

# Creating Your Resume'



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# Creating Your Resumé

How important is a good resumé? It may be possible to get a good job without a resumé, but your chances are much better if you have one.

Many websites and books show you how to create resúmes. The information below can help you to build a good, basic resumé that works. It doesn't matter if you have little or no employment history, or many years of employment.

It is very important to customize your resumé for the particular employer you are contacting, for the job you are seeking, for aspects of your personal background to highlight, and for the particular skills you can bring to a job. Attention to details is vital. You have only a few seconds to capture the employer's interest with your resumé.



## What Not to Include on Your Resumé

- Some things should never appear on your resumé. They include things that have fallen out of favor since your last resume, as well as items that are simply not needed. Here are things to avoid:
- Personal information like your age, social security number, race, religion, gender, marital status—Some of this information might be needed for international applications, but it is generally inappropriate to include on your resumé.
- Salary expectations and salary history—If a request for this information comes up during an interview, be prepared to answer. However, keep your salary expectations out of your resumé.
- Photos—Photos are generally discouraged when you apply for jobs in the United States, (though they may be needed when applying for jobs in other countries). The reason is that a photo puts the job applicant at risk for discrimination. Even though you want your resume to represent you, another purpose of the resume is to get you an invitation to an interview.



*More and more employers are looking to social media to connect with potential employees, especially LinkedIn. So, make sure your social media accounts include a professional photo if you are job searching. Also, be sure to remove any unprofessional photos or anything that you might not want a potential employer to see.*

- Hours worked at past jobs—The number of hours you worked at a past job don't need to be outlined; simply noting it was a part-time or full-time job is fine.
- "References Available Upon Request"—This statement is not necessary; it is one of those things that has fallen out of favor over time. Be prepared with a list of references to provide when they are requested.
- Mistakes—Although "no errors" should be a given, people still provide resumes that contain misspelled words, problems with punctuation, and other issues. Make sure your resume is free of errors. If you aren't comfortable with spelling or grammar, ask somebody else to proof your resume.

## Creating a Strong Resumé

**Length**—At one time, resúés over one page in length were automatically thrown out. While you want your resumé to be brief, it also needs to represent you well, even if extra pages are needed. Remember, the purpose of a resumé is to sell you and your skills to the person reading it. It is a marketing tool. Your resumé should focus on getting the reader's attention (in a good way) and showing how your skills fit the job you are seeking. Another purpose of the resumé is to get you an invitation to an interview. In general, if you have fewer than 10 years of experience related to the career goal, your resumé should be limited to a single page. One page also works for people looking at major career changes or people who held one or more jobs with the same employer. You can expand your resumé beyond one page if you have more than 10 years of experience, if you have worked in a highly technical field and need to explain your technical skills and knowledge, or you have other information that requires detailed explanation. Sometimes, resúés can reach three or more pages in length, but this is usually reserved for executives and senior managers with extensive leadership experience, or individuals in academics or science who have long lists of publications, presentations, research projects, licenses, patents, and other accomplishments that must be included. That information could even be included in an online supplement to your resume, such as a link to a personal website or digital portfolio.



List the most important information on the first page of the resumé. When you are organizing information into sections, such as job responsibilities, start with general information and then move into specifics. For example, if you were a shift manager at Taco Hut during the summer, your description could look something like this:

*Taco Hut, Shift Manager*

*Responsible for managing the crew and operations during the evening shift. Scheduled, trained and managed crew of three to four during evening shift. Closed and balanced registers at the end of the shift. Dealt with customer complaints as needed.*

**Presentation**—A resumé should always be printed neatly and clearly. Be sure that the printer produces high-quality copy. If it does not, use a friend's or go to a copy center or an office supply store (many of them offer copy services). Print the resumé on high-quality paper (which is better than what you pull out of a copy machine). Bond paper, identified by a watermark that is visible when you hold it up to light, works well. White is still the best color paper for resúés, but ivory/cream and pearl gray may be acceptable. Do not select darker tones in those shades and avoid pale blue, canary yellow, light green or pink—even if you like those colors personally. Stick with neutral colors and use black ink.

Make sure you have one-inch margins all around your page—the sides, top, and bottom. Use white space between sections, such as by double-spacing between the sections, so your resumé doesn't look crowded. Choose a basic font that is easy to read. Don't use a font that looks like handwriting or that is fancy. You can use bullets and bold, but don't get carried away with them. Also, stick with one font, rather than trying to be creative by using several fonts.



*A clean, easy-to-read resumé gives the potential employer the impression that you value neatness and organization. These are qualities that any employer wants to find in a new employee!*



## What to Include On Your Resumé

People used to include all kinds of personal information on their resume. However, it is illegal for a potential employer to ask questions about or to discriminate based on race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity, sexual orientation and pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information. None of this information is really relevant to your ability to do a job, so don't include it on your resumé.

The interviewer may ask you about hobbies, civic clubs, social involvement, etc., but a list of these does not belong on a resumé—unless a particular item directly relates to your ability to do the job. Now that you know what NOT to include, here is information that you should include:

- Information that identifies you—This includes your name, address, and telephone number. You will probably want to include an email address as well. Do not include your social security number—you don't know who will have access to your resumé and you don't want to share this information with just anyone. When you are hired, you can provide your number at that time.
- Occupational experience—Except for first-time job seekers, this will probably take up the most space on the resume, so give it the most attention. Make sure job titles are accurate and don't create a false image of what your job actually was. "Trash collector" is much more accurate than "Solid domestic refuse disposal facilitator." If there are gaps in your employment history due to layoffs or other factors, organize your resumé so that those gaps are less obvious.



*NEVER lie, embellish or try to give false information about your background on your resume. Instead, be honest and be prepared to present reasons for the gaps, as well as ways you have dealt with any negative elements.*

- Specific skills—A list of specific skills that you have is a good idea because it lets the employer know that there are a number of things you can do, not just several things you know about. Again, be honest and truthful about your capabilities. It might be very embarrassing to score 45 words per minute on a keyboarding test for the employer after listing 60 words per minute on a resumé.



*List any significant computer skills you have, including particular software packages or other applications. Computer skills are needed in nearly every field of work and are a vital part of many jobs. Know which skills you have that will be especially helpful in positions for which you apply.*

- Educational background—This is important to many employers. It can show if you have specific education and training in an area. It also gives the employer an idea of how current your education/training is and whether you have gotten additional education/training after you started work. Being able to list certifications, licenses, and reputable training programs can be a real plus, as long as they are current (certifications/licenses) and accurately reflect what you have completed. Avoid degrees from unaccredited schools and certifications from correspondence schools. If you are currently enrolled in a training program, list your expected date of completion.
- References—List references only if the advertisement for the job specifically asks you to include them with your resumé. If this is the case, you should create a separate page with only your references on that page. Three strong references should be plenty. Be sure to select persons who will give you a good recommendation and from whom you have received permission to use them as a reference. Your

current or most recent employer is normally a good start, along with other supervisors, instructors, civic or volunteer leaders, responsible co-workers and others who know your work skills. Family friends, relatives and neighbors are not the best choices. Be sure to include your references' names, titles, where they work, their email addresses, and phone numbers.

You may want to take a copy of your references page with you to the interview, in case the interviewer asks for them.

## Construction

It is very important to proofread your resume before giving it to any employer. Check it yourself, then check it again, and then ask someone you trust to check it one last time. Look for misspelled words and poor grammar. Many employers will not even consider giving you an interview if your resumé or letter of application contains spelling errors.

Be consistent. If you capitalize all of the initial letters in one job title, do it for all job titles. Indentions should be uniform, not changing from one section to another. Bolding should be consistent in each section. If you use semicolons to separate items in one section, do not switch to commas in the next section. Use either -ing (working, supervising, coordinating, etc.) or -ed (worked, supervised, coordinated, etc.), but do not use them together.

Whenever possible, use action verbs to describe activities, responsibilities, or accomplishments. You want the employer to know that you will be an energetic, productive employee. Use words such as supervised, developed, initiated, supported, coordinated, assisted, organized, planned, completed, established, or started. These verbs have more impact.

Your resumé is one place where you won't have to worry about using complete sentences. You can use sentence fragments, especially in bulleted lists. Simply be consistent when you use bullets and lists, such as skills or accomplishments.



## Format

Depending on your work history, career goals, and previous accomplishments, you can choose from different formats for your resumé. Any of them will work for marketing your skills, so you should choose the one that best fits your individual needs and job goals.

- The functional, or targeted, resumé highlights major accomplishments, skills, and strengths. It organizes skills into clusters that support your work objectives. Previous job titles and dates in your work history are either downplayed or left off altogether. Employers don't favor this format because it can be hard to tell when or where skills were learned or used. However, it can also make specific required skills easy to find. This format is used by people who have gaps in employment, those who change jobs often, or those who can't show skill growth in their employment. It can also be okay for someone just entering the job market.
- The chronological resumé lists your work history in order. You list your most recent work experience first and work backwards in time. It can do a good job of showing how you have progressed or grown in experience or responsibility. It is good for entry-level job seekers, students and others with little experience, and people wanting to move up the career ladder. Employers tend to be familiar with and like this format.
- The combination format combines features of the functional and chronological formats. It often begins with an overview or summary of the skills you have that fit the job for which you are applying (from the functional format). This is followed by sections that cover your experience, education, and accomplishments in reverse chronological order. This format is really not the best one for students and those just entering the job market, since it focuses on developed skills. It is best for people who want to highlight well-developed skills and who want to transfer skills from one industry to another.



The following pages include some simple resume samples.

## ***Functional Resumé Sample***

### **John C. Doe**

123 S. Main Street  
Your Town, Oklahoma and 12345  
000.000.0000  
john.c.doe@mail.com

#### **Computer Technician Background**

- Possess more than two years experience as Computer Repair Technician.
- Maintain computer support at three locations with over 300 computers and 150 printers.
- Trubleshoot and repair all types of personal computers, printers, and microcomputers.
- Set up and operate LanTastic networking package; have knowledge of various networking packages.
- Install and set up communication packages (modems, soft talk, etc.).
- Supervise PC support for software packages: Microsoft Office Suite, Creative Suite.

#### **Educational Background**

- Computer Repair Technician, Certificate of Completion, Canadian Valley Technology Center.
- Amber-Pocasset High School, High School Diploma

#### **Work History**

- Canadian Valley Technology Center, El Reno, Oklahoma. June 2013 to Present. Computer Repair Technician.
- Instructor, electronics, Summer Expo, 2015.
- Eason Oil Company, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. 2010-2011. Driller.
- Viersen-Cochran Drilling, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. 2009 - 2010. Floorhand and Derrickman.
-

## **Combination Resumé Sample**

### **Jane Z. Doe**

456 N. Main Street  
Your Town, Oklahoma and 12345  
000.000.0000  
jane.z.doe@mail.com

#### **Special Skills**

- Drafting and design, including structural and mechanical architectural design.
- Trained in computer-aided drafting — both CAD and Auto CAD.
- Familiar with all equipment used in the drafting profession.
- Ability to meet and get along well with others.

#### **Educational Background**

- Career-Technical Canadian Valley Technology Center. Completed two-year Drafting and Design Training Program, May 2016
- College El Reno Junior College, Spring 2016. Concurrent enrollment in general education classes. Completed 6 hours during senior year.
- High School El Reno High School. Graduated May 2016.

#### **Work Experience**

- July 2014 to Present Customer service, handling cash transactions, and supervision of carry-out personnel.  
  
During my three years in the grocery business, I have moved up from a carry-out position to the above described duties. Employers during this period of time were Homeland, El Reno; IGA, Yukon; and Hales'/Stevenson's Grocery, El Reno.

#### **Special Honors and Activities**

- El Reno FFA, member 2014-2016. Awarded Greenhand 2014, served as Historian 2015, Vice President 2016.
- Skills USA member 2015-2016.



## Resumé Worksheet

A resume worksheet can help you outline your personal information in advance, so you can put your resumé together quickly and easily. It can also help you avoid leaving out important details. Use it to create a rough draft of your resumé and then refine it.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Work Skills** — Listing your work-related skills may be the most important thing you can do for yourself in your job search. Assess your background and look for all the positive things about yourself. List all the skills you have acquired through work experience, school, or specialized training. Hint: Don't forget the skills you have acquired through hobbies, school-related activities (like leadership roles), and volunteer work.

**Work Experience** (Always begin with your most recent employment.)

Employer Name

Address

Dates \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Job Title  
(mo. & yr.) (mo. & yr.)

Duties/Responsibilities (list everything you are doing or did at this job.)

Employer Name

Address

Dates \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Job Title  
(mo. & yr.) (mo. & yr.)

Duties/Responsibilities (list everything you are doing or did at this job.)

Employer Name

Address

Dates \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Job Title  
(mo. & yr.) (mo. & yr.)

Duties/Responsibilities (list everything you are doing or did at this job.)

Use another piece of paper if you have more than three previous employers.

## Education

High School: Date Completed \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_

Career-Technical Education: Date Program Completed \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_

Course(s) Taken \_\_\_\_\_

College: Date Completed or Number of Hours Taken \_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_

Course(s)/Major \_\_\_\_\_

Degree(s) obtained \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Education (courses, seminars, etc.)

Type Training \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_

Date Attended \_\_\_\_\_ Course or Seminar Name \_\_\_\_\_

Type Training \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_

Date Attended \_\_\_\_\_ Course or Seminar Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Additional Information — Special Activities/Honors

Name of Group or Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Activity or Honor \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Group or Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Activity or Honor \_\_\_\_\_

**References** — These should be persons whom you have contacted and who have agreed to be a reference for you. Your first choices should be current or former employers, supervisors, co-workers, and/or instructors. *Remember, these will go on a separate sheet of paper from your resumé and only sent if requested.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

(street) (city) (state) (zip)

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

(street) (city) (state) (zip)

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

(street) (city) (state) (zip)

Email \_\_\_\_\_

## Cover Letter

Do you need a cover letter in every situation? Maybe not if you are applying for a part-time job at a local restaurant. If you are looking for a full-time position you want to keep for a while, it is a good idea to include a cover letter. The cover letter allows you to introduce yourself and is part of the initial screening process for many positions. It also allows you to point out your experience and skills, explain how you are a good fit for the position, and state what you can bring to the company or organization.

Your cover letter should be specific to the employer and the position for which you are applying. Follow the same rules concerning grammar, punctuation, and spelling, as you did with your resumé. Errors in a cover letter will reflect poorly on you. Here are a few guidelines to follow:

- Create your own, personal letterhead for a professional look. Enter your name on the top line, using a slightly larger font than the rest of the letter. On line two, give your address, including city, state, and ZIP code. On line three, list your email address and your phone number.
- Address the cover letter to a specific person, if possible.
- Make sure you have the correct name of the person to whom you are addressing the cover letter. Check the spelling of the person's name, as well as his/her proper title.
- Use proper margins, fonts, paper, and ink—just as with your resume. If you are submitting your application online, make sure your cover letter remains formatted correctly; send it to yourself and to some other people as a test.
- Double-space between the paragraphs in your letter.
- Below your letterhead, list the date you write the letter. (Be sure to send the cover letter on or soon after this date.) Follow the date with the name of the person who will receive the letter, his/her title, the employer name, and the employer address—just as you would address an envelope.



*If you don't have all of this information, do some research online. Check the employer's website. You may be able to locate the name of the person who will receive your cover letter and resume, as well as that person's title. If not, email or call the most appropriate contact person at the employer and ask for the information.*

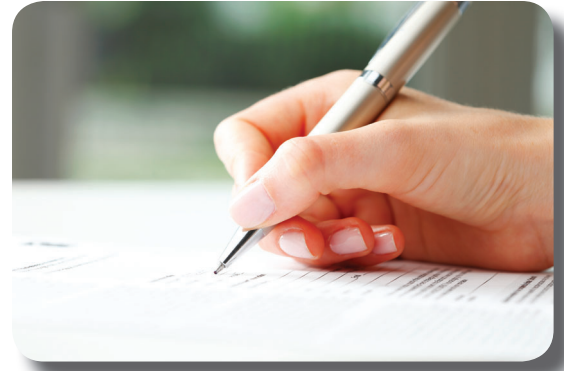
- Use the proper salutation (Mr., Mrs., Ms., Dr., etc.), followed by a colon.
- In the first paragraph, let the hiring manager (or other contact person) know the job for which you are applying, how you found out about the job opening, and why you are interested in the position. This should be a brief paragraph.
- In the second paragraph, sell yourself—make the reader want to read your resume. Explain why you want to do the type of work this job requires, why you want to work for this employer, why you want a career in this field. Point out a couple of ways that your skills, education, or experience relate to the job. If you can, use words from the job description and tie them to your experience. Be sure you really understand what the position involves and that you can deliver on any statements you make. This portion of the cover letter can have 1-2 paragraphs, if necessary, but keep the entire letter to a single page.
- In the final paragraph, repeat your enthusiasm and interest in the employer and in the position. This paragraph is where you “close the sale” or “ask for action”—it is where you ask for an interview or ask for the opportunity to discuss the details



of the position in person. (You can add your phone number here, if you choose, to make it easy for the reviewer to schedule an interview.) Be sure to thank the reader for taking the time to review your application.

- Close your letter with Sincerely or other appropriate closing, and sign or type your full name (don't use nicknames here). Include the Enclosure: Resume line below your signature if you are mailing your application, or state that there is an attachment if you are emailing it.

Do some research about the employer—the more you know about the employer and the industry, the better. You can use this knowledge to target your skills to the employer's needs in your cover letter. Use action verbs in your cover letter, just as in your resumé. Avoid using flattery, enhancing your achievements, or using unusual words. Keep your letter honest and to the point. Keep in mind that your cover letter is also a sample of your writing ability.





## **Sample Cover Letter**

**Dan Doe**  
123 N. West St. Mytown, OK 12345 123.456.7890  
dandoe@mymail.com

Date

Mr. John Smith  
AAA Welding Corporation  
789 N. South Street, Oklahoma City, OK

Dear Mr. Smith:

I am a recent graduate of Canadian Valley Tech's welding program and writing to apply for the welding position I saw advertised in Job Search OK. I am enclosing my resumé for your review.

My qualifications for the position include completion of two years of welding courses at Canadian Valley Technology Center in El Reno, Oklahoma, and attendance at a workshop on wrought iron design. I am skilled in all types of metal fabrication, and familiar with welding equipment as specified in your advertisement. In addition, I hold a current state certificate in MIG, TIG, and stick welding.

During my training at Canadian Valley, I was an active member of Skills USA and gained valuable leadership and team building skills that I can bring to this position.

I look forward to meeting with you to discuss my qualifications. Please call me for an interview at 123.456.7890 any day after 3:30 p.m. or email me at the above email address.

Sincerely,

Dan Doe

Enclosure: Resume