

Create Your Résumé in 6 Easy Steps

A résumé is a document that shows your qualifications to potential employers. *The primary purpose of a résumé is to get you an interview*, so it needs to be focused on what the employer wants, highlighting your education, work history and other qualifications. See the Résumé Critique Checklist for more details.

Step #1: Starting Your Document

Open a blank document in Microsoft Word or other word processor. Use of a template is generally not recommended because it is difficult to make changes to formatting and layout. Change the line spacing to single space with no spaces before or after paragraphs. Choose a professional looking font style, size 10-12.

Step #2: Contact Information

Enter your contact information at the top of your résumé. Include your preferred phone number and email. Make your name stand out by making it bigger or using boldface type. Use a professional email address that includes your name – no nicknames or dates.

Step #3: Summary of Skills or Objective Statement

Let the reader know *right away* how you are qualified (Skills Summary) or what you are looking for (Objective Statement). Convince the reader to continue reading! Write in sentence fragments so you can avoid personal pronouns such as I, my, me, etc.

Summary of Skills: 3-6 bullet points or statements highlighting qualifications that most closely relate to the job for which you are applying.

Objective Statement: What you are looking for; your motivations for this position.

Step #4: Education

Most students, new grads and career-changers put their education section next. Include in this order: Name of your program/major, name of college/university, city, state, expected graduation date (or date range). You may also include your GPA if 3.0 or greater, relevant coursework, software or projects.

Step #5: Experience

List all relevant experience—paid and unpaid, volunteer work and internships, for the last 10 years. Start with your most recent position and work backwards in time. List in this order: Job title, name of company (employer), city, state (do not include street address) and date range (month and year only). Then describe your accomplishments using strong action verbs. Use present tense verbs for current experiences; past tense verbs for previous experience. (Example: Work with customers or Worked with customers).

Education and Work Experience sections can be reversed based on which section most closely matches the job for which you are you applying.

You may find it helpful to divide your experience into two sections and label them accordingly, for example “Relevant Experience” and “Additional Experience”. Then list experiences chronologically within the appropriate category.

Step #6: Format

Review your résumé’s content. Be sure you are accurately summarizing your skills and accomplishments. Delete or condense items that are not as relevant. Adjust font size, line spacing, margins, tabs, bold, underlining and italics to make your résumé fit on one page and look nice.

References: References should be listed on a separate document. There is no need to write “References available upon request”.



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01/27/16