

# RESUME WRITING GUIDE

## What is a resume?

A resume is a summary of your background, skills and qualifications, which is sent to employers for review. It is your personal marketing brochure to gain the employer's attention and provide the information they need to bring you to the next step in the hiring process, an interview.

## Why is a resume important?

Your resume is often the first document that an employer would typically look at, so it serves as your first impression in the employment process. A well-written and formatted resume tells the employer a lot about your professionalism, and improves the chances for receiving an interview.

## How should you prepare for writing a resume?

The best way to begin writing your resume is do a self assessment. Think of past successes and achievements that you have experienced and write them down. These could be related to academics, volunteer activities or work experience and can even include things like travel, hobbies or any life experience where you learned and grew. Once you have finished brainstorming, narrow down the points that you want to focus on and prioritize them based on their applicability to qualities an employer may find important. *You don't have to include every single point on your resume; quality is always better than quantity.*

## What are the different types of resumes?

**Chronological** resumes organize work experience with the most recent employer first, followed by the next previous employment experience, and so on. Reverse chronological order helps the employer see the history of where you worked and is the most generally accepted resume type.

**Functional** resumes highlight groups of skills and capabilities rather than presenting them chronologically. For example, you can organize a variety of skills from school courses, job experiences and hobbies by organizing them into skill clusters (i.e. organization, administration, technical) in the main body of the document. This type of resume focuses the resume on relevant skills for the job, not your specific work history.

**Relevant Coursework** resumes take advantage of a student's skills developed in his/her coursework. Coursework can be used just like a job to show the employer both skills and knowledge developed during college.

## What are the most important considerations for resume writing?

Resume writing is about selling yourself and the challenge is to write a resume that effectively showcases your talent. One of the best techniques is to showcase accomplishments rather than simply list out job duties or tasks.



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## What are the most important considerations for resume writing? (cont.)

### Here is an experience example before showcasing:

- Performed cashier duties and answered customer questions

### Here is the same example after showcasing:

- Handled 200 financial transactions per day and assisted customers with product selection.
- Received training and refined customer service skills.
- Commended for being timely and accurate and given additional responsibilities.

## Quantify your accomplishments

It is not just what you are able to do, but how well you can do the job. By presenting specifics, the reader will gain a much better picture of your skill set and add to your credibility. To come up with ideas ask yourself questions like: How did I improve something?; What did I learn and how did I grow?; What skill did I demonstrate?; How did my employer benefit from my work?

## Situation, Action and Result (SAR)

Considering the qualifications and requirements for the job being pursued and address those in the resume. For example, if you are seeking a position which requires strong analytical skills, you will need to write about your analytical skills and how you use them to resolve problems.

For instance:

- Recognized that phone calls were being dropped due to long hold times.
- Changed on hold message and added background music, decreasing dropped calls by 30%, leading to an increase in business and customer satisfaction.

## What sections will I need in my resume?

Typical resume sections include OBJECTIVE, EDUCATION, HONORS AND AWARDS, EXPERIENCE, SKILLS, and ACTIVITIES. A resume is typically tailored to the skills required by the job you are applying to so make sure you are selective about the experience you share on your resume.

## To Do Next

- Talk with a Career Counselor during Drop-In Hours (see <http://www.sfsu.edu/~career> for current hours)
- Sign into GatorJOBS on the SF State Career Center website and click on the Optimal Resume link. Optimal Resume is an online tutorial that can assist you in your resume preparation.

