

Résumés are a marketing tool used to show your qualifications for a specific position and to persuade an employer to interview you. You should create a new résumé for each position you are applying for and demonstrate how you meet or exceed the specific requirements. Try to think like an employer: What would you want to see if you were hiring for this position?

MASTER LIST

A *master list* can be very helpful, because it enables you to collect all of the information about your experiences, skills, education, etc., in one document. Unlike a résumé, a master list is **never sent to an employer**, needs no specific formatting, and will have much more detail. Then when you tailor your résumé for a specific position, you can pull items from this master list to include in your résumé.

The master list will include–

- Entire work history
 - Address/phone numbers of employers
 - Names of supervisors
 - Salary information
- Many accomplishment statements
- Education, certificates, licensure
- Class projects and contributions to those projects
- All volunteer work
- Activities
- Anything else that might be relevant to an employer

This master list can be used when filling out applications, since you will have all employer information in one place, saving you time and energy. If you continue to update the list throughout the year, it will make tailoring a résumé much easier as well! Simply copy and paste the most relevant information into a résumé format, and you will never have to worry about losing information.

FORMATTING AND APPEARANCE

THE BASICS

No matter what type of résumé you use, the same basic formatting applies:

- One page for every 7-10 years of experience; no more than two pages. If a second page is needed, include your name and page 2 at the top of the page and DO NOT staple
- .7"-1" margins around entire document
- 11-12 point professional font (Times New Roman, Ariel, Calibri) for body with name slightly larger
- Use basic bullet pointed lists (▪ or •) instead of paragraphs
- For emphasis, use **bold**, *italics*, and CAPITALIZATION and stay consistent (e.g., If you use bold for degree title, use bold for job titles); avoid underlines
- Balance the text to avoid too much text or too much white space
- Black ink only, no color, and print on a high quality printer
- Templates should be avoided to ensure a unique document fitting individual specifications
- Print using white or ivory résumé paper (typically 100% cotton/linen) on the correct side of the paper with the watermark readable

The urge to get creative with the résumé format in an effort to stand out is natural, but employers consistently report a preference for easy-to-read, basic formatting. Would you rather be remembered for your fun bullet points or your experience and skills?

ARRANGEMENT

The first time employers review résumés, most will spend no more than 10-25 seconds reading each one. For this reason, it is crucial that they see the most important information as quickly and easily as possible. Since we read top to bottom and left to right, it is most beneficial to put the most important and relevant information toward the top of the page and on the left. The less important information should be at the bottom of the page.

TYPES OF RÉSUMÉS

Chronological

This is the most common and widely accepted résumé type. The experience section will be listed in **REVERSE** chronological order with bulleted statements demonstrating contributions and accomplishments.

Functional/Skills

Those who are going through a career change will often find themselves needing to focus on particular functions or skills as opposed to work experience. This résumé type emphasizes skill sets with bulleted statements that demonstrate these skills. Work experience will still be listed but will not include bullet points.

Combination/Hybrid

Exactly how it sounds, this type of résumé is a combination of the chronological and functional styles. Work experience is shown with bulleted statements, **AND** skill sets are also demonstrated.

SECTIONS

CONTACT INFORMATION

This is one area of the résumé that you are able to show a little creativity; just remember to keep the information easy to read. Make sure that your email address and your voice mail message are professional. Figure 1 shows two examples of formatting

The top of the page should include–

- full legal name
- street address
- phone number
- email address

FIGURE 1

ELIZABETH EXAMPLE

910 University Drive
Springfield, MO 65897
417.555.994

Example@live.missouristate.edu

Jane Doe

222 South National * Springfield, MO 65897 * 417-555-9898 * jane@live.missouristate.edu

EDUCATION

You have worked hard for your degree; now is the time to show it off (Figure 2). Start with the degree you are currently working toward or have earned most recently.

You must include–

- accurate degree title and major/minor (check transcript or course catalogue)
- university name
- location of university (city, state)
- graduation/expected graduation date (month, year)
- GPA

FIGURE 2

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Accounting Expected Graduation: May 20xx

Missouri State University, Springfield, MO

GPA 3.5/4.0, Major GPA 3.8/4.0

- Admitted into Accelerated Master of Accountancy program
- Dean's List Fall 20xx

Associate of Arts in General Studies

May 20xx

Ozark Technical Community College, Springfield, MO

GPA 3.3/4.0 while working 30-40 hours per week

There are a variety of ways to document GPA, including listing the cumulative, major, or final semester GPA. Just make sure it is clearly stated and accurate. If a GPA is not listed, the employer may assume it is lower than it actually is, which will work against you. Use the same format when listing previous degrees earned from other universities, community colleges, or technical schools. You will **NOT** list your high school diploma on a résumé, nor do you have to list information from institutions that did not result in a degree or certification.

EXPERIENCE

This section can be titled Work Experience, Professional Experience, Relevant Experience, Sales Experience, or any other appropriate description (Figure 3). It is not necessary to include all work history on the résumé, only the most relevant positions or those that used the most transferable skills. The positions should be listed beginning with the most recent and working backwards.

Each position needs to include–

- job title
- employer name
- location (city, state)
- range of employment (months, years)

FIGURE 3

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Sales Associate

November 20xx–Present

Popular Clothing; Any City, MO

- Assist diverse customer base to assess options based on individual style and price range
- Train up to 10 new associates on procedures and policies of the company

Lead Web Designer

September 20xx – May 20xx

ABC Company; Any City, MO

- Designed 122 web pages for a catalog company using HTML and Java
- Worked in a team of 5 programmers to maintain and update website with new applications

ADDITIONAL SECTIONS

To ensure the employer sees all of your qualifications, additional sections can be included on the résumé (Figure 4). If a skills section is used, it is important to provide proof of the skills instead of simply listing them.

Some options include–

- Academic Experience
- Activities
- Awards
- Certifications
- Community Service
- Computer Skills
- Honors
- Lab Skills
- Language Skills
- Leadership Experience
- Military Experience
- Objective Statement
- Professional Organizations
- Publications
- Service Projects
- Summary of Qualifications

FIGURE 4

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Team Leader

Spring 20xx

Marketing Plan; Missouri State University

- Led a team of 5 to create marketing plans for 3 local businesses
- Met with company representatives to better understand their needs and communicated them to group

COMPUTER SKILLS

- Proficient at Peachtree and QuickBooks accounting software
- Programming Languages: HTML and Java

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Philanthropy Chair

Spring 20xx–Present

Delta Delta Delta; Springfield, MO

- Worked with a team of 150 peers to raise over \$15,000 for children's cancer research

ACCOMPLISHMENT/CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS

Bulleted statements demonstrating skills, contributions, and accomplishments are the most important elements of the résumé but are also the most challenging.

These statements should–

- focus on the skills/contributions/accomplishments that are relevant to the **NEW** position
- show how you used them in previous positions/activities
- be detailed, yet concise, no longer than one-to-two lines of text

It is helpful to start with a list of skills or qualifications needed for the new position and then create your résumé showing how you have used these skills and how you meet the qualifications. Reviewing the job posting and using resources like O*NET (<http://online.onetcenter.org>) can be helpful in learning which skills are needed for the position. See Figure 3 and Figure 4 for examples.

Each statement will–

- begin with an action verb (see Action Verb handout), using appropriate verb tense
- show what you did using industry-specific terminology
- explain why you did it
- identify the result using dollar values, numbers, and percentages if possible

ACCURACY

All information on a résumé should be reviewed by multiple people to ensure it is free of errors, misspelled words, or grammatical mistakes. Remember that spell check does not catch all mistakes.

Some common errors include–

- “costumer” instead of the correct word “customer”
- “manger” instead of the correct word “manager”
- “Power Point” instead of the correct word “PowerPoint”

All are actual words, so they are not caught by spell check; however, they don’t have the intended meaning.

Although a résumé is not a legally binding document, all information should be truthful, accurate, and written in the applicant’s own words. Plagiarism is never acceptable, so do not “borrow” statements from friends, résumé examples, or the Internet.

THINGS TO AVOID

INFORMATION

Every country has a unique standard for what to include or not to include when applying for a job. In the United States, certain items are always left off the résumé:

- disabilities
- gender
- height/weight
- manager information
- marital status
- photograph
- political affiliation
- reasons for leaving past jobs
- religion
- sexual orientation
- salary requirements
- social security number/ITIN

Some of this information will be requested on an application, but not on the résumé. If applying outside the United States, follow the standards for that country to ensure you are providing all needed information.

GRAPHICS AND COLORS

Using graphics, clip art, pictures, or fun colors is a common mistake on résumés. Typically students do this to make their document stand out to employers, but it will backfire. The résumé will be remembered, but for all the wrong reasons. Employers will remember the pictures and colors, but not your name or information. Using your skills, education, and experience is the most effective way to truly stand out to the employer and be remembered for the right reasons.

REFERENCES

References are an important part of the job search, but should be left off the résumé. These belong as a separate document and will not accompany the résumé unless the employer specifically requested them. The reference page will have the same header/contact information as the résumé and will include the job title and contact information for each person who has agreed to serve as your reference. Be sure to ask permission to use someone as a reference, supply that person with a copy of your résumé, and send a copy of the job posting if he or she will be contacted. These simple steps will help ensure a higher quality reference, since the person will be more prepared to highlight the most relevant information to the employer. See Recommendations handout for more information.

Before sending your résumé to an employer, bring it to the Career Center for revision suggestions.