



The resumé is a key element in how you market yourself to potential employers. It presents a relatively concise summary of your personal, educational, and employment experiences and also allows you to highlight particular qualities, skills, and traits that you can offer to an employer.

Typically, the purpose of the resumé is to introduce you to the employer and obtain an interview. It then becomes a reference during and after the interview for the employer as they track your candidacy in a hiring process.

Keep in mind that employers spend a very short amount of time with an initial review of a resumé – often no more than 30 seconds. Thus, it is very important to highlight the details that are most important in your experiences and organize them effectively within the document to make the most impact upon reviewers.

In most cases, employers will request that candidates submit a resumé to be considered for vacancies (current or future) within their organization. A resumé is also a preferred way to introduce yourself, your qualifications and accomplishments to prospective employers at job fairs, and in networking situations. While a resumé is critical in your job search, it may also be helpful in applying to graduate school, fellowship programs, or for scholarships. You may also need a resumé to apply for leadership positions on campus or in your community.



### Some Resumé Essentials

- Provide a concise, accurate and easy-to-read account of your qualifications. Most undergraduates should try to limit their resume to one-page. Graduate students and alumni, depending on their field and amount of experience, may require two or more pages.
- Make sure your text format is consistent and attractively arranged, making the resume easy to scan for the major points. REMEMBER, you probably have less than a minute to make a positive impact on the reader.
- Use a layout that is eye-appealing and centered on the page, with effective and consistent use of fonts, margins, indentations, bolding, underlining, caps, and bullets. Choose an easy to read font 10-12 point size in black, with margins .5" to 1" on all sides with appropriate spacing.
- Use bullet points to describe your experiences in your resume as opposed to paragraphs or complete sentences. List them in the order of importance that you want the employer to see.
- Use "action" verbs used to describe experiences (be careful with verb tenses – use past tense for past positions, present tense for current positions.)
- Highlight your accomplishments within positions and quantify your points where applicable - don't just focus on job responsibilities.
- Use "Buzz" words to demonstrate knowledge of your field.
- Do not include use of first person personal pronouns such as "I", "me" or "my."
- When printing your resume, use quality, 8 ½ by 11 white or ivory paper, with matching paper for cover letters and envelopes.
- Be professional!
  - ◇ Use appropriate language and avoid slang or unnecessary acronyms
  - ◇ Carefully proofread your resume and all other job search materials (cover letter, references, etc.). Eliminate all typos and misspellings, and check your layout to ensure consistency throughout.
  - ◇ Use an email address on your resume that is professional, reliable and that you check regularly.
  - ◇ Be sure to have a professional greeting and plenty of space on your voicemail associated with the phone number provided on the resume, and be sure to check it regularly.
  - ◇ If you include a reference to your profile on a professional networking site such as LinkedIn, be sure that the profile information is accurate and up-to-date.



### Elements of the Resumé

#### Format

The reverse chronological format is most commonly used. Within each major heading, information is presented in reverse chronological order (most recent information first, then moving backward through time). Dates are included, plus brief descriptive information for the most important entries in each heading.

#### Contact Information

- Name – use larger bolder font (typically centered). Avoid nicknames.
- Complete address, telephone number, and email address. Make sure these are all current and accurate.

#### Job/Career Objective (optional)

This statement should be brief and tailored to the specific position you are applying for. It may also briefly highlight the skills or qualities you can bring to the organization.

Examples:

To secure a challenging opportunity in the area of customer service using solid communication and assertive sales skills

Interested in joining the staff of an organization to apply strong communication skills and detailed organizational abilities.

Seeking full-time summer internship in criminal justice studies where theories and skills gained in the classroom can be utilized.

#### Summary of Qualifications (optional)

A summary provides an opportunity to highlight your most impressive and relevant accomplishments, skills, and experiences. You can also pinpoint skills and qualifications that match those required by the position in question. It can either be a one to three sentences in length, or it can be bullet points.

Examples:

##### **Sentences:**

Bilingual with varied work experiences and excellent liberal arts education. Seeking full-time position that will utilize strong analytical and critical thinking skills to reach creative business solutions and move organization forward.



### Elements of the Resumé (continued)

#### **Bulleted:**

- Highly skilled personnel manager with 15 years of experience hiring, training and managing diverse teams
- Strong organizational and problem solving skills
- Excellent interpersonal, written and verbal communication skills
- Successful ability to simultaneously manage multiple tasks
- Honest, reliable and hard working

#### **Education**

Include the name of the college or university, location, date of graduation, degree, major, and if applicable, the minor or area(s) of concentration. Include your cumulative GPA or major GPA if competitive (3.0+). You may also include honors and awards. Do not include high school.

- College/Institution name                      City, State  
Degree (or certificate) and major Graduation date (or “expected” or “currently enrolled”)
- Honors and awards such as academic scholarships, leadership awards, GPA (if over 3.0). Alternatively, these can be listed under their own heading (see below).
- Relevant Coursework (specific courses or programs relevant to the position)

Previous degree(s), if any, would follow in exactly the same format you chose for the above. Generally speaking, list other colleges attended (and dates) if you spent at least one year there.

#### **Work Experience**

- List in reverse chronological order (most recent first).
- List either the job title or the employer (with city, state) first (just be consistent with your format).
- Include dates of employment (month/year to month/year, or since "January 2000"; "Summers, 1998 - 2000").

Example:

Employer/Organization  
Job title

City/ State  
Dates (month and year)

- Include a brief description of duties/experience for each position.
- For impact, use phrases beginning with "action verbs," not complete sentences.
- Use present tense for current job duties; past tense for previous job duties
- Be sure to highlight accomplishments as well as responsibilities. Use numbers and percentages to describe outcomes.



### Elements of the Resumé (continued)

#### Other Experiences

Include part-time, summer, volunteer work, internships, student teaching and clinical experiences as applicable. Some of these can and should be listed under their own heading, such as Internships.

##### **Other Potential Headings**

- Community Service
- Activities/Accomplishments
- Professional Organizations
- Professional Development/Workshops
- Military Service
- Skills/Certifications

#### References

- References are not usually included in your resume. However, you can have a heading for references indicating that they are “Available Upon Request”.
- You should have a reference list that is updated and readily available in case you are asked for it.
- Use professional references only (typically work and/or education related). Possibilities would include:
  - ◇ Faculty members who can speak to your academic ability, campus involvement, productivity, and timeliness
  - ◇ Past and present employers who can speak to issues such as your reliability, professionalism, initiative and your ability to work with others.
  - ◇ Advisors and coaches who can speak to your drive, leadership skills and work ethic
  - ◇ Do not provide references that only know you from a social context
- Make sure you ask permission before including someone as your reference!
  - ◇ Keep them informed of your search efforts
  - ◇ Provide them with a copy of your current resume
  - ◇ Provide them with job descriptions for any positions which you are interviewing for

### Elements of the Resumé (continued)

#### Example of Reference Page:

Your Name  
Address (optional)  
Telephone number  
Email address



**Note:** This Heading should match your Resume Heading!

Dr. Jane Doe  
Associate Professor of Criminal Justice Studies  
Lincoln College  
300 Keokuk  
Lincoln, IL 62656  
(Reference's phone number)

Mr. Harris Jones  
Administrative Services – Manager  
ABC Insurance Corporation  
300 Wacker Drive  
Chicago, IL 60606  
(Reference's phone number)

Professor John Smith  
Assistant Professor of Business Management  
Lincoln College – Normal  
715 West Raab Rd  
Normal, IL 61761  
(Reference's phone number)

Ms. Kayla Johnson  
Director of Academic Advisement  
Lincoln College  
300 Keokuk  
Lincoln, IL 62656  
(Reference's phone number)

## Resumé Language

Employers scan resumes quickly, so it is important to use strong action verbs to describe job duties and accomplishments. Quantifying information (aka numbers) also strengthen your resume. Examples of this approach would be “Supervised staff of ten employees”, “Managed \$10,000 operations budget”, and “Achieved 15% sales growth in territory from previous year.”

Some common action verbs that appear on resumes are listed below, along with recommendations for stronger and/or more descriptive action verbs you may want to consider:

Common Word(s)/Phrase(s)	Suggested Alternatives
Set up/Start Up	Arrange, Engineer, Establish, Found, Initiate, Introduce, Invent, Launch, Organize, Spearhead
Put together	Accumulate, Arrange, Assemble, Collect, Compile, Construct, Coordinate, Organize
Write	Compose, Draft, Formulate
Keep track	Monitor, Record
Keep up	Maintain
Help	Assist, Support
Watch over	Oversee, Supervise
Lead	Conduct, Direct, Guide, Head
Make	Create, Design, Develop, Devise, Establish, Formulate, Invent, Produce
Make better	Improve, Overhaul, Remodel, Restructure, Revise, Revitalize, Streamline, Strengthen, Transform, Upgrade
Make bigger	Enlarge, Expand, Increase
Check or Check over	Analyze, Examine, Inspect, Monitor, Review, Verify
Make sure	Assure, Ensure
Give	Present, Provide, Supply
Give out	Distribute
Show	Demonstrate, Display
Show how	Instruct
Fill out	Complete
Get	Acquire, Obtain, Secure

## Action Words for Resumés and Cover Letters

### Communication skills

Addressed	Advertised
Arbitrated	Arranged
Articulated	Authored
Clarified	Collaborated
Communicated	
Composed	
Condensed	Conferred
Consulted	Contacted
Conveyed	Convinced
Corresponded	Debated
Defined	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	Promoted
Proposed	Publicized
Reconciled	Recruited
Referred	Reinforced
Reported	Resolved
Responded	Solicited
Specified	Spoke
Suggested	Summarized
Synthesized	Translated
Wrote	

### Mgmt/leadership skills

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
Incorporated	Increased
Initiated	Inspected
Instituted	Led
Managed	Merged
Motivated	Navigated
Organized	Originated
Overhauled	Oversaw
Planned	Presided
Prioritized	Produced
Recommended	
Reorganized	
Replaced	Restored
Reviewed	Scheduled
Secured	Selected
Streamlined	Strengthened
Supervised	Terminated

### Helping skills

Adapted	Advocated
Aided	Answered
Arranged	Assessed
Assisted	Clarified
Coached	Collaborated
Contributed	Cooperated
Counseled	Demonstrated
Diagnosed	Educated
Encouraged	Ensured
Expedited	Facilitated
Familiarized	Furthered
Guided	Helped
Insured	Intervened
Motivated	Prevented
Provided	Referred
Rehabilitated	Represented
Resolved	Simplified
Supplied	Supported
Volunteered	

### Research skills

Analyzed	Clarified
Collected	Compared
Conducted	Critiqued
Detected	Determined
Diagnosed	Evaluated
Examined	Experimented
Explored	Extracted
Formulated	Gathered
Inspected	Interviewed
Invented	Investigated
Located	Measured
Organized	Researched
Reviewed	Searched
Solved	Summarized
Surveyed	Tested



## Action Words for Resumés and Cover Letters

### Organizational skills

Approved	Arranged
Catalogued	Categorized
Charted	Classified
Coded	Collected
Compiled	Corrected
Corresponded	Distributed
Executed	Filed
Generated	Incorporated
Inspected	Logged
Maintained	Monitored
Obtained	Operated
Ordered	Organized
Prepared	Processed
Provided	Purchased
Recorded	Registered
Reserved	Responded
Reviewed	Routed
Scheduled	Screened
Submitted	Supplied
Standardized	Updated
Validated	Verified

### Technical skills

Adapted	Applied
Assembled	Built
Calculated	Computed
Conserved	Constructed
Converted	Debugged
Designed	Determined
Developed	Engineered
Fabricated	Fortified
Installed	Maintained
Operated	Overhauled
Printed	Programmed
Rectified	Regulated
Remodeled	Repaired
Replaced	Restored
Solved	Specialized
Standardized	Studied
Upgraded	Utilized

### Teaching skills

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	

### Creative skills

Acted	Adapted
Began	Combined
Composed	
Conceptualized	
Condensed	Created
Customized	Designed
Developed	Directed
Displayed	Drew
Entertained	Established
Fashioned	Formulated
Founded	Illustrated
Initiated	Instituted
Integrated	Introduced
Invented	Modeled
Modified	Originated
Performed	Photographed
Planned	Revised
Revitalized	Shaped
Solved	

### Data/financial skills

Administered	Adjusted
Allocated	Analyzed
Appraised	Assessed
Audited	Balanced
Budgeted	Calculated
Computed	Conserved
Corrected	Determined
Developed	Estimated
Forecasted	Managed
Marketed	Measured
Netted	Planned
Prepared	Programmed
Projected	Qualified
Reconciled	Reduced
Researched	Retrieved

