

# How to Write a Résumé

A collaboration between the Career Center and Writing Center

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## **General Tips**

Resumes concisely state your qualifications, experience, and aspirations for the organizations you seek to join. They detail your achievements in education, work, volunteer activities, and life experiences to explain why you are a good fit for a position.

Highlight the education and certificates, relevant coursework or projects, work experience, and volunteer engagements that are most relevant to a specific job, emphasizing the skills or qualities that have been praised. Relevant life experiences can also help you pursue jobs and internships.

Throughout your professional life, continually record and promote your unique skills and talents. Revising your professional materials is key for exploring opportunities and planning your career intentionally.

## **Style Guide**

* Capitalize proper nouns.
* Write out numbers from one to nine, and use numerals for 10 and above.
* Write out an acronym the first time it is used: e.g., Management Information Systems (MIS).
* Choose one date format and stick with it: e.g., August 2024 or Aug 2024.
* Format numbers consistently, either as percentages (e.g., 60 percent) or numerals (e.g., 60%).
* Avoid first-person pronouns like I, me, or my as much as possible.
* Use digital-friendly fonts such as Calibri or Arial for visual clarity.
* Use bold and bullet points to highlight items like job titles, duties, degrees, and skills.

## **Proofreading Guide**

* Carefully review every word and format detail; spell check won't catch all errors.
* Take a break, then proofread again; ask a friend to proofread as well.
* Ensure your contact information is accurate and your email address is professional.
* Save your resume in multiple places using both .docx and .pdf formats.
* Perform the 20-second test: have someone read your resume for 20 seconds and see if they can identify the type of job you are seeking.

## **Composing Guide**

Use these five questions as a guide for composing your entire resume; elements from your detailed responses here could be especially valuable for the Summary section.

1. *What is my purpose for this resume and what are my objectives for this search?*

Is it aimed at supporting a specific job or internship application, a general search, grad school or scholarship application, or getting a grant? Have a simple, easy to update version that provides a complete record of your educational and professional life. That way you’ll be able to revise it quickly should a sudden opportunity come up.

Reflecting on this question can help you create an objective statement that is clear and useful – usually these are expected to be the last phrase of the entry. Word them actively using phrases such as, seeking a position in …; excited to join …; interested in … or looking forward to…

1. *What do I want to call myself?*

Even if you do not include a ‘Summary’ on your resume, have in mind a name for the professional role that you are seeking. If you are including a fuller profile or objective statement, open it by highlighting a general title from the field, your status as a college student, recent graduate, or that role from the posting to indicate how you see yourself as a member of the field. Consider adding descriptive adjectives like detail-oriented, creative, empathetic, or effective to this title.

The idea is to efficiently highlight the authentic, unique qualities that make you a good candidate. To find these, recall how people have praised your work as a student, employee, or volunteer for things that are relevant to this job search.

1. *What education and work experiences are relevant qualifications?*

List trainings, licensures, and relevant coursework as well as completed or anticipated degrees. What fields have you worked in already -- might they be relevant? Remember, relevant volunteer work experience may be as valuable as paid work in explaining your qualifications.

1. *What are my general professional and personal strengths?*

Skill sets, personal attributes, research interests, significant life experiences, hobbies, projects, or ways you contribute to your community or the world are just some of the categories to reflect upon here. Your commitment to growing professionally in relation to a specific element of the field is a strength that can be touched on in the ‘Summary.’

Something to reflect upon here is whether and how to include relevant strengths, personal attributes and identities or life challenges overcome. Having a conversation with a career counselor, advisor, or tutor can be an excellent way to develop a solid, authentic resume that includes a fully rounded account of how you can contribute as a professional in a given field.

1. *What do I want to highlight for this search?*

Place the strongest details at the beginning of the document. Mention them briefly in the ‘Summary’ then explain again in descriptions of professional work, internships, volunteer work, academic projects, personal projects, etc.

## **Sample Sections for Resumes**

### Header

Contact information should include: Full name (preferred name), phone number, and e-mail. Links to portfolios or sites such as LinkedIn are optional. Use the same header and fonts for different materials to present a cohesive set of documents.

#### SAMPLE ONE

**Faduma Hassan**

(612) 123-4567 | faduma.hassan@my.metrostate.edu | www.linkedin.com/in/fhassan/

#### SAMPLE TWO

**Asad Abdullahi, r.n.**

(612) 872-9899 | asadabdulrn@gmail.com | R.N. License: MN #494944

#### SAMPLE THREE

**Aliah Chau**

(651) 630-2222 • aliah.chau@my.metrostate.edu • www.linkedin.com/in/aliahchau/ • she/her

#### SAMPLE FOUR

**James Johnston**

(612) 729-1999 • j.johnston@outlook.com • https://github.com/j-johnston

### Summary

This is about defining who you are and articulating your professional aspirations to share with employers. The rest of the resume supports the summary; it serves as a cornerstone for your case to get hired. Use the ‘Composing Guide’ to help draft this section.

No matter how you format it—brief phrases, bullet points, lists, or a combination—it should be under 70 words and take no more than a few seconds to scan and understand. Always place it immediately after the ‘Header’ section. Emphasize your best qualifications from professional work, internships, volunteer work, academic projects, personal projects, and life experience and promote technical skills and talents that make you a good candidate.

#### SAMPLE ONE

**PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY**

Seeking an internship opportunity in marketing to apply customer service, communication, and task management skills, while gaining practical experience and industry insights.

* Over 4 years of quality customer service experience working with diverse populations
* Reliable individual who is equally productive when working independently or on a team
* Fluent in Somali and English

#### SAMPLE TWO

**OBJECTIVE**

Dedicated and multilingual Registered Nurse with an entry-level Master's in Nursing and extensive healthcare management experience. Fluent in Somali, Spanish, Hmong, and English. Seeking a challenging position with Allina Health in a clinical or hospital setting.

#### SAMPLE THREE

**SUMMARY**

Adaptable college graduate seeking an entry-level opportunity in the medical research industry. Expertise includes:

* Assisted in laboratory work for an organic chemistry course; volunteered to conduct outreach workshops at several local high schools
* Improved students' academic performance as a tutor and mentor for biology, chemistry, and algebra courses
* Recognized by the biology department for dedication as a research associate

#### SAMPLE FOUR

**SUMMARY**

Adaptable Computer Science student seeking an internship to utilize technical skills developed through academic coursework and hands-on experience. Recognized for resourceful problem-solving abilities and exceptional interpersonal communication skills.

### Education

Emphasize the degrees and subjects studied with bold font. Include the full name, city and state of all institutions. Including the year of graduation is optional for degrees already earned. GPA is also optional, if it is over 3.5 consider adding it. Some also choose to add related classes and certifications here.

#### SAMPLE ONE

**EDUCATION**

Metropolitan State University, Saint Paul, MN Anticipated May 2024

**Bachelor of Science: Business Administration** | **Minor in Advertising**

Relevant Coursework: Consumer and Professional Buyer Behavior; Integrated Marketing Communications; Advertising Copywriting, Design and Production; Writing and Designing for the Web

#### SAMPLE TWO

**EDUCATION**

**Master of Science: Nursing**, Metropolitan State University, St. Paul, MN, May 2022

Coursework: Holistic Nursing Care of Women, Children, and Families; Mental Health Nursing; Leadership, Quality, and Finance in Nursing; Pharmacology and Health Assessment

#### SAMPLE THREE

**EDUCATION**

Metropolitan State University, Saint Paul, MN 2023

**Bachelor of Science: Biology** • GPA 3.7 • *cum laude*

Minneapolis Community & Technical College, Minneapolis, MN

**Associate of Science: Accounting**

#### SAMPLE FOUR

**EDUCATION**

**Bachelor of Science: Computer Science**, Metropolitan State University, St. Paul, MN, Anticipated 2025

Relevant Coursework: Algorithms and Data Structures; Organization of Programming Languages; Object-Oriented Design and Implementation; Parallel and Distributed Algorithms, Networks and Security

**Data Analytics Certificate**, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, 2024

### Experience

Experience can include professional work, internships, volunteer work, academic projects, personal projects, and more. For each section, start with your most recent position and list all experiences in reverse chronological order. Emphasize the job held with bold font. Use two to five bullet points for each job. List years worked (months are optional).

To build these bullet points, use the 'Resume Bullet Point Builder' to create comprehensive descriptions for employers. Below, this process has been broken down.

1. *Use Action Verbs*: Start with an action verb, such as coordinate, develop, collaborate, supervise, etc. Use the present tense for current positions and the past tense for previous positions.
2. *Explain With/For Whom*: Identify the individuals you're working with or for. This could include supervisors, colleagues, customers, clients, patients,
3. *Detail Skills*: Outline the skill, which can be either interpersonal or technical. Interpersonal skills include communication, teamwork, time management, and organization, etc. Technical skills include specific software or hardware.
4. *Show Outcomes*: Clarify the purpose of the task. Ask yourself, "What's the purpose of this task?" or "What achievement am I highlighting?"

#### BASIC BULLET POINTS

* Managed office duties
* Waited on customers
* Assisted teacher

#### IMPROVED BULLET POINTS

* Managed office operations for a team of three, optimizing task completion for increased productivity
* Achieved high customer retention and delivered excellent service by promptly taking orders
* Collaborated with lead teacher to develop and implement effective pre-reading lesson plans

#### PROFESSIONAL WORK SAMPLE

**Assistant Manager**, Made For Retail Inc., Minneapolis, MN, 2019 – Present

* Direct workload for three sales representatives, meeting deadlines and achieving a 15% sales increase over three consecutive quarters
* Train customer service team to resolve 90% of complaints within 48 hours
* Oversee staffing and facilitate the opening of two new branches in out-of-state locations

#### INTERNSHIP SAMPLE

**Case Management Intern**, Daily Work, Saint Paul, MN, September 2023 – Present

* Manage a caseload of 6-10 clients using interpersonal communication skills to provide direct support and guidance to job seekers throughout their employment journey
* Conduct 1:1 meetings with job seekers, guiding interventions for tailored action plans
* Participated in the Overcoming Racism Conference to gain insights and tools for addressing systemic issues, promoting equity, and advocating for social justice

#### VOLUNTEER SAMPLE

**Volunteer**, True Friends, Annandale, MN May 2017 – September 2017

* Developed and executed creative activities with children that were developmentally appropriate and engaging
* Collaborated with parents and coworkers using interpersonal communication skills to ensure each child receives customized care

#### ACADEMIC PROJECT SAMPLE

**Traffic Management System**, Parallel and Distributed Algorithms Spring 2024

* + Developed a traffic management system utilizing Python and machine learning algorithms
  + Collaborated with a team of four students to design and implement the system
  + Implemented real-time data analysis to optimize traffic flow and reduce congestion in urban areas

### Other Sections

Consider creating separate sections for associations, clubs, or other activities that enhance your narrative. Below are recommended headings:

* Languages
* Honors and achievements
* Licensures and certifications
* Publications
* Technical skills
* Professional affiliations
* Workshops and conferences
* Presentations

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