

Targeted Resumes

Resumes are the cornerstone to any job hunt and we all recognize the need to write a great one to find a position. But, did you know that hiring managers typically take less than 20 seconds to review a resume!? The key, then, is to get your entry-level resume in the “yes” pile by making it easy to read and in a pattern that puts your best foot forward and fast!

First, **lay a good foundation**. I suggest you do not use a resume template as very often these can be hard to edit and customize. (And as a student, you should be adding new information every few months!) Starting in Word will most likely be your best option. Keep it to one or two pages, tops. Neatness counts, so keep the format clean and uniform. And grammatical errors will take you out of the running every time, so triple-check your spelling!

At the top of the resume, list your **contact information**—

- City, state & zip code (street address not required, and not suggested if you do a lot of job hunting online)
- Professional, hyperlinked email address (Check often when on a job hunt!)
- Your best phone number that connects to a positive, appropriate voicemail message if unable to pick up the phone (Note: When you get a message, call back immediately once in a quiet location. Check often when on a job hunt!)
- Your LinkedIn vanity url (Don't have one? You should! See a career services representative for help)
- Your portfolio web page link (if a Marketing student with Adobe Creative Suite skills)

You might consider starting with an **Summary** statement which highlights what you are seeking in a broad sense and the soft skills (character traits and personal qualities) you bring to the table. This provides a framework in which the rest of the resume will be read. This should be one sentence – two sentences at the maximum. This is a good place to mention that resumes are professional profiles about a potential candidate – do not use the words “I, me, mine, or my”.

In the second section, list your **Education**—college level information only as high school education is assumed (unless you went to an elite High School or want to discuss honors/activities from that era). List GPAs above 3.0 and any awards received, associations joined, or academic clubs supported. In most cases, include Relevant Coursework that details courses that a recruiter or hiring manager will want to know you have taken.

In the third section, list the **Skills** that would make you a valuable employee. Brainstorm what you have learned in classes and previous positions to include in this section. This may force you to crack open a few dusty textbooks and notebooks! Remember that this section is about *hard* skills (software, techniques, applicable knowledge, professional abilities), not *soft* skills (character traits and personal qualities, like being a good listener, adaptable or hard working).

In the next section, list **Experience**— positions and activities that somehow relate to the field you are hoping to enter. This could include academic projects, internships, volunteering, and even industry blogging, as well as paid positions. It's important to think of concise and clear value-focused job descriptions where you create statements about the significance you had in the company through your job – not just listing the tasks you did (which is also part of it). The descriptions should not only address *what* you did, but *how* you did it, *why* you did it, and the *results* of your efforts (quantitative data is fabulous here). In this section, a “functional” format may be required (see Career Services for more information) or simple well developed statements about past positions which do not relate exactly, but reveal transferable skills. Focus on information that is relative to your current career goals. Use bullets, not paragraphs.

Finally, a **Leadership & Community Involvement** section would be great to add. Employers are seeking entry level talent who are natural leaders with potential to grow in the company. If you have served your community in a positive way, stepped up to fill a need, and volunteered to support a good cause, provide the name of the organization served, title of role or a brief description of service provided, and years of service. Also to include experiences that describe your well-roundedness – Glee Club? Chess Club? Soccer? Your potential employer may want to know this, especially if you held a leadership role! But remember, academic clubs and academic leadership should be housed in the Education section.

To **wrap it up**, name your file simply (“Jane Doe Resume”). Save it as a PDF to ensure anyone's computer will display it as intended. Don't: add references' contact information; include a photo; use loud colors/unusual fonts/odd-sized paper; or include salary history/reasons for leaving jobs.

If you use this pattern, the 20 second scan will show the employer that you are an educated and skilled professional worth speaking with further -and get you into the “yes” pile where you belong! Take the test— Review your resume for 20 seconds. Does it highlight your education, career skills and related experience? Make changes using the advice provided and request a resume review with a career services representative. We'll help you create a winning resume!