

Résumés



What is a résumé? What should it do?

The purpose of your résumé is to prove you are the best person for the job to which you are applying. Because of this, you should design your résumé to be a sketch of you, your experiences and skills, and the strengths that you would bring to the specific position. This means it should not be a “one size fits all” document. Here are some things to consider.

How can you get started on your résumé?

- Make a list of words or ideas that seem important to the company using the job announcement and content on their website (or other materials).
- Brainstorm a list of experiences and skills *relevant* to the position – not just jobs.
- Ask yourself: What are the most memorable things I’ve done? What other organized activities have I participated in? What “extra” things have I done (at work) besides the basics of my position—conferences, events, talks? How do I help or lead people—at work or otherwise?
- Write down the basic details for each experience (name of organization, time, location, basic responsibilities) AND the most interesting/exciting aspect of that experience.

Using your brainstormed materials, begin making connections between the important ideas or phrases used by the company and your own experiences. Not all the important aspects will match, but this can help you phrase your experiences and skills in ways that resonate with the employer’s expectations, values, and ideas.

What are some common features of a résumé?

- Your name and basic contact information
- Education and/or other training
- Previous positions beginning with the most recent
- Other *relevant* activities or experiences
- Typically one (1) page

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What are some common conventions of a résumé?

- Major headings are bolded, later emphasis should be italicized.
- List experiences beginning with the most recent.
- All bulleted phrases should be in the same tense.
- Sans serif fonts are typically used for headings; serif fonts are typically used for body text.
- Design your résumé to have a similar amount of text and white space in the four quadrants of the page (see image below).

Language Features

- Use language used in the company's materials, including synonyms or related words
- Include quantified data: "Established over 20 new client accounts"
- Use strong action words

Final thoughts.

- Have someone read your résumé for 20 seconds (the average time a potential employer will spend) and then tell you what they learned about you. Revise if it is not the material you want your employer to learn.



Resume divided into 4 quadrants
(Purdue OWL)