




Building your resume

Your resume creates the first **IMPRESSION** that potential employers have of you.

Your resume is a **TOOL** that you need to constantly keep updated with your work and educational experiences. It's what you can use to help you write essays and to provide to the people you have asked to write letters of recommendation for you.

Some people think that one resume will work for every situation. That is not true. Not all jobs and organizations are looking for the same kind of employees and skill sets. You need to fine tune your resume to fit each individual application.

Tips for Building a Fantastic Resume.


 Make it easy to read.

◆ Write a brief summary of your experiences. As you get older, your resume may include only work experiences, but as a student you can include volunteer, education, and student organization (especially leadership) experiences that are relevant.


◆ Use bulleted lists or short sentences to describe your experiences. Be as detailed as necessary, but be concise.


◆ Use active voice. For example, say "led workgroup to develop a new training video" instead of "was responsible for developing new training video."

◆ Generally, you would use verbs in the past tense (ex. worked, have worked) unless it is an activity that is ongoing. For ongoing activities, use the present tense (ex. am working).

 As you describe your previous work, volunteer, and education experiences, think about the specific tasks or responsibilities that you did. And then think about the **skills** that you learned while doing those tasks—what skills did that you gain that can be **transferred** to the position you are applying for? Write about your tasks and responsibilities to highlight those skills.

For example, if you've worked in a fast food or retail organization, but you are interested in an administrative position working in a doctor's office or hospital, what skills do you have that would apply? Team work, customer service, communication skills, supplies management, time management, multi-tasking, etc.

 Be complete. If you have not listed it, they don't know that you can do it. And that may mean they don't call you for an interview. The employer cannot assume that you have a skill or experience that you don't say you have.

 Be **HONEST**. You want to put your best foot forward and to highlight how you would make a great employee. It is **NEVER** appropriate to embellish or lie about your experiences and skills—you will be found out later, if you get the job!

Use **ACTiVe VoiCE**.


Action words can be verbs, adjectives or adverbs.

Achieved, active, adapted, applied, balanced, caused, completed, created, defined, dependable, determined, earned, energized, examined, experienced, expressed, gained, graduated, inspired, learned, led, managed, motivated, overcome, participated, produced, pursued, served, steered, studied, tackled, volunteered, worked, won

“I was really intimidated when I first sat down to write my resume,” says Maxie Davie, a senior pre-Med major. “I didn’t know where to start. I just took my list of activities and reorganized them into different categories: education, community service, etc. After that it was easy.”

Organizing Your Resume.

Now that you know what to cover, you have to decide how to organize it. There isn’t a right or wrong way to deciding about presenting Experience or Education first. In general, most new graduates list education first, because they don’t have a lot of work experience to present. As you advance in your career, your work experiences become more important and you can decide then whether or not you want to list experience first.

 Whether you choose to list education or experience first, here are some pointers:

- ◆ List the items in each category (Education, Experiences, Skills and Abilities, Activities/Community Involvement, etc) in chronological order. Some people prefer **reverse** chronological order, which shares the most recent activities first. So what you did in 2009 would come first, before your 2008 or 2007 experiences.
- ◆ Focus on what you’ve done in the last few years. In general, you don’t have to include experiences that are more than ten years old.
- ◆ If you have completed your college education or been in the work force for several years, you do not have to list your high school education.
- ◆ If you are a new graduate and don’t have much work experience, you might consider listing some of your relevant (not everything) college coursework under your Education category.
- ◆ Under Skills and Abilities, list **ALL** computer software or applications that you can use, and identify your experience level (proficient, expert).

“I had to really sit down and think about the skills and abilities that I have developed through my experiences,” says Ryan Fleishmann, a master’s student in biomedical sciences. “I was really surprised when I put it all on paper.”


“Don’t be afraid to ask someone to take a look at your resume,” explains Loni Flores, an advisor for a college student organization. “I work with students all the time on developing their resumes, and most of the time they have forgotten about some experience, or haven’t really thought through how to describe the skills and abilities that they have developed. Having a second person look it over and give some suggestions takes the pressure off—they can help you figure out how to truthfully brag about what you’ve done.”


Formatting Your Resume.


There is no standard format that is best. You can often find free templates online that allow you to place your text into their formatted page. Software applications like Microsoft Word and Publisher also have templates available to help you.


In general, your resume needs to be well-organized so that the employer can quickly refer to specific sections. Most people's resumes range from one to three pages—if you can't describe your experiences in skills in that space, then you need to consider cutting out some of the details. For most new graduates one to two pages will be sufficient.

There is one exception to the three page rule: a person who has lots of research or publication experience and is seeking a position where those are important may have a much longer resume (called a curriculum vitae) to list all of those specific research projects or publication listings where they have been the author.

 Your name and contact information should be at the very top of the page. **ALWAYS.**


 Each category (Education, Experience, Skills/Abilities, etc) should be formatted so that each category stands apart from the others.

 Bullet lists are a great way to identify experiences in a format that is easily readable.

 Use parallel structure. If you have a bulleted list, begin each bullet in the same way. For example:

◆ **Developed** a promotional video to encourage high school students not to smoke.

◆ **Volunteered** with Habitat for Humanity for 20 hours to build a home.

 **Triple** check what you have written. And ask someone else to proofread your resume and correct the mistakes that they find. Look at punctuation, grammar, spelling, and spacing. This is a document that requires attention to detail—if you spell something incorrectly or use incorrect grammar, those mistakes may raise questions about how conscientious you are in your work.

Sample Format Styles

Angela Hernandez
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EXPERIENCE

Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Teacher Assistant, Volunteer

Main responsibilities: help with the children, grade assignments, and file any paperwork.
August 2004-May 2006

Sonic Drive-In, Cashier

Main responsibility: deliver orders and take care of money transactions. June 2006-August 2008

Comanche High School, Secretary's Assistant, Volunteer

Main responsibilities: answer calls, take messages, run errands, deliver packages, and file necessary papers. August 2007-May 2008

University of Texas Student Counseling Center, Student Assistant

Main responsibilities: file documents, run errands, post fliers, deliver and pick up checks.
October 2008-November 2008

SUMMARY OF SKILLS

Organizational

- Worked with Comanche Chamber of Commerce in a subdivision called the Jr. Board as the President, and helped organize a fund raise to save the local depot from demolition. These events included silent auctions, various contests, and banquets.
- As a teacher assistant, was required to prepare class lectures in case of teacher absences.
- As Vice President of the Student Council, was responsible for the homecoming program, which included the organization of the candidates as they marched on the field and the program pamphlet.
- With the Sacred Heart Youth, was responsible for the organization and hosting of a biannual retreat.
- Organized, with the help of committee, an annual haunted house hosted by Science Olympiad.

Secretarial

- Experienced in administrative assistant duties, such as filing, errands, and answering phone calls.
- Skilled in Microsoft Works 2007 and its components.

Communication

- Delivered speeches at different teacher conferences for the Superintendent's Cabinet of Student Leaders in order to promote and raise awareness of how such a program, if instituted at a campus, could help decrease student failure and diminish barriers impeding success.
- Bilingual and fluent in English and Spanish.
- For a weekend retreat hosted in Dallas, TX, with over 1,000 attendees was nominated to be the master of ceremonies (MC) for the entire weekend.

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Objective: I am seeking to find a dietetic internship to extend my educational experience in a community health setting.

Education: August 2009-present
Currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Science Dietetics Program at West Texas A&M University. Expected graduation date: May 2011.

August 2007-May 2009
Attended Amarillo College for pre-requisite courses. GPA: 3.8
Completed Nurse Aid Certification Course.

May 2007
Graduated from General High School, where I participated in dual-credit courses through Amarillo College, the National Honor Society, and Junior and Senior Leadership activities.

Work Experience: August 2007-April 2009
Certified Nurse Aid, City Hospital. Participated in patient care activities as a CNA:

- Monitored blood pressure,
- Measured fluid intake and output,
- Assisted patients with daily activities, including bathing, eating, and walking
- Assisted nursing staff with meeting patient and family care needs

May 2009-present
Student Assistant, West Texas A&M University. Assist Dr. Dietetics Professor with research activities associated with diabetes nutrition needs

- Follow-up with study participants to document daily food journal entries, insulin doses, and blood glucose levels.
- Develop line graphs with data for each participant to chart food and insulin intake versus blood glucose level.
- Assist with developing Powerpoint presentations.

Skills & Abilities: Microsoft Office Suite; proficient in Word, Excel and Powerpoint.

