CRAFTING A RESUME

A resume is a formal document created to present your experience, skills, and accomplishments for the primary purpose of getting a job. This written document includes information about your educational background, work history, skills you possess as they relate to the job at hand, and professional credentials, awards, or accomplishments. Most professional positions require the submission of a resume along with an application to give the hiring manager a better idea of who you are and how your experience would align with the available position. Your resume and application will likely be the first impression you make with a company and it is important to be able to represent yourself well enough to stand out from the other applicants and land you an interview.

WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN A RESUME?

You will likely be writing your first resume in high school. This is an important time to practice creating resumes and learning about the different formats, styles, and information to be included in your resume so that when it is time to create a professional resume, you will already have some experience and knowledge on the process.

What to Include in a High School Resume

1. **Informal Work Experience & Activities**
   For your first resume, you may not have any actual work experience to include (however, if you do, you should definitely include it). Instead, you should focus on any experience you have with informal work such as baby- or pet-sitting, mowing lawns or shoveling snow, or anything else you might have done to earn money. You should also highlight any volunteer activities you've participated in such as community service, organizing or participating in fundraisers, etc. Think about all of the areas of your life and communities you are a part of, not just activities you've completed in school.

2. **Identify Leadership Experience**
   If you have ever been in a leadership position, such as the secretary or treasurer of a club or a team captain, be sure to include information about this on your resume. For each position or experience you include, list out your responsibilities in that position and any accomplishments you achieved in the position.

3. **Focus on Attitude & Work Habits**

   Employers will be most interested in the information that indicates what type of employee you might be so focusing on your attitude toward work and your personal work habits. If you are punctual and have a good attendance record, mention that. If you are studious, enrolled in (and doing well in) challenging courses such as Honors or AP, include that. If you have a good work ethic and some evidence of that, even a comment or recognition from a teacher, coach, or mentor, you should also highlight that here.

4. **Awards & Achievements**

   Think about your collective activities and participation in clubs, sports, classes, and other community-based or extracurricular activities and try to identify the achievements you've earned in all of those areas. Look for places where you've made a positive contribution and it's been recognized. Include these using verbs such as "enhanced, reorganized, increased, improved, initiated, or expanded". Also include here any advanced academic projects you've completed (again, AP tests or special projects).

What to Include in a Professional Resume

When you are ready to complete a professional resume, here are some guidelines for what type of information should be included:

- A **profile or objective** that outlines your goals and briefly tells employers what you have to offer.

- An optional **summary of qualifications** briefly states your skills, abilities, experience, and qualifications for the specific job.

- Your **work history** is the most important information on your resume. Employers will use this to see how your experience matches their preferences for a prospective employee.

- Include details about any **volunteer work** you've done that's either directly related to the job you're applying for or that you've done during any gaps in employment.

- **Education** is another important component of your resume. What information to include here depends largely on how long you've been out of school, but generally, including any degrees earned is sufficient.

- You will also want to mention any **certifications** you have. These should be professional certifications that you have worked toward.

- **Awards and accomplishments** you have earned will show potential employers that you have been recognized for your work ethic.

- In the skills section of your resume, list all of the **skills** you have that are directly related to the job for which you are applying. Focus on skills you have that match the listed preferred skills in the job posting first.

COMPARING RESUME FORMATS

There are three common types of resumes: **chronological**, **functional**, and **hybrid / combination**. Choosing the "right" format for you that best highlights your experience and skills can be a challenge, but knowing a little bit of information about each one can help.

1. A **chronological** resume highlights your work experience and the amount of time a person has spent in their career or industry. This format is best when a person's professional work experience closely matches the job requirements.

2. A **functional** resume focuses on a person's skills and talents and how they relate to the job for which they are applying. This is also known as a skills-based resume and is best suited for people working in technical or skill-based professions.

3. A **hybrid** resume combines aspects of both chronological and functional resumes by detailing skills and providing information about work experience.

To learn more about these resume formats and the information that should be included in each, visit these resources:
- Resume Formats from resume.io
- Resume Format Comparison Chart, Moore Norman Technology Center
- Resume Samples, Indeed

RESUME VS. CV

When discussing resumes, specifically outside of the U.S., you may also hear the term CV. This stands for Curriculum Vitae which is Latin for "course of life" meaning the course of your academic life. A CV is generally required for positions within academic institutions, such as fellowships, grants, postdoctoral positions, and teaching / research positions. A CV is also typically required for graduate school applications. In many European countries, a CV is meant to contain all job application documents, including a resume. In Canada and the United States, 'resume' and 'CV' are sometimes used interchangeably.

"Both CVs and Resumes:
- Are tailored for the specific job / company you are applying to
- Should represent you as the best qualified candidate
- Are used to get you an interview
- Do not usually include personal interests" ("Resume vs. Curriculum Vitae...")

A CV focuses primarily on your academic experience and achievements. CVs can, and should be, multiple pages in length, while a resume should be limited to one page or two (front and back) at most.

To learn more about CVs, check out these resources:
- Resume vs. Curriculum Vitae: What's the Difference?, UC Davis Internship & Career Center
- Resume vs. Curriculum Vitae: Differences, Definitions, and Tips, Indeed
- CV Format Guide: Examples and Tips, Indeed

HOW TO WRITE A RESUME

1. **Create an Outline** - This first step is focused on brainstorming all of the possible experiences, paid or unpaid, and skills and accomplishments that would be good to include in your resume. Just simply make a list to start, you can find more language to describe them later.

2. **Write Brief Descriptions of Each Item -** For each item you've listed in your outline, begin writing brief statements about each one that accurately describes your contribution or take-away as succinctly as possible. When writing, be sure to use verbs and active language such as led, organized, created, taught, trained, served, wrote, researched, edited, etc.

3. **Connect Your Experience to the Job Requirements -** Read the job description and match your experience to their requirements. Tell the truth, but think of experiences you have had that relate to the responsibilities of the job, even if you've never worked before.

4. **Tailor Your Resume to Each Job** - It is important to tailor your resume toward each different job you apply to. The basics of your resume will stay the same, but think about those connections and whether or not you can make small tweaks to your descriptions to better align to the job description for each job you apply to.

5. **Write a Cover Letter** - A cover letter is an important addition to your resume that can help you stand out to potential employers. This letter should identify your skills and knowledge and how they make you the best candidate for the job. "Your cover letter should do four things:
   a. Introduce you to the potential employer as a strong candidate
   b. Include your reasons the employer should consider you for the position
   c. Leave the employer with a positive and memorable first impression of you as a candidate
   d. Cause the hiring manager to contact you for an interview" ("How to Write an Entry Level Cover Letter")

6. **Proofread and Edit** - Be sure to carefully proofread your draft multiple times before you print any copies, and definitely before you submit your resume. Look for spelling and grammatical errors. It's also a good idea to have a parent, mentor, guidance counselor, teacher, or other trusted adult proofread as well and make suggestions for improvement. It's also important to edit your resume down to the absolute most important information, only. Your resume should be around one page. That's all.

7. **Clean & Neat Presentation** - You want to choose a standard, clean font to type your resume in and print it on clean white or cream colored paper only. You can buy heavier weight cardstock specifically for resumes, but that's not always necessary. To keep it protected, you can also cover your resume and cover letter in a book report cover or other folder or folio.