

Resume Writing Techniques and Examples

A resume is a visual representation or snapshot of your top relevant professional qualifications. Its purpose is to advance you to the interview step in the job-seeking process. Your resume is sometimes the only chance to communicate your skills and abilities to a potential employer because it provides a snapshot of your qualifications. The type, format, length and content of the resume are important, as these features determine whether an employer will grant an interview.

Key elements of a successful resume

Your resume is not a “transcript” nor should it be a professional “report card” that lists all you have ever done. When you are targeting a specific job/organization/industry the more relevant the better. A successful resume will be:

- **Targeted:** Your resume should be designed for the specific industry, organization, and position you are interested in. Every time you submit your resume for a position, you must compare the language and content of the job posting to your resume and adjust accordingly, mirroring your top qualifications to their needs. Don’t be afraid to remove items that do not highlight specific relevant and potentially transferable skills, knowledge, and abilities
- **Accomplishment-driven:** Resumes should instantly communicate the value you can bring to an organization. Employers want to know what you can do for *them* and showing that you were a valuable contributor will entice an employer to want to know more about you. Make sure that your content does not sound like a list of duties but is worded to highlight your skills, using strong action verbs to emphasize your contributions. Thus, phrases like “responsibilities included” and “responsible for” should be avoided on your resume.
- **Polished and well-structured:** Be sure to use uniform formatting and standard fonts throughout your document. A successful resume has information in clear and predictable sections to make it the most reader-friendly to hiring managers. Always proofread (and re-read) to ensure your resume is free of typos and grammatical errors. Visually your resume should entice a reader by its clean and professional appearance. Review the visual appeal page for additional information.

- **Quantifiable:** Whenever possible include numbers and metrics to quantify your accomplishments and contributions. An example would be “Created new customer procedures that increased satisfaction rates by 10%”. Review the Accomplishment Statement page for more information.
- **Universally understood:** Avoid heavy usage of industry slang and technical terms. Anyone should be able to pick up and understand how you match their desired qualifications.

Choose a resume format

Choose a format that best highlights your professional match for the employer’s needs. There are three main types of resume formats, and important points to consider when choosing the right one to use. Read the table below for a brief overview of each type, their individual merits and benefits as well as when you should use them.

3 Primary types of resume formats:

TYPE	Chronological	Functional	Combination
Description	This is the most traditional and preferred format. It highlights your	Presents your work achievements under skill headings, which gives you	Blends the flexibility and strength of the other two types of resumes by

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	<p>work chronology starting with your most recent and working backwards. Your dates, places of employment, and job titles are listed as headings under which your achievements are written.</p>	<p>the freedom to put your achievements in order by relevance and impact rather than by chronology. The dates, names of employers, and job titles in your work history are listed very briefly in a separate section, usually at the bottom of your resume.</p>	<p>presenting your work history in the body of the resume. Then skill subheadings are used to group achievement statements under each job title/employer.</p>
<p>Benefits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to write and read • Most preferred by employers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows you to highlight specific strengths and transferable skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows how the skills you have used in the past apply to the job you are seeking
<p>Use this format when:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying in the same industry or field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are making an extreme career change and your job history is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your job titles do not clearly describe the level of

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You want to emphasize past career success, making your job objective the next obvious step in your career path • There are no gaps in your work history, or the gaps are easily filled with doing something relevant or constructive • The name of a former employer may hold significant value to a prospective employer 	<p>in no way relevant to your job objective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To emphasize transferable skills used in volunteer work or coursework. You are a recent graduate with limited work experience • You want to downplay a checkered job history or have large gaps in employment • You need to draw attention to skills and/or jobs from early in your work history 	<p>responsibility you held</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You want to fill gaps with unpaid experiences that are relevant to your current objective • You are making a career change and need to highlight transferable skills or names of former employers may not be obvious to prospective employers

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<p>Don't use this format when:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are gaps in your work history or you change jobs frequently • When calling attention to your age could be a problem • You are entering the job market after a long absence or entering for the first time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have the ability to use a chronological or combination resume. This is the least preferred format by employers and often is perceived that you have something to hide. • If the potential employer uses an Applicant Tracking System. This format is often not readable and your resume will not be reviewed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have limited experience or have large gaps in your work history