

WHAT IS A RÉSUMÉ?

A résumé is your personal marketing tool, whether you are applying for an internship, job, or graduate school. Its purpose is to:

- promote your unique combination of education, experiences, skills, qualifications, and activities
- grab the reader's attention
- generate an interview.

Writing a résumé is an art form, not a science. There is no one way to write your résumé, only guidelines and best practices. Your résumé is not so much about you, but more about how you, your talents, and experiences match the organization's needs or requirements. Notice the emphasis is on the employer's needs, not yours.

You may want to compose several versions tailored specifically for different opportunities, positions, industries, and organizations.

Brainstorm and collect information in a personal file that includes:

- *projects that demonstrate academic excellence and skill competencies*
- *awards and honors*
- *accomplishments*
- *leadership information*
- *performance reviews*
- *clubs and organization memberships and activities*
- *volunteer work*
- *other documents and data.*
- *Refer to this file when writing the résumé, as well as when building your portfolio.*

Consider adding a positioning section at the top of your résumé, if you have room or if your résumé is not very focused. This can be an Objective, Qualifications, Summary, Value Proposition, or Profile.

This section should be a very specific snapshot of who you are and entice the reader to want to know more about you. This is not a statement of what you are looking for, and, most importantly, write this creatively and interestingly; do not bore the reader from the onset. If you make a claim in your positioning statement, you must provide evidence of it elsewhere in your resume.

Most students' resumes do not need a positioning statement; however, if you will not be able to submit a cover letter with the resume, these can be useful tools to create a message of how you fit with what the employer is searching for. Also, if your experience and degree do not completely line up with the position, qualifications statements may help you link your experience with the requirements of the position. Rewrite or reconsider these statements each time you submit your resume.

A final use for positioning statements is to take up room on a resume that is weak. The better solution is to get experience, highlight class projects that prepare you for the position, jo

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A recruiter receives hundreds of resumes, and many are named "resume." Make filing your emailed résumé easy on the recipient. Include your name and possibly some information on the opportunity in the document's file name, e.g., `résumé_MPorter_biochemist`.

A common complaint of recruiters is that they receive file names with another organization's name on it, e.g. `résumé_kpmg` when it was sent to DeLoitte.

Consider converting your document into a PDF for any Internet-based posting or e-mailing. This will protect it from formatting mishaps and tampering. Most newer Word programs and Mac

VERBS: ACTIVE OR PASSIVE

In your experience sections, each bullet should begin with a verb. Employers hire you for what you can and will do for them, not for what you are. Use active voice and action verbs. Ensure verb tenses are correct to the timeframe that you are documenting.

THESE PEOPLE JUST DON'T BELONG

A list of references nor a statement References Available does not belong on your résumé. Instead create a reference sheet with full contact information. Bring this document to the interview; only send this sheet with your résumé if it is requested in the application.

DO THEY CARE? DID YOU SAY IT RIGHT?

Ensure the style of your résumé fits the industry and organization you are targeting.

NO PRONOUNS ALLOWED

Résumés are written with an understood I. Avoid pronouns.

PARALLEL UNIVERSE

Carefully review your verb tenses, style choices, spacing, tabs, and other formatting for consistency.

HYPERBOLES, NOT HYPERACTIVE

Do not use overly effusive language or make claims you cannot prove. Never lie or exaggerate on your resume.

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE FOR ME LATELY?

Do not list high school information, even if you graduated from a school that has cachet or a powerful alumni network. There are other ways to optimize these relationships.

There are a few exceptions, but typically only if you accomplished something extraordinary in high school, such as "winner of National Debate Tournament" or you received experience in your select field.

The other exception is a freshmen building their first résumé; however, the freshman year should be spent building experiences and applications that start to fill a professional résumé. Once a student has begun the sophomore year, no high school has little merit.

IT'S NOT PERSONAL

Do not list anything that could put the employer in any sort of Equal Employment Opportunity trouble. This includes age, marital status, sexual orientation, family information, health, ethnicity, and religious affiliation.

Consider the value of including any controversial information on your resume. For instance, if you were active in a the Young Socialists of America club and are applying to a conservative organization, weigh carefully the value of putting this on your resume.

Never list your social security number, bank information, or other private information. Social security numbers typically are not put on résumés; however, some government résumés require them.

Most students' résumés will be one page; however, if you make a