

# **RESUME WRITING GUIDE**



**BIOLA**  
UNIVERSITY

**CENTER FOR  
CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

# PURPOSE OF A RESUME

The purpose of a resume is to land an interview! It matches your skills, education, and experiences with employer needs.

## PRELIMINARY STEPS

### **THREE STEPS TO A POWER-PACKED RESUME**

1. TAKE STOCK OF WHAT YOU HAVE TO OFFER.
2. PRIORITIZE YOUR SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE.
3. SELECT A FORMAT.

### 1. TAKE STOCK

Make a list of what you can offer an employer. The following questions will help you assess your professional abilities, technical skills, personal attributes, experience, and accomplishments.



**What are my skills and abilities?** What “life skills” are transferable to different work settings, such as organizational, analytical, time management, leadership, and communication skills?

**What are my special or technical skills?** Include your skill level in languages, spreadsheets, databases, programming, design, clerical, cash management, customer service, and sales.

**What are my accomplishments?** Prospective employers want to know how your performance made a difference.

- Did you do something faster, better, or cheaper? How much?
- Did you increase membership, participation, or sales? How much?
- Did you save your organization any money or eliminate waste? How much?
- Did you identify and/or help solve any problems? What kind? Quantify.
- Did you institute any new methods, procedures, services or products? What was the improvement?
- Did you re-organize or improve an existing system? How? Quantify.
- Did you coordinate any event or project?
- Did you train another person? What were the results?
- Did you tutor anyone? How did their grades improve?

### 2. PRIORITIZE YOUR SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

Each resume you produce will be tailored to fit the specific job for which you are applying. Start by analyzing the job description for skills and abilities. Read job descriptions thoroughly and then highlight all of the keywords that indicate required and preferred skills, abilities, attributes, and qualifications. If an employer is looking for somebody who is innovative, punctual, and attentive to detail, use these same words in your resume.

When precise tailoring is not possible, construct your resume so that it is focused on your primary career or job objective. Identifying your primary career objective will help you decide which skills and experiences to emphasize and which ones to omit when creating your resume.

### 3. SELECT FORMAT

There are two basic formats for resume preparation: chronological and functional.

#### CHRONOLOGICAL

Chronological resumes are most common. Most recent position is listed first, followed by previous positions in reverse chronological order.

#### FUNCTIONAL

You might choose this format if you lack work experience, have gaps in employment, or have diverse or short-term jobs. The functional format can be used to emphasize transferable skills.

## BASIC ELEMENTS OF A RESUME

### HEADING

The heading should include your name, address, phone number, and email address. Make sure to let your name **STAND OUT** by using bold and increasing the font size.

### OBJECTIVE

The objective is a one-sentence declaration of the job type that you are seeking. State your objective clearly and succinctly, being as specific as possible. If you are unable to list a specific job type you can omit the objective statement.

### EDUCATION

List all colleges you have attended. Include the degree or certificate title, the Month and Year of graduation, the name of the institution, and the city and state where it is located. This may be the first section of the resume for many students and recent graduates. List “Education” before “Experience” when education is your strength, and “Experience” first when it is your greatest asset.

### EXPERIENCE

The experience section refers to paid or unpaid work.  
A standard format for listing experience is:

**Job title**, dates of employment (Month Year- Month Year)

Name of employer, city, state

- Use action verbs and give details of job responsibilities and outcomes produced.



**TIP:** Your degree and job titles are generally the most important pieces of information. Showcase them by listing them first and in **bold**.

With the exception of your current position, start each bullet point with a past-tense action verb to describe experience. Emphasize measurable impact in the department or

organization rather than merely listing duties. Include scope and numbers wherever possible. Avoid beginning descriptions with the phrases/terms, "I," "responsible for," "assisted," and "duties included." Include internships, practicums, and volunteer experiences that support your objective.

## **ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS OF A RESUME (OPTIONAL)**

### **ACTIVITIES AND HONORS**

- List student organizations and professional associations, indicating any offices held.
- Highlight university activities that show evidence of leadership, initiative, community involvement or the use of special skills. These may alternately be listed in the "Experience" section.
- Organize information to highlight greatest skills and achievements.
- Recent graduates and students can include academic honors (Dean's List, honor societies, and scholarships) listed as a subheading under "Education."

### **OTHER INFORMATION**

You may want to highlight other achievements or skills that are not easily incorporated into the other sections. This may include such things as languages, licenses, credentials, professional affiliations, research, or publications. Simply create an appropriate heading and insert it in resume.

### **RESUME DO'S**

- **Tailor resume for each position.**
- **Lead with strengths.**
- **Use action verbs.**
- **Use past tense for previous activities, present tense for current activities.**
- **Bullet points.** Large dots are effective in drawing the employer's attention to your accomplishments.
- **Use professional font styles.** Suggested fonts: Arial, Times New Roman, or Helvetica. Use a 10-12 font size.
- **Be consistent in style.**
- **Limit resume to one page** (unless applying for an upper-level position with many years of experience).
- **Proof read resume!**
- **Get feedback from others.**
- **Use high quality, neutral paper.**

### **RESUME DON'TS**

- Don't use italics or scripts.
- Don't include photographs.
- Don't put in fancy binders or folders.
- Don't list sex, height, weight or other personal information.
- Don't include the complete address of prior employers.
- Don't list religion, race, ethnic origin, or political affiliation.
- Don't include salary information.
- Don't include lengthy periods of unemployment.
- Don't exaggerate.
- Don't use jargon, slang, or trite expressions.
- Don't use abbreviations or conjunctions.
- Don't include references.

# ACTION VERBS

## MANAGEMENT

administered	coordinated	increased	reviewed
analyzed	delegated	organized	scheduled
assigned	developed	oversaw	strengthened
attained	directed	planned	supervised
chaired	evaluated	prioritized	
consolidated	executed	produced	
contracted	improved	recommended	

## COMMUNICATION

addressed	enlisted	maintained	researched
arbitrated	formulated	operated	promoted
arranged	influenced	overhauled	publicized
authored	interpreted	programmed	reconciled
collaborated	lectured	remodeled	recruited
convinced	mediated	repaired	spoke
corresponded	moderated	solved	translated
developed	negotiated	upgraded	wrote
drafted	persuaded	planned	
edited	fabricated	projected	

## RESEARCH

clarified	examined	interviewed	surveyed
collected	extracted	investigated	systematized
critiqued	identified	organized	
diagnosed	inspected	reviewed	
evaluated	interpreted	summarized	

## TECHNICAL

assembled	designed	maintained	remodeled
built	devised	operated	repaired
calculated	engineered	overhauled	solved
computed	fabricated	programmed	upgraded

## TEACHING

adapted	coordinated	evaluated	instructed
advised	demystified	explained	persuaded
clarified	developed	facilitated	set goals
coached	enabled	guided	stimulated
communicated	encouraged	informed	trained

**FINANCIAL**

administered	audited	computed	marketed
allocated	balanced	developed	planned
analyzed	budgeted	forecasted	projected
appraised	calculated	managed	researched

**HELPING**

assessed	counseled	expedited	motivated
assisted	demonstrated	facilitated	referred
clarified	diagnosed	familiarized	rehabilitated
coached	educated	guided	represented

**CLERICAL OR DETAIL ORIENTED**

approved	dispatched	operated	retrieved
arranged	executed	organized	screened
catalogued	generated	prepared	specified
classified	implemented	processed	systematized
collected	inspected	purchased	tabulated
compiled	monitored	recorded	validated

**CREATIVE**

acted	directed	instituted	planned
conceptualized	established	integrated	revitalized
created	fashioned	introduced	shaped
customized	founded	invented	
designed	illustrated	originated	
developed	initiated	performed	

**MORE VERBS FOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

achieved	pioneered	restored
expanded	reduced (losses)	spearheaded
improved	resolved	transformed