

RESUME WRITING TIPS

A resume is a targeted personal marketing document that summarizes your education and experiences to highlight your qualifications as they relate to the job (part or full-time jobs, internships, leadership positions, scholarships, etc.) you are seeking. It is also a way to obtain an interview.

Sales Zone: The top two thirds of a resume is where the most relevant information should appear.

Reinforce Zone: The bottom third of the page is where you provide supporting evidence. Don't bury information in this section that is required for the job for which you are applying.

Design and layout matter. Do not use templates as they make you look the same as other candidates, and they can be difficult to personalize. Highlight skills at the bullet rather than burying them within the phrase and keep headers to the left as well as the reader will scan top to bottom and left to right. Recruiters may spend as little as six seconds on an initial review of your resume. The following tips will help make your resume as easy to read and as effective as possible.

Types of Resumes

Chronological (sample, p. 3)

Use when experience, education and activities are relevant to your career goals; previous job titles or company names are impressive; job history shows growth or emphasizes related accomplishments. Warning: This style makes non-impressive job titles and frequent career changes clearly visible.

Functional/Skills (sample, p. 3)

Use to deemphasize irrelevant job titles and work history in order to draw attention to transferable skills. Draw on all sources of experience (jobs, volunteering, activities and coursework) to describe skills. Warning: This style draws attention to an absence of related experience.

Combination (sample, p. 4)

Combine aspects of chronological and functional formats to emphasize work and skills/accomplishments equally.

Header

- Include full name, email and phone number
- Include city, state and zip code, leave off physical address
- Email should be professional, contain your name and not be work-related (remove hyperlink)
- Include link to portfolio, website or LinkedIn if applicable
- Name will be bolded 18–22 pt font, content 11–12 pt

Summary of Qualifications

The Summary of Qualifications should consist of 3 to 5 bullets that communicate an overview of your experience, successes, talents, personal traits and skills. This quickly markets your skills and personal traits to an employer.

Do not lie, exaggerate or misrepresent yourself. Highlight your experience and accomplishments based on solid facts. Do not repeat information from your cover letter, state the obvious or narrow your opportunities too much.

Education

List in reverse chronological order (present to past) and include GPA if 3.0 and above; do not round up. You may include the following categories in this section, but consider creating a separate section if you have more than three in the category:

- Awards, honors and scholarships
- Education abroad experience
- Special training, certifications or workshops

Experience

List your experience in reverse chronological order (present to past). Decide whether to list job title or employer first and be consistent. Create both Related Experience and Other Experience sections to move more related positions to top. Use bullets to communicate successes, starting each with an action verb that communicates a related skill. (See Action Verb list in this packet). Incorporate numbers to quantify outcomes when possible.

Activities, Honors and/or Research

These sections are optional and may be combined or listed in separate sections depending on how many of each you have. List activities that demonstrate job-related or leadership skills and memberships in career-related organizations. Do not just list an organization because you paid dues as you should be prepared to talk about your involvement in an interview.

Key Skills

Include skills that align with job description. Consider including Computer, Foreign Languages, Personal and/or Certifications. For some majors, certifications should be listed higher on the resume.

Miscellaneous

Consider including service, publications, presentations, willingness to travel or relocate and date of availability. While interests demonstrate uniqueness, weigh their relevance.



References

Do not list “Available upon request” on your resume. Prepare a separate page and list 3 to 5 references, using the same name format as your resume. Always obtain permission and keep references informed of the positions you are pursuing. Include the following information (sample, p. 4):

- Complete name (using Mr., Miss, Mrs., Ms. or Dr.)
- Job title and name of the organization
- Work address
- Email address and phone number (identify if office or cell)

Choosing your references

Ask people who have the knowledge to speak highly of your past work performance (job, class work, research, etc.), and ask them if they have the time to serve as a positive reference. Work supervisors or organization advisors are ideal. Colleagues are appropriate if you worked on a team project together. Character/personal references should only be provided if requested or if your choices are limited.

Educating and informing your references

Provide a copy of your resume to your references so they may speak intelligently about your past experiences. Inform them of the kind of positions you are seeking. Coach them about the skills and strengths you would like them to emphasize. Notify them of positions for which you apply so they may anticipate the call. Thank references and notify them when you accept a job.

On your Resume, do...

- Update and change content for each position and consider if format needs to be altered as well.
- Keep to one page if have less than 10 years of experience.
- Omit high school information by mid sophomore year.
- Use bullets, not blocks of text to encourage readability.
- Communicate skills through bulleted statements.
- Prepare a separate reference page.
- Tell the truth 100% of the time.
- Have at least three people proof it:
 - Career Planning and Development professional.
 - Professional in the field (professor or supervisor).
 - Personal “cheerleader” (family, friend or mentor).

On your Resume, don't...

- Use a generic template or poor formatting.
- Make it too long.
- List JUST your job title, company and dates.
- Use pronouns.
- Date or title it “RESUME.”
- Introduce anything that could be perceived as a negative.
- Refer to religion, political party or national origin. Consider using general terms to indicate experience in these areas.
- Include salary information.
- Forget to proofread.
- List references on your resume.
- Use unprofessional email address.
- Include gender, social security number, high school info (unless relevant), marital status, height/weight, birth date or picture.

There are exceptions to these recommendations depending on your industry of interest or if you are applying in another country. Research your industry and network to confirm any unique approaches in the job search that you need to implement.

Emailing Your Resume

Prior to emailing a resume, inquire as to what file type the employer prefers. Typically, the best formats are the following:

PDF: A Portable Document File (PDF) is a common option as the document’s format won’t change when opened on another’s computer. Save as a PDF, rather than print/scan.

DOCX/DOC: This format is widely used and accepted. It allows for effective formatting and is a good option if the employer uses MS Word or has compatibility software.

RTF: A Rich Text Format (RTF) is more versatile as it isn’t specific to a program (MS Word). It preserves common formatting but doesn’t allow as many options as a DOCX.

TXT: To insert your resume into a website text box, have a Text File (TXT) version available. Edit your resume in Notepad to create a version with no formatting (italics, bold, etc.).

Type position title and/or job number in subject line. Use the body of the email to professionally and briefly introduce yourself. Let the reader know what documents are attached and note when you will follow-up. Check that documents are attached before sending.

Uploading Your Resume to Company Websites

Due to the number of applications companies receive, many resumes are screened first by an Applicant Tracking System (ATS). This means that your resume must be in a format the software can read (DOCX, DOC and PDF are safest options) and rich with key words relevant to the position for which you are applying. Use common fonts it can read and avoid putting content in tables or the header/footer.

Despite your efforts to create a visually pleasing resume, some employers will ask that you simply cut and paste text into a text box. To do this, create a resume in Notepad where all formatting is stripped from your document. Everything will be left justified. Use all caps for headers and use asterisks or hyphens to identify bulleted information.

Mailing Your Resume

Stack your cover letter over your resume and paper clip (do not staple). Insert into a large manila envelope that does not require that you fold the documents. Check for correct postage.

CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME

Martin, TN 38237
chronological@utm.edu | 731.123.0000 | linkedin.com/in/chronoresume

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Energetic college graduate seeking Public Relations Assistant Director position
- Innovative thinker with strong creative problem-solving and analytical skills
- Strong communicator (verbal and written), experienced in technical writing, blogging and presenting
- Technologically savvy; proficient in using social media marketing strategies

EDUCATION

University of Tennessee at Martin (UTM); Martin, TN
Bachelor of Arts, Public Relations; May 20XX
– GPA: 3.5/4.0

EXPERIENCE

UTM Career Services; Martin, TN
Social Media Intern; January 20XX—Present
– Create and schedule Facebook, Twitter and Instagram posts, increasing links to website 65%
– Collaborate with supervisor to develop Facebook ads
– Develop social media standards for organization

Social Sorority; Martin, TN
President; March 20XX—Present
– Direct 10-member executive council to achieve chapter/national goals
– Assess ideas and make recommendations for implementation
– Served as liaison to 225-member organization and national organization
VP of Marketing; March 20XX—February 20XX
– Created, implemented and maintained social media and website
– Managed print and promotional item design, printing and distribution
– Communicated effectively with members, University administration and national representatives

We Are Hip Inc.; Nashville, TN
Sales Manager; Summers Breaks 20XX & 20XX
– Supervised five sales clerks
– Initiated new reward program for clerks, resulting in increased sales both summers
– Maintained budget, inventory and payroll

TECHNICAL SKILLS

General Software: Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint & Publisher
Design: Proficient in Adobe Photoshop, InDesign and Illustrator
Social Media: Proficient in Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Hootsuite

FUNCTIONAL RESUME

Martin, TN 38237 | 731.123.1234 | function@utm.edu

HIGHLIGHT OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Creative with experience developing marketing solutions
- Effective and professional communicator (verbal and written)
- Relationship builder recognized for interpersonal skills
- Technically savvy including web design and social media

EDUCATION

University of Tennessee at Martin; Martin, TN | *Bachelor of Arts, English; May 20xx*
• Advertising Minor
• GPA: 3.80/4.00

Dyersburg State Community College; Dyersburg, TN
Associate of Science, Accounting; May 20xx

KEY SKILLS

Creativity

- Created custom designed logo and promotional materials
- Designed weekly flyers to advertise social functions
- Applicable course work: advertising and public relations

Writing

- Wrote, edited and distributed monthly newsletter for academic honor society
- Promoted organization state-wide through press releases
- Applicable course work: business writing

Interpersonal

- Coordinated publication of newsletter with 11 fraternities, Greek Life Office, and printing company to meet deadlines
- Exceeded goals for campus newspaper ad sales
- Communicated via phone and face-to-face with patrons interested in learning about organization
- Applicable course work: personal selling, organizational behavior and persuasive discourse

Computer

- Proficient in Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher)
- Design experience with Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator
- Proficient in social media: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Hootsuite

EXPERIENCE / ACTIVITIES

Social Fraternity; Martin, TN | *Publicity Chair; Jan 20xx - Present*
Weakley County Press; Martin, TN | *Sales Representative; Sept 20xx - Present*
Phi Kappa Phi; Martin, TN | *Secretary; Mar 20xx - Feb 20xx*
National Kidney Foundation; Arcata, CA | *Intern; Jan 20xx - Apr 20xx*

COMBINATION RESUME

Martin, TN 38237 | (731) 123-1234 | combo@utm.edu

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Detail-oriented, comfortable editing both technical and creative pieces
- Creative writer with published short stories and poems
- Dynamic communicator whether speaking to small or large groups or individuals
- Culturally aware with international travel experience, comfortable building rapport with diverse groups of people

EDUCATION

University of Tennessee at Martin, Martin, TN | *Bachelor of Arts*; May 20XX

- English Major
- Theatre Minor
- GPA: 3.5/4.0 | Dean's List: Six (6) semesters

Study Abroad, London, England; Dublin, Ireland | Spring Break 20XX

WRITING EXPERIENCE

Weakley County Press; Martin, TN | *Editor Intern*; April 20XX – Present

- Proof incoming articles for weekly newspaper
- Write editorial pieces on national, local and campus events
- Create short stories for entertainment section bi-weekly

Happy Summer Camp; Smallville, OH | *Creative Asst.*; Summers 20XX, 20XX

- Wrote, directed and produced student play
- Supervised, edited and compiled 50 campers' creative writing
- Critiqued and creatively enhanced camp newsletter

KEY SKILLS

Writing

- Edited faculty research paper to be published nationally
- Wrote 4 short stories and 3 poems (published in University magazine)
- Produced dynamic script for 5 team members for class presentation

Creativity

- Participated in traveling improv group, awarded regional recognition by *Weakley County Press*
- Designed and presented history of film presentation to audience of 300
- Created posters, flyers and social media ads to promote six sold-out shows

Computer

- Proficient in Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher)
- Experienced using social media: Facebook, Instagram and Twitter
- Working knowledge Adobe (InDesign, Illustrator, Photoshop)

OTHER EXPERIENCE

BeanSwitch, (literary magazine), Martin, TN | *Contributor*; Spring 20XX

Dr. Jane Doe, Martin, TN | *Undergraduate Research Assistant*; Fall 20XX

FunnyBone, Union City, TN | *Performer*; Spring 20XX - Fall 20XX

History of Theatre Course, Martin, TN | *Team Member*; Fall 20XX

COMBINATION RESUME

Martin, TN 38237 | (731) 123-1234 | combo@utm.edu

REFERENCES

Mr. John Doe

Advisor

Weakley County Press

235 S Lindell St

Martin, TN 38237

johndoe@wcp.com

731.587.3144

Mr. John Smith

Director

Happy Summer Camp

1212 Plaza

Small Town, OH 12345

j_smith@happycamp.org

111.111.1111

Dr. Jane Doe

Professor

University of Tennessee at Martin

English Department

Martin, TN 38238

janedoe@utm.edu

731.881.1234

ACTION VERBS/PERSONAL QUALITIES

The National Association of Colleges & Employers has identified seven career competencies sought by all employers:

Critical Thinking/Problem Solving	Digital Technology
Oral/Written Communications	Leadership
Professionalism/Work Ethic	Teamwork/Collaboration
Global/Intercultural Fluency	Career Management

These skills and others listed in job descriptions are the ones that should appear in your resume to communicate applicable skills to an employer. If you are currently in the position, use present tense; if no longer in the position, use past tense.

Use this list to brainstorm, but also look at job descriptions, talk to current/past supervisors and utilize a thesaurus. Try to communicate a diverse skill set.

Leadership

administered
analyzed
appointed
approved
assigned
attained
authorized
chaired
considered
consolidated
contracted
controlled
converted
coordinated
decided
delegated
developed
directed
eliminated
emphasized
enforced
enhanced
established
executed
generated
handled
headed
hired
hosted
improved
implemented
increased
initiated
inspected
instituted
managed
merged
motivated
organized
originated
overhauled
oversaw
planned
presided
prioritized
produced
recommended
replaced
restored
scheduled
secured

selected

streamlined
strengthened
supervised
terminated
transformed

Communicate

addressed
advertised
arbitrated
arranged
articulated
authored
clarified
collaborated
communicated
composed
conferred
consulted
contacted
conveyed
convinced
corresponded
debated
defined
described
developed
directed
discussed
drafted
edited
elicited
enlisted
explained
expressed
formulated
furnished
incorporated
influenced
interacted
interpreted
interviewed
involved
joined
judged
lectured
listened
marketed
mediated
moderated
negotiated
observed

outlined

participated
persuaded
presented
proposed
publicized
reconciled
recruited
referred
reinforced
reported
resolved
responded
solicited
spoke
summarized
synthesized
translated
wrote

Research

analyzed
clarified
collected
compared
conducted
critiqued
detected
determined
diagnosed
evaluated
examined
experimented
explored
extracted
formulated
gathered
identified
inspected
interpreted
interviewed
invented
investigated
measured
organized
researched
reviewed
searched
solved
summarized
surveyed
systematized
tested

Technical

adapted
applied
assembled
built
calculated
computed
conserved
constructed
converted
designed
determined
developed
engineered
maintained
manufactured
operated
overhauled
printed
programmed
regulated
remodeled
repaired
replaced
restored
solved
specialized
standardized
studied
upgraded
utilized

Teaching

adapted
advised
clarified
coached
communicated
conducted
coordinated
critiqued
developed
enabled
encouraged
evaluated
explained
facilitated
focused
guided
individualized
informed
instilled
instructed

motivated
persuaded
simulated
stimulated
taught
tested
trained
transmitted
tutored

Financial/Data

administered
adjusted
allocated
analyzed
appraised
assessed
audited
balanced
budgeted
calculated
computed
conserved
corrected
determined
developed
estimated
measured
planned
prepared
programmed
projected
reconciled
reduced
researched
retrieved

Creative

acted
adapted
began
combined
composed
conceptualized
condensed
created
customized
designed
developed
directed
displayed
drew
entertained
established

fashioned
formulated
illustrated
initiated
instituted
integrated
introduced
invented
modeled
modified
originated
performed
photographed
planned
revised
revitalized
shaped

Helping

adapted
advocated
aided
answered
arranged
assessed
cared for
clarified
coached
collaborated
contributed
cooperated
counseled
demonstrated
diagnosed
educated
encouraged
ensured
expedited
facilitated
familiarized
furthered
guided
insured
intervened
motivated
prevented
procured
provided
rehabilitated
represented
resolved
simplified
supplied

supported
volunteered

Organization

accommodated
achieved
approved
arranged
catalogued
categorized
charted
classified
coded
collected
compiled
corrected
corresponded
distributed
generated
implemented
incorporated
inspected
logged
maintained
monitored
obtained
operated
ordered
prepared
processed
provided
purchased
recorded
registered
reserved
responded
reviewed
routed
scheduled
screened
served
set-up
submitted
supplied
standardized
systematized
updated
validated
Verified

Personal Qualities

structured
flexible
provide variety
autonomous
team-oriented
supportive
friendly
conservative
competitive
innovative
results-oriented
customer-oriented
highly-organized
systematic
Direct/Decisive
results-oriented
independent
initiative
risk-taker
decisive
competitive
goal-oriented
Supportive
consistent
team-oriented
deliberate
specialist
patient
attentive
listener
cautious
Precise/Reflective
diplomatic
analytical
accurate
fact-finder
systematic
attentive to detail
Outgoing
persuasive
enthusiastic
people-oriented
verbal
articulate
optimistic
energetic

RESUME CHECKLIST

In order for your resume to be approved on the job posting site and be available to employers, it must meet the following requirements. Submit your resume as a Word document to a staff member for feedback or call the office to schedule an appointment.

Consistent format and content

- Use professional fonts: Times, Garamond, Arial, Calibri, etc.
- Name font size (14–20 pt)
- Header font size (12–14 pt)
- Body text size (10–12 pt)
- Emphasize major headings using CAPS and bolding
- Fill the page but keep to one page if less than 10 years of related experience
- NO high school information after sophomore year unless specifically related to career goals
- NO grammatical/spelling mistakes
- NO social security number, birth date, pictures/graphics, marital status, gender, ethnicity, or religion
- NO references (belong on separate page)
- NO personal pronouns such as “I, me or my”

Contact Information

- Include name, address (no street address), phone number, and professional email address clearly at top of page

Summary of Qualifications

- Summarize, in 3–5 bullets, the skills and personal traits you possess
- Bullets should mirror the job description and communicate you are a fit for position/company
- Do not include an objective statement

Education

- Include institution(s) and location (City, ST)
- Include degree (Bachelor of...) and major and minor(s) if applicable (Make sure you know the degree you are seeking)
- Include expected graduation date (month/year)
- List multiple degrees present to past
- Include GPA if 3.0 and higher
- Include courses if uniquely related to job, using name, not course number

Experience

- Include employer/organization, location, title and dates of employment (month/year)
- Include applicable volunteer, internships, co-ops, part- and full-time job experiences
- List multiple positions present to past
- Use present and past tense verbs accurately
- Use concise bulleted statements that begin with action verbs that communicate skills (NO sentences)
- Quantify and qualify successes when possible
- Special or Senior Projects may be included if applicable to position
- Focus more on outcomes than tasks completed

Optional Sections

- Consider adding Honors, Awards, Activities, Research, etc. if applicable to job and you have contributed regularly and actively
- Spell organization names (no abbreviations) and list leadership roles with dates
- Be cautious including organization names revealing political affiliation, religious preference, racial/ethnic background, etc.

Key Skills

- Foreign Languages:** List oral, written and reading competency levels, not course years
- Computer:** Include hardware and software proficiencies, if seeking tech position, include more specific sections: programming languages, hardware, software, operating systems, databases, peripherals, etc.
- Certifications/Licenses:** List dates
- Personal:** List personal skills/traits that help make you a better candidate for position

Curriculum Vitas

- May be longer than one page - include name and page number on subsequent pages

BUILD YOUR RESUME WORKSHEET

This worksheet is designed to help you build a basic resume. To best demonstrate your unique skills and experiences, avoid templates. This document is two pages long for your convenience. However, a recent graduate's resume should be one page. Margins should be .5" to 1" on all sides. Content font will be 11 or 12 pt in most cases.

NAME (name can be 18–22 pt font) _____

City, ST Zipcode _____ | email _____

Phone _____ | LinkedIn/Portfolio _____

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS (headers can be 12–14 pt font)

- List in 3–5 bullets the skills and personal traits that align specifically with the job of interest

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

EDUCATION

Institution; City, ST _____

Bachelor of Arts/Science in Major; Graduation Date _____

- Minor: _____
- Cumulative GPA: _____/4.0 (list if above a 3.00 and round to TWO decimal places)
- Major GPA: _____/4.0 (list if above a 3.00 and higher than Cumulative GPA and round to TWO decimal places)

** Study abroad experience, scholarships and honors can be listed in this section if not enough to justify separate section.*

EXPERIENCE

Company/Organization Name; City, ST _____

Job/Position Title; dates held position _____

List in 3–5 bullets the skills that communicate successes and outcomes on the job. Start each bullet with an action verb and quantify your outcomes rather than listing tasks completed. Include only those positions (including leadership, internship and volunteer) that allow you to demonstrate skills relevant to job for which you are applying. These entries should be listed in reverse chronological order (present to past). You may want to create related and other experience sections to best communicate your fit to an employer.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Company/Organization Name; City, ST _____

Job/Position Title; dates held position _____

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

EXPERIENCE CONTINUED

Company/Organization Name; City, ST _____

Job/Position Title; dates held position _____

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Company/Organization Name; City, ST _____

Job/Position Title; dates held position _____

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

ACTIVITIES

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

** List those activities, honors and/or volunteer work that will be meaningful to the employer and those in which you were actively engaged. Include leadership positions and dates of membership. You may need to list in one or two columns. Separate sections may be needed if applicable. This section is NOT required on a resume.*

KEY SKILLS

Computer: _____

**List those computer programs for which you are proficient. If you have extensive technical skills, you may need to divide into separate entries (general software, design software, social media, etc.)*

Foreign Language(s): _____

**List the language and your proficiency level, not the years or semesters of education. For example: Native, fluent, intermediate, basic conversation, etc.*

ADDITIONAL NOTES

- References should be listed on a separate page with a header and layout that match your resume (and cover letter). Do not use abbreviations (other than states)
- Do not use a template but create a format that is easily read and that you can easily update
- Be consistent in your format and organization

OPTIONAL HEADINGS

Affiliations

Professional Development

Certifications

Memberships

Training Experience

Honors

Organizations

Volunteer Experience