RESUME WRITING FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS & ALUMNI

What is a resume?
A resume is a potential employer's first impression of you: Your personal marketing statement. Remember, the purpose of the resume is to get an interview, not a job. Therefore, tell the employer only what they need to know to want to meet you, and organize it in a way that is clear, easy to read, and quickly shows how your skills match their needs. Remember your audience! There is no one right way to write a resume. Put your information in a format that your audience likes to get information.

Recent studies show employers will scan your resume in approximately 5-15 seconds. With limited time, your job is to show them efficiently how you are qualified and why you should be interviewed.

Style

- Tailor the resume to the specific job or job category; the resume may need to be changed slightly for each job
- Put the most relevant information in the top 1/3 of the resume
- Use reverse chronological information (most recent is first)
- Use action verbs and consistent verb forms
- Make it easy to read and follow
- Error-proof your resume (have others proofread it too!)
- Include enough white space
- Limit the length to one page whenever possible, unless you have 6-8 solid years of experience in your field
- Spell out numbers that are single digits (e.g. "four" instead of "4")

Formatting

- Be consistent in format and content (e.g. organizations are always in the same place with the same font, etc.) Use **bolds**, CAPITALS, and *italics* (or a combination) (Note: <u>underlines</u> work best for headers only.)
- Use a laser or letter quality printer
- Use PDF when sending resume via email if you need to preserve formatting
- Title your resume "Your Name Resume.doc" so that if it gets detached from an email it is clear whose it is
- Use a basic, readable font like Verdana or Georgia, size 10-12 point
- Use 8 1/2 x 11-inch bond paper in white, cream, or gray with black print (if printing)

DO NOT

- Use personal pronouns
- Number or letter categories
- Use a picture
- Include age, sex, or religion
- Abbreviate
- List your references on your resume (Make a separate document for that)

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PARTS OF THE RESUME

EDUCATION

For most recent graduates or those still in school, your education is the strongest experience you have in your field. If this is the case, this information should go first. If not, you can put **Education** after **Experience**. Include: type of degree, concentration, academic honors, and date of graduation or expected graduation (Note: Only put the month and year you graduated, not the span of years). You can also list projects that you've done within your coursework.

For example:

EMERSON COLLEGE, Boston, MA **Expected Graduation May 2013**
M.F.A. in Media Art

- Created, directed, and produced a 30-second PSA, two 10 minute documentaries, and an interview, which highlighted on a *New England News* talk show entitled *Boston's Front Row*
- Created, produced, and directed a four minute silent black and white film, *Rainy Season,* with Super 8mm equipment

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, Ann Arbor, MI **May 2009**
B.S. in Mass Communication, Concentration: Film

Note: You do not have to include your GPA, especially for your Graduate degree.

EXPERIENCE

List pertinent experiences (for the job you are applying for) in reverse chronological order. This experience can include paid work, summer jobs, internships, volunteer work, and school activities and organizations. Include name of the organization, city and state, dates employed, your job title, and a brief job description. Your description should emphasize accomplishments and major responsibilities. Descriptions can be in paragraph or bullet form or a combination, depending on your preference.

> ***Key: Tell Your Story!*** You want to demonstrate to your audience that you can persuade and entice your audience, as this is the role of almost any Emerson College degree. Show your ***duties*** and ***accomplishments***, and give enough details of what you've done so that the reader/hiring manager can relate and understand your experience. Using **numbers** and **names** can help give a ***sense of scope*** of the project and what **actions you did** to help the project succeed. See this handout for a sample list of these action verbs.

Note: If you are currently in a position, you may write that description in either present or past tense.

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Remember that sometimes the resume has transferable skills rather than direct skills. For example, working in a management role at a restaurant might not show your skills in marketing, but it does show your ability to manage multiple projects, which is applicable.

Examples:

J.D. PUBLIC RELATIONS, Newton, MA **May 2011 – February 2012**
Public Relations Coordinator
Coordinated over 50 multimedia sales meetings for large corporations including Keds, Bose, and Intel. Selected and ordered 50,000 premium items for national sales promotion. Organized production schedules, budgets, and press kits with five vendors.

- Managed all phases of video production for a 30-second promotion mailed to 10,000 meeting attendees.
- Coordinated schedules and logistics for six consultants giving presentations at two national meeting to 400 sale representatives.

VIDEO DOME, Boston, MA **May – August 2011**
Video Assistant
Organized over 450 items in tape library chronologically as opposed to alphabetically to make archived programs easier to find. Made minor repairs to cameras, DVD players, and other equipment. Edited four 30 second video shorts in both Mac & PC platforms.

THE RENDON GROUP, Boston, MA **August 2010 – May 2011**
Associate Director

- Wrote company's Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Policy in coordination with consultant.
- Copyedited five client literature packets resulting in two additional client projects.
- Rewrote over 20 employee biographies for inclusion in government proposals.

***Note**: You can also make separate headers to group your experiences (e.g. **MARKETING EXPERIENCE** and **ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE**) so that you can highlight those that are most appropriate for the position.*

SKILLS
This is where you can list the particular skills that you've developed. You can list them separately (as done below, or all in one group:

***Editing*:** Avid, Dreamweaver, Photoshop, iMovie, etc. You can also list copyediting formats (e.g. MLA, APA, Chicago)
Equipment: (such as Avid Media Composer, Toaster 100, Steenbeck, Super 8mm, 16mm camera. You can also indicate "working knowledge of" or "proficient."
Computer: Excel, Word, PowerPoint, SPSS, Macintosh and/or PC platforms
Languages: List any language in which you have a working knowledge. You can also label them "fluent" or "native" if appropriate.

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OBJECTIVE, PROFILE, or SUMMARY
We don't recommend you use an objective, as your objective is to get the job. Your experience, education, and skills should make that obvious. If you have numerous different experiences that doesn't make it clear what you're looking for, you can have a *Summary* or *Profile* statement that says who you are and what you have to offer.

For example:

An editorial professional with over five years experience in newspaper, magazine, and online journal editorial and writing.

AFFILIATIONS
List college or professional affiliations that are relevant to the field. Indicate offices held and achievements related to these activities. Avoid listing religious or political affiliations you had a role where you want to highlight your accomplishments within the role.

INTERESTS
You will most likely not be listing interests, but might if you don't have enough to fill up one page of content. If you do, make sure that they relate somewhat to the position you have a back story ready in case someone asks you about it. What does this say about you?

FORMAT
There are several main resume formats commonly used. A *chronological* resume format is usually the best option for undergraduate and graduate students as well as many alumni. It describes each job in reverse chronological order (most recent job first, in order of the position you ended most recently). As stated above, you can have different sections (e.g. **VIDEO PRODUCTION EXPERIENCE**) to bring your most marketable skills to the top of your resume.

Dates: Make sure your date formats are consistent throughout the document. If you have less than five years experience, we recommend month and years (e.g. March 2011).

FINAL NOTE
Resume language needs to be:

- Specific rather than general
- Action-oriented
- Fact-based (quantify or qualify – use numbers and dollars when appropriate)
- Skill, not task based – i.e., not "answer phones" (task) but "provide customer information over telephone" (skill)
- Articulate, not "flowery"
- Value added – make sure each word counts! Why should they care about what you have to say?

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ACTION VERBS

Communication & People Skills
Addressed
Advertised
Arbitrated
Arranged
Authored
Clarified
Collaborated
Communicated
Composed
Condensed
Consulted
Contacted
Conveyed
Convinced
Corresponded
Debated
Defined
Developed
Directed
Drafted
Edited
Enlisted
Explained
Formulated
Incorporated
Influenced
Interacted
Interpreted
Interviewed
Joined
Lectured
Listened
Marketed
Mediated
Moderated
Negotiated
Observed
Outlined
Participated
Persuaded
Presented
Promoted
Proposed
Publicized
Recruited
Referred
Reinforced
Reported
Resolved
Responded
Solicited
Specified
Spoke
Suggested
Summarized
Synthesized
Translated
Wrote

Creative Skills
Adapted
Combined
Conceptualized
Created
Customized
Designed
Displayed
Entertained
Founded
Illustrated
Initiated
Instituted
Integrated
Introduced
Modeled
Modified
Originated
Performed
Revised
Revitalized
Shaped
Solved

Management Skills
Administered
Analyzed
Appointed
Approved
Assigned
Attained
Authorized
Chaired
Considered
Consolidated
Contracted
Controlled
Converted
Coordinated
Decided
Delegated
Executed
Generated
Handled
Headed
Hired
Hosted
Improved
Increased
Inspected
Led
Managed
Merged
Motivated
Navigated
Organized
Overhauled
Oversaw
Planned
Presided
Prioritized
Produced
Recommended
Reorganized
Replaced
Restored
Reviewed
Scheduled
Secured
Selected
Streamlined
Strengthened
Supervised

Organizational Skills
Catalogued
Categorized
Classified
Collected
Compiled
Corrected
Distributed
Filed
Generated
Logged
Maintained
Monitored
Obtained
Operated
Ordered
Prepared
Processed
Provided
Purchased
Recorded
Registered
Reserved
Responded
Routed
Screened
Submitted
Supplied
Standardized
Updated
Validated
Verified

Teaching Skills
Advised
Coached
Conducted
Critiqued
Enabled
Encouraged
Evaluated
Facilitated
Focused
Guided
Individualized
Informed
Instructed
Taught
Trained
Tutored

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