

# Writing a Resume

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## Objectives

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1. State the purpose of a resume
2. Describe the design, length, and format of typical and alternative resumes
3. Distinguish between a chronological and a functional resume format
4. Describe the six basic categories of information on a resume
5. Review four sample resumes
6. Write a quality draft of your resume for critique by others

## Purpose of a Resume

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The resume documents one's qualifications for a position. It is a marketing tool and should be unique in both content and format to highlight facts about an individual as they relate to a job or position. A resume is a summary of one's personal, educational, and work experience qualifications. Resumes can be used by candidates applying for work, graduate schools, or scholarships/fellowships. This guide will focus on the resume primarily for a job search situation.

## Style of a Resume

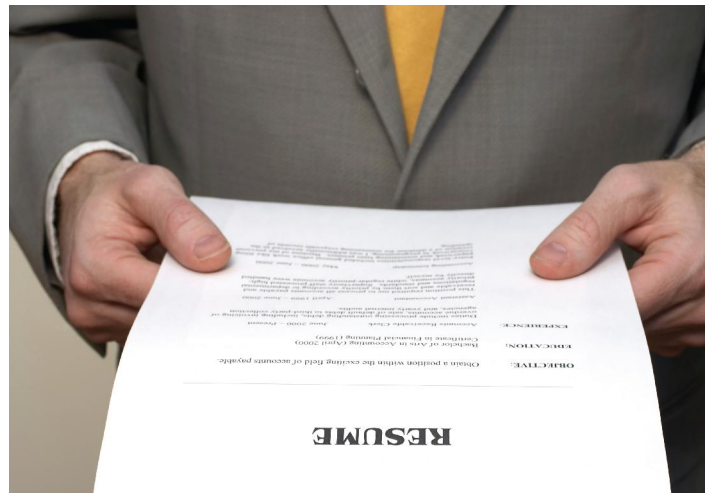
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### Design

While it is true that there exists no absolutely correct way to design a resume, there are certain traditions in resume writing that have become standard. The descriptions which follow are intended to help you create a resume that will serve your individual needs and represent your individual qualifications.

The style in which you choose to write your resume will give it tone and a personal flavor which can either enhance your resume or detract from it.

Don't forget, a resume is a sales device and must present a positive image. Keep in mind that while a resume is an essential tool in the job campaign, it is not meant as a substitute for the interview (even though it usually precedes the interview). Because of the above and because the resume is a summary, you may (and most do) use incomplete sentences (examples include: Major: History... analyzed survey data... led small group recreation activities... supervised secretary... etc.). Some people feel that the resume should be action-oriented and reflect



## What's Inside

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Alternative Resume Styles.....	2
The Two Basic Formats.....	2
The Six Categories of Information.....	3
Four Sample Resumes .....	5
The Resume Critique .....	5
Hints And Suggestions.....	5
Do's and Don'ts of Resume Writing.....	5
Positive Action Word List .....	6
Job Duties Exercise.....	7
Resume Printing.....	7

a more assertive and confident job seeker. Others are more comfortable with a neutral tone showing qualifications and interests without much attention to assertiveness or salesmanship. Ultimately, the tone and content of your resume is based on information obtained regarding your career field and prospective employer.

## Length

Most resumes are 1-3 pages. The resume should be as long as necessary to present your qualifications concisely. One page resumes are most common for traditional age (18-23) college students.

## Format

The format should attract attention and create interest. Choose appropriate categories for your information and order them from most to least relevant to your objective. Use capital letters, underlining, bold face, indentations and white space to emphasize important information. However, once you've selected a format, be consistent within categories. The resume should be easy to follow and pleasing to the eye. If you plan to post your resume on the Internet or send it to an employer that uses a scanning system, you may want to consider an alternate format.

## Alternative Resume Styles

### Resumes for posting on the Internet

A common job-hunting practice involves posting resumes on the Internet. This may or may not increase your chances of securing an interview. There are a few recommendations to consider before posting your resume.

No line of text should be longer than 65 characters, including spaces.

Pay close attention to your choice of words throughout your resume. Employers searching for online resumes typically use keyword search programs to find resumes of interest. If your resume does not include these key words, it may not be retrieved during the search process. To select keywords, consider specific skills and qualifications necessary for success in the field of interest.

Keep in mind that the information you place in your resume will be available to anyone who wants to see it, so avoid confidential information.

### Scannable Resumes

Some employers use scanning technology to handle the large number of resumes they receive. This is done by a system that scans the resume into computer memory. Employers can then search the resume for skills that match those necessary for a particular job.

When constructing a scannable resume, remember the following tips:

Specify skills you have obtained using nouns as opposed to verbs. For example, "responsible for training..." should be worded, "trained new employees."

Use lots of white space to aid the computer in recognizing the information.

Avoid using underlining, bold facing, varied fonts, or other fancy formatting options. These can result in misread information and potentially could cost you an interview.

Use words that everyone will be able to recognize. Scanning programs may not be designed with a thesaurus, so difficult words may be overlooked.

Do not fold or staple a resume that will be scanned. If you are concerned about whether a particular employer scans resumes, you may want to call in advance to check.

For more information on electronic and scannable resumes, see resources in the Career Library.

## The Two Basic Formats

In organizing the information to go into a resume, there are two basic approaches.

### Chronological or General:

Lists, describes, and dates the details of each job and educational experience separately. Listings under each category are placed in reverse chronological order, starting with the most recent schooling or job. This approach is most appropriate if you have extensive uninterrupted work experience in the area in which you seek employment. It is also the most common approach.

### Functional

Consists of selections from your total experience of only those parts which relate to the job you seek. Under each category, you list qualifications, skills, experiences, etc., that logically support your job objective in functional areas such as management, research, writing, teaching, sales, human relations, etc. This approach is more difficult to construct, but may be more effective in documenting the skills or functions you want to perform, especially if your background is varied.

## The Six Categories of Information

As stated earlier, certain aspects of resume writing have become standard. This is most evident for the categories of information to be included in the resume. The following categories have come to be regarded as essential in resume writing.

### **1. Identification**

Your name, full address, and phone number(s) with the area code should be the first item on your resume. If you are at a temporary address, you can include this in addition to, or in place of, your permanent address. It has become common practice to include your e-mail address, but make sure it is professional in nature, and doesn't contain cutesy words, slang, or worse!

### **2. Professional Objective (optional)**

This should be your career objective stated as concisely as possible. It should be broad enough in scope to cover any suitable employment and to interest a wide array of employers, yet be specific enough to give an element of sound career direction to your resume. If you are planning to seek employment in several different areas where the same objective would not be appropriate, consider writing a resume for each area

An alternative is to omit this category from your resume and relate this information through the cover letter. The problem with this approach is that cover letters and resumes often get separated, creating a void when it comes to comments about your job interests and objectives.

Statements concerning your objectives should be continually reinforced and supported through the other elements of your resume. You can focus on any of the following:

- position title
- career area
- organization type
- specific population
- skills you wish to use.

For more information, visit the Career Center Library.

### **3. Education**

The highest level achieved should come first and continue backward with other schools attended, degrees earned, or training received. It is not necessary to include high school. However, if some items in the high school background show high honors or generally reinforce the career objective then pertinent data should be included. List the names of schools, dates attended or graduation date, degrees earned, and major/minor subjects.

You may also include honors, awards, Dean's list, grade point average, and other items which may enhance this section of your resume. The possibilities for expansion in this category are unlimited. You also may decide to list selected courses you have taken as well as special projects and activities.

Beware !!! If you have a long list of such activities, it might be wise to select only the most important. You can omit the others or include them in separate categories such as "Honors/Awards" or "Activities." To include all of these items under the Education heading might begin to dilute the image of the degree and make your resume look cluttered and confused.

### **4. Experience**

This category typically reflects your contact with specific employers. It is permissible to include cooperative education, internships, volunteer work, summer jobs, special projects, or military experience under this category. If you have several experiences very much related to your objective, you may wish to list those under "Related Experience" and your other experiences under "Other or Additional Experience."

List position titles, names of organizations, locations (city and state), dates and duties. Again, in presenting this information, choose a format where the most relevant comes first. Two different examples for presenting the same information follow:

Holiday Inn: Tallahassee, FL  
Desk Clerk, 1/05 - Present

Desk Clerk - Holiday Inn, Tallahassee, FL  
January 2005 - present

Employers are mainly interested in the degree of responsibility you held and the skills you demonstrated. Try to outline your duties in such a way that throw the best possible light on that job experience, and at the same time relate it to your professional objective. For example:

Crew Member, McDonald's  
Tallahassee, FL, 1/05 to present

Managed operations and supervised 19 co-workers.  
Compiled inventory data and maintained stock.

Assisted in hiring and training new employees.

Use the *Positive Action Word List* and *Job Duties Exercise* included in this guide to help you identify and document skills and accomplishments from your past experiences. Remember, any experience in the world of work may be capable of demonstrating your dependability, resourcefulness, and responsibility, including internships, volunteer experience, leadership positions, class projects, part-time work, etc. Choose whatever shows your qualifications and experience to your best advantage.

## 5. Personal (optional)

Sources vary on what to include and whether or not to include personal information. It is wise to consider the potential reactions of prospective employers to such information in evaluating its usefulness in your job search. If you choose to include information regarding birthdate, marital status, etc., it should appear near the end of the resume. The argument for putting it near the bottom is that an employer may be prejudiced by the information presented. This is an argument for omitting this category altogether. The choice is yours.

## 6. References

Choose one of the following:

"References available upon request."

Credentials available from  
The Career Center  
Florida State University  
Tallahassee, FL 32306-2490

Leave off the statement referring to references, as it is assumed you will provide them.

To document your references, list the names, titles, addresses, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses of three to five people on a separate page. Be sure these individuals can speak about your experience or knowledge of a specific subject matter. Remember to ask their permission to be used as a reference and to give your resume to the references you use. Include your name and contact information from your resume at the top of the reference page. Provide this list to the employer when requested.

Other Categories: The above categories are a foundation of a resume, but there are many other options. Some possibilities include:

- Activities
- Background
- Certifications
- Computer Skills
- Honors/Awards
- Interests
- Languages
- Licenses
- Memberships
- Professional Activities
- Publications
- Recitals/Art Shows
- Special Skills
- Workshops/Seminars

If you have information which you feel is important, but doesn't fit any of the above categories, then create categories to fit your information and/or the requirements of specific job targets. You also may have categories unique to your field of study, e.g., clinical nursing experience. The key is having categories that best fit the position or positions you are seeking.

## Four Sample Resumes

At the end of this guide are four sample resumes. *These are only intended as examples. Feel free to create a format that fits your own style and career goals.* Please note that the font size of the samples have been reduced for inclusion in this guide. They are intended to help you pull together the information in the preceding sections and to give you some ideas of what finished resumes can look like. Be aware of the wide variety in layout style, writing techniques, format, etc.

Additional sample resumes are available in three locations where a career advisor may also be available to help you.

The Career Center Library

The College of Business, RBB 233

The College of Engineering, B226

You may find that none of the samples you find seem appropriate for the presentation of your unique qualifications. Or you may discover that all the samples seem like the best way. If you are confused, pick and choose what is useful and consistent with your individual needs and objectives. Then create your own original resume. Remember, the focus is on you, your needs, your objectives, and your qualifications.

## The Resume Critique

Have several people critique your best draft. Next, bring your revised draft to the Career Center and a career advisor will be glad to review it with you. Finally, use the Career Center's Employability Skills Lab to make further revisions as needed.

## Hints And Suggestions

Before you begin the task of actually writing your rough draft, thoroughly familiarize yourself the *Do's and Don'ts of the Resume Writing* included in this guide. By following these guidelines, you will increase the probability of producing a readable and straightforward account of your unique qualifications. While most sources agree that a resume composed along these lines is more competitive and successful, remember, the focus is on your needs and objectives. Consider which hints will help you write the resume most appropriate for your job objective.

## Do's and Don'ts of Resume Writing

### Do

**Be brief, clear, and concise.** A resume that is not confusing, easily readable, and well-organized is more competitive.

**Be consistent.** Experiment with the arrangement of headlines, captions, indentations, blocks of text, and the use of capitalization and underscoring. Then choose a layout which is readable and appealing to the eye and stick with it. Use white space surrounding the text copy for emphasis.

**Be positive.** Start statements or phrases with verbs denoting positive actions (e.g., successfully introduced, initiated, etc. See the *Positive-Action Word List* for ideas). Avoid the use of the personal pronoun "I." Omit negative statements.

**Be honest.** Included information should accurately represent you to employers.

**Be careful.** Double-check for typos and mistakes in grammar, spelling, or punctuation. Use a dictionary. When in doubt, check it out. Errors in detail suggest careless workmanship.

**Be neat.** Use lots of white space when creating your resume to avoid the cluttered look. Make sure you get a clear, unmarred copy. Print copies of your resume using a quality laser printer.

### Don't

State salary requirements. If asked, research the value of the position and your skills and give a range of mid to high.

Give reasons for quitting previous jobs.

Limit geographical considerations unless absolutely necessary.

Expound on philosophy or values.

Offer any negative information.

Use standard resume templates found in popular computer software or books

## Positive Action Word List

accomplish	decrease	investigate	read
account	decide	judge	recommend
achieve	design	landscape	recruit
act	determine	lead	repair
administer	develop	learn	report
advertise	devise	listen	research
advise	diagnose	make	review
analyze	direct	manage	schedule
appraise	discover	manufacture	select
appeal	document	market	sell
arrange	draft	measure	serve
assemble	draw	meet	solve
assign	edit	mobilize	speak
assist	engineer	model	staff
attend	entertain	motivate	start
audit	establish	negotiate	structure
authorize	estimate	operate	submit
budget	evaluate	order	supervise
build	exercise	originate	supply
calculate	exhibit	organize	synthesize
catalogue	experiment	paint	talk
chart	explain	perform	teach
clarify	facilitate	persuade	test
collect	formulate	photograph	train
communicate	furnish	plan	translate
compete	guide	play	travel
complete	handle	predict	tutor
compile	hire	prepare	type
compose	implement	present	understand
conduct	improve	preside	verify
contribute	increase	produce	write
control	influence	program	
coordinate	initiate	promote	
correct	inspect	propose	
counsel	install	provide	
create	instruct	publish	
dance	interpret	purchase	
delegate	interview	qualify	
demonstrate	invent	raise	

## Job Duties Exercise

Sometimes people have a difficult time describing what they did in a particular job. In the Career Center we often hear, "Oh, I just waited tables." Every position requires skills which are transferable to work after college. Use the following steps to identify these skills and make them relevant to employers.

1. Think about a specific job you held. Picture in your mind what you did on a typical day.
2. Use the *Positive Action Word* list to brainstorm all of the skills you employed during this day. Mark each word that fits the job.
3. Choose three to five of these words that shows you working at your best.
4. For each verb think of the questions "Who?, What?, When? Why? How?" to write a detailed description of the job duty.

These steps can help you create a vivid and accurate picture of a past job. For example:

**Rabbit's Restaurant, Head Server, Tallahassee, FL**                      January 2005 - December 2006  
Promoted nightly specials while greeting guests  
Trained 25 new hires in restaurant policy and procedures  
Supervised front-of-house staff when manager was off duty

Now, use this space and the four steps to describe one of your jobs.

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## Resume Printing

Given the accessibility of computer technology, most individuals produce their resume using some form of word processing software. However, be sure not to use the templates or wizards in these software packages. Using these tools often results in a generic resume which looks too much like the resumes of other people. Plus, it can be difficult to edit and revise resumes created by these "helpful" tools. Thus, you must recreate your resume from scratch. Once you have completed your resume, copies can be created using a high quality laser printer.

If you want a certain type of paper to print your original on, specialty papers are sold at most office supply stores and copy centers in town. This is probably the most economical and efficient way to prepare and produce a resume. Plus, when you save your file on a USB drive or hard drive you can easily

update it. Be sure to keep a backup of this file in a safe place so you don't lose your resume. Both the online Career Portfolio and SeminoleLink at [career.fsu.edu](http://career.fsu.edu) are great places to upload your resume for safe keeping.

Another option is to have your resume done by a professional who can desktop publish it. This method of producing an original, plus copies, costs more than if you do it yourself. But some people prefer the typeset "look," and would rather someone else do the work. The Career Center has information in the Career Library on print shops in town that will help you in producing and copying your resume.

Students can access a variety of computer labs on campus to create and print their resume. For information on campus computer labs visit [ucs.fsu.edu/labs/](http://ucs.fsu.edu/labs/). Students and alumni can also use the Career Center's computer lab.

## Chronological Resume: Example 1

**Steve Andrews**  
123 Ocala Rd #1  
Tallahassee, FL 32304  
(850) 323-4000  
abc251@fsu.edu

### Education

Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL May 2006  
**Master of Accounting in Taxation**  
Overall GPA: 3.92

Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL May 2005  
**Bachelor of Science in Accounting, Summa Cum Laude**  
Overall GPA: 4.00

### Experience

**Teaching Assistant (ACG 2021)-FSU College of Business, Tallahassee, FL** 8/04 – Present

- Review course assignments with approximately 50 students
- Assist students in course material
- Administer and grade course exams

**Campaign Treasurer-Leon Co. Commission, District 5, Tallahassee, FL** 6/03 –11/03

- Assisted in fundraising in excess of \$87,000 in campaign contributions
- Managed the campaign account
- Produced financial reports in accordance with Florida election law

**Accountant I-State of Florida DEP, Tallahassee, FL** 6/03 – 8/03

- Reconciled work order accounts
- Assembled vouchers to pay invoices for various projects

**Accounting Clerk-ABC Bank, Tallahassee, FL** Summers 2001 & 2002

- Determined institution's fixed assets
- Completed Accounting Department procedures manual
- Handled accounts payable assignments

### Honors

FSU Accounting Department – Outstanding Senior 2004-2005  
FICPA, Tallahassee Chapter Scholarship  
FSU College of Business Achievement Scholarship  
FSU Accounting Department - Outstanding Junior 2003-2004  
Member of National Society of Collegiate Scholars  
Dean's List 8 consecutive semesters

### Activities

Accounting Society, Treasurer, Political clubs—local & school, intramural football

## Chronological Resume: Example 2

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### **Natalie Jones**

123 Park Avenue North

Tallahassee, FL 32301

Home Phone: 850-575-2000 Mobile: 333-290-8000

e-mail: abcd5518@yahoo.com

#### **Education**

B. S., April 2007, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL

**Major: Criminology Minors: Psychology & Sociology**

**Major GPA: 3.5**

#### **Experience**

Florida State University Tallahassee, FL, January 2006-Present

##### **Assistant to Director of Undergraduate Internships**

- Collected and analyzed reporting data using Web site and SPSS.
- Delivered basic advising services to undergraduate students.
- Answered phones, opened mail, and filed documents.

State Attorney's Office-Worthless Check Division, Tallahassee, FL, September 2004-August 2005

##### **Receptionist**

- Collected and processed fees and receipts.
- Processed mail and organizing files.

Thomas Smith Law Offices, Tallahassee, FL, September 2003-August 2004

##### **Administrative Assistant**

- Created spreadsheets and performed data entry.
- Arranged daily appointments and greeted clients.

National Distribution Centers, Orlando, FL, May 2003-August 2003

##### **Account Representative**

- Acted as the sole account representative for the Florida sales territory.
- Kept accurate and current inventory records and account receivable ledger.
- Prepared orders and selected individual carriers for distribution.

#### **Research Experience**

- Florida State University-Center for Excellence Study on School Violence
- Federal Public Defender's Office-United States v. Drayton

#### **Honors**

- All American Scholar Award 2005
- Seminole Award Nominee 2005
- Who's Who Among Students in American Universities & Colleges Nominee 2005
- Dean's List-5 semesters

#### **Activities**

- Alpha Phi Sigma-National Criminology Honor Society
- Volunteer-Animal Shelter, Kate Sullivan Elementary School

# Functional Resume

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## Ariana Franklin

7578 Tree Lane • Atlanta, GA 30318  
arifranklin@fsu.edu • (850) 385-1370

### Objective

To obtain a position in the financial industry allowing me to utilize my financial and managerial skills to increase the customer base of the organization.

### Education

**Georgia State University**, Atlanta, GA

May 2008

Bachelor of Business Administration, Finance GPA 3.6/4.0

Financed 100% of Education

### Relevant Coursework

Corporate Finance

International Finance

Financial Institutions

### Relevant Experience

#### Banking

- Service business and consumer accounts according to customer financial needs
- Make consumer loans and create lines of credit
- Approve transactions and resolve discrepancies on accounts

#### Analytical

- Acted as liaison between regional executives and sales staff by tracking, forecasting, and reporting revenue activities
- Analyzed sample of projects to evaluate the quality of current forecasting tools
- Established reports that enabled the sales department to increase efficiency of operations

### Employment History

**Nations Bank**, Atlanta, GA

2/07-Present

Consumer Banker I

**Wallace Computer Services**, Atlanta, GA

1/04-12/06

Sales Analyst

### Honors

- Tracy Oaks Scholarship for Outstanding Leadership
- Deans List

### Skills

- Proficiency in Lotus 1-2-3, Excel, dBaseIV, Microsoft Word and WordPerfect 7.0

# Combined Functional & Chronological Resume

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## DANIEL TAYLOR

1234 Park Ave. Apt. 15, Tallahassee, FL 32303 · Home: (850) 555-7000 · Cell: (407) 555-6000  
[abc1202@fsu.edu](mailto:abc1202@fsu.edu)

### EDUCATION

**Florida State University**, Tallahassee, FL  
Bachelor of Science, Biology, August 2008  
G.P.A. 3.55, with Honors, Dean's List

### HEALTHCARE EXPERIENCE

**Healthcare Services, Tallahassee, FL** **6/07-Present**  
*Self-Employed*

- Initiated my own business working with mentally handicapped adults
- Rehabilitate clients on a mental, emotional, and physical level
- Develop and incorporate daily routines that utilize physical and mental exercises

**Starlight Child Center, Tallahassee, FL** **01/06-8/06**  
*Counselor*

- Mentored and advised children ages 3-11
- Prepared programs integrating physical and mental activities for youth success

**Bobby E. Leach Center, Tallahassee, FL** **12/04-12/05**  
*Personal Trainer*

- Successfully refined fitness goals and introduced proper technique to over 150 clients
- Motivated and enhanced clients' work-life balance by incorporating physical fitness into their daily routine

### MARKETING AND SALES EXPERIENCE

**Vector Marketing, Orlando, FL** **4/03-8/03**  
*Sales Associate*

- Effectively met sales goals for quarter
- Worked sales and marketing functions for CUTCO product

**Mail Boxes Etc.—U.P.S., Orlando, FL** **8/02-8/03**  
*Sales Associate*

- Responsible for generating store marketing plans and refining customer service process

### VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

- **Gretchen Everhart School:** Aide to children with a wide range of mental disabilities
- **International Medical Outreach:** Medical mission trip serving a third-world population
- **Clairbridge Nursing Home:** Program facilitator for elderly
- **Hospital:** Shadowed physicians and assisted with daily routines

### ACTIVITIES & HONORS

American Medical Student Association (V.P.)  
F.S.U. Career Center Advisory Board

Golden Key International Honor Society  
Seminole Torchbearers



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