

Preparing Your **Resume**

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WRITING YOUR RESUME

1. Keep in mind: **The whole purpose of writing your resume is to get you an interview!** Think of your resume as a personal brochure which describes your background as it relates to your career. **It should be concise and to the point.** If your resume is too lengthy, an employer will not want to read it. Ask yourself, “Would I take the time to read this if it came across my desk?”

2. Strive to keep your resume to one page; however, if you have many years of experience, a two page resume is acceptable. You do not need to include everything that you did at a particular job, nor do you need to include every job you’ve ever had. Include just those things that are relevant to your desired career.

3. Your resume **must** attract attention. It should briefly outline your education, employment experience, goals, and special skills. Your resume should tell the employer:
 - Who you are
 - What you know
 - What you have done
 - What you would like to do
 - What you can do for the employer

4. Be careful not to write a dry, boring description of what you have done. Instead, stress your accomplishments and skills by using action words and descriptive phrases. **Key point: What did you learn from your experiences (work, skills, school, etc.) that will be an asset in the job you’re seeking?**

ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS:

- A. Have I had any promotions, awards, or honors?
 - B. How have my responsibilities increased since I started?
 - C. What was I held accountable for?
 - D. Did I do anything to increase sales, profits, organizational efficiency? Anything unique? Any measurable accomplishments?
 - E. **What makes me better or different from the typical applicant?**
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5. PRINT/
PAPER Many resumes are e-mailed to potential employers, but for those that are sent “snail mail” use a conservative color paper (ivory, tan, white or off-white). Don’t use grey because it doesn’t copy or fax well. You should use at least a #24 bond paper for both your resume and cover letter. Mail them both in matching envelopes. **Make sure your resume is typed in no less than a 10 point font, and your margins should be no less than .5 all around.**

JOB DESCRIPTION PHRASES AND BULLETS

Identifying those qualities, skills, and experiences which demonstrate your capabilities is most effective when you use **job description phrases and bullets**. It isn't "incorrect" to use paragraphs to explain your experiences, but action words and bulleted phrases are **attention getters**. Employers typically receive many resumes and often have little time to read through them. Use white space effectively, bold/italicize special achievements, and use job description phrases and bullets to make your resume the one they want to read!

Sample job description phrases:

- Credited with having accomplished . . .
- Commended for . . .
- Served as a _____ for _____ years before being promoted to . . .
- Chosen from _____ staff members to . . .
- Acquired knowledge of . . .
- Organized and implemented new _____ systems which increased efficiency in . . .
- Trained and supervised . . .
- Increased company profit by . . .
- Effective in . . .
- Developed ability to . . .
- Coordinated creative marketing displays by . . .
- Assisted manager with . . .
- Trained new employees and organized work schedules which increased office productivity by . . .
- Recognized as . . .
- Implemented various _____ procedures by . . .
- Motivated and supervised employees in . . .

ACTION WORDS/FUNCTIONS

Supervised

Administered
Controlled
Coordinated
Delegated
Demonstrated
Directed
Guided
Instructed
Led
Managed
Monitored
Ordered
Scheduled
Trained

Assisted

Advised
Carried out
Notified
Observed
Performed
Supported

Achieved

Attained
Completed
Dealt
Effected

Did

Conducted
Produced
Participated
Provided

Put Together

Assembled
Built
Compiled
Coordinated
Effected
Engaged
Gathered
Implemented
Maintained
Organized
Planned
Prepared
Structured

Evaluated

Assessed
Analyzed
Conceived
Compared
Defined
Estimated
Forecasted
Interpreted
Observed
Pinpointed
Recommended
Reviewed
Projected
Solved
Strategize
Surveyed
Updated

Demonstrated

Exhibited
Illustrated
Performed
Presented
Proven/Shown

Created/Started

Conceived
Designed
Developed
Established
Expanded
Founded
Generated
Implemented
Initiated
Introduced
Invented
Launched
Organized
Produced

Communicated

Consulted
Interviewed
Lectured
Negotiated
Taught
Trained
Investigated

Altered

Cut
Eliminated
Expanded
Increased
Negotiated
Reduced

Influenced

Encouraged
Innovated
Motivated
Promoted
Persuaded

Efficiency

Accelerated
Expedited
Applied
Maintained
Mastered
Reinforced

Chose

Brought
Enlisted
Selected

Reorganized

Adjusted
Improved
Molded
Proposed
Revamped
Revised

Wrote

Edited
Recorded
Researched
Reported
Summarized

Functional

Assembled
Cleaned
Kept
Piled
Opened
Operated
Packed
Received
Shipped
Sold

THE REVERSE CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME

The **reverse chronological format** is the most common type of resume. It lists experiences from the present to the past. This style works well for those without gaps in employment and whose past experience is closely related to the desired position. ***NOTE*** Remember that all experiences should be listed from the **most** to **least** important.

LAYOUT OF THE REVERSE CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME

1. **Name, address, home/work/cell number and E-mail address:** Any way you want to list this is O.K. Flush right, flush left, a combination, or center it – just include it!
2. **Summary vs. Job Objective:** A summary section is most preferred right now. A **summary** is a short paragraph describing your background, skill/abilities, education, and desired position. Bullets may also be included for special skill emphasis. A **job objective** is a brief, one sentence statement that states the position you desire.
3. **Skills/Competencies/Professional Achievements:** Choose an appropriate heading and list any relevant computer skills, licenses, special talents, awards, publications, certifications, or anything else that you cannot include under “Work Experience”.
4. **Work Experience:** Make sure to include the name of the organization where you worked, its location, your job title, and the dates when you worked there. Street addresses, zip codes, and telephone numbers are not necessary. If you can, obtain a copy of your job description. Having a job description to refer to makes it a little easier to write your resume. Make sure to keep action verbs in the present tense if you are currently employed, and in the past tense if you no longer work there.
5. **Education:** This section will go at the top of your resume (after your “skills/competencies” section) **only if you are a recent college graduate**. If you have a few years of career-related experience, list your education near the bottom of your resume (after your “Work Experience” section) – regardless of when you graduated. List your most recent accomplishment first and include the name of the institute or trade school and the town/state it’s located. List your focus of study, and the degree or certification you earned. There’s no need to put your high-school information, employers just assume you’ve graduated. Dates may or may not be excluded to avoid age discrimination.
6. **Professional Affiliations:** If you do not belong to any organizations in your field of interest . . . JOIN THEM! Not only is networking the number one way of obtaining employment in the United States, it is very impressive when an employer sees that you are keeping up to date with current trends.
7. **References:** Only include this section if you need to fill a blank space on your resume. It isn’t necessary to list the names of your references here, simply put furnished or available upon request. Names, numbers and addresses of your references should be on an entirely separate page and submitted only when requested.

THE FUNCTIONAL RESUME

The **functional format** allows you to group your experiences into categories that emphasize your skills which closely relate to your career objective. Job titles and employment dates are de-emphasized. If you are looking to change your career entirely, or if there are gaps in your employment dates, the functional resume will work well for you. Strive to keep it to one page, but two pages may be necessary if you have many years of experience.

LAYOUT OF THE FUNCTIONAL RESUME

1. **Name, address, home and/or work number** As with the reverse chronological resume, you may present this information any way you think looks best, and however you think it will grab an employer's attention.
2. **Summary** A summary is generally used in lieu of a job objective on a functional resume. It allows the resume writer to really focus on additional skills and special traits which the employer will not see in the "*relevant experience*" section. Be sure to include the type of position you're seeking to obtain.
3. **Relevant Experience** This section is what makes the functional resume unique. It is up to you to come up with 3-4 special skill sections which are relevant to your career objective in your summary. For instance, if you're looking for a position in Human Resources: Training/Development, Oral/Written Communication, and Project Management might be excellent headers to describe your past experience.
See the **Occupational Outlook Handbook, developed by the US Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, for career information on over 250 occupations. It describes, in detail, the various skills and traits needed to succeed at your chosen career.**
4. **Education** Those people who compose a functional resume usually list their education somewhere near the bottom of the resume. Don't forget to put your most recent educational experiences first.
5. **Special Interests** This section may be titled in a variety of ways – *Computer Skills, Awards, Licenses, Certifications, Continuing Education, Specialized Education, Affiliations*, etc. If you have many achievements under any of the aforementioned sections, make sure to include it on your resume.
6. **Employment History** On a functional resume, your employment history should be one of the last things you include. Don't give any job descriptions under this category, just list the employer, location, your job title, and dates when you worked there.
7. **References** Once again, just say *available* or *furnished upon request* and list the actual names and phone numbers of your references on a separate piece of paper (submitted only if requested). It is OK to omit this section if there isn't any room.

THE COVER LETTER

Whenever you mail or e-mail your resume to a potential employer, it should be accompanied by a cover letter. The cover letter explains to the employer why you are sending a resume, and it should *motivate* him or her to read your resume. Don't miss this opportunity if you're sending your resume via e-mail. The cover letter allows you to restate relevant points within your resume, including information which may have been difficult to write. A good cover letter can also help to express your personality in a way that a resume cannot, and that's very helpful to potential employers in today's impersonal technological era!

Your Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code
Telephone Number (Home and Work)
E-mail Address (If Applicable)

Today's Date

Ms. M. Ployer
Title
Company
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Ms. Ployer,

1st Paragraph: Briefly (no more than 3 sentences) tell why you are writing. Name the position, how you have heard of the job opening, and why you are interested.

2nd Paragraph: Mention skills and qualifications you think would be of greatest interest to the potential employer. Point out any related work experience or specialized training you have had. Emphasize why you are particularly interested in the opportunity, the organization, its location, or type of work.

3rd Paragraph: Get into further detail regarding your qualifications, background, training, awards, and/or any special projects you have completed. It's great to have a "hero story" about how you were able to help your company achieve something that sets you apart from the other employees – i.e. "Because I found an error in the math, we were able to save \$2M in revenue."

4th Paragraph: Close by making a specific request for a job interview or an informal information-gathering meeting to develop your knowledge of the field. Restate your telephone number and e-mail address.

Sincerely,
Your name

John A. Smith
123 Any Street
Anytown, NY 00000
Phone: (845) 555-5555
E-mail: johnasmith@myemail.com

May 1, 2008

Ms. M. Ployer
Human Resources Director
ABC Fitness and Recreation Organization
456 Main Street
Anytown, NY 00000

Dear Ms. Ployer,

In response to your advertisement in last Sunday's Record for a *Personal Trainer/Educator* at ABC Fitness and Recreation Organization, attached please find my resume for your review. Currently, I'm a *Personal Trainer* at CDE Fitness Gym, and although I enjoy my career, I'm looking for a position that would offer new challenges and growth potential. At present, our location is relatively limited, and the job description you've offered is very enticing.

Given my extensive experience in physical therapy and rehabilitation, I believe my qualifications would match your expectations. Having worked for CDE Fitness Gym for over ten years, I'm fully aware of the high standard of performance that is necessary to achieve success in this field. Over the last few years, I've had the opportunity to act as a mentor to new Personal Fitness Trainers. As a mentor, I've been able to help improve the trainers' education via in-house workshops relating to anatomy, physiology, bio-mechanics, and how the human body generally functions.

Last year, I was awarded high honors within our organization for my innate sensitivity to the physical and emotional needs of our clients. As such, I've been assigned to provide help for new employees with their interpersonal skills.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this position with you at your earliest convenience. Should you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (555) 555-5555, or you can E-mail me at johnasmith@myemail.com. Thank you in advance for your consideration, and I look forward to meeting with you in the future.

Sincerely,

John A. Smith