
Crafting an Effective Resume

By the THINK TANK Writing Center

A resume is a concise outline of your education, experience, accomplishments, and skills. Employers may spend only 30 seconds scanning a resume, so you need to be able to show that your background meets their requirements effectively. Think of your resume as a marketing tool that you can use to sell yourself to your potential employer.

An effective resume:

- Emphasizes relevant accomplishments and potential contributions
- Focuses on the requirements of a specific position or skills necessary in a particular field
- Is succinct, well-organized, and easy to read

Tips to Making an Effective Resume

1 *Understand the purpose of your resume*

A resume is a way to establish yourself and your brand. You need to understand the skills that your employer is requesting and be able to describe how your work experience, qualifications, and relevant skills meet those needs. Your resume serves as your first impression to your potential employer, so you need to be able to market yourself effectively. A great first step is to brainstorm your experiences, qualifications, and skills to remind yourself on what you've accomplished!

2 *Use a clear, easy-to-read format*

A succinct, well-organized format is a great way of presenting information to your potential employer. Effective resumes are often condensed to a single page, use section headers, and use consistent formatting. Make sure you use an easy-to-read, professional font in your resume that is no smaller than an 11-point font and that your margins are no narrower than 0.8 inches. Opt for bulleted points instead of paragraphs!

3 *What to include*

You should include the following information in your resume: name, contact information,

education, and relevant experience. Additionally, as space and relevance permit, you can include an objective, relevant skills, awards/distinctions, and your references. The information that you provide related to your relevant experiences and education should be detailed. Be sure to include your title/degree, location, and related accomplishments.

4 *I know how to work! I just need to describe it.*

When describing your relevant experience, avoid using paragraphs and instead use 3-4 bullet points to summarize your responsibilities and achievements. In these bullets, avoid using passive verbs and phrases such as "was responsible for" or "helped to." Instead opt for strong action verbs, such as "developed, administered, facilitated, or calculated." Format these bullets using the "Action, Project, Result" method and quantify your work whenever possible.

5 *Edit, revise, and save in a PDF format*

Make sure that your grammar is correct and that your structure is clear. Be sure to save the file as a PDF to retain your original formatting.