

Creating Professional Resumes & Cover Letters

CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER
California State University, Los Angeles

What we will discuss

- Purposes and uses of the resume
- Standard Resume Formats
- Resume Sections
- Formatting Tips
- Special Considerations
- Keywords
- Cover Letters





The Purpose of the Resume

- **The resume's main purpose is to get you an interview!**
- It is often the first item a potential employer sees about you and therefore is very important
- A resume is a short descriptive account of your work experience, education, qualifications, achievements, and special skills.
- (In addition, a resume may be requested by a scholarship committee or be part of your admissions application for graduate or professional school).



Resumes can be used in the following ways:

- To network with others, including at Career Fairs
- To be submitted along with an employer job application form and/or cover letter as you apply for open positions
- To be taken to a job interview
- To be coupled with a dynamic online presence, particularly, your LinkedIn profile

Standard Resume Formats

Reverse Chronological

Functional





Reverse Chronological Resume

Starts with your current experiences, and then goes back in time chronologically.

Most employers prefer this resume format.

Sample- Reverse Chronological Resume

James Dean

555 PLEASANT BLVD.

CHICAGO, IL, 55555

555-555-5555

JAMESDEAN@UNIVERSITY.COM

Education

SAMPLE UNIVERSITY , NAPERVILLE , IL UNITED STATES

Bachelor of Arts Candidate, May 2014

- Active In Philosophy Departmental Planning & Administration
- Yearly Dean's List Inclusion
- Vice President of Chess Club

Professional Experience

SAMPLE UNIVERSITY , CHICAGO , IL UNITED STATES

Department Office Assistant , Jan 2011 – present

- Direct or coordinate the supportive services department of a business, agency, or organization.
- Direct, coordinate, and evaluate the activities of personnel, including support staff, engaged in administering academic institutions, departments or alumni organizations.
- Participate in student recruitment, selection, and admission, making admissions recommendations when required to do so.
- Represent institutions at community and campus events, in meetings with other institution personnel, and during accreditation processes.

TARGET , NAPERVILLE , IL UNITED STATES

Shift Lead , Jul 2008 – Aug 2011

- Manage staff, preparing work schedules and assigning specific duties.
- Plan and direct activities such as sales promotions, coordinating with other department heads as required.
- Perform sales floor work, such as greeting or assisting customers, stocking shelves, or taking inventory.

MCDONALDS , CHICAGO, IL UNITED STATES

Cashier , Mar 2006 – May 2008

- Receive payment by cash, check, credit cards, vouchers, or automatic debits.
- Assist customers by providing information and resolving their complaints.
- Count money in cash drawers at the beginning of shifts to ensure that amounts are correct and that there is adequate change.

Additional Skills

- Adobe Photoshop
- Asana Project Management Software
- Spanish Fluency
- CPR Certified



Functional Resume

Concentrates on your particular areas of expertise and specialized skills and abilities, rather than on individual job duties.

Job candidates who are entering new fields or have experience unrelated to their career goals might want to choose this format, because it **focuses on transferrable skills**, not specific job experiences.

Sample – Functional Resume

15993 Mayfair Court
West Bloomfield, MI

SOPHIA L. MEYERS

(248) 222-8520
sophialmeyers@aol.com

Talented young professional with skills and training in:
NEUROBIOLOGY AND BIOCHEMISTRY RESEARCH

Highly-accomplished, quick learner with an impressive **hands-on knowledge base** encompassing the entire spectrum of **neurobiological research**, with special expertise in Organic, Inorganic, Analytical, Solutions, Instrumental Analysis and Physical Chemistry. Regarded by peers and mentors as an overachiever who is **committed to excellence in this field**, as demonstrated by **outstanding academic achievement**. Demonstrate thorough and detailed research capabilities. *Experience and academic preparation include:*

- Molecular Theory
- Quantum Mechanical Modeling
- Mathematical Modeling
- Particle Location and Density
- DNA Analysis and Separation
- Reagent Preparations
- EDTA Titration Process
- Electron Neutron Diffraction
- Electrophoretic Techniques
- Thermodynamic Principles
- Ethology
- Blood Typing
- Diffusion Principles
- X-Ray Diffraction
- GCMS/MS

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Biology and Biochemistry

Michigan State University, East Lansing MI ~ Graduated with the Highest Honors ~ 2006

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE & EMPLOYMENT

Scheduling Coordinator – Sterling Radiology Consultants, Sterling VA ~ 5/2006 to present
Neuroscience Intern – Michigan State University, East Lansing MI ~ 8/2005 to 5/2006
Medication Care Manager – Sunrise Assisted Living, East Lansing MI ~ 2/2003 to 7/2006

- **Clinical Trials:** Administered a significant drug trial and established a dosage response curve for the identification of invertebrate behavior using neuromodulators.
- **Medication Management:** Completed state requirements training to confidently, legally and safely administer patient medication and effectively document their immediate reaction. Managed a staff of 10, ordered and controlled the administration of all narcotics.
- **Ethology:** Performed pet care behavioral science medical procedures, including the administration of both local and general anesthesia, catheters, iv and injectables. Confidently handle x-rays and assess behavior modifications due to hormones, neuroreceptors and neurotransmitters.
- **Quality Assurance and Statistical Analysis:** Delivered 3+ year in-depth reagent preparation and reaction writing capstone project culminating in and solidifying expertise in testing chemicals to determine molarity of any solution.
- **Spectroscopy:** Trained in Chemical Detection Methods including UV detection, chromatography and polarity, as well as finding unknown chemicals by running samples using search criteria.
- **Gamete Shedding/Invitro Fertilization:** Oversaw a developmental biology project devoted to the invitro fertilization of insects, rats and invertebrates, whereby deliberate injection led to gamete shedding, fertilization of eggs in petry, and ultimately the reintroduction of eggs into animals.

PRESENTATIONS & CONFERENCES

Presented Topic: "Octopomine vs. Serotonin as a Neuromodulator and Neurotransmitter"

Resume Sections

- I. Personal Info
- II. Objective
- III. Summary of Qualifications
- IV. Education
- V. Work Experience
- VI. Skills
- VII. Awards & Activities
- VIII. Volunteer Experience
- IX. References

(this can vary)



I. Personal Information

- Name should stand out.
- Can vary the placement of name, address, phone number, email address.
- List only one phone number.
- Professional-sounding voice message
- Professional email address
- In certain cases, "U.S. Citizen" is appropriate here.





II. Objective

- Short and sweet is preferred if you are using your resume to apply for a specific position.

Example: *"Seeking position as Accountant I for Kaiser Permanente."*

- If you are taking your resume to a career fair or uploading it to a website, the objective should be general.

Example: *"Seeking full-time accounting position."*



III. Summary of Qualifications

- Could also be called:
“Profile”,
“Qualifications”, or
“Highlights”
- Should be tailored to the
job in question via the job
description

Example

“Blends academic training in social work with three years experience working with diverse clientele. Adept at interviewing, report writing and problem-solving. Professional, collaborative and committed.”





IV. Education

- Most recent degree or current study listed first
- List expected date of graduation.
- List options, minors and certificates.
- Spell out college name: *California State University, Los Angeles*
- AA/AS may drop off when you get bachelor's.
- High school (freshmen only)
- List graduation with honors or high GPA



V. Work Experience/Work History Part I

- Current or most recent job experience first
- Not all jobs need to be listed - - why?
- List job title first.
- Include employer's name and city.
- Use bullets or paragraphs to detail job duties and accomplishments.
- Each descriptive phrase should begin with an action verb. (current job – use present tense; previous jobs – use past tense)
- If using bullet format, no more than 5 or 6 bullets items per job.



V. Work Experience/Work History Part 2

- Prioritize the order in which you describe job duties, with the most relevant ones listed first.
- Divide your work experience into “Related Experience” and “Other Experience”, if appropriate.
- Remember to list internships if they are related to your field. It doesn’t matter if you were paid or not – good experience is good experience!



VI. Skills

- **General “soft” skills** *Examples:* proactive approach, teamwork experience, analytical thinking, multitasking, customer relations
- **Computer/Technical skills**, listing known computer programs. *Examples:* Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, QuickBooks
- **Language skills** *Example:* English/Korean



VII. Awards & Activities

- Include memberships in campus and community organizations.
- Make special note if you held an office.
- Dates are not required.
- Don't forget to list national associations.
- If listing a scholarship, indicate its name and who awarded it to you.
- Don't forget "Employee of the Month"

VIII. Volunteer Experience

Volunteer experience can be listed if it is meaningful and appropriate.

Social Work, Psychology, Sociology, credential students and some others may want to list their volunteer experience under “Work Experience” if it closely relates to their career goals and is significant.





IX. References “available upon request”

- Ideally, have at least 3 people agree to be your references.
- Do not ask family or friends, but consider employers, professors, scout leaders, clergy who know you well enough to address your talents and attributes as a good employee, student or citizen.
- Give your references a copy of your resume and keep them updated on your job hunt.
- **(Never list your references' names on the resume)**. Instead, only if requested, provide a list that includes: reference name, job title, place of employment, phone number and email address.



Formatting Tips

There is not one specific way to format your resume.

You have many choices. But the advice presented in this workshop comes from ***what employers tell us*** about their preferred resume formats.

A word about resume templates. You may choose to use a resume template (a means by which you 'plug in' your information into a prescribed format) but it isn't recommended unless you are short on time.

Templates aren't flexible and generally don't allow for customization – thus, use your own Microsoft Word skills to create your own unique document!



Formatting Tips, Part I

- Use one font and same size throughout document (exception – your name)
- Use **BOLD** to emphasize only the most important features of your resume
- Acceptable type sizes are 10, 11 and 12 pt.
- Be consistent with tabs, dates and other formatting features

Formatting Tips, Part 2

- Length is only important if you are handling the hard copy of the resume, in which case it should be one or two full pages.
- Decide on an overall design scheme – bullets or paragraphs?
- Make the resume professional-looking and inviting to read.



Special Considerations

- Your resume should be targeted to the specific job you are applying for.



- The job description helps you customize your resume to the employer's needs.
- Make sure the employer doesn't miss out on your most marketable assets: put them in priority order in the top half or top two-thirds of the resume.

It's all in the details

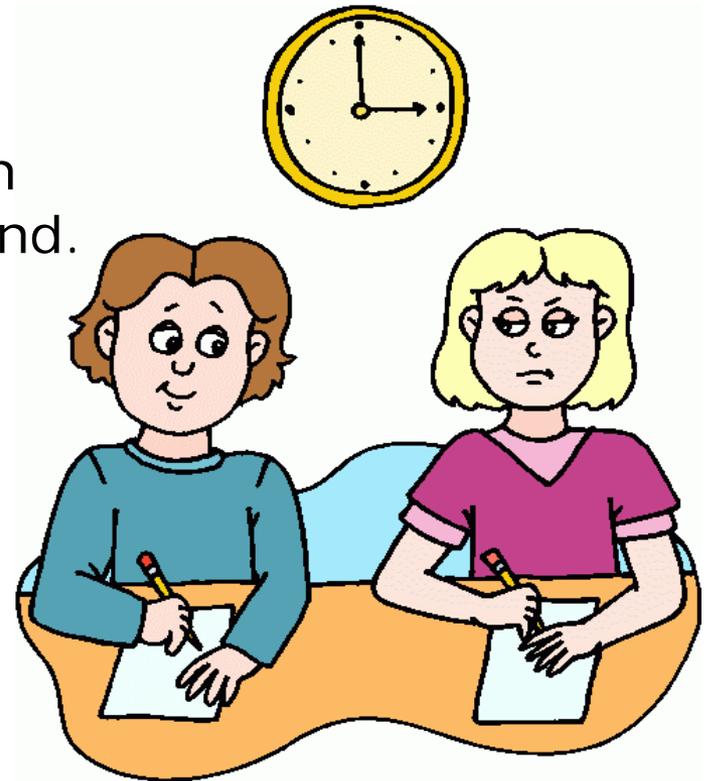


- Do not use personal pronouns
- Double check your spelling, grammar and punctuation
- Print your resume on a good printer and use heavy (20 to 24 pound) neutral-colored paper

The whole truth, and nothing but the truth . . .

Never ever include false information on your resume.

With the technology that is available today, employers can easily check on your background.





What is a CV? And how does it differ from a resume?

- A curriculum vita (or CV) is longer and much more detailed than a resume because its purpose is different.
- CV's are usually requested from individuals who are applying for graduate or professional school admission, or job opportunities related to science, research, or higher education.
- Career Center staff can review your CV, just as we review student resumes.



Keywords

- Large companies may scan your resume, looking for what they call “keywords.” Keywords get you noticed.
- You can identify keywords for your profession by reviewing job postings for your target jobs and noting qualifications, technical expertise, industry jargon and personality traits that are being sought after.



More on Keywords

- Here is an example of a keyword-laden summary statement for a Sales Representative:

***Achievement-oriented sales professional** with two years of **success** in the insurance industry. Skilled at **developing multi-channel marketing strategies** and providing excellent customer service....**bilingual – Spanish**...team player...special projects...event planning...**increased sales**.*

Cover Letters





The Cover Letter Part I

- The cover letter “covers” your resume and is an additional opportunity to sell yourself.
- It should not merely repeat what is on the resume, but should *complement* the resume.
- The cover letter **must be tailored** to the employer and the job opening for which you are applying. Do NOT create a one-size-fits-all cover letter.
- Realize that the employer may view this letter as a **writing sample**, so your grammar, spelling, punctuation and style must be perfect!

The Cover Letter Part 2

- 1st paragraph: Name the job you are applying for, and add how you found out about the job opening.
- Paragraphs 2 -4: Write about how you would be able to fit the job in question and bring special value to the workplace. Show your knowledge of the employer, and be enthusiastic about your career field and the job for which you are applying. Sell yourself!



The Cover Letter Part 3

- Final paragraph: Sum yourself up, thank the reader, and let them know you will contact them directly if you don't hear anything within a prescribed time period.
- If you are sending a hard copy, use the same higher-quality paper you are using for your resume, and submit it with your resume with no folds or staples.

Sample – Cover Letter

February 22, 20XX

Dr. Michelle Rhodes
Principal, Wolftrap Elementary School
1205 Beulah Road
Snohomish, WA 98290

Dear Dr. Rhodes:

I enjoyed our conversation on February 18th at the Family and Child Development seminar on teaching elementary children and appreciated your personal input about balancing the needs of children and the community during difficult economic times. This letter is to follow-up about the Fourth Grade Teacher position as discussed at the seminar. I will complete my Multiple Subject Teaching credential in June 20XX, and will be available for employment as soon as needed for the 20XX-XX school year.

My teacher preparation program at Cal State L.A. includes student teaching. Last quarter I taught second grade and I am currently teaching fourth grade. These valuable experiences have afforded me the opportunity to:

- Develop lesson plans on a wide range of topics and varying levels of academic ability,
- Work with emotionally and physically challenged students in a total inclusion program,
- Use my Spanish skills with ESL students,
- Observe and participate in effective classroom management approaches,
- Assist with parent-teacher conferences, and
- Complete in-service sessions on diversity, math and reading skills, and community relations.

My experience includes work at a private day care facility, Rainbow Riders Childcare Center, and at our campus Children's Center. Both these facilities are NAEYC-accredited and adhere to the highest standards. At both locations, I led small and large group activities, helped with lunches and snacks, and implemented appropriate activities. Both experiences also provided me with extensive exposure to the implementation of developmentally appropriate activities and materials.

I enthusiastically look forward to putting my knowledge and experience into practice in the Snohomish School District and look forward to relocating to the Pacific Northwest. I can be reached at (213) 000-0000. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely, etc.



Summary of the most important points

- Remember that the main purpose of the resume is to get an interview
- Choose a resume format – there are 2 types
- Required resume elements include personal info, objective, education, work experience
- Be consistent with your format, allowing no typos or grammatical errors
- Tailor your resume to the particular job you are applying for!
- Use the cover letter to sell yourself and add value to your resume

Need further resume advice?

Call the Career Center to schedule an appointment with a counselor for a resume critique or come in during walk-in hours.

Walk-ins

M – TH 11 am – 2 pm

(323) 343-3237

Remember – a good resume gets you the interview!

GOOD LUCK!

