



Tips for Creating an Impactful Resume

Don't use an online template. Templates are designed to make your resume pretty, not to show off your skills and accomplishments, and they're difficult to customize. A basic format, like the attached sample resume, will give you room to really make the case for yourself. If you need even more space, make the margins a little smaller on all sides.

Create a header. Include your name, pronouns ([optional](#)), contact information, and LinkedIn custom URL. Be sure your email address is professional. Think "jbrown792@gmail.com," not "glitteryunicorn@gmail.com."

Lose the Objective or Profile section. Typically, these take up valuable space without saying anything important. Want the employer to know why you're interested in the job? Explain it in your cover letter. Want employers to know you're a "quick learner, team player, and good communicator"? Prove it to them by using your resume to show how you've demonstrated those skills with positive outcomes.

Keep it to one page. When you're ten years into your career, a multi-page resume may be appropriate. But as a student, it's not likely you'll have enough relevant experience to fill more than one page. If your resume is longer than that, reread it with a critical eye, asking yourself whether each entry really paints you as an exceptionally good candidate for the specific position you're applying for.

Don't try to include everything! Most hiring managers spend about ten seconds reviewing a resume, so don't make them hunt through long chunks of text or 20 entries to find out what you bring to the table – they might miss the important stuff completely. Instead, edit it down to the most impactful entries, those that show responsibilities and accomplishments directly relevant to the job you're applying for.

Do not use complete sentences. For ease of reading at a glance, use bullet points and sentence fragments.

Start each bullet point with an action verb. Employers want to know what you can do, so put that right up front. The more descriptive the verb, the better.

Include dates and location (city, state) for every entry. Entries should be listed in reverse chronological order, where the most recent experience is at the top.

Put your education section on top. As a student, this is where you are spending most of your time and getting most of your experience. Let the employer know that about you up front.

Think carefully about including your GPA. If including GPA is not required or is not the norm in your field, consider leaving it off unless it is truly exceptional (3.8 or above).

Consider a bullet under education for "Relevant Coursework," then list courses or projects that have prepared you for the position you're applying for. This shows employers that while you may not have direct experience in their field, you have important background knowledge that will help succeed at the job.

Be selective about high school accomplishments and jobs. By the time you're a college sophomore, you probably have experiences that are more relevant to the job or internship you want than that random summer job from when you were 16. The same goes for high school extracurriculars; keep only those that demonstrate skills that would be valuable to your desired employer.

Focus on major responsibilities and their associated outcomes or accomplishments. This shows the employer what you can do and how well you can do it, and that you have a track record of success when taking on important responsibilities. Responsibilities and accomplishments should be the focus of every single entry on your resume!

Quantify your accomplishments whenever possible. Use numbers to show your impact. Planned eight events; raised \$10,000; increased newsletter open rates by 20%; coached 30 twelve-year-olds, etc.

Visit the BSC Writing Center. Struggling to word your bullet points in the way that best shows off your skills? [Stop by the Writing Center](#) for one-on-one help. Writing Center tutors can also help with cover letters and personal statements!

Be thoughtful about including volunteer experiences. It's great to show community involvement, but don't waste valuable space listing a one-time service day. (You're not a Red Mountain Park volunteer just because you picked up trash there during first-year orientation.) Instead, highlight a repeated commitment to a cause or organization, something you regularly engage in and that has helped you develop as a person. If asked about it in your interview, you'll be able to tell a meaningful story with specific examples.

Proofread. Print your resume and read it on paper. Read it aloud. Ask a friend to read it for you. And obviously, spellcheck. Don't be disqualified because of a formatting mistake or a missing word.

A Note on References

References don't belong on your resume. You don't even need to include "References available upon request." It's assumed that if you're applying for a position, you have references available.

List your references on a separate page that uses the same header with your name and contact information as your resume. This is an easy, professional way to coordinate your application materials.

Choose references who can speak to your skills and accomplishments. References should be people who've seen you in action and can vouch for what you claim on your resume. Avoid using friends and relatives.

Be sure to list your relationship to your reference. State how they know you, for example "Supervisor, January 2019 – present" or "Professor, Nonprofit and Arts Marketing, Fall 2020."

Always ask permission to use someone as a reference. Also ask for their preferred contact information.

Send your references a copy of your resume and, when possible, job descriptions for the positions you're applying for. This will help them better speak to your relevant skills and accomplishments.