



Writing the Resume

Whether it is to be submitted to a college placement office or sent along with a job-application letter, the resume communicates in two ways: by its appearance and its content.

APPEARANCE OF THE RESUME

Because in almost all cases potential employers see the resume before they see the person who wrote it, the resume has to make a good first impression. Employers believe -- often correctly -- that the appearance of the resume reflects the professionalism of the writer. A neat resume implies that the writer would do professional work. When employers look at the resume, therefore, they see more than a single piece of paper: they see an example of the kind of work they can expect if they hire the writer.

Some colleges and universities advise students to have their resumes professionally printed. A printed resume is attractive, and that's good -- provided, of course, that the information on it is consistent with its professional appearance. However, using a computer with a letter quality printer and good-quality paper will produce a comparably professional appearance, and most employers agree that a neatly typed resume photocopied on good-quality paper is perfectly acceptable.

No matter how they are produced, resumes should have a neat and professional appearance. They should feature the following:

1. *Generous margins.* Leave a one-inch margin on all four sides
2. *Clean type.* Use a typewriter with clear, sharp, unbroken letters or a letter-quality printer.
3. *Symmetry.* Arrange the information so that the page has a balanced appearance.
4. *Adequate white space.* Avoid a cluttered, packed arrangement of information.

CONTENT OF THE RESUME

Although different experts advocate different approaches to resume writing, everyone agrees on two things.

First, the resume must be completely free of errors. Grammar, punctuation, usage, and spelling errors undercut your professionalism by casting doubt on the accuracy of the information contained in the resume. Ask for assistance after you have written a first draft of your resume, and proofread the finished product at least twice.

Second, the resume must provide clear and specific information, without generalizations or self-

congratulation. Your resume is a sales document, but you are both the salesperson and the product. You have to provide the specific details that will lead the reader to conclude that you are a terrific job candidate. Let your experience show this to the reader. Saying it directly to the reader is graceless and worse, unconvincing.

A resume should be long enough to include all of the pertinent information but not so long as to bore or irritate the reader. Generally, a student's resume should be kept to one page. If, however, the student has special accomplishments to describe -- such as journal articles or patents -- a two-page resume is appropriate. If your information comes to just over one page, either eliminate or condense some material to make it fit onto one page, or modify the physical layout of the resume so that it fills a substantial part of the second page.

FORMAT OF THE RESUME

The two most common resume formats are chronological and functional.

The chronological resume lists information in reverse chronological order (with the most recent education and experience listed first)

A chronological resume is useful when...

- you have significant relevant work experience
- your experience can be related to the current job search
- your employment/education history has no major gaps.

The functional resume lists related skills and accomplishments.

Use a functional approach when...

- you lack relevant experience
- you are changing careers
- there are time gaps in your employment/education history.

ELEMENTS OF THE RESUME

Most resumes include the following categories of information.

1. **Identifying information**
2. **Objective**
2. **Education**
3. **Employment/Experience**
4. **Additional headings (including professional affiliations/certifications/awards)**
5. **References (not usual)**

Identifying Information

Your full name, address, and phone number should always appear at the top of the page. Your name should appear on the first line, followed by your complete address, including the zip code. Also use your complete phone number, with the area code and your e-mail address.

Note: be sure to choose an email that is professional e.g. hotbabe99@gmail.com is not a good email to use for professional correspondence.

Students who have two addresses and phone numbers should make sure that both are listed and identified clearly. Often, an employer will try to call a student during an academic holiday to arrange an interview.

Objective

Indicate what type of position or area you wish to be considered for. If you are seeking a specific position, (e.g. editorial assistant) name it.

Education

The education section usually follows the identifying information on the resume of a student or a recent graduate. People with substantial professional experience usually place the employment experience section before the education section.

The following information is included in the education section: the degree, the institution, its location, and the date of graduation. After the degree abbreviation (such as B.S., B.A., A.A., or M.S.), list the academic major (and, if you have one, the minor) -- for example, B.S. in Materials Engineering. Identify the institution by its full name: Pennsylvania State University, not Penn State. Also include the city and state of the institution. If your degree has not yet been granted, write **Anticipated date of graduation** or **Degree expected** before the month and the year.

You should also list any other institutions you attended beyond the high school level -- even those at which you did not earn a degree. Students are sometimes uneasy about listing community colleges or junior colleges; they shouldn't be. Employers are generally impressed to learn that a student began at a smaller or less advanced school and was able to transfer to a four-year college or university. The listings for other institutions attended should include the same information as the main listing. Arrange the entries in reverse chronological order: that is, list first the school you attended most recently.

You can also expand the education section by including a list of courses that would be of particular interest to the reader. Advanced courses in an area of your major concentration might be appropriate, especially if the potential employer has mentioned that area in the job advertisement.

You also can list in the education section any honors and awards you received. Scholarships, internships, and academic awards all offer evidence of an exceptional job candidate. If you are using a functional resume, if you have received a number of such honors, or some that were not exclusively academic, it might be more effective to list them under a separate heading in a section called Honors or Awards. (See below)

Employment/Experience

The employment section, like the education section, conveys at least the basic information about each job you've held: the dates of employment, the organization's name and location, and your position or title. This information is self-explanatory.

However, a skeletal listing of nothing more than these basic facts would not be very informative or impressive. As in the education section, you should provide carefully selected details. What readers want to know, after they have learned where and when you were employed, is what you actually did or accomplished. Therefore, you should provide a two to three-line description for each position.

The various jobs should be listed and described in reverse chronological order on the resume to highlight those positions you have held most recently.

If you have held a number of non-professional positions as well as several professional positions, the non-professional ones can be grouped together in one listing:

Other Employment: Cashier (summer, 1995), salesperson (part-time, 1995) clerk (summer, 1994)

If you have little or no substantial work experience, you may want to use a functional resume that emphasizes other kinds of experience and accomplishments. List three to five skills (e.g. research, writing, leadership). Under each skill, give two to six statements describing your activity and accomplishments (e.g., Leadership: President of Hunter Accounting Society--increased membership by 25%).

At the end of the skills section, list the places and dates of any employment.

Additional Headings (e.g., honors, awards, special skills, languages, professional affiliations, certifications etc.)

Any special knowledge or experience you have can be listed in a separate section of the resume.

References

You may list the names of three or four references -- people who have written letters of recommendation or who have agreed to speak on your behalf -- on your resume. Or you may simply say that you will furnish the names of the references upon request. The length of your resume sometimes dictates which style to use. If the resume is already long, the abbreviated form might be preferable. If it does not fill out the page, the longer form might be the one to use.

CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME SAMPLE #2

John Lewkowski
848 Plains Street
Fort Pierre, South Dakota 57067
605-555-9745

Employment Objective

A museum staff position leading eventually to a curatorship.

Education

B.A., Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana, 1996.
Major: history Minor: biology GPA: 3.85/4.00=A

State University of New York, course in researching, cataloging, and mounting exhibits, summer 1994.

Experience

Museum volunteer, Joseph Moore Museum, Earlham College, 1994-96. Assisted director of small natural history museum. Developed traveling museum program for four local elementary schools. Identified and catalogued specimens, maintained exhibits.

Summer intern, Tippecanoe County Historical Museum, Lafayette, Indiana, 1995. Wrote grant proposal resulting in \$10,000 award for archeological dig at 18th-century French and Indian trading settlement. Wrote with state and federal agencies, university faculty, museum staff.

Laboratory assistant, Earlham College, spring term, 1996. Supervised freshman biology lab, prepared lab materials and specimens, answered students' questions, and graded lab reports. Was selected Outstanding Teaching Assistant in the Natural Sciences.

Honors and Activities

Earlham Alumni Scholarship, 1993-96
Outstanding Teaching Assistant, 1996
Earlham College tennis team, 1994-96

Personal Data

Speak and write French. Interests: travel and photography.

RESUME SAMPLE #3

Diane Bellows
1830 Lexington Ave.
Louisville, KY 40227
(502) 689-3137

EDUCATION University of Louisville, B.A., 1997

 Major: Business Administration with emphasis in personal management
 Minor: Economics with emphasis in corporate finance

EXPERIENCE

College Orientation Leader, University Admissions Office, 1995-97. Met with prospective students and their parents; conducted tours of campus; answered questions; wrote reports for each orientation meeting.

Academic Committee, Alpha Phi Sorority, 1995-97. Organized study halls and tutoring services for disadvantaged students.

Advertising Manager, University yearbook, 1996. Responsible for securing advertising that made the yearbook self-supporting; wrote monthly progress report.

Summers Intern, Echo Electronics, June 1996. Learned about pension plans, health care benefits, employee associations, and work regulations as they affect employee relations and personnel management.

Volunteer Worker, Arthur Schneider's School Board re-election campaign, 1995. Wrote press releases, campaign brochures, direct mailers; did research on teacher competence.

REFERENCES Placement Office
 University of Louisville
 Louisville, KY 40222
 (502) 744-3219

SAMPLE FUNCTIONAL RESUME

MAGGIE HANNAN
2421-19 Hunter Avenue
Bronx, New York, 10475
(718) 379-6952
meran@shiva.hunter.cuny.edu

- OBJECTIVE** Entry-level publishing position
- EDUCATION** Bachelor of Arts, Cum Laude; Hunter College, 1999
Major: English--concentration in writing (3.3)
Minor: Film and Media Studies (3.5)
- HONORS** Dean's List 1996 - 1999
- SKILLS** Bilingual (French), research, writing, Microsoft Word
- EXPERIENCE** **Writing:** Contributed to writing press releases for Chrysalis records.
Participated in writing seminars. Performed readings of works.
- Publicity:** Assisted in publicity campaigns. Composed and sent press kits.
- Research:** Conducted semiotic analysis of women audiences as part of an
independent project in media. Implemented impact analysis of compact
disc technology.
- WORK**
EXPERIENCE Telemarketing Representative, 1997 - 1999
Edward Blank Associates, New York
- Publicity Intern, Summer 1998
Chrysalis Records, New York
- Office Clerk, 1995 - 1997
Queens College Financial Aid Office, Queens, NY
- REFERENCES** Provided upon request