
Before You Begin

Do you have a job in mind? To whom are you writing this résumé? Have you researched the company to which you are applying? It is crucial to have answers to these questions because each résumé that you write must be targeted to a specific company. There is no such thing as an all-purpose résumé. If you were the employer, would you want an applicant who took the time to research your company and has a specific résumé that targets your company? Or would you want an applicant who has photocopies of his or her résumé and hands them out like a flyer to any company? Employers **do notice** the effort put into a résumé. There are three general types of résumés:

1. Chronological

The chronological résumé (also known as a progressive résumé) is the most common type of résumé. It is formatted in reverse chronological order, which means that the most recent information is presented first. The chronological résumé

- **focuses** on past employment
- **highlights** position titles and organization names
- **shows** experience in related fields
- **provides** a straightforward history of work through experience
- **illustrates** accomplishments in each job, emphasizing activities that are similar to the new job

2. Functional

The functional résumé is also called a skills résumé. This type of résumé is ideal for someone who is changing careers or lacks work experience, for example, a recent graduate. The functional résumé

- **focuses** on skills rather than past employment
- **groups** skills and accomplishments into special categories
- **matches** work history with skills and accomplishments
- **identifies** three to five skill areas, highlighting specific achievements or experience to prove ability
- **provides** a flexible approach
- **highlights** *what* your skills are, but not *when* you acquired them

3. Combination

The combination résumé is exactly what it sounds like: a combination of the chronological and functional résumés. This résumé shows employment and education history in reverse chronological order, along with a functional style listing of relevant skills and accomplishments. It is ideal for recent graduates who want to show what they can do for a prospective employer. The combination résumé

- **accentuates** capabilities and complete job history
- **targets** a specific job description
- **lists** experience by skill areas, including employers and dates
- **highlights** skills and past employment
- **stresses** transferable skills and demonstrates career growth and continuity

How Do I Know Which Résumé To Use?

Traditionally, the chronological résumé has been the most commonly used. However, the functional and combination résumés are becoming more widely accepted. Recent graduates, or anyone who

lacks experience, tend to prefer the functional and combination résumés because they don't focus on the amount of past employment; rather, they focus on the skills that you are able to provide to the employer.

- Use the **chronological** résumé when you are
 - looking for another position in the same field of work
 - showing the strongest work experience reflected in most recent job
 - demonstrating steady career growth
 - illustrating a solid and consistent record of progress

- Use the **functional** résumé when you are
 - lacking related job experience (e.g. first job search)
 - looking for a job in a new field or changing careers
 - re-entering the workforce after a lengthy absence

- Use the **combination** résumé when you are
 - changing careers
 - including volunteer/internship experience
 - showing a variety of employment history

What Do I Write in Each Part of the Résumé?

Heading

- Put your name, address, telephone number, e-mail address
- If possible, leave a number where messages can be left
- Avoid temporary addresses

Objective

- Keep it simple and straightforward
- There are two options when writing the objective:
 - 1. **Include a specific objective** – needed when applying to a specific, targeted position, or when responding to an advertisement
 - 2. **Include a general objective** – needed when applying to any position in a specific field

Skills Summary / Qualifications

- Put all entries in parallel form, beginning with a verb.
- Show what you can do for the employer.
- Include special skills, such as computer programs, languages, office equipment, and exceptional aptitudes, e.g. work well under pressure.
- Provide details or evidence to support these skills and aptitudes.
- Mention training and experience in a related area of work.
- Highlight potential for employers (for those who lack experience).
- Use words like “competent in,” “proficient with,” “ability to,” etc.

Education

- Schools attended: names, locations, dates, majors, degrees earned, and Grade Point Average (if higher than 3.0)
- Certificates
- Licenses
- * Education comes before Work Experience when
 - Currently in school / recently graduated
 - Education more pertinent to new career
 - Position requires special education

Work/Volunteer Experience

- Put the job title, company's name, city, province, dates employed, duties/transferable skills
- Be sure to use verbs at the beginning of every point
- Include specific duties and their relevance or significance to the job that is being applied to
- Use -ing verbs for current job
- Quantify accomplishments
- * Even though employment history is optional in a *functional* résumé, employers still wish to see this section on the résumé (with minimal details)

Awards, Activities, Interests

- Awards, scholarships, etc. - explain what they are, who they were received from, and when they were received
- Activities or clubs in which you were involved that are relevant to the position
- * This heading can be altered to accommodate what you want to emphasize.

Résumé Dos and Don'ts

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|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Do use a familiar font: Times New Roman is best, sizes 11-12 for the main text, 13-16 for headings. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Do list information in the order of importance for the employer. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Do use bullets, putting all these entries in parallel form. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Do stay under two pages. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Do begin all points with verbs. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Do use periods, but only at the end of a complete sentence. |

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|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Don't list references on your résumé; list them on a separate sheet and submit it only upon request. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Don't include personal information (e.g. birth date, weight, religion, etc.) or a photograph. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Don't say "duties include..." or "responsible for..." |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Don't use personal pronouns (for example, "I", "me", "you", etc.) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Don't put irrelevant hobbies |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Don't lie! |

Cover Letters

Similar to the résumé, there is no such thing as an all-purpose cover letter. The purpose of the cover letter is to sell your services to the employer. It allows the employer to get to know your personality, qualifications, writing skills, intellect and enthusiasm toward the job. The cover letter, when written effectively, will help you get an interview, and ultimately, the job position.

There are two types of cover letters: solicited and unsolicited. A **solicited** cover letter targets a specific advertised position. In contrast, an **unsolicited** cover letter targets a company with no

position advertised. Both types of cover letters require original wording that reflects the writer's individual style. Writers should avoid using templates that employers see all the time.

Solicited Cover Letter

- Refer directly and accurately to the source from which you have obtained information about the job opening.
- Match the job title and description to your own qualifications to prove that you are the right person for the job.

Unsolicited Cover Letter

- Show knowledge of the company and persuade the employer to read your cover letter.
- Demonstrate how the company can benefit from your knowledge, background, and talents.

Content

- Address letter to the specific company and person in charge of hiring.
- Include the position to which you are applying.
- Show interest and knowledge of the company (and any project the company is doing).
- Emphasize qualifications for the position and how you obtained and enhanced them.
- Incorporate reasons why you want to work there, why you fit in the company.
- Refer to the résumé as you highlight your most important and relevant accomplishments, skills, and experience.
- Request and welcome a follow-up or interview.

Format

- In paragraph form
- **First paragraph:** brief, two to three sentences
 - Include:
 - What job position you are applying for, how you learned about it
 - Any personal contacts in or with the company
 - General qualifications you have for the position
- **Body paragraphs:** one to three longer paragraphs
 - Expand on qualifications for the position, including examples (proof).
 - Discuss in detail the most relevant qualifications from the résumé, consisting of experience, skills, background, etc.
 - Be specific.
- **Conclusion:** two to three sentences
 - Request an interview (or response).
 - Indicate where, when and how you can be reached.
 - Thank the employer for his or her time and consideration.