

Writing Your First Resume

By Louise Fletcher

Creating Your First Resume

If you are worried about writing a resume, or struggling with the task, you're not alone! But creating your first resume doesn't have to be an intimidating task if you understand the goal of your resume - to generate interest and interviews. It doesn't have to get you a job and it doesn't need to cover your life history. It simply has to pique the interest of the reader and answer the only question he cares about: will this candidate add value to my company?

If your resume answers this question effectively - by clearly communicating your strengths - employers will want to meet with you. It really is that simple.

Research Job Postings

Of course, in order to demonstrate your value, you need to know what potential employers are looking for. Start by researching job postings that interest you. Look for frequently-mentioned requirements. Ask experienced professionals what they consider important when they make hiring decisions. Read professional publications and websites related to your target industry. Immerse yourself in your chosen field and learn as much as you can. Once you know what is important to employers you can target your resume to address those issues.

What to Include on Your First Resume

Many students and recent graduates worry that they don't have enough experience to create a compelling resume. Don't be concerned. Once you start to really think about your background, you'll be surprised at what you have to boast about. The content of your resume will be determined by your own unique experiences, skills and background but as a general guideline you should include:

- Positive personal characteristics
- Technical and computer skills
- Coursework relevant to your desired profession
- Educational accomplishments (include your GPA if it's 3.0 or higher)
- Skills and experience gained during internships or summer jobs
- Other related accomplishments (design awards, recognition, winning competitions etc.)
- Work History (include unpaid work if it relates to your target positions)

The key is to emphasize those things that demonstrate your value and to leave out those things that don't. For example, if you are looking to work in Information Systems, your ability to program in C++ will be important - but the fact that you have won awards for water skiing won't! Don't include hobbies unless they directly relate to your goal.

Resume Design

Many people are surprised to learn that resume design is just as important as content, but it's absolutely true. Research suggests that your resume has less than 20 seconds to make the right impression, so it must be eye-catching and easy to read. To get ideas for layout and structure, search through different resume templates found on the internet. All contain examples of professionally-written resumes and will help you decide on the best approach.

As you work on your resume, keep your reader in mind and remember his/her basic concern: will this candidate add value? If you answer effectively by highlighting relevant skills, personal characteristics and accomplishments, your resume will open the right doors and generate interviews.

Resume Writing Tips and Advice

- [Resume Tips for High School Students](#)
- [Resume Examples for Teens](#)

The College Admissions Resume

Like most resume writing, writing a college resume can seem much harder than it really is. The most important and most difficult part of writing a resume is getting started. Yes, overcoming procrastination when writing a resume is really the hardest part. Since a resume is not only used for applying for internships and jobs, it is imperative to get one going because you will most likely need it when applying to colleges as well.

Sections to Include in a College Application Résumé:

- Heading (includes personal information – name, address, phone number, & email address)
- Academic Profile (high school and dates attended)
- Summer Programs Attended
- Honors / Awards / AP / IB courses
- SAT/ACT scores / class ranking
- Co-Curricular Activities (school clubs, music, sports, etc.)
- Extracurricular Activities (out-of-school groups)
- Work and Volunteer Experience
- Hobbies / Interests / Travel
- Skills (Language/Computer/etc.)

College Application Résumé Tips:

1. Each experience should be included in reverse chronological order beginning with the most recent.
2. It's important to mention any unique experiences that will help you stand apart from other candidates.
3. Be consistent when writing your resume – abbreviations, periods, capitalization, dates.
4. Provide any individuals who have agreed to write a recommendation with a copy of your resume.
5. Have one or more people look over your resume prior to sending it out.
6. Use action verbs whenever possible.
7. Last but not least - Proofread, proofread, proofread!

What does the Admissions Department look for in a college resume?

1. Although you may not have worked many jobs, the college resume speaks volumes about who you are by making you put together something that shows your personal skills, interests, and values and forces you to put into words what you have done so far.
2. You may include coursework that you think is noteworthy that would be a good addition to the overall document. If you participated in any college level courses, this is a good thing to include as well.
3. What about activities? Say that you are an athlete or possess music or art capabilities, the college wants to know that too. Maybe you did a lot of volunteer work or fundraising

during high school which may also be noteworthy for them to understand your personal values and what kinds of things are important to you.

4. When applying to college a one page resume should suffice. If you have an enormous amount of writing or lab experience, put that on there too. If it does go to two pages, make sure the experiences are worth including and try to make the second page as complete as possible as well. Also, be sure to include your name and page 2 at the top of the second page. That way if the pages should get separated the admissions department won't face the frustration of reviewing an incomplete resume in the process.
5. In addition to having a lot of important information to include on your resume, it's essential that you make sure that it is well-written. A resume that is written poorly may be rejected no matter how accomplished you have been so far.
6. The best scenario is to have a well-written resume that shows accomplishments and involvement in a number of activities.

Tips for writing an effective resume:

Include any and all information that would make you stand out in the college admissions process.

1. On your resume it's important to include whatever information you have that would be valuable for the Admissions Department to know. If you have received any awards or graduated #3 in your class, be sure to include that information on your resume. Now this may seem like a no-brainer, but I can't tell you how many resumes where this has been left out. Modesty on a resume can be a killer. In real life it may suit you well but when trying to earn the respect and attention in the college admissions process, it's essential that this information be included.
2. Although it's important to include your accomplishments it's just as important not to embellish on them to a point where they are unbelievable and not totally true. Embellishing on your resume can be just as damaging as not including important information that makes you stand out.

Use bullet points to describe your experiences:

- When describing your experiences on your resume, it's most effective to include them using bullet points. This makes it easy for the committee to review and makes it more effective to make your experiences stand out.

Important tips for using bullet points:

- Begin each bullet point with an action verb.
- Write each bullet point using specific concise language omitting articles such as an, and, and the whenever possible.
- Include your skills and accomplishments in your bullet points rather than focusing on your responsibilities.

Example:

- Researched, wrote, and presented laboratory findings of water quality using samples from Hovey Pond in Chelsea, Massachusetts.

Include essential information that will make a positive impression on the committee:

Since you only have one page (two at the most) to write down all of your experiences, it is crucial that you include information that shows excellent grades, awards, leadership activities, presentation skills, as well as individual creative capabilities such as music, art, writing, and/or excellent communication and interpersonal skills. It is these types of attributes that will make you stand out from the other candidates.

Examples:**Education:**

GPA: 96/100

Graduate third in class of 425 students

Attended Harvard University 's Summer Pre-Law Program

Experiences:

The experiences below provide information that highlights writing, leadership, and research experiences that could be very useful in college.

- Wrote 5 page essay to be published in high school art magazine.
- Led 45 students in high school's weekend leadership development program.
- Participated in scientific laboratory study to establish the survival instincts of rats.

Co-Curricular Activities:

- Treasurer, Student Government Association, Grades 9-12
- Flute Player, St. Georges High School, Laramie, WY, Grades 9 - 12
- Captain, Soccer Team, St. George's High School, Laramie, WY, Fall 20XX – Spring 20XX
- Player, Soccer Team, St. George's High School, Laramie, WY, Fall 20XX – Present
- Organizer, St. George's Marathan Dance, Laramie, WY, Spring 20XX
- Helped raise over \$20,000 for scholarships to be given to underprivileged children in the school

Volunteer:

Fundraiser, Make A Wish Foundation, 20XX

Volunteer, Domestic Violence Shelter , 20XX