

Write Your Resume:

A workshop from
The Speaking, Reading
and Writing Center



Why a resume matters



A good resume can be the bridge between you and a potential employer.

“First of all, the resume is still the best way to show companies what your skills are, what your experience includes, and how you might be the best fit for their needs. It’s a succinct way to summarize your value and then the employer has a copy too” (Why Resumes Still Matter (Sort Of) from Job Search Ninja).



Top 10 resume mistakes

- Typos and grammatical errors
- Lack of specifics
- One size fits all
- Highlighting duties instead of accomplishments
- Too long or too short
- Bad objective
- No action verbs
- Leaving off important information
- Visually busy
- Incorrect contact information

Typos and grammatical errors

Spelling, grammar and other errors in a resume make potential employers think you can't write or don't care about accuracy.



Lack of specifics

No detail

Example:
worked with
employees in
restaurant setting

Effective detail

Example:
Recruited, hired,
trained and
supervised 20
employees in a
restaurant with \$2
million in annual
sales.



One size fits all?

Employers want resumes written specifically for them. They expect to see how your qualifications fit a position in their organization.

Highlighting duties vs. accomplishments

Job duties

- Attended group meetings
- Recorded minutes
- Worked with children in daycare setting
- Updated department files

Accomplishments

- Recorded weekly meeting minutes and compiled them in Microsoft Word file
- Developed three daily activities for preschoolers and prepared them for holiday performance
- Reorganized 10 years of financial files now accessible to all department members

Too long or too short

There is no rule governing resume length. However, applicants with long careers, higher educational standing, multiple publications or research will have longer resumes. Generally, a maximum of two pages is a good guideline. One page resumes are also effective.



No action verbs

Passive verb

“responsible for...”

“was in charge of...”

Action verb

“resolved user questions as part of an IT help desk serving 4,000 students and staff.”

“hired, trained and managed six customer service representatives for retail cosmetic department.”



Leaving off important information

While it may be tempting to exclude mentioning temporary, part time or low wage jobs, the skills learned from these experiences (e.g., work ethic, time management, customer service) are more important to employers than you might think.



Visually too busy

Margin-to-margin text, five different fonts, multiple images and colors might give an employer a headache. Keep your resume's focus, instead, on your skills and qualifications.

Incorrect contact information

It seems simple, but make sure all your contact information is correct and up-to-date.



Resume tips from a top recruiter

- Avoid fancy layouts, fonts and special effects
- Prepare it in simple Word format
- Use reverse chronological order
- Get rid of objectives and summaries
- Skip personal information
- Stories sell. Numbers, statistics and percentages get attention
- Avoid fuzzy key words and phrases like “customer-oriented”, “excellent communication skills” and “creative” because they lack specific meaning
- Use words that refer to job titles (customer service, manager, accountant)
- No photos. You’re looking for a job, not a date



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This PowerPoint presentation is based on the article "Avoid the Top 10 Resume Mistakes" by Peter Vogt, Monster Senior Contributing Writer