

RESUME WRITING

The Basics

Use this checklist to make sure you have covered the basics for developing your resume. Remember, a resume is a marketing tool and often the most critical item in determining whether or not you will obtain an interview. Keep in mind that certain career fields will dictate resume design options, and you may need several versions of your resume if you are looking for different types of positions!

Appearance/Format

- Do NOT use a resume template which can create future editing challenges.
- Use **appropriate format** (chronological, functional, combination) to illustrate skills and experience.
- Use $\frac{3}{4}$ - one inch margins on all sides.
- Utilize bold, italics, capitalization, and spacing to produce a **visually attractive, easy to read** document.
- Font style/size** are appropriate, consistent, and easy to read (11 – 12 point font for body text, larger font size for name/headers).
- Sections are arranged so that the **most important information is listed first** (top to bottom, left to right).
- Length of resume is appropriate depending on your experience (**one page is typical** for new graduates).
- More than one page resume is **not stapled** and your name and page number are on additional pages.
- Print resume on good quality (bond) paper; white or off-white shade is preferred (and best for scanning).
- Have your resume **proofed** by one or two people who have expertise in writing resumes or in your career field (i.e. a Career Exploration and Development staff member, faculty advisor, etc.).

Key Words

- Use **keywords related to your career field** when possible. Keywords are nouns and phrases that highlight your distinctive technical and professional areas of expertise and should include industry-related jargon. Keywords are the basis of most electronic resume search and retrieval processes that may be utilized by employers to screen resumes.
- Identify keywords by perusing ads and position descriptions to identify patterns of words employers use frequently. Often the first keywords mentioned are likely the most important.

Grammar/Spelling

- Resume contains NO typos or misspellings. **Proofread** carefully and do not rely solely on spell check!
- Overall structure is **clear and organized**.
- Avoid personal pronouns** such as “I” and “My”, abbreviations, and complete sentences.
- Utilize capitalization and punctuation consistently.

Heading/Contact Information

- Your **name is in the largest font** size (up to 16 point) on your resume and located at the top.
- Mailing address** and **phone number** are current (with a professional message on your answering machine/and or voice mail).
- Only one, professional **email address** is provided. Your kent.edu email is recommended (remember, you can forward your kent.edu email to another email address you may utilize).
- Include URL of your web site (if you have one and content is appropriate for employer viewing).

Objective or Summary

An **objective describes your career goals** and tells the employer what you want to do. A **summary** is typically used by someone with several years of experience and contains three to five phrases **highlighting areas of expertise, examples of leadership, or personal strengths – the VALUE you offer to the employer.**

- Is clear and concise and supported by the rest of your resume.
- Indicates a realistic and/or proven career plan.
- Is tailored to the specific posting.

Your resume should contain **accurate and honest information** and be free of personal data such as age, marital status, height/weight, and photos (unless applying for positions overseas when additional information may be appropriate).

The Basics of Resume Writing

Education/Coursework/Certifications/Licenses

- ___ List current degree/major and any postsecondary degrees obtained in reverse chronological order (most recent first).
- ___ Degree(s)/Major(s) are named appropriately (i.e. “Bachelor of Science in (your major)”, not “BS”).
- ___ Emphasize **degree** by placing it in **bold** before school name and location (city, state)
- ___ List only the **month and year** of graduation (do not put “expected” or “projected” graduation).
- ___ Include overall and major GPA if **3.0 or higher**.
- ___ If you **financed your education**, say so. For example, “Financed 75% of college tuition.”
- ___ List only significant coursework (no more than six, junior level courses and up) that directly support your career objective.

Skills

- ___ Include **computer skills** and name the software programs in which you are proficient.
- ___ Include **language skills** if applicable (non-native English speaker should not include English since this is assumed).

Work Experience/Related Work Experience/Related Experience/(Retail, Computer, Counseling, etc) Experience

- ___ Experience is appropriately separated into Relevant and Additional Experience (see above) sections if applicable.
- ___ List experience starting with **most recent position first** (reverse chronological order).
- ___ Emphasize full and part-time positions, paid or unpaid internships, volunteer work, etc. related to your objective.
- ___ Include your **title, organization, location** (city, state only).
- ___ Include the **month and year** (no abbreviations) of employment, not exact dates.
- ___ Use **strong action verbs** (supervised, oversaw, designed, etc.) to describe responsibilities and accomplishments (avoid passive phrases such as “responsible for” and “duties included”).
- ___ List position duties with bullets instead of writing them in paragraph form (if space available on page).
- ___ Provide **specific/quantifying information** (numbers, dollars, percentages) when possible.
- ___ When writing numbers, 10 and over are numerical, nine and under are written out as words.
- ___ Use appropriate **verb tense**. (Use past tense action verbs to describe all past and present employment experiences.)
- ___ Emphasize **skills** appropriate to your stated objective.

Honors/Awards/Activities/Leadership Experience/Volunteer Experience/Community Service

- ___ Provide names of organizations (professional, community, campus) you’ve been involved with.
- ___ Indicate positions held and/or recognitions received from organizations.
- ___ Do not typically include high school activities/awards (unless you are a freshman/sophomore student, education major, etc. and content reflects a trend in interests/performance without utilizing needed space.)

Options for Additional Sections

- Memberships, Professional Memberships
- Course Projects
- Research
- Publications
- Presentations

For **electronic transmission of your resume**, employers often prefer certain formats. One of the easiest and most reliable methods is to **convert your resume to a PDF** through Adobe Acrobat Writer.

References

- ___ Obtain three to five references from individuals familiar with your academic, leadership, teamwork, and/or work habits.
- ___ Include a separate reference page (with references centered on page) or the line “References (and portfolio) available upon request” at the end of your resume.