

# The Resume Guide

Career Services

## The Purpose of a Resume

A resume is a marketing tool that documents one's qualifications. It is a 30-second commercial. The goal of a resume is to gain the opportunity to get an interview for a job that you want. It is not a complete life history. It summarizes one's personal, educational, and work experience qualifications.

## Resume Design

While there is no one correct way to design a resume, there are, however, traditions that have become standards. For example:

The length should be 1 page if you are seeking your first permanent position after college graduation.

The format should be attractive and interesting. It should also be neat, organized, and easy to follow.

The content should be true and valuable information. Give it the "Does it help?" test.

Ask yourself these questions:

Will I get the interview if someone knows this piece of information?

Is it relevant to the position?

Does it solve their problem? (Filling the open position.)

Is it more important than something else is? (Should you get rid of something else?)

The font should be easy to read; however, some experts suggest you not stick to the standard Times Roman. Christine F. Della Monaca, a Monster Staff Writer, states: "As for typeface, you had definite opinions. 'Don't use Times New Roman font,' advises one seeker. 'Your resume will look like everyone else's. Georgia and Tahoma are both different, professional, and pleasant to look at.'"

Look at the following examples and see that there are good and poor fonts for resumes.

**This is Georgia.**

**This is Tahoma.**

**This is Times Roman.**

**This is Arial.**

*This is French Script MT.*

**This is Californian.**

**This is courier.**

**This is Century.**

**This is Helvetica.**

**This is Old English Text MT.**

## Putting Your Resume on Paper

### Create Your Personal Letterhead

The top of your resume consists of your name, address, email, and phone number. Make it attractive as though it is your customized, personal letterhead. The same letterhead should be used for your cover letter and reference list as well.

Be creative, this reflects you and your personality. You may vary the font, font size (not to exceed 20 point), bold, lines, italic, and alignment.

Be aware: you should have a professional email address that you check every day. Your phone messages should be professional. You may list more than one address without stating which is permanent and temporary.

### Objective Statement

“The most effective resumes focus on specific career goals. Managers have a job opening and are looking for a candidate who meets their criteria. Resumes that appear to solve their problems will get a closer look...” Kim. Issacs, “Resume Dilemma,” Monster.com.

This section will change with every resume that you submit. It states the targeted position that you seek and the type of employer or specific employer. Keep it simple and straight forward for the interviewer. Ultimately it will help your chances of getting an interview.

An objective statement:

- One or two phrases
- Does not use pronouns like “I” or “my”
- Can help clarify your goals for the reader
- Can close doors if not well written
- Is optional
- Answers the question, “What do I want?”

String objective statements:

- A position in sales with a progressive company
- A training and development position with a large corporation
- A position in research and development in applied science
- A physical education or basketball coaching position with the possibility of teaching special education

Weak objective statements:

- To utilize my education and skills in a career with a developing company to better the human condition and continue my education
- To continue to develop my skills in counseling
- To use my education, knowledge, and resources in the area of international business to find a job
- To find fulfilling work in which I can learn and grow while helping the company

## **Education**

As a student or recent graduate, this is a very important section that should be near the top of your resume.

List all colleges attended in reverse chronological order. Each entry should include the following information:

- Full name of school
- Location (city and state)
- Degree (Bachelor of Art/Science)
- Month and year of graduation or expected graduation
- Majors, minors, and concentrations
- GPA

GPA? Some people will advise only GPAs of 3.0/4.0 or higher to be printed. Be careful, some readers will not consider a resume if a minimum GPA is advertised and it does not appear on the resume.

Awards? You may include awards and honors into this section or put them into their own section. If you have extensive lists, choose the most important ones so as not to clutter your resume.

High School information? Do not include it after your junior year of college unless the school is well-known or you are applying for a job in that area. Some awards such as Boy Scouts' Eagle Scout Award and Girl Scouts' Gold Award should be included.

Sample:

St. Andrews Presbyterian College, Laurinburg, NC  
Bachelor of Science in Biology, May 2010  
Minor: Chemistry, GPA: 3.76/4.0

## **Skills/Qualifications/Highlights**

Your skills give an interviewer reason to contact you for an interview. This section tells an organization what you can do for them. This section also emphasizes your experiences and achievements related to your resume's goal. The skill or qualification section is your chance to show what you can do, regardless of your education, GPA, work experience or honors. Use this section to tell the interviewer what you can do, no matter where you did it.

You should list at least five skills or qualifications with an example or "proof" that you can do what you say you can do. Focus on quantifiable information when possible. Use skills or qualifications that are in some way relevant to the position that you want. You can choose any format, just make it consistent. Use action verbs that state the skill at the beginning or one or two sentences per item. In most cases this section should be the highlight of your resume. Ask yourself, "What is the skill? What is the proof?"

Examples with possible formats:

- Schedule 20 employees on a weekly basis.
- Increased production (sales or customer satisfaction) by 35%
- Assigned and supervised the completion of tasks for student employees

## Experience

You may include internships, volunteer work, summer jobs, work-study jobs, full time jobs, part-time jobs, special projects, and military experience. List your experience in reverse chronological order with a distinct, uniform format for each entry that includes: job title, organization, location, dates and perhaps responsibilities (unless they have already been listed in the skills section).

Samples of different formats:

**President** January 2007 to present  
*United States of America*, Washington, D.C.

**St. Andrews Presbyterian College, Admission Office** (Summer 2000)  
*Student Tour Guide*  
Laurinburg, NC 28352

**Communications Intern** August 2006 - May 2007  
*Baltimore Philosophy Club*, Baltimore, MD

- Produced monthly newsletter with circulation of 5,000
- Edited manuscripts submitted for publication

Holiday Inn: Tallahassee, FL  
**Desk Clerk**, (1/03 – present)

## Awards/Honors

You have some latitude with the Awards and Honors section. These sections are not required and you may choose to include the information under education or combine it with Activities depending on how many items you have or their relevance to the position that you seek. If you are struggling to get your resume on one page, apply the “Does it help?” test.

When it comes to “bragging” about yourself, you may feel uncomfortable. In fact, the American culture tells us not to brag on ourselves. In this case, however, it is not bragging. You are simply listing the facts. You were on the Honor Roll, you did win a scholarship or you were recognized as “Most Improved Student” or “Most Valuable Player.”

Tell the reader what and when. Assume your audience knows nothing about the honors and in some cases you may wish to include a brief description.

National Honor Society	1999-2001
Warner Hall Scholarship	2005-2008
ABC Scholarship (Freshman Scholarship)	2005

## Activities

If you have any unique or exciting activities, interests or hobbies, you can include them in this section. Relevant or significant club or organization experience will fit.

Example:

Cross country tandem bike racing, international cooking, training dogs in agility

## Travel

If you have traveled abroad, a section listing your experience can provide relevant job information. International travel demonstrates adaptability, world experience, and a positive attitude toward diversity. This can be especially important if you are seeking a job with a multi-national company. Where you went, when, and what you did are the important factors in this section.

Examples of different formats:

**Cuenca, Ecuador** Summer 2007  
Lived with a host family while studying Spanish at the local university

*Brunnenburg, Italy*, Fall 2006

- Worked in a vineyard
- Studied poetry with the family of Ezra Pound

## References

References go on a separate page listing names, titles, addresses, work telephone numbers, and email addresses. You should be able to provide at least three when they are requested, generally after an interview. Use your letterhead and then list the information for contacts who can speak about your experience or knowledge of the subject matter. You do not have to mention this list in your resume or cover letter. It is implied that you will deliver it if asked.

Remember to contact your references when you begin a job search and send them a copy of your resume. You may also want to send them information about the company and position that you are seeking.

Examples of different formats:

Jane Doe  
English Professor  
St. Andrews Presbyterian College  
Laurinburg, NC 28352  
(910) 277-5xxx  
janedoe@sapc.edu

Sam Doe  
Director  
Creative Writing Therapy Center  
10,000 South Main Street  
Burlington, NC 28333  
(336) 222-0000  
sdoe@yahoo.com

## **Suggestions/Hints**

### **Do:**

Be brief, clear, and concise

Be consistent

Be positive

Be honest

Be careful, get a proof reader  
(Typos are the kiss of death.)

Be neat

Make it easy to read and find information

Use action verbs

Use qualifiable information

Keep it to one page

Use the same letterhead for resume, cover letter, and reference list

### **Do not:**

State salary requirements

Give reasons for changing employers

Limit geographical considerations unless necessary

Expound on philosophy or values

Offer any negative information

Use clichés like “People person”

Include personal information about health, religion, marital status, weight

Use “I” or “me”

Use a font that is difficult to read

Clutter your page or leave big empty spaces