, but only relevant experience, skills, accomplishments, and activities. Do not include personal information such as marital status.
7. **Obviously generic.** Tailor your resume. The employer needs to feel that you are interested in that particular position with his or her particular company.
8. **Too snazzy.** Of course, use good quality bond paper, but avoid exotic types, colored paper, photographs, binders, and graphics.
9. **Boring.** Make your resume as dynamic as possible. Begin every statement with an action verb. Use active verbs to describe what you have accomplished in past jobs.
10. **Too modest.** The resume showcases your qualifications in competition with the other applicants. Put your best foot forward without misrepresentation, falsification, or arrogance.

Resume Template

Name (16-20PT Font)

Address

City/State/Zip

Phone

Email

Professional Objective: Position as [specific position] within [specific company]

Highlights of Qualifications:

- Overview of your career experience & skills—about 2-3 bullet points

Relevant Experience and Accomplishments:

[Skill Set Desired in Job Description] Skills

- WHAT (skill based action verb) + HOW (how you used the skill—“by, through, using”) + WHY/RESULT (why you took action, what was the result)

[Skill Set Desired in Job Description] Skills

- Developed, managed, and monitored records such as recordkeeping for budgets, equipment, and supplies
- Purchased, maintained, and distributed supplies for different areas of administration
- Created contract budgets, equipment, and supplies for quality operation at ABC

[Skill Set Desired in Job Description] Skills

- Performed applicable department duties in the absence of the Assistance Director for Customer Service center
- Planned and coordinate feed the homeless monthly event up to 200 attendees
- Coordinated monthly events and workshops for families up to 75 attendees

Education:

Community College of Aurora

Aurora, Colorado

Associates of [Arts/Sciences], [Focus]

Expected Graduation: [Month, Year];

Employment History:

Position

Organization/Company Title

Month, Year- Month, Year

Volunteer Work, Associations, and Honors:

Position

Organization/Company Title

Month, Year- Month, Year

Relevant Coursework:

Course Title

School

Semester, Year

Resume Checklist:

An employer-ready resume must meet professional standards in every category.

Content	
Order of Information?	
Does the most important category come first?	
Is the organization logical and clear?	
Completeness?	
Are all major topics emphasized by the employer covered?	
Is each area concise yet complete?	
Are duties and achievements described in specific terms?	
Relevance?	
Is there a clear reason for each piece of information?	
Has the information been tailored to a targeted field and job?	
Language	
Word Choice?	
Are action verbs or nouns (key words)?	
Is the language clear and straightforward?	
Mechanics?	
Are there any errors in spelling, grammar or punctuation?	
Are there any typographical errors?	
Appearance	
Is the resume appealing and easy to read?	
Does it use headings effectively?	
Does it use white space, indentation, underlining, capitals effectively?	
Does it have a professional look?	
Is formatting—headings, spacing, font—consistent throughout?	
Is the wording consistent throughout?	