

# RESUME GUIDELINES

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Effective resumes are written with three key components in mind: format, content and impact. You want your resume to be easy to read, easy to understand, and compelling in showing that you are the right candidate for the opportunity.

## Resumes are typically written in two formats: chronological or functional

*Recruiters prefer chronological resumes*

**Chronological resumes** list all of your experience in reverse chronological order, with the most recent experience at the top. This format is the most common and most used today. It is best for those professionals who are seeking a role within their current industry or a similar industry.

**Functional resumes** focus on your skills and accomplishments. This format lists your experience in clusters, with relevant skills listed first and given the most space for description. Employment, education and training are listed on the bottom half of the resume, with much less detail.

## Best Practice for Writing a Resume:

**Focus on format.** You want your resume to be well-organized, well-spaced and easy to read quickly. Ensure that your font is uniform in size and style, your margins are balanced on all sides, your headings are consistent in style, and your experience is styled with consistency (*i.e. all organization names in bold, etc.*).

**Order of importance.** Recruiters scan resumes very quickly, focusing the longest on the top of the resume. The most relevant information for your intended audience should be as close to the top left of the resume as possible. For example, if you have been employed full-time, your Experience should be near the top of your resume. If you are a full-time graduate student, your Education section might be near the top left. This order may change depending on the role to which you are applying.

**Keep it simple.** Avoid lots of color and excessive symbols, as they distract the reader from your content. Choose fonts that are uniform across operating systems and are easy to read—Arial or Times, size 10 or 11. Use of bullets rather than paragraphs to allow the eye to easily focus on the content. Refrain from using text boxes or special resume templates. These risk transferring poorly when uploaded into an organization's applicant tracking system. They also make it difficult to edit your resume in the future.

**Consider your contact info.** List only one email address and one phone number. Choose the email and phone that you check most often. Ensure that your voicemail is not at capacity. If you have an old email account (*i.e. @aol.com*), consider opening a more modern one (*i.e. Gmail or yahoo*) to show tech savvy. Do not include your full address. City and state are sufficient. You can also list "Remote" if you are seeking remote roles. Include a personalized URL for your LinkedIn profile.

**Spell check.** Even one spelling error can remove you from consideration.

**Limit the length.** No matter your age, resumes should not be longer than 2 pages. Technology allows hundreds of applicants to apply to one job, leaving recruiters and hiring managers limited time to review all resumes. Keep your resume short and easy to skim within 8-10 seconds.

**Profile/Summary.** Create a summary section with about 3 sentences that describe yourself as a candidate who is ideally suited for the job to which you're applying. This summary may change every time you submit a resume. The title of this section should be branded according to the role you're targeting. It should not be called "Profile," "Summary," or "Objective."

**Key Skills/Accomplishments.** Recruiters often use an Applicant Tracking System (ATS) to screen and filter resumes based on key words, skills, etc. Identify the keywords and skills desired for your target industry and add them to the top of your resume. This can be a list of keywords or short phrases. Be thoughtful about the skills you identify. This skill section should be tailored to each position. Remember to highlight both soft and hard skills.

**Tailor the content.** Whether or not you submit a cover letter along with your resume, you want your resume to be able to stand alone and show that you are uniquely qualified for the job. Read the position description carefully and incorporate key words into your resume. Adjust the skills and attributes within your profile to mimic those desired. Reorder the bullets in your descriptions to list the most relevant skills and experience first.

**Make an impact.** The goal of a resume is help you move forward onto the next step of the application process. Write statements that showcase your accomplishments and outputs. Celebrate your achievements and make them known using language in your Experience section with bullets such as "resulting in" or "increased by". Inspire the hiring manager by showing them what great work you can accomplish if hired by them.

**Limit AI use.** AI tools can be great thought partners as you're crafting their resume. However, when used too often, they tend to create resumes that are generic and unoriginal. AI tools are also prone to fabricating information in order to answer your prompt effectively. If you choose to use AI to help with your resume, use it in small doses. For instance, ask for it to help you provide an example of an effective resume bullet. Or have it proofread a section for spelling and/or grammar mistakes. Or better yet, ask it to review a job description and pull out the top skills to highlight in your resume. Then, add them yourself.

**Own your resume.** Resumes are as unique as you and me. Seek multiple opinions on format and content, but ensure that the final product feels true to you. There is no one way to write a resume. Your resume is the first impression you make on a hiring manager, so ensure that you are putting your best foot forward.

# CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME

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## NAME

City, State · Phone · Email

### POSITION TITLE YOU'RE APPLYING FOR | KEY SKILLS/EXPERTISE

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A 3-5 sentence summary of who you are as a professional, why you do the work that you do, your key competencies and skills—select only the top 3. Explain what you bring to the table, and what you are looking to do.

Hard-working and enthusiastic professional seeking to transition my project management and interpersonal skills to ABC field. Experience managing cross-functional teams to deliver results and meet deadlines. Passionate about pursuing work that is mission-focused and makes a difference in my community.

**Selected Accomplishments:** (Highlight a few accomplishments that speak directly to the role you're applying to)

- More than # years professional service experience delivering high-quality customer service
- Developed agile interpersonal skills, having worked with a diversity of professionals, clients and staff members
- Experience meeting deadlines in a results-oriented environment

**Skills:** (List both soft and hard skills in this section. Be sure to tailor for each position to which you apply)

✓ Skill  
✓ Skill  
✓ Skill

✓ Skill  
✓ Skill  
✓ Skill

✓ Skill  
✓ Skill  
✓ Skill

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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List your professional experience, while highlighting the skills and special knowledge areas most relevant to the position you desire. Be sure to write statements that focus on accomplishments, rather than duties. Create actionable bullets that focus on an accomplishment in the context of the action taken. Highlight selected accomplishments, too. For example:

**Job Title, Employer, City, State**

Month Year-Present

- Description of relevant skills that highlight accomplishments
- Description of relevant skills that highlight accomplishments

**Selected Accomplishments:**

- Highlight specific project, award, accomplishment
- Highlight specific project, award, accomplishment

**Job Title, Employer, City, State**

Month Year-Month Year

- Description of relevant skills that highlight accomplishments

**Selected Accomplishments:**

- Highlight specific project, award, accomplishment

### VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE (optional)

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List the volunteer organizations that show significance, i.e. leadership, longevity, commitment to a cause, personal interest, etc. If organization is not well-known, then consider including a line that explains the purpose of the organization. For example:

**Title, Organization, City, State**

Month Year-Present

Community organization whose focus is to raise funds to support the local food bank.

- Description of relevant skills that highlight accomplishments

**Organization, City, State**

Month Year-Month Year

### EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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List schools/institutions from which you obtained a degree, certificate or specialized training. Start with the most recent first, and then go back in time. For example:

**Boston University, Boston, MA**

Month Year

Master of Business Administration, Finance concentration

**College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, MA**

Month Year

Bachelor of Arts, History

# FUNCTIONAL RESUME

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## NAME

City, State · Phone · Email

### POSITION TITLE YOU'RE APPLYING FOR | KEY SKILLS/EXPERTISE

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*A 3-5 sentence summary of who you are as a professional, why you do the work that you do, your key competencies and skills—select only the top 3. Explain what you bring to the table, and what you are looking to do.*

Hard-working and enthusiastic professional seeking to transition my project management and interpersonal skills to ABC field. Experience managing cross-functional teams to deliver results and meet deadlines. Passionate about pursuing work that is mission-focused and makes a difference in my community.

**Selected Accomplishments:** *(Highlight a few accomplishments that speak directly to the role you're applying to)*

- More than # years professional service experience delivering high-quality customer service
- Developed agile interpersonal skills, having worked with a diversity of professionals, clients and staff members
- Experience meeting deadlines in a results-oriented environment

### RELEVANT SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

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*Present your work experience by listing your most important skills and experience that pertain to the job for which you are applying. Then describe several activities and accomplishments from all of your jobs and life experiences to document each of these skills. Create actionable bullets that focus on an accomplishment in the context of the action taken. For example:*

#### Relevant Skill or Special Knowledge Area

- Activity/Accomplishment
- Activity/Accomplishment
- Activity/Accomplishment

#### Relevant Skill or Special Knowledge Area

- Activity/Accomplishment
- Activity/Accomplishment
- Activity/Accomplishment

#### Relevant Skill or Special Knowledge Area

- Activity/Accomplishment
- Activity/Accomplishment
- Activity/Accomplishment

### EMPLOYMENT HISTORY (a.k.a. PROFESSIONAL HISTORY)

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*List the employers from which you gained or used the skills and special knowledge areas mentioned above. Be sure to include the dates, job title, and employer, for example:*

**Job Title, Employer, City, State**

Month Year-Present

**Job Title, Employer, City, State**

Month Year-Month Year

**Job Title, Employer, City, State**

Month Year-Month Year

### EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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*List schools/institutions from which you obtained a degree, certificate or specialized training. Start with the most recent first, and then go back in time. For example:*

**Boston University, Boston, MA**

Month Year

*Master of Business Administration, Finance concentration*

**College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, MA**

Month Year

*Bachelor of Arts, History*