



Writing an Effective Resume

What is the purpose of the resume?

The goal of your resume is to get an interview. For this reason, you want your resume to highlight the aspects of your experience that are most transferable to the opportunity you want.

A resume provides a summary of your skills, abilities and accomplishments. A resume is used for a variety of reasons (part time job, internship, scholarship, graduate school, or full time employment) and because applications vary, your resume must be tailored based on the specific purpose. Your resume should generate interest, resulting in an interview. It must also be carefully written and critiqued.

TARGETING YOUR RESUME. It's a good idea to have a long version of your resume that you save on your computer that you can pull from each time you apply for an opportunity. By having this longer document, you can then determine which information should be used for the particular position. Class projects, work experiences (even from high school), campus involvement, volunteer work, and entrepreneurial projects could potentially be needed for future resumes you are building. Focus on how the transferable skills you have obtained, even from jobs you think are unrelated, actually do relate to the position you want.

HEADING: Your heading is your personal letterhead and can also be used on your cover letter. Have freedom in the way you format (left aligned or centered on the page) and the text (font and size) – just keep it professional. Always include your phone number with area code and e-mail address. Most will include complete mailing address or the location where you are searching for work and intend to relocate. You may include links to personal website, blog, LinkedIn profile as long as your content is appropriate (in content and quality) for employers to view.

EDUCATION: Include name of school, degree or certificate earned or pursuing major area of study and graduation or expected graduation date (month year). You may include GPA, academic projects, relevant coursework, study abroad, and/or continuing education in your field. You may include certifications, licenses or teaching credentials.

EXPERIENCE: Include the name of company or organization (unless self-employed), your title, the location (city, state) and dates of involvement (month year – month year OR month year – Present). Use action verbs to describe your duties and accomplishments. List history and dates in reverse chronological order (your current or most recent work or activity first) within experience categories.

Briefly describe primary duties in a way that shows significance and skill development. Focus on transferable skills you will use again rather than specific duties that may not be part of a future job.

CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT/ VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE: List organizations you belong to. You may develop into detailed experiences by including offices you held and accomplishments or just list the name of the organization and include dates of involvement.

CREATING EXPERIENCE CATEGORIES. Additional categories might include class projects, related experience, relevant course work, research experience, leadership experience, presentations, and publications.

Consider separating your experiences to strategically place your most relevant experiences higher on the page by using headings such as “related experience” and “work experience.”

REFERENCES. References should go on a separate page that also includes the heading you used for your resume. Include contact information for at least 3 people that have said they would be willing to speak on your behalf. They should personally know about your work ethic and ability to be successful in a future position. Avoid putting “references available upon request” at the end of your resume – it takes up space and is



Resume Checklist

Overall Appearance and Content

- Makes an immediate favorable impression; easy to read
- Avoids using templates you find online – they are hard to update and look generic
- Looks appropriate for profession
- Separates info into categories for easy reading
- Makes efficient use of space
- Appropriately uses bold, underlining, etc.
- Not more than 2 pages in length
- Makes every word count.
- Supports and substantiates objective
- Does not use full sentences (no “I” statements).
- Free from grammatical, spelling, & punctuation errors
- Mentions technical, computer, or language skills
- If distributed in person, printed on high quality resume paper

Contact Information

- Is clearly presented at top of page
- Includes one telephone number(s)
- Includes one email address that looks professional
- Includes current address or desired relocation city

Objective (optional)

- Is clearly stated and conveys purpose
- Is reasonably short (1-3 lines)
- Is related to position applied or states the job title

Special Sections (may vary by major/field)

- Skills – focus on hard skills - technical, lab, tools, equipment, etc.
- Certifications - common for those with flight hours, state boards
- Licensure or Certification Assessments – list licensure received or list tests completed and scheduled (included dates) for license requirements

Organization

- Organizes categories so strongest qualifications listed first, consistent format throughout
- Related information organized together in categories
- No references listed on main resume

Education Section

- Includes degree(s), major and institution
- Includes graduation date.
- GPA is included if over 3.0
- Includes relevant coursework (no course numbers), if applicable
- Includes Study Abroad, if applicable
- Includes 1 or 2 significant honors (could be a separate section)

Experience Section

- Includes job title
- States employer name & location (city, state)
- Includes dates for each experience
- Listed in reverse chronological order within sections
- Uses concise phrases starting with action verbs
- Descriptions detail skills, accomplishments and results rather than duties

Leadership/Activities/Honors

- Shows well roundedness
- Choose most significant involvement and honors that you could elaborate on in an interview
- Emphasizes/describes leadership roles
- List **significant** scholarships
- For significant leadership roles, consider a separate category entitled “Leadership” where you describe experiences as you would a job

Submitting the Resume & Cover Letter

- **#1 Tip – Follow the directions that the employer has provided with their job - each organization will accept these materials differently**
- If an email address is provided, send a professionally written email with the resume and cover letter attached, both saved as PDFs.
- If the employer takes resumes through a web-based application, you will most likely upload the resume and cover letter as well as other materials such as references.
- Both humans and computers reading resumes look for key words from the job description.
- Employers may also ask for an application. If you're unsure of whether to provide an application or a resume, it's best to provide both.

RESUME ACTION VERBS

When describing your experiences, start each bulleted phrase with a strong action verb to demonstrate a specific skill. Avoid starting your phrases with the words "responsible for." Instead, you want to provide the reader with a visual of how you acted on the job. Use the words listed to create a clear picture of your experiences.

Management / Leadership Skills

- assigned
- attained
- chaired
- collaborated
- consolidated
- contracted
- cooperated
- coordinated
- delegated
- directed
- enforced
- enlisted
- executed
- expedited
- facilitated
- governed
- improved
- increased
- initiated
- inspired
- led
- listened
- managed
- mediated
- motivated
- oversaw
- planned
- prioritized
- produced
- recommended
- represented
- reviewed
- revitalized
- scheduled
- shaped
- strategized
- strengthened
- spearheaded
- supervised

Communication Skills

- addressed
- arbitrated
- authored
- clarified
- conveyed
- convinced
- corresponded
- directed
- drafted
- edited
- explained
- formulated
- influenced
- informed
- interpreted
- interviewed

- lectured
- mediated
- moderated
- negotiated
- persuaded
- promoted
- publicized
- reconciled
- recruited
- reported
- summarized
- translated

Research Skills

- analyzed
- calculated
- collected
- compared
- conducted
- critiqued
- defined
- evaluated
- examined
- extracted
- forecasted
- formulated
- gathered
- identified
- inspected
- predicted
- quantified
- reviewed
- summarized
- surveyed
- systematized
- tested

Technical Skills

- analyzed
- assembled
- built
- calculated
- computed
- constructed
- designed
- devised
- engineered
- fabricated
- located
- maintained
- modified
- operated
- overhauled
- programmed
- remodeled
- repaired
- solved
- supplied
- upgraded

Teaching Skills

- adapted
- advised
- coached
- communicated
- coordinated
- demonstrated
- developed
- enabled
- encouraged
- evaluated
- explained
- facilitated
- guided
- informed
- instructed
- persuaded
- set goals
- stimulated
- trained

Financial Skills

- administered
- allocated
- analyzed
- appraised
- audited
- balanced
- budgeted
- calculated
- computed
- developed
- forecasted
- marketed
- planned
- projected

Creative / Design Skills

- acted
- built
- choreographed
- composed
- conceptualized
- created
- customized
- designed
- directed
- entertained
- established
- fashioned
- founded
- illustrated
- incorporated
- instituted
- integrated
- introduced
- invented
- originated
- performed

- photographed
- planned
- revitalized
- shaped

Helping Skills

- administered
- assessed
- assisted
- clarified
- coached
- communicated
- coordinated
- counseled
- demonstrated
- diagnosed
- dispensed
- educated
- evaluated
- expedited
- facilitated
- familiarized
- guided
- monitored
- motivated
- operated
- performed
- recorded
- referred
- rehabilitated
- represented

Clerical / Detail Skills

- approved
- arranged
- catalogued
- classified
- collected
- compiled
- dispatched
- executed
- generated
- implemented
- inspected
- monitored
- operated
- organized
- prepared
- processed
- purchased
- recorded
- retrieved
- screened
- specified
- systematized
- tabulated
- validated



Resume Planning Worksheet

Use this worksheet to brainstorm your experiences. When you're ready to write your resume, include the information that best fits your objective and shows the skills required for the job.

IDENTIFYING INFORMATION:

first name, middle initial, last name

telephone number, e-mail address

address to use for applications

OBJECTIVE

Examples: A (An) x position utilizing my x, y, and z skills OR A position in x field that would provide experience for insert future oriented goal

EDUCATION (list GC first. If you completed a significant amount of coursework or received a degree from another college, list it second. High school information is not needed and should not be used beyond the freshman year).

college, city, state

Degree (B.A., B.S., B.S.N., A.S. etc)

Month & year to be received

major(s), minor(s), concentration(s)

grade point average (if above a 3.0)

related course work (maximum of 6 classes; only if applicable to objective and when you may not have related work experience)

EXPERIENCE (volunteer or paid. List most recent experience first.)

title, name of organization, city, state, and dates of employment

leading with an action verb, describe a responsibility, duty, accomplishment, or acquired skill.

leading with a strong action verb, describe another responsibility, duty, accomplishment, or acquired skill.

leading with a strong action verb, describe another responsibility, duty, accomplishment, or acquired skill.

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SKILLS (Specify computer languages or special skills, including working knowledge, proficiency, or fluency in languages other than English. This information can be used in a skills section at the bottom of your resume or a summary of qualifications section between the objective and education. This should not be a list of soft skills.)

LEADERSHIP/ACTIVITIES (List leadership positions, memberships or affiliations. Be sure to include the Sorority LLLC program as one of the areas you describe. You may include HS activities until you take on new leadership roles in college.)

name of organization, title or position (if applicable)

If you held a leadership role, describe accomplishments, duties, responsibilities, and acquired skills

name of organization, title or position (if applicable)

If you held a leadership role, describe accomplishments, duties, responsibilities, and acquired skills

HONORS AND AWARDS (List honors toward the end of a resume, focusing on those that may be significant for your field of study or shows mastery of a valued transferable skill.)

name of honor or award, date received

name of honor or award, date received

name of honor or award, date received

INTERESTS (only list interests if they would be important to the employer and the field. For instance, photography would be useful for someone in the public relations field)

OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS (List any additional information that may fit into a new or previously listed category. Areas to consider: presentations, research projects, community service, study abroad, military, etc)

PRESENTATIONS

RESEARCH/CLASS PROJECTS

COMMUNITY SERVICE

STUDY ABROAD

MILITARY

ADDITIONAL

Writing an Effective Cover Letter

Jane Austin

Relocating to Atlanta, GA | (478) 555-5555
janeaustin@mga.edu

November 1, 2019

Ms. Katherine Ortiz
Director of Development
WLMR-Channel 57
10656 Columbia Parkway
Atlanta, GA 31301

Dear Ms. Ortiz:

I am interested in your Assistant Director of Development position you listed recently posted on Handshake with Middle Georgia State University. I have always been a fan of public television, and the opportunity of raising money for such a worthwhile organization is very exciting to me. I am a devoted viewer of such programs as "Great Performances", "Nova", and "Live at Lincoln Center." I am excited at the thought of being able to bring this type of programming to our community.

As you will note in the enclosed resume, I will be graduating from Middle Georgia State with a degree in English. I feel confident that my speaking ability will allow me to make the kind of presentations the job undoubtedly requires, and that my writing skills will enable me to continue the effective letter-writing campaigns that you have so successfully initiated. In addition, communication and leadership skills gained through my participation with various on-campus organizations and part time work experiences will contribute to my ability to be successful in this position.

I believe that these are the kinds of skills and abilities that you are looking for in an Assistant Director of Development and I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this further. Contact me by phone at (478) 555-5555 or email at janeaustin@mga.edu to schedule an interview. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jane Austin

What is the purpose of the cover letter? The cover letter tells an employer why they are receiving your resume and for which job you are applying. Study the job description so that you can specifically communicate what you are applying for and how your skills and experience best match the position. You can practice writing a cover letter but you will have to write a new one each time you apply for a job. If you do not change your cover letter with each job application, you will be less likely to convince a potential employer that you really want the job.

When do you send a cover letter? If you are applying for a job by mailing, emailing, or faxing a resume, you should always send a cover letter. Pay close attention to the job posting to which you are applying. In most instances, the application process will require both a resume and a cover letter.

What if I apply for a job on-line? If the online process allows you to upload a cover letter, then ALWAYS send a cover letter. Read the directions and act accordingly. If you are emailing the resume, attaching a cover letter in addition to a brief but professional email message is very acceptable.

Do I take a cover letter to a job fair or to an on-campus interview? No. A cover letter is unnecessary since you are meeting in-person.

Although you can follow the typical business letter format for writing your address, an easy and eye catching option is to copy your resume heading to the top of the cover letter.

Date you are writing the letter

Address of the person you are writing

Salutation: Always write to a person. Take the time to find out the hiring manager's name or appropriate title.

Paragraph 1 explains why you are writing. Include information such as:

- 1) Why you are interested?
- 2) Willingness to relocate (if applicable)
- 3) How you found out about the job and/or how the position relates to your goals.

Paragraph 2 is your sales pitch. Discuss how your

skills, experiences, and strengths fit the position. Suggested topics include:

- 1) A direct (and sincere) interest you have in what the organization does.
- 2) Emphasizing the skills/experiences that you have that meet the employer's needs.
- 3) Giving one or two related examples of accomplishments that relate to key qualifications and job duties.
- 4) Experiences could include courses you have taken, class projects, campus involvement, or related work experience/skills.

Paragraph 3 is where you create a plan of action:

- 1) Ask for an interview.
- 2) What will you do next?
- 3) Thank the person for their time or indicate your eagerness to speak with them further.

Signature:

Sincerely is the best way to end a business letter.