

RÉSUMÉ PREPARATION

A résumé is a marketing tool; a brief summary of your qualifications to sell yourself to prospective employers. Your résumé should reflect you—your experiences, interests, accomplishments, skills, and education. It should attract attention and spark interest, impress an employer, and ultimately create an invitation for a personal interview.

1. Spend ample time reviewing your background and past experiences so you know what skills, abilities, and qualifications you have to offer an employer. Use the Career Preparation Worksheet to assist you. Include volunteer work, which is an important indicator of your skills and effectiveness. This can be especially valuable for those re-entering the work force.

You will need to ask yourself several questions before beginning to write your résumé. Make an honest assessment of your likes and dislikes to write the best possible résumé for you. It is only human to gravitate toward the things we like and do best. Answering the following questions will help you clarify some of the important points:

- Which skills or achievements give me the greatest satisfaction?
 - Which of my past jobs (including volunteer work) did I like best?
 - What are my main attributes?
 - What are my main liabilities?
 - Do I prefer a large or small company?
 - Do I prefer to work alone or am I a team player?
 - Am I most comfortable following directions or do I prefer supervising and motivating others?
 - Do I enjoy working with people or equipment?
 - Do I need the security of a regular salary or do I prefer the incentive of commission/bonus work?
 - Do I prefer a full-time job or freelance work?
 - Would I prefer a job that includes travel?
2. Select the appropriate résumé format—chronological or functional—to market you and your experience most effectively. If you start in one format, continue with that style throughout the entire résumé. A new résumé may not be necessary for every job you apply for. However, you may

need to revise your résumé for a special interview, so keep several versions on hand. A computer is great for making revisions. You can keep several résumés on file and update and revise whenever necessary.

3. Typeset your résumé or produce it on a computer. Because they are in a creative profession, designers have more latitude in their choice of typefaces, or fonts, but be sure not to use anything smaller than 10-point. The serif types are considered to be more traditional, the sans serif types more contemporary. The typeface you choose should be both aesthetic and readable.
4. Have your résumé reviewed by an instructor, placement counselor, or industry professional before distributing it. Many colleges offer workshops in résumé preparation if you are currently enrolled in a program or have recently graduated. Professional advice can save you time, worry and, ultimately, disappointment.
5. Invest as much time as necessary to revise your draft. Proofread your résumé carefully before having it duplicated. Remember, the résumé is an extension of you. It promotes your image.

PAPER

Choose an 8½" x 11" acid-free, 100-percent cotton or high-quality recycled paper in a color light enough for easy reading and a weight heavy enough for photocopying or faxing. Usually 24 lb. is best, though résumé cover stock is fine. Match stationery for cover letter, résumé, #10 envelopes, and follow-up letters.

FONTS AND LAYOUT

Select a clear, readable font, avoiding those that are overly decorative. Use only one font for the résumé. View your name and important words in various fonts to see which you prefer. Generally, you'll want to keep the size either 10- or 12-point, with a larger size acceptable for your name.

Use various font styles (bold, underline, etc.) and punctuation sparingly; let the résumé speak for itself. Use black ink and a laser printer or high-resolution ink jet printer. Never use a dot matrix printer. Always have black-and-white copies available for photocopying and to respond to ads.

Select your résumé format (chronological or functional) and edit the information to one page only.

RÉSUMÉ STYLES

CHRONOLOGICAL RÉSUMÉS

Chronological résumés outline your background in a sequential time frame, with the most recent events listed first. This format is commonly used by recent college graduates with limited work experience (see Fig. 15.1).

Rules for the Chronological Résumé

1. Start with your present or most recent position and work backward, with most space devoted to recent employment.
2. Detail only the last four or five positions of employment covering the last ten or so years.
3. Use year designations, not month and day. Give greater detail at the interview or on the application.
4. Don't show every major position change with a given employer. List two or three at most, including the most recent.
5. Do not repeat details/duties common to several positions.
6. Within each position listed, stress the major accomplishments and responsibilities that demonstrate your competency. Once the most significant aspects of your work are clear, it is generally not necessary to include lesser achievements.
7. Keep your next job target in mind, and as you describe prior positions and accomplishments, emphasize those that relate most to your next move up.
8. Do not include education in chronological order. If it is within the past five years, list it at the top of the résumé. If earlier than that, at the bottom. (This is not a hard and fast rule, however. Follow your own instincts whether to emphasize work or education.)
9. Keep the résumé to one page.