Guide to Resume Writing

What is a Resume?

A resume is a concise summary of your experiences and qualifications as they relate to a particular career field or position of interest. To be most effective, your resume must be employer-centered, focusing on how you can meet the needs of the employer. It should tell the employer who you are, what you know, what you have done and what you can do for them.

Because a resume is a reflection of an individual, there is no one perfect way to approach writing a resume. However, there are some basic guidelines to follow, which apply to all resumes. If you are pursuing a position in more than one field, you will probably need several versions of your resume. You may also want to have a Career Counselor and a professional in your field(s) of interest critique your resume.

Before Starting Your Resume

Select the type of resume format you will use.

- Decide whether you will write a chronological, functional or combination resume. The chronological resume focuses more on dates, positions and duties in reverse chronological order and is best suited for someone with much work experience that relates to one's goals or objectives.
- A functional resume emphasizes transferable skills, qualifications and accomplishments and is good if you lack work experience or are trying to enter a new occupation.
- A combination resume combines the best elements of both formats. It is a good choice for recent graduates with some job experience. (Refer to samples of the three types.)

Consider the overall appearance of your resume.

- Is the layout professional? Is it neat, free of grammar/ spelling mistakes and consistent in its organization and verb tenses? Does it avoid the use of personal pronouns and abbreviations?

Be succinct in your writing style.

- Use short, dynamic, descriptive phrases rather than long sentences or paragraphs. Keep it to one or two pages, preferably one.

Begin sentences with action verbs.

- Examples of action verbs would be the following: organized, counseled, evaluated, prepared, created. Stress skills, strengths and qualifications. Do not just list duties.

Do not limit the content to just paid work experiences.

- Focus on transferable skills also gained through volunteer work, service experiences, class projects, internships and activities.

Maintain a professional appearance.

- Copy your resume using a laser printer. Select quality linen paper (20- 50 pound bond paper) and choose conservative colors (white, ivory, gray or cream).

Put the most significant information first.

- Experiences, activities and skills that relate most directly to your job objectives should be featured near the top of your resume.

Steps to Writing a Resume

- **Use a resume worksheet** to brainstorm all the training, education, internships, job-related experiences and leisure activities you have done with their accompanying skills, qualifications and accomplishments.

- **Identify and write your objective, summary of qualifications, or personal statement.** This would include the general type of position you are seeking and what skills or outcomes you can offer the employer. Your objective will determine what experiences you will put in your resume.

- **Select a resume format that will best highlight what you have to offer.**

- **Include your identity** (e.g. legal name, address, phone, email address), objective, educational background (do not include high school) and experience. Use action verbs and short phrases to describe experiences.

- **Make an appointment with Center for Calling & Career** to review your rough draft. Have a professional in your field also review your resume. Make final revisions.

- If you are applying for a position at a large company, **ask if your resume will be scanned.** If so, you will need to write a different type of resume. You can learn more about electronic resumes in the Center for Calling & Career office.

JOHN DOE
1234 Smith Lane
Pittsfield, IL 62323
(123) 456-7890
John.doe@email.com

OBJECTIVE

Social Studies Teacher (Grades 5-12) where computer literacy, strong personal skills and enthusiasm create an atmosphere in which children are motivated to learn.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education
Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 1995
Pennsylvania Teaching Credential:
Economics, Geography, United States and World History, Grades 5-12

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Substitute Teacher, Smalltown Elementary School, Smalltown, PA, Fall 1996.

- Worked with diverse student groups and expanded range of teaching capabilities.
- Utilized positive classroom management techniques with middle school students.
- Created interesting and self-motivating lesson plans.
- Planned and prepared lessons and assignments.
- Developed exciting, hands-on learning experiences for children grades five to twelve.

Student Teacher, Townville Middle School (10 weeks), Townville, PA, Spring 1995.

- Taught U.S. History, Geography, and Government to classes ranging in size from 20 to 35 students.
- Developed multi-faceted daily lessons for each course.
- Perfected computer fluency in Word 2000, WordPerfect, Excel and Access.
- Evaluated and critiqued student papers and assignments.
- Led extracurricular activities, including softball and computer club.

Sunday School Teacher, First Evangelical Free Church, Philadelphia, PA, 1992-1994

- Incorporated learning incentives program into Sunday school lessons.
- Involved parents and siblings in reinforcing principles from class at home.
- Taught children (grades 5-8) from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds in an urban setting.

HONORS

- National Dean's List, 1994
- Alpha Lambda, 1992 (Freshman Honor Society)
- Phi Eta Sigma, 1992 (Freshman Honor Society)

(Example of a chronological resume – keep in mind that this format works best if you have related experience and are simply "moving up" the career ladder.)

Sally Student

1111 Broadway Avenue
New York, NY 55555
111-111-1111
Sally.student@email.com

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts in Economics and Psychology with a focus in community development;
Minor in Mathematics
Northwestern College, St. Paul, MN May 2007, GPA: 3.69

- Studied Economics with a focus on economic development and analyzing effective developmental policies
- Studied Mathematics, and its application in research and economic analysis
- Took research classes focusing on statistical analysis and developing planning skills for completing research projects
- Completed courses developing interpersonal relationship skills, as they relate to psychology and social services
- National Dean's List, and recipient of various scholarships

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

Research & Analysis Skills

- Developed and conducted an undergraduate research project
- Analyzed data using SPSS software and reported research findings in a formal research report and presentation
- Experienced with research designs and appropriate statistics for those designs
- Researched and analyzed various developmental policies in a policy analysis report
- Familiar with statistical computation and how to interpret the results of those computations

Computer Skills

- Skilled in common MS Office programs such as Word, Excel, and PowerPoint
- Experience with SPSS software
- Served as a teaching assistant for a college-level computer class including grading papers and conducting labs

Organizational Skills

- Achieved academic success in college while working, playing sports, performing musically, and participating in community service
- Planned and organized school social events for both large and small groups
- Able to follow instructions on set up and customer service without being directly supervised

Interpersonal Skills

- Developed strong relational skills as a Resident Advisor for a year at Northwestern College

WORK & VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Resident Advisor, Northwestern College, St. Paul, MN 2005-2006
Student Financial Services Intern, Northwestern College, St. Paul, MN 2006
Economics Tutor, Northwestern College, St. Paul, MN 2006
Auditor, Retail Inventory Services, St. Paul, MN 2005-2006
Soup Kitchen Volunteer, Saint Paul Rescue Mission, St. Paul, MN 2004-2005

(Example of a functional resume)

PERRY PASTOR
286 Holy Roller Way
Lexington, KY 12345
(555) 267-3265
pastorp@aol.com

Career Objective

An Associate Pastor position where organizational abilities, strong written and verbal communication skills, and experience in leading groups can be utilized to accomplish the mission of the church.

Education

Bachelor of Arts, Pastoral Ministries
Northwestern College, St. Paul, MN, May 2000
Concentration: Greek

Special Training

Growing a Healthy Church I, Sonlife Ministries, February 2000
Telephone Counseling, Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Spring 1998
IDAK Assessment, IDAK Group, Inc., Fall 1998

Related Experience

Pastoral Internship, Way of Life Church, Lexington, KY, February-July 1999

- Preached a six-week series from the Gospel of John
- Trained youth group in evangelism
- Coordinated, organized and led a group of adults on a missions trip to Bangkok, Thailand
- Participated in Nurture Committee meetings
- Wrote portions of the weekly church newsletter

Intercultural Missions Trip Leader, Paris, France, Northwestern College, St. Paul, MN, March 2000

- Recruited, prepared, and supervised a group of college students on a missions trip to Paris, France
- Assisted faculty member with fundraising training
- Facilitated bi-weekly team meetings prior to the trip
- Taught and performed through a puppet ministry in public schools in France

Sunday School Teacher, Fruit of the Vine Church, Wilmore, KY, September – May 2000

- Prepared, developed, and taught materials to weekly Sunday school class, grades 4-6

Work History

Administrative Assistant, Evangelical Free Church of America, Bloomington, MN, Summers 1998-1999
Sales Representative, B. Dalton Books, Minnetonka, MN, Summers 1996-1997

(Example of a combination resume)