



Résumé Writing

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Five Keys to an Outstanding Résumé

A résumé only works if it makes its way to the Hiring Authority who decides to interview you!

- Résumés are *scanned*
 - By Recruiters usually less than 30 seconds!
 - By Applicant Tracking Systems (a computer)
- Résumés are screened to *rule out* applicants who do not meet the qualifications or present themselves professionally in writing
- Résumés that make it past the scanners and screeners are scrutinized to reduce the number of candidates and ranked to invite the most qualified to interview

Because		You Should	Key to Success
Recruiters and Hiring Managers look for candidates who are “best qualified” for a specific position	→	Tailor your résumé to each position and the employer’s needs	FOCUS
Recruiters and Hiring Managers look for results and achievements with quantifiable data	→	Write a “results oriented” résumé and quantify where possible	ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Skills are transferable from one job, or situation, to another	→	Give concrete examples of your relevant transferable skills	TRANSFERABLE SKILLS
Résumés are often placed into keyword searchable databases	→	Analyze the position description for keywords— use the same verbs and add nouns for the specific details from your activities (nouns)	KEYWORDS
Recruiters and Hiring Managers scan résumés	→	Ensure the readability of your one page résumé	APPEARANCE

Five Steps to Tailor Your Résumé to Address the Employer's Needs



Everything on a résumé must be on target. Your targeted résumé should make it easy for the reader or computer program to see that you have the qualifications needed for the job.

Writing an Objective

An objective is optional on a résumé and when written well will help the recruiter or hiring manager understand why you are interested in the position. Write an objective that is brief and to the point. Below are examples to help you develop your objective.

Formula 1: Focus on the kind of position you want (or the title of the one you're applying for).

Example: Seeking a part-time position as an Administrative Assistant.

Formula 2: Focus on the field or industry in which you are interested in working.

Example: Seeking a position in the Information Technology field.

Formula 3: Focus on your skills and abilities.

Example: Seeking a position that will utilize my communication, data-entry skills, and strong work ethic.

Do's and Don'ts

Do:

- Schedule a résumé critique appointment with a Career Advisor
- Proofread and review for consistent formatting
- List information in order of importance and relevance to the job description
- Create a separate reference list to bring to the interview
- Use 14 – 16 point font size for your name and 10 – 12 for the body of your résumé
- Single space within paragraphs and double space between sections
- Use 8 ½" X 11" white or ivory résumé paper
- Use 1 inch margins, never less than 0.5 inches
- Include your name and page number at the top of the second page (if you have one)

Don't:

- Use fancy fonts or colors. Use readable fonts such as Times, Helvetica or Palatino.
- Use an unprofessional email address (i.e. hotmama@gmail.com)
- Use an unprofessional voicemail greeting
- List references on your résumé
- Use phrases such as "responsibilities included"
- Use résumé templates included in word processing software
- Include routine job duties such as "making copies"
- Write long objectives such as, "To find a sales position at a medium sized corporation where I can grow and develop my management skills"
- Use abbreviations
- Crowd the page

STAR Method

A formula for writing better bullet/accomplishment statements. The STAR Method helps you think of concrete examples of your relevant accomplishments, functional skills, and characteristics.

Situation Describe the context and the nature of a problem or issue you faced.

Task Describe the task(s) that needed to be done.

Action(s) Relate what *you* actually did. What skills did you apply to the task? Describe the time frame, if relevant, and other details to help the reader “see” you in action. How did *you* contribute to your team’s effort?

Results What was the result of your actions?

(Knowledge/Skills: What skill did you use or develop? What did you learn?)

STAR Method Example	You would write:
S: Business fraternity T: Charity Event A: Organized R: Raised more than \$4,000.00	Organized business fraternity philanthropic events resulted in contributions exceeding \$4,000.00.
S: Unsatisfied customer T: Resolve customer’s complaint A: Listened to the customer. Analyzed the situation and determined customer was overcharged last week. Reimbursed the customer. R: Customer felt understood, satisfied with customer service, and will likely continue shopping at the store	Developed outstanding customer service skills by resolving customer complaints and ensuring customer satisfaction at all times.

Quantify whenever possible.

- Issued up to 365 purchase orders annually
- Managed front office functions to support staff of 4
- Researched and selected phone system valued at \$16,000.00
- Scheduled appointments for 3 staff members

★★★ Your accomplishments are the STARs on your résumé! ★★★

Action Statements with Accomplishment-Oriented Results

This chart demonstrates how action words create an accomplishment-oriented word picture. Basic duties and responsibilities are described in the **first column**. The **second column** changes these passive phrases into active statements. The **third column** includes accomplishment-oriented results. Adding results lengthens the paragraphs. Selectively choose those that best market you for your chosen job.

Passive	Active	Accomplishment-Oriented
Duties included teaching art lessons.	Prepared and displayed creative art activities.	Prepared creative art activities, increasing students' interest and abilities. Awarded four blue ribbons at District Art Show.
Worked with customer service.	Provided customer service for bank services.	Provided exceptional customer service through resolution of problems, explanation of bank services and policies, and knowledge of financial planning. Received "outstanding" customer satisfaction surveys.
Responsible for clerical duties.	Assisted supervisor with clerical/office procedures to save time.	Successfully developed and implemented systems to streamline office procedures and increase productivity.
Department manager.	Managed department and recruited participants.	Staffed and managed a 20 – 30 person department that recruited participants for marketing research studies. Cut costs by one-third in less than six months.
Responsible for counseling offenders.	Counseled ex-offenders on career, alcohol, and drug abuse.	Acquired considerable counseling experience through 300 hours of one-on-one counseling sessions with ex-offenders in the areas of career assessment, alcohol, and drug abuse.

Maintain the focus of your résumé by devoting more space (bullets) to those positions that are directly related to your target. Other positions might have fewer bullets or none at all.

Action Verbs

Using what you know now, brainstorm responses to the questions below. Start with an action verb to describe *Who, What, How, Where, and Why* with an end result.

- Did a supervisor or professor hand-pick you for additional responsibilities or special project(s)? Also list situations in which you chose to take on additional responsibilities.
- What community service projects did you undertake and what were the results of your efforts?
- How have you used organizational or managerial skills?
- List situations in which you've handled money or budgets. How have you raised, collected, or managed funds?
- Give one or more examples of ways you have exhibited interpersonal skills.
- Have you recruited new members to any organizations?
- In what situations have you employed problem-solving, conflict-resolution, or mediation skills?
- Describe any situations in which you responded to complaints.
- How have you demonstrated teamwork?
- List situations in which you were required to juggle many projects simultaneously under deadline pressure.

Management	Recommended	Persuaded	Solicited	Analysis	Educated	Integrated
Achieved	Reviewed	Promoted	Solved	Assessed	Enabled	Invented
Administer	Scheduled	Publicized		Collected	Encouraged	Originated
Analyzed	Selected	Recruited	Descriptive Words	Complied	Explained	Performed
Arranged	Succeeded	Reported	Ability	Computed	Facilitated	Revitalized
Appointed	Supervised	Spoke	Capability	Conducted	Guided	Shaped
Contracted		Translated	Competence	Critiqued	Informed	
Consolidated	Communication	Wrote	Consistently	Diagnosed	Instructed	Technical
Coordinated	Addressed		Constantly	Evaluated	Referred	Assembled
Delegated	Advised	Financial	Efficiently	Examined	Set goals	Built
Directed	Arbitrated	Allocated	Knowledgeable	Extracted	Stimulated	Devised
Developed	Authored	Appraised	Maturely	Experimented	Trained	Engineered
Employed	Clarified	Audited	Productively	Explored	United	Fabricated
Established	Coached	Balanced	Professionally	Identified	Volunteered	Maintained
Evaluated	Collaborated	Budgeted	Profitably	Interviewed		Monitored
Expanded	Communicated	Calculated	Repeatedly	Investigated	Creative	Operated
Hired	Drafted	Compiled	Resourcefully	Researched	Acted	Technical
Initiated	Edited	Forecasted	Significantly	Summarized	Composed	
Improved	Formulated	Financed	Substantially	Surveyed	Conceptualized	
Increased	Influenced	Funded	Successfully	Synthesized	Created	
Introduced	Interpreted	Marketed	Technically	Systematized	Designed	
Negotiated	Lectured	Measured	Versatility		Dramatized	
Organized	Managed	Modified	Vigorously	Interpersonal	Fashioned	
Oversaw	Mediated	Projected	Well educated	Adapted	Founded	
Planned	Moderated	Purchased	Well rounded	Counseled	Illustrated	
Prioritized	Motivated	Sold		Demonstrated	Instituted	

Résumé Headings Highlight Your Qualifications

Strategically order headings to place the most important information at the “top” of your résumé. For technical skills, be sure to include your level of proficiency (Knowledge of, Familiar with, Experience in, etc.).

Example of Heading Order

Objective

Skills

Education

- Related Coursework
- Projects
- Honors and Awards

Work experience

Internships

Volunteer Experience

Training

Work Experience

- List your most recent work first, then your earlier work (*reverse* chronological order)
- Include the name of the employer, your job title, location, and the dates of employment
- Include all work experience, even if it was short term or unpaid
- Include all jobs even if they are not related to your current job objective, because they help create a picture of reliability and willingness to work
- Include jobs even if your parents or relatives were the employer
- Emphasize job-related skills and abilities by writing strong phrases that begin with a verb (see list of “Action Verbs” on pg. 6)
- Always keep the needs of your employer in mind. Address the specific requirements of a position by relating your related skills, qualifications, and accomplishments
- List accomplishments whenever possible rather than just describing duties
- Write short, clear phrases. Use the minimum number of words necessary to accurately convey what you want to say
- Use present tense verbs for current positions and past tense verbs for previous positions
- Avoid introductory phrases such as “my duties included” or “I was in charge of”
- Avoid personal pronouns (“my” or “I”)
- Avoid use of verbs ending in “ing”

For Job-Seekers with Minimal Paid Experience

List relevant accomplishments from:

- Internships
- Summer jobs
- Campus jobs (work-study)
- Entrepreneurial/self-employed jobs
- Temporary work
- Certification courses
- Campus activity positions
- Fraternity/sorority/social club positions
- Extracurricular or sports leadership positions
- Volunteer work (school, church, club, not-for-profit organizations)
- Classroom experiences, assignments, research papers/projects (group project, hands-on assignments, “real-world” experiences, laboratory experience, presentations, study-abroad programs, simulations)

Mention any positions of leadership and responsibility. Examples: “club treasurer”, “school newspaper editor”, etc. Be sure to address the job requirements (qualifications or skills required) for a specific position.

Job Requirement: “Ability to meet deadlines”

Your experience:

- Edited and distributed a 4-page monthly newsletter for the Criminal Justice Club
- Conducted extensive research utilizing scholarly articles for term paper in Terrorism and Homeland Security course (include title of the paper)

Additional skills suggested by these descriptions: writing ability, critical thinking, prioritizing, organizational skills, time management, computer skills

NOTE: These additional skills describe “how” you performed, therefore, showing the value you can bring to your work. This is why employers value work experience. However, you could have gained these same skills from an extracurricular activity. For example, if you were in charge of handling the money for a fund-raising activity. So, analyze all of your activities for the “additional skills and qualities” you can expand on when writing bullets. The STAR Method (pg. 4) helps you do it!

Creating strong, descriptive bullets prepares you to stand out in interviews too!

No work experience? No problem!

You have more skills than you realize! Remember, skills are *transferable* from one situation to another. For example, planning and prioritizing (academic) work while in college are both transferable skills that are valued in the work place (#4 below). Assess strengths and transferable skills gained from your education, extracurricular activities, sports and/or volunteer experiences.

College students also obtain marketable transferable skills from pursuing a degree. Feature relevant **coursework** (major and relevant general education), **group projects** that show how you used your skills/knowledge, and **self-management skills** (focused, on-time, etc.). Employers need skills that you may take for granted. Describe your computer skills, language skills, and all other relevant skills or character traits such those described below. Just be sure to describe how you used or developed the skill or how the character trait adds value.



Character counts! Don't just say it. Prove it! "Prove" that you have character skills (adaptable, flexible, hard-working) Identify important characteristics necessary to perform superbly in the target position. Think of *concrete examples* from your accomplishments on your jobs and activities to communicate your character skills.

For example: "Maintained 4.0 GPA while financing 80% of education through full-time employment"

Sample Résumé

First and Last Name

Street Address • City, State Zip
Student@csustan.edu • Phone Number
Portfolio: Portfolium web address is optional.

OBJECTIVE

Utilize the formula on page 3 to focus on the kind of position you want, field or industry you are interested in, or your skills and abilities.

SKILLS

- List software and proficiency (advanced knowledge, familiar with, etc.)
- List language(s) and proficiency (fluent, conversational or basic).
- Demonstrated experience with...

EDUCATION

California State University, Stanislaus, Turlock, CA

Bachelor of Arts or Science, Name of Major

Graduation Month Year

Minor or Concentration

Overall GPA 4.0 and/or Major GPA 4.0

Dean's List: Semester and Year

Related Coursework

Course Title

Course Title

Course Title

Course Title

AWARDS

List name of award, Year

EXPERIENCE

Position Title

Month Year – Month Year

Company/Organization Name, City, State

- Use bullet points to describe your accomplishments (bullets will lead the reader's eyes more easily)
- Always start each bullet with "action verbs" – add adjectives to emphasize
- State an accomplishment that demonstrates your skills in this field/position
- Use present tense verbs for current positions and past tense for previous positions

INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

Internship Title

Month Year – Month Year

Company/Organization Name, City, State

- Use bullet points same as work experience above to describe accomplishments

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Volunteer Title

Month Year – Month Year

Community Service Organization, City, State

- Write accomplishment statements and describe transferable skills the same as you would for paid work, if relevant

Electronic Résumés

Most résumés are placed into keyword-searchable databases, or Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS). Below are tips to help you set-up your electronic résumé.

Do:

- Omit graphics, shading, boxes, vertical and horizontal lines
- Use Arial, Tahoma, Verdana or Helvetica font type
- List your phone number on its own line
- Create your résumé as a Word document so the ATS will be able to parse, or extract text correctly. Anything other than basic text may not be extracted or may be jumbled.
- Ensure your résumé gets “hits” on the keywords that have been programmed in for the position by using job-specific or field-specific language. Use verbs as well as nouns such as write, Spanish (language fluency), BS, Java, and marketing research (gel electrophoresis)
- Use words and key phrases from your discipline such as Elder Care, sales promotion, financial modeling, employee benefits
- Use best practice in formatting work experience (employer, title, dates)
- Use more content (a second page) if needed
- Upload your résumé rather than cutting/pasting

Don't:

- Use bullets or multiple columns
- Send as a PDF, unless specifically noted
- Use graphics, logos or fancy fonts
- Use italics, bold, or underlining
- Use headers or footers