Resumes

"All most hiring managers want from a resume: a concise, easy-to-scan list of what you've accomplished, organized chronologically by position, plus any particularly notable skills, all presented in a format that they can quickly scan and get the highlights" –Allison Green of *Ask a Manager*.[1]

You resume is a strategic document that highlights your suitability for a desired position, internship, scholarship, or other opportunity. Your resume is generally the first impression of you that a potential employer will get.

FORMATTING A RESUME

Resume formats can vary by field, but there are some hard-and-fast rules:
1. Your resume should fit on 1-2 pages, unless otherwise specified by your employer.
2. It should concisely summarize your qualifications and place specific emphasis on experience relevant to the position for which you are applying.
3. It should be organized as a list rather than an essay, and written in short verbal phrases rather than complete sentences ("Increased revenue by 30%" rather than "I increased our revenue by 30%").
4. It should be neatly organized, with distinct sections.
5. Font size and style should be consistent and easy to read.

WHAT TO INCLUDE ON YOUR RESUME

The content and order of your sections will vary by your field and the position for which you are applying. However, all resumes should contain the following information:

- **Contact information**. The title or "header" at the top of your resume should be your name. Beneath it, list your full mailing address, telephone number with area code, and a professional-sounding email address (i.e. not NSyncLvr@hotmail.com).
- **Post-high school education.** State the full name of your university, the type of degree you obtained (or that you are currently pursuing), academic majors, minor concentrations, and graduation date (or expected graduation date). If you are still in college or a recent graduate, you may include your GPA, if it is above a 3.0. The education section may come before or after the work experience section, depending on which is more relevant to the position for which you are applying.
- **Work experience**. This is the most important section of your resume. List all your work experience that is relevant to the job you are applying for. For each entry, include your employer's (company's) full name, your job title, the range of dates you worked, and a brief description of your responsibilities and achievements. Also, keep in mind….
  - "Work experience" does not necessarily have to be paid. Internships and volunteer work can count as experience. Think of this section as demonstrating to your employer the work you have done that showcases your particular set of skills.
  - Use action verbs to emphasize your responsibilities and achievements, rather than just listing the duties of each job. When possible, back up your achievements with numbers ("increased club membership by 30%).
  - For clarity's sake, this section usually lists the positions in rough chronological order, starting with the most recent. However, if you held multiple positions at the same time (common with part-time jobs and volunteer work) list those most relevant to your desired position first.

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[1] Green, A. (2014, May 14). How to create a resume from scratch [Web log post]. Retrieved from www.askamanager.org/2014/05/how-to-create-a-resume-from-scratch.
This handout is adapted from resources created by Sydney Reed of the University Writing Center at the University of Texas at Austin (uwc.utexas.edu), UMC Career Services, and Allison Green (askamanager.org).

OPTIONAL SECTIONS
Depending on your qualifications and the position for which you are applying, you might consider including the following sections on your resume.

- **Profile or highlights.** A "profile" or "highlights" section comes at the top of your resume, after your contact information, and gives a quick overview of your particular strengths and qualifications as a candidate. It is there to help the hiring manager get a brief, holistic image of you before they read the rest of your resume. These sections are usually no more than three brief, one or two line bullet points.
- **Leadership and/or Volunteer Experience.** If you have impressive or relevant non-professional experience that is not listed in your "experience" section, you might consider including a separate section for it. Like the experience section, you should list these positions chronologically, and include a brief description of your duties and accomplishments with each.
- **Honors.** If you are just out of college and have honors (Dean's List, scholarships, etc.), consider listing them. If you are at a later point in your career, leave common college accomplishments off your resume.
- **Academic Projects.** This section is most appropriate if you are applying for a position in an academic program or field or if your project is particularly relevant to the work you would be doing in your desired position. A senior/honors thesis or research project would be appropriate to list here. Projects completed as a research assistant should go in the "Experience" section.
- **Skills.** If you speak multiple languages or have particular computer skills (like specific software or programming languages) that would be relevant to the position, let the hiring manager know! Remember, though, that listing these skills on a resume makes them fair game in an interview – don't exaggerate.
- **Miscellaneous.** If you have experiences or qualifications relevant to the position that don't fit into any of the other categories, you could list them in a miscellaneous section. For example, if you play with a community orchestra and are applying for a position at a music store.

RESUME FAQs

What about an objective? Even though many resume templates still include them, "objectives" – statements explaining what a candidate is hoping to achieve with the resume – have largely been replaced in recent years by profile/highlights sections. Nowadays, it is generally assumed that an applicant's objective is to be hired for the position for which they are applying.

What about references? Resume templates often also include the line "References available on request" at the end of the resume. Most employers, though, will assume that references are available. Deleting this line frees up more space for your accomplishments.

How do I show "excellent written and oral communication skills" or "a strong work ethic?"
Subjective traits like these are commonly part of job postings, but they should not be included on your resume. Hiring managers are unlikely to take you at your word because anyone could say they possess these skills. A better use of your resume space is to demonstrate these skills through your accomplishments and work experience – and demonstrate those "strong written communication skills" in your cover letter!

What if I don't have that much work experience? Resume writing can be frustrating for current students and recent grads because traditional resumes are so focused on professional experience. It is true that work experience is what your future employer is most interested in; however, there are some things you can do to make yourself look attractive even without lots of experience in your field: 1) List all the jobs you have held on your resume. Even part-time retail or food service positions demonstrate that you can keep to a schedule and get along with co-workers. 2) Make use of internships, research/teaching assistantships, and volunteer work related to your field in your "Experience" section. 3) Keep your resume to ONE page. Fluff and unnecessary information will be obvious to potential employers and make you look naïve and unprofessional.

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