

# The Basics of Resume Writing

## Samford University Career Development Center

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### I. Purpose

The purpose of the resume is to convince employers of what you have to offer, and how your skills match the skills he/she is seeking for the opening. The goal of a resume is to lead to an interview invitation.

### II. How to start

Brainstorm by making a list of all of the work and in-depth volunteer experience you have had, and under each of those write down all of the things you did for each experience. For upperclassmen this list will include college experiences only; for underclassmen, this could include some experiences from high school. Write down your education, special skills, and any other activities you've been involved in. At this point, don't worry about format--- just focus on putting the information down on paper.

### III. Contents

Some of the components of a resume typically include:

- A. Identification:** Include your name, address (either your mailing address, or just your city, state, or zip), phone number, and e-mail. You may also include a link to a portfolio, website, or LinkedIn page *as appropriate* (and typically no more than one of them).
- B. Objective:** This is not a required section, but it can be helpful if you need help making your resume fill a page. IF you use an objective, make sure it is *targeted*. It should include the name of the company and position, if appropriate, and should focus on what you have to offer an employer; this motivates them to continue reading. When using the title, use "or related position" as well, to show that you are open to other positions for which you may be qualified.

*Examples:*

"A sales or related position at \_\_\_\_ (company name) which would allow me to use my communication skills and marketing experience gained through coursework and related internships."

- C. Education:** List your degree (Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Business Administration, etc.), institution name, city, state; your major(s), and date of graduation. Include your GPA if it is a 3.0 or better, using the format of GPA: 3.2/4.0, or GPA 3.43/4.00. See resume samples for order of these items.

If you received another degree from a previous institution, skip a line and list the name of your other school(s), city and state, and dates you attended.

If you participated in a study abroad, skip a line after your university information and list it in the format of: **Study Abroad:** Name of University, city, country, dates.

- D. Experience:** Employers prefer the reverse chronological format. List the most recent job first, the next most recent and so on. It is easy to read and identifies your work experience clearly. Types of work experiences that may be included are summer, part-time, full-time, in-depth volunteer, and campus work as well as internships, and extensive externships. Depending on how much you have done, you may or may not include all of these. For upperclassmen, only use the jobs you had while you were in college unless they are particularly relevant to the job you

are seeking. If you are a freshmen or sophomore, you may include some experiences from high school.

You need to include all the important information: Job title, name of employer, city, state, and dates of employment (see examples)

To create your descriptions, look at your brainstorming list and what you jotted down for your duties under each job. From that, craft your descriptions. A few points:

- Start each bullet with a verb or adverb, present tense if you are still doing it, past tense if you are not.
- Think “I” when starting each one, but don’t write it. Example: “(I) Assist customers...”
- Use transferable skills whenever possible; a transferable skill is one that can be used in multiple situations, even those which aren’t related. The ability to multi-task, work in a fast-paced environment, accurately process monetary transactions, and adapt communication skills based on customer needs are all examples of transferrable skills.
- Remember that your first resume is a draft; bring it in to the Career Development Center and we’ll be happy to give you feedback!

**E. References:** Always make a separate reference page. Three to five references are appropriate. Include names, titles, city/state, phone numbers, and e-mails. Make sure you put a “Mr.”, “Ms.”, or “Dr.” before each name. ASK PERMISSION BEFORE USING INDIVIDUALS AS REFERENCES, and also ask which phone number and email you should use (personal vs. work). See sample reference sheet for additional tips.

**E. Additional Sections:**

Each person’s resume is different. Based on your experiences and the purpose of your resume, you may have additional sections to include, but not limited to, some of the following:

1. *Activities:* List any campus or community activities you've been involved with while in college. List the name of the organization and positions held (if any).
2. *Special Skills:* List any relevant skills for the position to which you are applying, such as foreign language skills, software/hardware knowledge, etc.
3. *Honors/Awards/Scholarships:* Focus on any special achievements or recognitions. If listing scholarships, describe their nature (i.e. academic, leadership based, etc.)
4. If you have a great deal of experience, you may find it helpful to divide it into several sections, such as “Work Experience” and “Volunteer Experience”, or “Related Experience” and “Other Experience”.

#### **IV. Final Notes**

##### ***Formatting***

- Keep it to one page if at all possible; based on experience and major, it may be acceptable for it to be longer. CVs are typically greater in length (see example),
- Use the same style of font throughout your resume, references, and cover letter; use the same size font throughout as well, with the exception of your name, which should be larger.
- Use italics and bold to emphasize and highlight, but don't over do it.
- Use indented and "bulleted" statements.
- **As needed, you should customize your resume for each type of position you are seeking.**
- Use good quality resume paper if the employer requires a hard copy. White or ivory are the most acceptable colors. You can print on the resume paper or print on plain paper and have it copied (professionally) onto resume paper.

**Content**

- PROOFREAD! PROOFREAD! PROOFREAD! Have it reviewed by the CDC as well.
- Use quantities, amounts, and dollar values where they enhance your job description; this also applies to use of software.
- Don't list gender, marital status, health, religion, political affiliation, or other personal irrelevancies; do not include pictures.
- Don't include information from high school, except in the rare occasion where it clearly demonstrates you've been interested in and involved in the field you are pursuing since that time.
- Don't explain unrelated information in detail. No one is hired from a resume or application, so save your explanations for the interview.
- Don't use words such as "I," "me," or "my" in your resume, except in the objective.

*Make an appointment with the Career Development Center so a counselor can assist you with this important process!*

***For more information, stop by or call the Career Development Center  
217 Dwight Beeson Hall • 205-726-2980***

ACTION VERBS

**Management Skills**

administered  
analyzed  
assigned  
attained  
chaired  
contracted  
consolidated  
coordinated  
delegated  
developed  
directed  
evaluated  
executed  
improved  
increased  
organized  
oversaw  
planned  
prioritized  
produced  
recommended  
reviewed  
scheduled  
strengthened  
supervised

**Communication Skills**

addressed  
arbitrated  
arranged  
authored  
corresponded  
developed  
directed  
drafted  
edited  
enlisted  
formulated  
influenced  
interpreted  
lectured  
mediated  
moderated  
motivated  
negotiated

persuaded  
promoted  
publicized  
reconciled  
recruited  
spoke  
translated  
wrote

**Research Skills**

clarified  
collected  
criticized  
diagnosed  
evaluated  
examined  
extracted  
identified  
inspected  
interpreted  
interviewed  
investigated  
organized  
reviewed  
summarized  
surveyed  
systemized

**Technical Skills**

assembled  
built  
calculated  
computed  
designed  
devised  
engineered  
fabricated  
maintained  
operated  
overhauled  
programmed  
remodeled  
repaired  
solved  
trained  
upgraded

**Teaching Skills**

adapted  
advised  
clarified  
coached  
communicated  
coordinated  
developed  
enabled  
encouraged  
evaluated  
explained  
facilitated  
guided  
informed  
initiated  
instructed  
persuaded  
set goals  
stimulated

**Financial Skills**

administered  
allocated  
analyzed  
appraised  
audited  
balanced  
budgeted  
calculated  
computed  
developed  
forecast  
managed  
marketed  
planned  
projected  
researched

**Creative Skills**

acted  
conceptualized  
created  
designed  
developed

directed  
established  
fashioned  
founded  
illustrated  
instituted  
integrated  
introduced  
invented  
originated  
performed  
planned  
revitalized  
shaped

**Helping Skills**

assessed  
assisted  
clarified  
coached  
counseled  
demonstrated  
diagnosed  
educated  
expedited  
facilitated  
familiarized  
guided  
referred  
rehabilitated  
represented

**Clerical or Detail Skills**

approved  
arranged  
catalogued  
classified  
collected  
compiled  
dispatched  
executed  
generated  
implemented  
inspected  
monitored  
operated

organized  
prepared  
processed  
purchased  
recorded  
retrieved  
screened  
specified  
systemized  
tabulated  
validated