

Types of Writing | Résumés

The following guidelines for the content and layout of your résumé will help you make the best possible impression on any potential employer.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- ◀ Think quality, not quantity. An employer will probably spend less than 30 seconds reviewing your résumé, so it must make an instant impression. Because clarity and brevity are critical, most résumés should be no longer than one page.
- ◀ Do enough research to know the employer's standards and expectations; then omit irrelevant details and focus on information that fits the job description.
- ◀ Since employers often list the most important requirements first in a job description, consider mirroring the organization of the job description in your résumé.
- ◀ Be confident and honest. Do not exaggerate, change dates, or create job titles.
- ◀ Use white, ivory, cream, light beige, or light gray bond paper.

CONTENT

Each résumé should be uniquely adapted for its intended audience, so your specific section headings may vary. Some of the most common sections are discussed below:

CONTACT INFORMATION

Your overall heading should include your basic contact information, including the following:

- ◀ **Full name.** You may include a nickname in quotation marks.
- ◀ **Address.** Spell out directional words (North, West, etc.).
- ◀ **Phone.** Include your area code.
- ◀ **Email address.** Make sure the address you use seems appropriately professional.

OBJECTIVE STATEMENT

You may include a brief objective statement to explain your reason for submitting a résumé. If you choose to do this, the objective statement should briefly include the following:

- ◀ **Job information.** Give basic information about the job, the job title, and the organization's name.
EXAMPLE: Seeking a full-time position as assistant manager at Craig's Diner . . .
- ◀ **Your qualifications.** Briefly state your qualifications and traits that will benefit the company.
EXAMPLE: . . . where my leadership abilities and three years of restaurant managerial experience can enhance the services of your diner.

EDUCATION

The length of the education section can be long or short depending on what you want to emphasize. If you have solid work experience, the education section may only need to include basic facts about your education. However, if you want to show how your education qualifies you for the job, develop it into something more extensive. In general, you should include the following information:

- ◀ **School names.** List colleges or universities you attended, usually in reverse chronological order.
- ◀ **School locations.** Give the city and state of each school.
- ◀ **Dates attended.** Include the dates you attended each school.
- ◀ **Degree(s) earned and graduation date.** Include projected graduation date if it is within one year.
- ◀ **Major(s) and minor(s).** Include these if they are applicable to the job.
- ◀ **GPA.** Only include your GPA if it is required or if it reflects your strength as a student.

If it is relevant, you may also include information about honors, extracurricular activities, scholarships, special coursework, certifications, etc. (See sample résumés for examples.)

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Note these specific guidelines for degree names:

- ◄ **Capitalization.** Only capitalize the names of specific degrees.
- ◄ **Apostrophes.** Use an apostrophe with the words *bachelor's degree* or *master's degree*. Never use an apostrophe for specific names of these degrees or for associate or doctorate degrees.

EXAMPLES: a Bachelor of Science Degree
a bachelor's degree
an associate degree

EXPERIENCE

Your experience can be placed in one section or several different sections. Some possible section headings are *Work Experience*, *Work History*, *Volunteer Activities*, *Professional Experience*, and *Related or Relevant Experience*. Customize your headings to make your résumé quickly show the audience what is important. Generally, include the following details about your work and volunteer experiences:

- ◄ **Job Title.** State your job title or a description of your role.
- ◄ **Company or Organization Name**
- ◄ **Location.** A complete address is not necessary. Just provide the organization's city and state.
- ◄ **Dates of Employment.** Use months and years or the word "present."
- ◄ **Duties or Accomplishment Statements.** Describe duties or accomplishments using phrases, not complete sentences. Avoid using *I*. Instead, begin phrases with action verbs (present tense for your current job and past tense for former jobs) to demonstrate how your accomplishments and experiences have prepared you for the job for which you are applying.

EXAMPLES: Supervised 25 co-workers
Taught students basic writing skills
Developed a training program for new employees

OTHER INFORMATION

In addition to *Education* and *Experience*, other possible sections could include *Skills*, *Training*, *Relevant Courses*, *Leadership Experience*, *Publications*, *Presentations*, *Certifications*, *Awards*, or *Honors*. Include information that highlights your strengths and is relevant to the job. For example, you might consider mentioning valuable skills like computer and language proficiencies, your typing speed, or community involvement.

FORMAT

The way you organize and present your qualifications will significantly affect the initial impression you make. Consider the following guidelines:

LAYOUT

- ◄ Avoid templates. Make your résumé original so that it will stand out.
- ◄ Make your résumé look professional. Avoid graphics, and check neatness, spelling, and grammar.
- ◄ Use white space effectively, and avoid dense paragraphs of text. Add space to make the page look balanced and to make information easier to find.
- ◄ Be consistent. Use the same style for all headings and the same style for all body text.
- ◄ Use bullets rather than paragraphs.

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HEADINGS

- ◄ Put your name, phone number, address, and email at the top of the page.
- ◄ To make information easier to find, organize it in logical sections.
- ◄ Make section headings stand out. Generally, they should be large and/or bold.

FONTS

- ◄ Your name should be the largest text on the page (18-24 point font).
- ◄ The body of your résumé should be in 10-12 point fonts. Smaller fonts are hard to read, and larger fonts give the impression that you do not have enough information to fill a résumé.
- ◄ Use no more than two fonts. Sans serif fonts (without "feet," like **Arial**) make headings stand out. Serif fonts (with "feet," like **Georgia**) are great for body text because they create a line that helps your eyes flow smoothly along the text and are therefore easier to read.
- ◄ Italics, bold, or underlining may be used to make sections of body text stand out, but never use more than two of these emphasis devices.
- ◄ To add emphasis, put information on its own line, bullet lists of responsibilities, or indent.

WORD CHOICE

- ◄ Avoid using the pronoun *I*.
- ◄ If possible, use specific percentages, numbers, and amounts in descriptions.
- ◄ Choose wording from the job listing to describe your skills.
- ◄ Avoid using abbreviations, contractions, and acronyms.

TYPES OF RÉSUMÉS

The type of résumé you submit will depend upon each employer's specific requirements. The following are some of the most common types of résumés:

CHRONOLOGICAL

This is a traditional format that is arranged by dates. List items in reverse chronological order (most recent first). Usually *Employment* or *Education* is the main focus. List all experiences within a reasonable time period, or use only those relevant to the job.

FUNCTIONAL

A functional résumé emphasizes experiences that specifically qualify you for a job. You may use section headings similar to those in a chronological résumé (for example, *Employment* and *Education*). Rather than listing items chronologically by date, however, organize them by significance, placing the most impressive items first in the list.

SCANNABLE

Scannable résumés allow a computer program to look for key words in your résumé. Consequently, using words from the job listing is vital. The computer will not read the résumé if it contains special objects, so eliminate any bullets, lines, or other symbols. Because color or graininess can darken scanned copies, scannable résumés should usually be printed on plain, white paper.

CURRICULUM VITAE

This type of résumé is used most often by professionals within their fields. It can be several pages long and should contain detailed information under several headings like *Publications*, *Presentations*, *Patents*, *Conferences Attended*, *Affiliations*, etc. If you are not certain whether you should use a Curriculum Vitae or a standard résumé, ask the company or organization which they prefer.

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SAMPLE RÉSUMÉS

You should adapt each résumé to match the expectations and requirements of each specific employer. The following samples illustrate a few of the many approaches available. (The first résumé uses a functional format. The second is more chronological in format.)

Louis Williams
 107 Lewis Parkway, Denver, CO 94071 · 524/823-3871 (H) · 524/663-8049 (W) · williams@ucd.edu

Objective: Seeking full-time employment as Associate Editor for *The College Enquirer*, where my writing skills and background in management can strengthen and complement the newspaper's writing team.

Work Experience

Borrowed Earth, Editor, College Literary Journal
 Logan, UT, 2001-2003

- Selected, formatted, and edited texts for publication
- Gained proficiency in QuarkXPress, Microsoft Office Suite, Microsoft Publisher, and Java

Writing Center, Utah State University
 Logan, UT, 2002-2003

- Worked one-on-one with student writers to develop basic writing techniques
- Trained small group of tutors and facilitated group projects
- Supervised tutors in the preparation of grammar handouts for publication

Georgetown University, Teacher's Aid, Basic Writing Composition
 Washington, D.C., 2003-present

- Assist in teaching of writing curriculum
- Conduct group and individual study sessions
- Oversee five graders and assist in grading of assignments

Education

Georgetown University, Bachelor of Art Degree, English Teaching
 Washington, D.C., Projected Graduation: Apr. 2005

- GPA 3.82.
- Sigma Tau Delta Distinction (International English Honor Society)

Utah State University, Associate of Art Degree, Rhetoric and Composition
 Logan, UT, 2000-2003

Volunteer Work

American Red Cross, 2000-present

- Certified American Red Cross First Responder
- American Red Cross Olympic First Aid Volunteer

Boy Scouts of America, 1998

- Earned Eagle Scout Award

CONTACT INFORMATION

Use 18-24 point font for your name. Make other information easy to find and read.

OBJECTIVE STATEMENT

Explain your reason for applying. Name the position, and state how you will benefit the company.

SECTION HEADINGS

Choose short section headings. Organize them in a way that emphasizes your greatest strengths. Put them in an order that mirrors the organization of the employer's original job description.

Sonya Henderson
 1068 West 1750 South, Orem, UT 84058 shenderson@walmart.com (801) 586-5363

Education

Accounting, BS, Skidmore College 1993 - 1997
 Saratoga Springs, NY

Awards: Ranking Young Business Leader Scholarship 1995

Relevant Courses:

- Marketing
- Strategic Analysis
- Accounting
- Operations
- Business Communications
- Corporate Finance

Experience

Operations Manager, Wal-Mart Apr 2003 - Present
 Provo, UT

- Manage US logistics, operations, and supply chain processes
- Balance country product service level and inventory turn levels (Maintain a top five country forecasting ranking)
- Prepare department finance proposals including department budgets, product pricing, and promotion margin analysis

Night Shift Supervisor, Albertsons Sep 2001 - Mar 2003
 Provo, UT

- Supervised 20-25 employees
- Assisted customers

Distributor Relations, Shopee Enterprises May 1999 - Aug 2001
 Saratoga Springs, NY

- Resolved distributors' legal, compensation, and business concerns
- Developed distributor relations training module

English Instructor, International Exchange, Inc. Jun - Sept 1999
 Hong Kong

- Taught English to groups of 15 to 30 students.

Skills

Proficient in SAP, Atlas, QuatroPro, Microsoft Office Suite
 Conversationally fluent in French

BULLETED LISTS

Avoid dense paragraphs, and use phrases that begin with action verbs to describe your duties or accomplishments.

WHITE SPACE

Use white space to make your résumé more balanced and readable.

BOLD TYPE AND ITALICS

To emphasize section headings or important text, use bold type or italics.