

Unit 1: How to Write a Resume

How to Write a Resume

Writing a resume can be a daunting task, especially if you're tackling this challenge for the first time in your professional life, or if you've been off the job market for so long that you've lost your old resume file and you need to start from scratch. But there's no need to panic. Just break the larger task down into small, individual steps, starting with the ones below. And remember: you can always revisit any detail of your resume if what you're doing isn't working.

1. Start by taking some notes. Think carefully about your answers to the following three questions: A) What kind of job are you looking for? B) What skills, talents, and credentials do employers in this field value most? And C) How can you prove that you have these skills by sharing selected details from your professional background?

2. Start from scratch. Once you've assembled some notes, open a new blank file and begin creating a rough draft of your formal resume. Start by writing a 1-3-line summary of what you do, what you're looking for, and why employers should be interested in you.

3. Knock out an easy section first. Above your summary, type out your contact information starting with your name, your address, your email address, and your phone number. When you're ready, you'll also add links to your website or online resume if you have one.

4. Focus on your top strengths and skills. Create a section titled "Skills," which should briefly list the most important skills you can offer to potential employers—the skills that may not be easily conveyed by your job history. This section will include the languages you speak, the software languages and coding skills you've mastered, the specialized areas of knowledge that you command within your larger field of expertise, and the certifications and licenses you hold outside of those required by the jobs in your work history section.

5. Highlight your career accomplishments. After your skills, create a subheading called "Professional Experience" or "Work History." In this section, you'll list each of your formal job titles, starting with the most recent OR the most relevant to the positions you'll be pursuing. Under each job title, create three bullet points, and follow each bullet point with an achievement or relevant accomplishment you earned during your tenure in that role. When you have to be selective, choose accomplishments that will impress your potential employers over accomplishments that make you proud. Your resume should always be written with your reader in mind.

6. Include your education. Each of your educational institutions, starting with the most recent. After each institution, list the degree or diploma you earned, your course of study, and the year you

completed your program. Be sure to include all relevant training and certification courses, not just university degrees. Only include your high school diploma if your education doesn't extend beyond that point.

7. Get help. Once your first draft is complete, your process isn't over. In fact, it's just beginning. Take your resume to friends, family, experts in your field, your mentor, your network contacts, and/or a professional resume editor who can help you fine tune the details. You'll also need to adjust and tighten your layout and presentation, including font size, text boxes, lines, and stylistic decisions.

Resources: www.resumehelp.com has tons of free resume templates available and tips. www.myp perfect resume.com is another resource that has great information. Microsoft Word has several different templates to choose from as well.