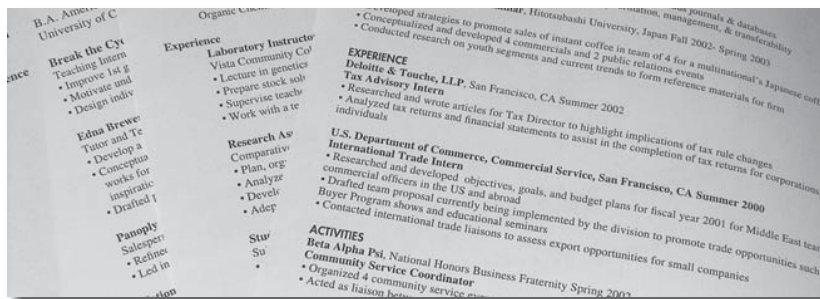


# Resume & Letter Writing

You often make your first impression on an employer with your resume, and you want that impression to be outstanding. An effective resume is a succinctly written snapshot of your education and experience. But it is more than just good writing and a generic list of activities. For a resume to be truly outstanding, it needs to highlight your unique strengths and be custom tailored to the position you want.



## HOW TO DEVELOP A RESUME

### 1. Analyze the job description.

Read job descriptions and highlight the required and preferred skills, abilities, attributes, and qualifications. Use these words in your resume.

### 2. Create a list of accomplishments

Take some time to think about tasks that you enjoyed doing, did well, and of which you were proud. Include education/training, volunteer experience, jobs, projects, school assignments, travel, and group/team activities. Describe in detail what you did and with whom, the equipment you used, the personal strengths and skills you employed, and the outcome of your efforts. Quantify your results, if possible, and use commonly understood terminology. Don't be humble; this is your chance to promote yourself.

## Career Center Resources

Search [career.berkeley.edu](http://career.berkeley.edu) for details about these resources:

**Career Counselors.** 45-minute appointments for individual help constructing your resume or cover letter or getting feedback about their effectiveness. 15-minute **Mini-Appointments** for individual resume or cover letter critiques.

**Information Lab, Job Search section.** Books and binders with resume and cover letter tips and samples.

**Curriculum Vitae (CV) Information.** For PhD students. See CV and Cover Letter information online at PhD section of website.

**Resume and Cover Letter Workshops.** Especially useful if you have never written a resume and are working on your first draft.

**Specialized Resume Writing workshops.** Tailored to certain majors or for those pursuing specialized career fields; e.g., **Resume Check for Engineering Majors** or **Resume Writing for Jobs in Nonprofits**.

**Resume Critiques with employers.** Feedback on your resume from a company representative. Special sign-up online, usually the first week of fall classes.

## USE A RESUME TO:

Respond to an advertised job vacancy.

Send to employers that interest you after you have researched their organizations.

Accompany government, graduate school, or other formal application forms.

Present at an interview to a potential employer.

Reinforce a personal contact you have already established with an employer.

Submit to employers before on-campus interviews.


Accompany a request to a past or current employer or professor to write you a letter of recommendation.

Network for jobs.

## 3. Analyze experiences for relevant skill areas

Reviewing each experience, identify the skills you used that fit with positions for which you are applying.


## 4. Write descriptive phrases

Using action verbs  see p. 23, write short phrases to describe what you did that illustrates each skill. Be concise and specific. Arrange the descriptive phrases in order of relevance to the position for which you are applying (most relevant at the top).

## 5. Choose an appropriate format

Avoid using resume templates that come with word processing applications. Not only are employers all too familiar with them, but templates are inflexible – often they won't allow you to move sections around or to modify headings.

## Resume formats

Several resume formats are available. Select the kind that best presents your background and qualifications.  see p. 24 for Sample Resumes.


### Chronological


This type of resume lists your experience in reverse chronological order. Arrange your resume sections based upon aspects of your background you wish to stress, putting the most relevant information first. It works best when your work, volunteer, and academic experiences relate directly to the type of job for which you are applying. Most on-campus recruiters and business employers prefer a chronological resume.

### Skills


Using headings that reflect skills, this resume highlights your most important skill areas and knowledge relevant to a given position. This format focuses less on where and when you obtained and used skills, and lists job titles, employers, and dates of employment in a brief section at the bottom of the page. It works well when your work experience is not directly related to your career goal or when you are making a career change.

### Hybrid Chronological/Skills


This type of resume combines elements from both chronological and skills formats. It allows you to keep the popular chronological format while also showcasing your most relevant skills near the top of the document. A hybrid resume can be organized in a number of ways, but many start with a skills summary followed by a list of experiences with descriptions in reverse chronological order grouped under skill headings. For an example  see p. 26.

For information about a **Curriculum Vitae (CV)**, used primarily for academic positions at the PhD level, go to  <http://career.berkeley.edu/Phds/PhDCV.stm>

## RESUME TIPS FOR FIRST YEAR STUDENTS

- As a first or second year student, it's okay to include work, accomplishments, leadership experience, and highlights of activities from high school. By your third year in college your resume should contain primarily college experiences and activities.
- If you don't have much work experience, incorporate other types of information into your resume.  see p. 21 for a list of Resume Components. Include some of the optional components marked with asterisks.
- If you're creating a resume for the first time, expect to spend several hours putting it together.

## SENDING RESUMES AND LETTERS ELECTRONICALLY

To send your resume via email, find out the employer's format preference when possible. Although some recruiters accept attachments, others prefer your resume in the text of the email message. If you can't find out the employer's preference, send it both ways in one message. Unless you are told otherwise, include a cover letter. Send both the resume and cover letter in one email message.  see p. 37 for an example.

When submitting a resume via an organization's website, use the formatting and display style recommended by the website.

### To send your resume as an attachment:

- Create your resume using a common word processing program.
- Give the document a name the hiring manager will associate with you, such as "MillerJennifer.doc." This will enable a recruiter to find your resume once it's saved on a computer. Don't name the document "Resume.doc."
- Be absolutely sure your document is free of viruses.
- Send it electronically to a friend to make sure it's easy to open, the formatting stays correct, and the document is virus-free.

### To send your resume in the text of the email message:

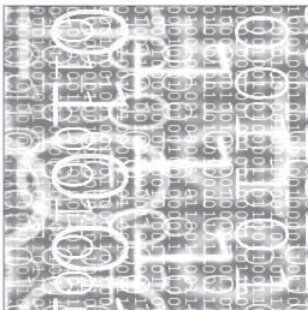
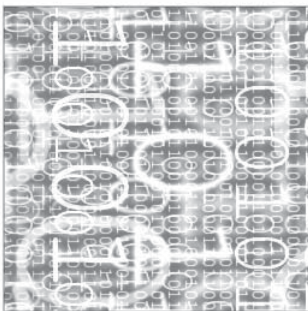
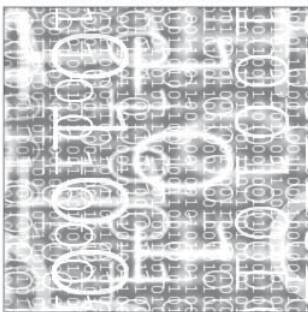
- The cover letter should appear first, above your resume.
- All text should be aligned left.
- Do not use bold, underlining, bullets, distinctive fonts, colored text, or html codes. Use asterisks (\*), plus signs (+), dashes, all capital letters, and combinations of these to highlight text.

- Save your cover letter and resume as "text only" or "plain text," then cut and paste them into the email.
- Send it electronically to yourself and to a friend with a different email system to see how it will look.
- Text resumes look plain and ordinary, but employers are used to this. They are most concerned with the content.

### To make your resume scannable:

Some large employers utilize resume database tracking systems. They scan incoming resumes into a database and when they have openings, they can retrieve resumes using relevant keywords.

- It's okay to ask an employer if you should provide a scannable resume. Some companies will indicate on their website that they scan resumes and even give formatting tips.
- Include industry or job-specific keywords, especially relevant skills, understandable abbreviations, major, specific fields of study, and experience (e.g., marketing research, java, html, sales, gel electrophoresis).
- Use 10 to 14 point font size.
- Do not use italics, underlining, fancy fonts, or multiple columns. Use spacing or all capitals for emphasis.
- Not all systems accept boldface, but unless you are instructed not to use it, it is probably fine.
- Do not center text.
- Print on white paper with a high-resolution laser printer.
- When submitting a hard copy by mail, do not fold it.



# Resume Components

COMPONENT	BASICS	COMMENTS
<b>Identifying Data</b>	Name, street address, email address and phone or message number at the top of the page (include area codes and zip codes). Include personal web page if you want employers to see it.	Voicemail message, email address, and website content should be appropriate for a potential employer.
<b>Education</b>	Name of school, major, degree received, graduation date, projected graduation date, or dates of attendance if no degree was completed.	Include any course titles relevant to the targeted position. Honors and grade-point average optional; include if among your strong points. If you attended more than one school, list the most recent first. You don't have to list all the schools you have attended. Do not list high school. Additional training may either go here or under a separate heading.
<b>Experience/Work History</b>	Paid, volunteer or military work. Emphasize tasks, skills, abilities, and accomplishments related to the targeted position. Give the job title, employing organization, and dates of employment.	Present achievements, contributions, and results or impact (e.g., streamlined a procedure or made a cost-saving suggestion). Experience does not have to be paid.

The components listed below are optional – use if appropriate for your background and the employers you're targeting

<b>Job Objective</b>	A one-line description of the type of position you want.	Follows your name and contact information at the top of your resume. Should be specific rather than a general statement of your interests.
<b>Skills &amp; Abilities or Summary of Qualifications</b>	Foreign languages, computer skills, office skills, lab techniques or transferable skills not mentioned elsewhere in the resume.	Can be combined under this heading or listed separately.
<b>Languages</b>	State if you are fluent in a foreign language.	If you understand a language but are not fluent, still mention it. For example: Fluent in Russian, conversational Spanish, or read and write French.
<b>Activities &amp; Interests</b>	In order of importance or reverse chronological order, list student activities/ organizations, professional associations and committees in which you have participated. List any offices that you held with the skills you used.	Include activities and interests that show leadership or initiative or that pertain to your career interest.
<b>Community Involvement/Volunteer Activities</b>	List offices held, organizations, projects, and accomplishments.	If the setting is political or religious, you may want to use generic descriptions (e.g., Youth Leader for church, Speech Writer for City Council candidate). If substantial, these may be listed under "Experience."
<b>Honors</b>	Recent graduates and continuing students can include academic honors such as Dean's List, honor societies and scholarships.	Can be listed separately or as a subsection under Education.
<b>Research &amp; Publications</b>	Briefly describe relevant research projects. List published articles, papers or books.	
<b>Travel</b>	Include if your career interest involves travel or knowledge of other cultures.	You can also use this as a way of distinguishing yourself if you have significant travel experience.
<b>References</b>	You do not need to end your resume with the phrase, "References Available on Request," but this is the best place to state that you have "Portfolio and/or writing samples available on request."	Create a separate page for references. List names, titles and contact information. Always ask permission before using anyone's name as a reference. Include people who know about your work related abilities, such as former employers, volunteer project supervisors, and faculty. Do not use relatives or friends.

## Resume Dos & Don'ts

### Do

- Use good quality (at least 20 lb. bond) paper
- Use a readable font and print on a high-resolution printer (laser is best)
- If you use an objective, make it specific
- Emphasize results produced or impact made, significant achievements, and recognition from others
- Quantify when possible and use specific examples
- Check the spelling of every word; make sure grammar and punctuation are correct
- Have someone proofread your resume
- Get feedback from several people
- Begin phrases with action verbs such as "developed," "initiated," etc.
- Be truthful about your accomplishments
- Keep your resume to one page unless you have extensive experience related to your job objective

### Don't

- Use resume templates that come with word processing software
- Begin phrases with "I" or use complete sentences
- Include personal information such as marital status, social security number, age, or national origin
- Use flashy graphics or colored paper
- Mention controversial activities or associations
- List unrelated, minor duties such as "opened mail" or "filed documents"
- Exaggerate your experience
- Use meaningless words or phrases such as "seeking a challenging position" or "seeking a position working with people"
- Start phrases in the experience section with "My responsibilities (or duties) included"
- Use abbreviations

## Resume Checklist

- Is the resume pleasing to the eye – easy-to-read font, good layout?
- Are your name, address, city, state, zip code, phone number and email address at the top of the page?
- Does your objective (if used) state clearly the functional areas in which you seek employment and the level of the job you want?
- Did you use bullets, bold, or all capitals to highlight key strengths?
- If you know your resume will be scanned, did you omit columns, underlining, and italics?
- Is information listed in order of importance and relevance to the position?
- Does the resume avoid generalities and focus on specific information about experience, projects, products?
- Did you check the spelling of every word and make sure the grammar and punctuation are correct?
- Do most phrases begin with action verbs such as "developed," "initiated," etc.?
- Have you been truthful about your accomplishments rather than being falsely modest or hyping them too much?
- If you were the employer, would you call you for an interview?

# Verb List for Resumes & Letters

## Management

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

## Communication

addressed  
arbitrated  
arranged  
authored  
collaborated  
**convinced**  
corresponded  
developed  
directed  
drafted  
edited  
enlisted  
formulated  
influenced  
interpreted  
lectured  
mediated  
moderated  
negotiated  
persuaded

promoted  
publicized  
reconciled  
recruited  
spoke  
translated  
wrote

## Research

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

## Technical

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

## Teaching

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

## Financial

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

## Creative

acted  
conceptualized  
created  
customized  
designed

developed  
directed  
established  
fashioned  
**founded**  
illustrated  
**initiated**  
instituted  
integrated  
**introduced**  
**invented**  
**originated**  
performed  
planned  
**revitalized**  
shaped

## Helping

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

Words in **bold** are especially good for pointing out accomplishments.

## Clerical or Detail Oriented

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

## More Verbs for Accomplishments

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

from *The Damn Good Resume Guide* by Yana Parker, Berkeley: Ten Speed Press