

Résumés

What is the purpose of a résumé?

The purpose of a résumé is to get an interview. A résumé is like an advertisement: it must attract attention, create interest, and generate action on the part of the reader. A good résumé will lead an employer to invite you to discuss, at an interview, how your background and personality fit the organization. Since the average employer takes less than one minute to scan a résumé, your résumé must be brief: no longer than two pages (and for some industries, like finance, and in some cases, high tech, no more than one page). The résumé tells a potential employer what you have done, what you can do, who you are, and what you know. It also states what kind of work you seek. The résumé must provide enough information to allow the employer to evaluate your qualifications and to convince the employer to invite you for an interview.

The résumé is more concise than a curriculum vitae (CV), which is prepared for a teaching/research position at a university or for inclusion in an application package for graduate school. To write a CV for an academic job posting read [Academic Applications and Interviews: Writing CVs](#).

To prepare a CV for graduate school or a professional program read [CV/résumé overview](#).

What do employers want?

Content

Design your résumé to match the position you seek: convey the skills and traits you would bring to the job. Be sure to demonstrate:

- Your relevant skills, knowledge, and experience
- Unique accomplishments that help you stand out
- Your personality, to ensure your compatibility with the work environment
- Your general interests
- Your ability to set and achieve goals

Style and appearance

Your résumé should make a favourable first impression: include well-organized material, use an easy-to-read sans-serif font (e.g., Calibri, Arial, or Verdana, in 10-12 point size). Check grammar and spelling, and provide up-to-date information. Minimize the use of tabs and highlighting techniques (e.g., bold, italics, capitals) so that your résumé does not look too “busy.” If it is necessary to print your résumé, use high-quality white or light neutral paper.

Write in a positive tone while describing your education, experience, skills, and qualities. Don't be shy! If you don't believe in yourself, how will a potential employer believe in you? Nevertheless, the résumé must be an honest depiction of your experience and abilities. Don't lie or stretch the truth. Any misrepresentation will come back to haunt you if not at the interview, then on the job.

There is no ideal résumé suitable to all job seekers. Your goal should be to create a document that reveals your strengths through both your content and your writing style. Be enthusiastic, confident, and focused.

Major sections of a résumé

It is up to you to determine which sections to include in your résumé. Contact Information, Objective (optional) and Summary of Qualifications are typically the first three. The remaining sections should be ordered according to their relevance to the job. If you have only one or two points to communicate under any section heading, consider including the information under an existing heading rather than creating a new one (e.g., include one or two awards as a sub-section under Education). If your document is two pages in length, the content of the first page is especially important. An employer may initially spend just a minute or less looking over your résumé, so you should position the most important sections on the first page.

Use key words that are common in the industry to which you are applying and/or that are listed in the job advertisement. Doing so will increase the chance of your résumé being selected, whether a person or a computer (Applicant Tracking System) is reading it. Remember to include dates throughout your résumé.

If you are concerned that the information in your résumé will reveal your ethnicity or religious, political, or sexual orientation, use generic terms (e.g., Team Leader, Local Youth Group).

The following are possible sections and sub-sections of a résumé. Choose and arrange them in the way that will best help you present the advantages that you offer to each employer.

Contact information

Contact Information refers to information such as name, address (optional), telephone number, email address, and web/LinkedIn/social media page/blog. In North America, no other personal information [e.g., date of birth, marital status, or Social Insurance Number (SIN)] is required, nor are labels for each piece of information (e.g., Email, Résumé, or Contact Information at the top of the page). Co-op students should add their academic level, plan name, and student identification number.

- Include your name on both pages (in the largest heading on page one, using a font size larger than that used in the body and for other headings) and the page number on page two
- If you will be changing address while your résumé is in circulation, note the expected date of your move (e.g., address valid until April 18, 20xx). Note: street addresses are best omitted; include city/province only if that location would be an advantage (e.g., you are applying to a job in British Columbia and your permanent address is in that province)
- Decide what headings you will use if you need to state two addresses (e.g., Local/Present and Home/Permanent)
- When creating a personal email address, ensure that it is business-like; be selective when choosing an email provider because the addresses of some of the more popular ones are rejected by SPAM-filtering software
- If you cannot answer your phone during business hours, make sure you have a reliable message retrieval system with a professional-sounding recording, or list an alternate number in your résumé
- Consider including a link to your e-portfolio and/or webpage. Make sure it is professional and up-to-date. Demonstrate your skills by including examples of your work (e.g., design, writing, reports, projects, thesis, code, art work, etc.)
- If you have a Twitter or LinkedIn account, blog, or other social networking tool that is relevant to your industry and employment, you may include your handle/username
- If you are not a Permanent Resident of Canada or Canadian Citizen, and are legally eligible to work

in Canada, but your experience could be interpreted to suggest that you are not, consider noting your eligibility to work in Canada on your resume and/or indicating your status. For example you could say in your Summary of Qualifications: "Eligible to work in Canada". You must ensure that you have acquired the necessary documentation / permits to legally undertake work in Canada

- After graduation, international students may have opportunities to work in Canada temporarily. Decide whether you would like to include a note about short-term employment on your résumé (e.g., Available for one-year contract). Check the usual employment requirements for the countries that interest you

Objective

Listing an objective is optional. That said, its inclusion can help you to visualize the job/area that you are applying for: This visual will then help you to better tailor your points to fit this objective.

- If the résumé is for an advertised position, include the job title in the statement (e.g., "Junior Computer Programmer," "Social Worker," or "Technical Writer")
- If the résumé is for an unadvertised position, state an area or field of interest (e.g., "Public Relations" or "Health Education")

Summary of qualifications

Choose a title for this section that reflects who you are and how you want to represent yourself. A variety of options are possible, including Highlights of Qualifications, Executive Summary, Professional Profile, and Profile.

This key section provides a concise overview of your qualifications, showing the employer, in a few short seconds, how you stand out from other candidates. You may draw qualifications from any area of your life (e.g., work, volunteer experience, education, or other activities). Typically, include four to six (maximum seven) points outlining your relevant strengths and achievements, beginning with the most relevant to the job. Points may begin with nouns or adjectives. Describe your competitive advantage — the value you offer.

Tailor your Summary of Qualifications section (and résumé) to each job to which you apply. All points in your summary must be targeted to your potential employer, elaborated on throughout your résumé, and accurate. Employers say that job applicants often falsely claim to possess skills, and that misrepresentation is perceived negatively. Precision and accurate wording will help you obtain a job to which you are well-suited and in which you can excel.

Your summary section must be industry specific. However, rather than copy sentences from a job advertisement, include key words commonly used in the industry to which you are applying. Whether your document is initially scanned electronically or by a human, both are looking for these key words and phrases. If you are having trouble identifying what to highlight, do more research! Try typing "job description" + "computer engineer" (or the title of the job you seek) into a search engine in order to discover industry-specific words and phrases.

Highlight any key or unique achievements that will help you stand out among other applicants. Use strong adjectives and facts to describe your strengths — don't be modest! A phrase such as "Two years' experience completing projects in..." has more impact than "good knowledge of ..." Include:

- As a first bullet (if applicable), your experience (from paid/unpaid work, academics, or extracurricular activities) relevant to the position sought (e.g., one year experience in graphic design; three years process engineering experience with key responsibilities in product design and implementation; solid academic career focusing on business development initiatives in the field of specialty catalysts)

- Your relevant knowledge/skills/expertise (e.g., “computer proficiency, report writing, program planning, public speaking, problem-solving”)
- Any education that complements your practical experience (e.g., “machine design, resource assessment, marketing”)
- A general reference to where you developed the skill (e.g., “proven leadership skills developed through three summers as camp counsellor”). Include this level of detail only once or twice so that points do not become too lengthy
- Personal characteristics and attributes; however, include only those that are relevant to the position you are seeking (e.g., consistently able to deliver results under tight deadlines vs punctual, honest, etc.)
- Specialized training/education (e.g., “CPR certification”)
- Fluency in a language other than English, specifically noting your level of verbal and/or written competency

If you don’t know how to describe your strengths effectively, try some self-assessment activities to help you uncover these strengths. Activities contained in the Self Assessment section, which include online career guidance systems subscribed to by the University of Waterloo and available to students, employees, and alumni, as well as other assessments (MBTI and Strong Interest Inventory) available through the Centre for Career Action, can help you to better understand and articulate skills and strengths of interest to employers. You may also wish to attend a workshop or book a Career Development appointment. Both can be accessed through the Centre for Career Action website.

Education

This section will follow the Summary of Qualifications if you consider it to be stronger or more relevant to your application than your work or volunteer experience. How you describe your education depends on your level of study and your graduation or professional status. Consider the following options:

- For students in postsecondary education: Candidate for, Degree, Plan (major), minor/option/specialization (if desired), University, Location and Year beginning program (e.g., “Candidate for Bachelor of Mathematics, Honours Computer Science, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, September 20xx present”)
- Secondary school listing: omit reference to your secondary school once you have moved beyond your first year of postsecondary study unless the reference is to a prestigious institution or will add valuable information when the reader considers you for an interview; list Diploma, High School, Location and Year diploma was received (e.g., “Ontario Secondary School Diploma, ABC High school, Any-town, Any-province, 20xx”); include specialization if applicable
- For alumni: Degree, Plan (major), University, Location and Year degree obtained (e.g., Bachelor of Arts, History, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, June 20xx); Omit reference to the month the year after you graduate
- If you changed your program of study, include an entry like the following:
 - a) Candidate for Bachelor of Science, Honours Biology, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, 20xx – Present
 - b) Environmental Studies, Geography, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, 20xx – 20xx
- Check the name of the degree granted (e.g., Bachelor of Applied Science for most engineering students; Bachelor of Mathematics for computer science students), and list the degree unabbreviated
- Multiple entries: when referring to more than one program (e.g., Bachelor’s, Master’s), arrange entries in reverse chronological order (i.e., most recent first)
- Incorporate professional development activities (e.g., certification, workshops, or continuing or distance education courses) by changing the heading to “Education and Professional Development,” arranging entries in reverse chronological order

Relevant projects

Include one to three substantive projects and/or assignments you have completed in high school or university that are relevant to the type of job you are hoping to attain. This is particularly helpful for those with relatively little paid work or volunteer experience. Consider creating this section as a sub-heading or as a bullet point of the Education section:

- Provide the project or assignment title, the class or lab the project or assignment was completed in, and dates (e.g., “Method of Practice Report, Introduction to Social Work, Sept. – Dec. 20xx”; “Payroll Database Assignment, Introduction to Computing, Sept. – Dec. 20xx”; “Circuit Analysis Project, Circuit Analysis Lab, Feb. – June 20xx”)
- List your points in reverse chronological order
- Include several bullet points to describe what you accomplished; begin each bullet point with an action verb (e.g., Presented 50-page report to panel of five faculty resulting in grade of 95%)
- Do not use vague expressions such as “responsible for” or “duties included”; do not use weak verbs such as “helped” or “assisted”
- Use past tense since a project/assignment is added to your résumé when completed

Relevant courses

Consider creating this section as a sub-heading or as a bullet point of the Education section.

- Choose three to six courses related to the job applied for
- If the name of the course does not convey its relevance, elaborate (e.g., “Basic Human Resources Management trained in labour relations and various recruiting and salary negotiation techniques”)
- Prioritize the list or arrange it by themes to make it easier to scan
- Place information in columns for easy reading, or separate courses with commas (if space is an issue)
- Do not include the course number

Thesis

You may choose to create this section as a sub-heading or as a bullet point under the Education section.

- If the title does not indicate a project's scope and relevance, use a few words or bulleted points to describe it

Work experience

How you format your work experience section depends upon the type of résumé you have chosen. Refer to Résumé styles and templates for details on the three types. Generally:

- This section could also be referred to as “Employment Experience” or “Relevant Experience”
- Include three to five points outlining your most relevant strengths
- List your points in decreasing order of importance for the type of work you are seeking (i.e., most relevant first)
- In point form, describe what you accomplished on the job
- Begin each point with either a skill or achievement action verb (see Appendix A); do not use weak verbs such as “helped” or “assisted”
- Use the present tense for ongoing jobs and the past tense for past jobs
- Do not use vague expressions such as “responsible for” or “duties included”; they don’t tell the employer the scope of your accomplishments
- Describe the most relevant points in greater detail (e.g., in an entry about report writing, you would include information about literature searches only if that part of the experience was relevant to the job)
- If your work experience is not directly related, emphasize transferable skills (e.g., if you worked as

a server and now want to work in an administrative role, emphasize your ability to work under pressure/stress, communicative/interpersonal skills, attention to detail, etc.)

- There is no rule concerning how recent an experience must be to include it on your résumé; if it is relevant, include it
- If you learned something on the job (e.g., how to use a new piece of software) but did not have a chance to use it, you may include a “learned” statement (e.g., learned how to use Excel); use this approach sparingly
- Indicate your level of responsibility (e.g., “depositing cash” or “managing a department during the absence of supervisor”) and provide evidence of promotion if applicable
- Do not use personal pronouns such as “my” and “their,” or definite and indefinite articles: “a,” “an,” or “the”

References

Although references are very important, the notation “References Available Upon Request” is no longer considered necessary. Generally, you should not list referees' names and contact information: your goal should be to meet with the prospective employer to sell yourself before the employer contacts your referees. In addition, you do not want your referees to have to answer phone calls until you have reached the interview stage.

Always ask permission to use someone as a reference. Choose only people you are sure will speak highly of you. Be sure that they see your strengths and weaknesses as you see them, and discuss what your referee's response might be to potentially embarrassing questions. If much time has lapsed between requesting permission to use a reference and a potential call from an employer, notify your referee that a call may be forthcoming. Choose someone who has seen you work in situations similar to those in which you would be working in the job to which you are applying; you do not need to use your immediate supervisor, although it is advisable to have at least one supervisor on your reference list.

Give your referees a copy of the résumé(s) you have submitted to employers. Have the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of two to four references on sheets that you can provide to an employer when asked for your references.

Volunteer experience

Include volunteer experience in one of these three ways depending on the significance of the experience relative to your job objective.

- If your volunteer activities are as impressive as your paid work experience, add information on volunteering to your Work Experience section, with a notation (e.g., Assistant to Director—volunteer)
- If you wish to highlight your volunteer activities separately from your work experience, create a separate heading (e.g., Volunteer Activities, Volunteer Experience, or Community Service); include your Volunteer Experience before Work Experience in your résumé if it is more relevant
- If your volunteer activities are not directly related to the work you are seeking, add them to the Activities and Interests section
- Regardless of the heading you list your volunteer experience under, list the organizations for which you volunteered and, if relevant, add detail about your contributions, beginning each point with an action verb

Activities and interests

- Begin by listing organized activities; state role (e.g., Member, President), name of organization, location, and dates; organize entries in reverse chronological order; and state if you were elected

or appointed to any positions

- General interests or hobbies do not require dates but your most relevant activities may be best expressed through bulleted statements (beginning each with an action verb)
- If you have many interests, consider including only those that are most relevant to the job to which you are applying (e.g., fitness-related interests for a job in a health-oriented field)
- You may also wish to include hobbies that show you are well-rounded or that indicate transferable skills such as teamwork or leadership; avoid general references such as music, reading: be specific
- Include hobbies and activities that show your knowledge and passion in your field (e.g., social media groups you actively participate in, personal projects)

Consider creating one or more sections to highlight strengths in these areas:

Computer Proficiency, Laboratory Skills, Technical Skills, Scientific Instrumentation, Certifications

- Present an overview of qualifications relating to your job objective
- List similar proficiencies together (e.g., for computer proficiency: hardware, software, languages,) in columns or as bullet points
- Be sure to accurately describe level of proficiency (e.g., “familiar with” does not equal “proficient in” or “working knowledge”)
- If including dates (e.g., for Certifications), list them in reverse chronological order
- Include these points under Summary of Qualifications if there is not enough information to include in a separate section

Awards and Scholarships

- State the name of the award, the name of the institution from which the award was received, and the date it was received
- Include important awards from both university and high school in reverse chronological order
- Explain the significance of the award if it is not implicit in the award’s title
- Be selective; include no more than six entries

Professional Memberships

- List current and relevant memberships, and include dates to demonstrate length of membership

Languages

If you are proficient in several languages and this skill is relevant, create a “Languages Spoken” section.

- List languages in which you are fluent (other than English)
- Specify your verbal and/or written competency level; take special care to be accurate in this section because some jobs require fluency

Publications

- List in bibliographic format only those publications that would interest the reader. If your list is lengthy, include only relevant publications, using the heading “Selected Publications. If there is insufficient space to list all relevant publications, add “Additional publications available upon request” as part of a point or as a footer at the end of your résumé, and consider adding those publications to your LinkedIn profile
- Include work that has been published, has been submitted for publication, or is in progress, being sure to label each accurately
- List papers or reports you presented as a guest speaker

Writing effective bullet points for a résumé

Use bulleted statements throughout your résumé. Each bullet point should strongly communicate your qualifications and accomplishments which are relevant to the position. If you have only one bullet point in a section, find a way to incorporate it into another section.

Review the [Major sections of a résumé](#) for advice on writing bulleted statements in Job Objective or Career Goal and Summary of Qualifications or Skills Summary.

Any bullet point in the Work Experience, Volunteer Experience, Education, and Activities and Interests sections should begin with a skill or achievement action verb that will create a vivid image of your accomplishment. Use the job advertisement as your guide in formulating and choosing key words that are true to your strengths. Although 3-5 bullets are standard for each experience, employers often do not scan past the first three bullets - so be sure to prioritize and place the most important and relevant information first. If you engaged in an activity or used a particular skill only 10% of the time but it is very relevant to the prospective employer, list that bullet at or near the beginning of your bullet points.

Be concise and avoid repeating verbs. Please refer to the list of action verbs provided. Remember that all action verbs are not created equal! Verbs like "helped," "assisted," "participated," and "worked," although technically in the active voice, fail to provide a specific picture of what you have done, so avoid them wherever possible.

If you intend to use such words to show that your role was to participate in but not to lead a project, consider using other strategies. If you were one member of a two-person team, consider using "co-" as the prefix to the action verb describing your role (e.g., "Co-edited user's manual"); if you were part of a team with 2+ members, explain your role and end by indicating that others were involved (e.g., "Edited user's manual for XYZ software, as member of communications team," or "Edited user's manual for XYZ software, in collaboration with supervisor"). If, on the other hand, your goal is to hide the fact that your role was minimal, omit the statement.

You may find it helpful to think of the following three components as you begin to write bulleted statements:

Complete statement

- **Did x using y to achieve z (What) + (How) + (Why)**

1. **What:** what action you took, using a skill or achievement verb (e.g., designed)
2. **How:** how you performed the task: a) actual tool or technique (e.g., using MS Access); b) role you played (e.g., as member of 5-person team); and/or c) using an adverb (e.g., effectively, accurately)
3. **Why:** what result or outcome you achieved, quantified wherever possible (e.g., doubled speed of information retrieval)

Complete statement

- **Designed client database using MS Access; doubled speed of information retrieval**

Note

Although each bullet point should include skill and task components, always adding tools and results may be too lengthy. Try to include points that use three or all four components several times throughout your résumé, especially when demonstrating key achievements.

Because it is important to demonstrate productivity and achievements to prospective employers, begin some of your bullets with the outcome, using an achievement action verb. The above example would then read:

Complete statement

- **Doubled speed of information retrieval by successfully designing client database, using MS Access**

When using both types of bullets (i.e., skill-first and achievement-first), begin your list with an achievement-first bullet for the greatest impact. Please refer to the list of [Action verbs](#) provided as a reference for both skill and achievement verbs.

Try to include points that use all three components several times throughout your résumé, especially when demonstrating key achievements. However, it will not be possible, or even plausible, to include a result in all cases. The goal is to leave the reader with the clear impression that you are someone who can and does get results — and will for them as well.

Additional tips

When assessing your qualifications for a position in which you are interested and believe you can succeed, be sure to consider all of your experiences and what you have gained from them. Did you teach yourself a programming language? Have you attended an industry-related event? Paid work experience is not the only relevant experience that employers look for in résumés. You can demonstrate your knowledge, skills, and passion for the field in a number of ways including through interests, volunteer activities and education.

Also assess areas which you may need to develop. Would a course be beneficial? Networking, attending events, participating in webinars (many are free!), volunteering, and reading/research can all contribute to strengthening your résumé for future applications. Find a mentor in your field. He or she can provide helpful advice regarding beneficial events and activities to engage in to further your career development. The shape of employment is constantly evolving, which is why keeping your résumé up-to-date is so important for gaining interviews. But the résumé also evolves as you do.

Action verbs

Achievement verbs

Describe your accomplishments/results using action verbs. Review these sample verbs and select those that apply to you.

- accelerated
- accentuated
- accomplished
- achieved
- adapted
- added
- addressed
- adjusted
- advanced
- advocated
- aligned
- altered
- appointed
- approved
- augmented
- balanced
- broadened
- brought
- built
- capitalized
- captured
- chaired
- championed
- changed
- clarified
- closed
- commended
- completed
- conceived
- conceptualized
- conserved
- consolidated
- continued
- converted
- corrected
- created
- curtailed
- cut
- deciphered
- declined
- decreased
- defined
- delivered
- designated
- designed
- developed
- devised
- diagnosed
- differentiated
- directed
- discovered
- dispatched
- disposed
- distinguished
- diversified
- diverted
- doubled
- drove
- earned
- effected
- elected
- eliminated
- empowered
- energized
- enforced
- enhanced
- enlarged
- ensured
- established
- exceeded
- executed
- expanded
- expedited
- exposed
- facilitated

- finalized
- fixed
- forged
- formalized
- formed
- formulated
- fostered
- founded
- gained
- generated
- governed
- graduated
- halted
- hand-picked
- headed
- impacted
- implemented
- improved
- increased
- influenced
- initiated
- innovated
- instituted
- integrated
- intensified
- introduced
- invented
- invited
- justified
- launched
- led
- leveraged
- liquidated
- lowered
- maintained
- managed
- mastered
- masterminded
- maximized
- merged
- minimized
- modernized
- modified
- nominated
- normalized
- obtained
- offered
- opened
- optimized
- orchestrated
- originated
- overcame
- overhauled
- oversaw
- perfected
- performed
- persuaded
- piloted
- pinpointed
- pioneered
- positioned
- prevented
- prioritized
- produced
- profited
- progressed
- projected
- promoted
- propelled
- proposed
- proved
- raised
- ranked
- ratified
- realigned
- rebuilt
- recaptured
- received
- recognized
- recommended
- reconciled
- recorded
- redesigned
- reduced
- reengineered
- refined
- regained
- regulated
- rehabilitated
- reinforced
- rejuvenated
- released
- remedied
- remodeled
- renegotiated
- renewed
- renovated
- reorganized
- repaired
- repositioned
- represented
- resolved
- restored
- restructured
- retained
- retrieved
- revamped
- reversed
- revised
- revitalized
- satisfied
- saved
- secured
- separated
- shaped
- shepherded
- simplified
- slashed
- solidified
- solved
- sparked
- spearheaded
- standardized
- started
- steered
- stimulated
- streamlined
- strengthened
- succeeded
- surpassed
- terminated
- transferred
- transformed
- transitioned
- trimmed
- tripled
- troubleshoot
- turned
- uncovered
- unified
- united
- updated
- upgraded
- validated
- verified
- widened
- won
- yielded

Skills verbs

Describe your skills using action verbs. Review these sample verbs and select those that apply to you.

- acquired
- acted
- adjudicated
- adjusted
- administered
- advertised
- advised
- advocated
- allocated
- analyzed
- anchored
- answered
- applied
- appointed
- appraised
- approved
- arbitrated
- arranged
- articulated
- ascertained
- assembled
- assessed
- assigned
- associated
- audited
- authenticated
- authored
- authorized
- balanced
- began
- bestowed
- brainstormed
- briefed
- budgeted
- built
- calculated
- calibrated
- capitalized
- captured
- catalogued
- compared
- compelled
- compiled
- completed
- composed
- computed
- conceived
- conceptualized
- concluded
- condensed
- conducted
- configured
- conserved
- consolidated
- constructed
- consulted
- contracted
- contrasted
- contributed
- controlled
- converted
- conveyed
- cooperated
- coordinated
- corrected
- corresponded
- counselled
- crafted
- created
- critiqued
- customized
- debugged
- decided
- deciphered
- defined
- delegated
- demonstrated
- deployed
- derived
- described
- designed
- detailed
- detected
- determined
- developed
- devised
- diagnosed
- differentiated
- directed
- discerned
- discovered
- dispensed
- displayed
- dissected
- distinguished
- distributed
- diversified
- diverted
- documented
- drafted
- drew
- drove
- edited
- educated
- elected
- emphasized
- empowered
- enabled
- enacted
- encouraged
- endorsed
- energized
- enforced
- engineered
- enlisted
- enlivened
- entertained
- equalized
- estimated
- evaluated
- examined
- executed
- exhibited
- exhorted
- experimented
- explained
- explored
- exported
- expressed
- extracted
- extricated
- fabricated
- facilitated
- familiarized
- filed
- finalized
- financed
- fixed
- forecasted
- forged
- formalized
- formed
- formulated
- fortified
- fostered
- generated
- governed
- graduated
- guided
- halted
- handled
- headed
- hired
- honoured
- hosted
- hypothesized
- identified
- illustrated
- imagined
- imported
- improvised
- incorporated
- influenced
- informed
- initiated
- inspected
- inspired
- installed
- instilled
- instructed
- integrated
- interpreted
- intervened
- interviewed
- invented
- inventoried
- investigated
- itemized
- joined
- judged
- justified
- launched
- learned
- lectured
- led
- leveraged
- liaised
- licensed
- listed
- listened
- located
- logged
- lowered
- maintained
- managed
- manipulated
- manufactured
- mapped
- marked
- marketed
- measured
- mediated
- mentored
- merged

- modelled
- moderated
- modified
- monetized
- monitored
- motivated
- narrated
- navigated
- negotiated
- networked
- nominated
- normalized
- observed
- offered
- officiated
- operated
- orchestrated
- ordered
- organized
- oriented
- outlined
- outsourced
- oversaw
- participated
- partnered
- perceived
- performed
- persuaded
- photographed
- piloted
- pinpointed
- pioneered
- planned
- positioned
- predicted
- prepared
- prescribed
- presented
- presided
- prioritized
- processed
- procured
- produced
- programmed
- progressed
- projected
- promoted
- proofread
- propelled
- proposed
- prospected
- protected
- proved
- provided
- publicized
- published
- purchased
- qualified
- quantified
- questioned
- raised
- rated
- ratified
- realigned
- rebuilt
- recaptured
- received
- recognized
- recommended
- reconciled
- recorded
- recruited
- rectified
- redesigned
- reengineered
- referred
- refined
- registered
- regulated
- rehabilitated
- reinforced
- remodelled
- rendered
- renegotiated
- renewed
- renovated
- reorganized
- repaired
- replaced
- reported
- repositioned
- represented
- researched
- reserved
- resolved
- responded
- restored
- restructured
- retained
- retrieved
- reviewed
- revised
- routed
- scheduled
- screened
- searched
- secured
- selected
- separated
- served
- serviced
- shared
- shepherded
- sketched
- solicited
- solidified
- solved
- spearheaded
- specialized
- specified
- spoke
- standardized
- steered
- stimulated
- structured
- studied
- submitted
- substantiated
- suggested
- summarized
- supervised
- supplemented
- supplied
- supported
- synthesized
- systematized
- tabulated
- targeted
- taught
- tended
- terminated
- tested
- traced
- transcribed
- transferred
- translated
- transmitted
- travelled
- treated
- trimmed
- troubleshoot
- tutored
- uncovered
- updated
- upgraded
- used
- utilized
- validated
- verbalized
- viewed
- visualized
- weighed
- welded
- widened
- worked
- wrote

Résumé styles and templates

There are three basic types of résumés: chronological, modified chronological, and functional. The decision to use a particular style depends upon your past work experience and your current objective.

Note

The way in which files open on your machine will depend on the web browser you are using, and the type(s) of software (e.g., Microsoft Word) installed on your device. For example, files may open up in a new window, download to your machine, etc.

Chronological résumé

- The chronological style is the most common. Since employers are most comfortable with this format, choose another format only if the chronological résumé does not allow you to market your skills effectively
- Organize jobs in reverse chronological order, stating:
 - a) Job Title: create an accurate one if you had none
 - b) Name of company or organization and location (city/province). Do not include supervisor's name or employer's street address or telephone number
 - c) Dates, beginning and terminating (for full-time, on-going positions of at least one year, it is not necessary to include the months)
- For jobs you want to include but not in detail, add a sub-section at the end of Work Experience called Other Work Experience (dates if you wish, e.g., 20__ - __) with job titles, or job titles and type of work environment if helpful (e.g., camp counsellor, waiter in fast-paced truck stop, stock clerk in automotive store)
- If you started or ran your own business, refer to it by its proper name and your official title. For example, you could write:
 - a) Owner/Manager, ABC Window Cleaning, Toronto, Ontario or
 - b) Proprietor, Residential Window Cleaning Service, Toronto, Ontario

Example

[Chronological résumé \(.doc\)](#)

Modified chronological résumé

- The difference between this type of résumé and the chronological one is the section on work experience
- The modified chronological résumé enables you to feature related experience, or to move to the top of the section those jobs that would ordinarily be listed after less relevant ones
- Replace the words "Work Experience" with a description about the type of experience; be consistent — use either all nouns or all adjectives; see Sample experience headings (Appendix B) for examples
- Collect in one section all jobs of similar type and list them in reverse chronological order
- Be sure that the theme word you use to describe each Experience section is descriptive of aspects of the job you stated in your objective

Example

[Modified Chronological template \(.doc\)](#)

Functional résumé

- The difference between this type of résumé and the chronological one is the section on work experience
- A functional format may be useful for individuals who have:
 - a) Little or no related experience, but do have relevant qualifications for the job

- b) Relevant experience, but these positions would be lost among the other jobs in a chronological résumé and the modified chronological format would not be suitable
 - c) A number of similar work experiences, which would require repeating the same points under several job listings
 - d) So much material to say that it would take more than two pages to do it
- It is essential that you have a good chronological résumé from which to work because it is difficult to think creatively and evaluate information at the same time
 - Identify three to six major skill areas related to your objective; be consistent — use either all nouns or all adjectives; see Sample experience headings for examples
 - Make sure there is no overlap in meaning when selecting the names for your skill sections; as you take each point from your chronological résumé, you will then find that it clearly fits in only one section
 - Take each point in the job description section of Work Experience from your chronological résumé and include it under one of the skill headings you created; ensure that each point starts with an appropriate action verb
 - Since the points are removed from the employers they were associated with, you may have to add some generic information on setting, population, etc.; example: under ABC Parks and Recreation Department in your chronological résumé you have “organized Friday afternoon drop-in leisure activities for seniors”; in your functional résumé, add “in a recreational setting” so that the reader will not wonder in what context (medical, psychological, etc.)
 - Try to combine points whenever possible to make clear, concise entries; the number of points for each function/skill should range from three to seven
 - In formulating the points for each thematic qualification, you can also draw upon your academics (projects, papers, etc.), extracurricular activities, and volunteer work as long as the reader knows the setting and does not think you have done the work in one of your paid positions
 - The Work History section comprises, in reverse chronological order, a listing of your employment: Job title, Company/Organization, Location, and Date. There are no job description details in this section

Example

[Functional template \(.doc\)](#)

More examples

Chronological

1. [Chronological 1: Junior resume sample \(.doc\)](#)
2. [Chronological 2: Junior Architecture resume sample \(.doc\)](#)
3. [Chronological 3: Graduating resume sample \(doc\)](#)

Modified Chronological

1. [Modified Chronological 1: Junior resume sample \(.doc\)](#)
2. [Modified Chronological 2: Graduate international resume sample \(.doc\)](#)

Functional

1. [Functional 1: Junior resume sample \(.doc\)](#)
2. [Functional 2: Alumni resume sample \(.doc\)](#)

Sample experience headings

The following skill areas can be used as headings in the experience portion of a functional and modified chronological résumé. These are suggestions only; you may use many other headings, as well.

- Administration
- Advising
- Analysis and Evaluation
- Business Development
- Business Management
- Childcare
- Client Relations
- Communications
- Community Liaison
- Computer Experience
- Conflict Resolution
- Consulting
- Counselling and Development
- Creativity and Design
- Crisis Evaluation and Response
- Customer Relations
- Customer Service
- Data Collection/Entry
- Design and Development
- Electronics Knowledge
- Equipment Operation
- Evaluation/Analysis
- Financial Analysis
- Food Preparation
- Fundraising
- Health and Safety
- Human Resources Management
- International Experience
- Leadership
- Management
- Mentoring
- Office Administration
- Organizational Development
- Planning
- Presentation Skills
- Problem Solving
- Product Development
- Program Development
- Program Planning
- Programming and Special Events
- Project Management
- Public Relations
- Public Speaking
- Quality Control
- Research
- Sales and Marketing
- Special Events Coordination
- Strategic Planning
- Supervision and Training
- Systems Development
- Teaching
- Team Work
- Technical Skills
- Training and Development
- Trouble Shooting
- Warehouse/Inventory
- Writing and Editing
- Writing and Presentation

Proofreading résumés

Before you give your résumé to any potential employer, proofread it carefully and have at least one other person review your document. Your computer's spell checker will catch some typing and spelling errors, but it will not point out words that have been correctly spelled but incorrectly used (e.g., "precious" when you meant "previous"). In addition, pay attention to the following:

1. **Appearance:** At first glance, will the employer find the résumé attractive and want to read it (layout of sections/points/margins, font size/style)?
2. **Accomplishments:** Does the document present your qualifications from both theoretical and practical perspectives and cover education, skills, experience, personality, etc.?
3. **Writing/presentation:** Is each point relevant to the job to which you are applying? Is your writing clear, concise, and complete? Are your words precise and action-oriented? Are there any spelling, typographic, or grammatical errors?
4. **Sales appeal:** Have you told readers in a positive, interesting way what you can do for their organization and provided enough proof of expertise that the reader will want to interview you?
5. **Contact information:** Have you provided your name, address (optional), email, phone numbers, and website/social media addresses (if applicable) on the top of page one so that an employer can easily reach you?

Electronic résumés

Advances in technology have changed the recruitment process significantly over the past decade. Today, most companies accept or request an electronic version of your cover letter and résumé. Résumés are sorted and stored in various ways by human resource departments, using databases that organize application packages into categories. Submit your cover letter and résumé in the format requested.

Follow-up

After responding to an online job posting, you should usually follow up, either by phone or email, with the contact person listed on the job advertisement. If there is no contact information, phone the organization to determine whom to contact. Do not follow up, however, if the employer clearly states “No phone calls, please.”