

Write Your Own Resume

- **Sample Resume**
- **How To Avoid Resume Pitfalls**
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- **How To Prepare For Landing Your First Media Job**
- **Top Mistakes Job Seekers Make**

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Your Full Name Here In Big Bold Type

Street Address
City, State, and Zip
(xxx) xxx-xxxx

email_address@email.address

[set margins for this document to 1" all four sides]

EDUCATION

Mass Communication, B.S., University of North Carolina at Pembroke, anticipated May 2010

- Major in XXXXXXXXXXXXX
- Minor in XXXXXXXXXXXXX *[fill in your major, drop minor if none, set graduation year to yours]*

Quilt Making, A.A., Rockingham State University, December 2007

WORK EXPERIENCE

Ramparts Auto Parts, Cary, North Carolina *[substitute your organization, city, state]*

Sales Clerk. January 2002–March 2003 *[substitute your job title and dates held]*

- Special knowledge or skills you displayed and acquired
- Results, accomplishments, contributions, promotions

*[maximum three lines; begin sentences with action verbs;
indicate the positive difference or impact you made;
be specific, concrete, and concise; repeat such info for each job you have held]*

PUBLIC SERVICE AND VOLUNTEER WORK

American Cancer Society, Greensboro, North Carolina *[substitute your organization]*

Telephone Receptionist. July 2001–February 2002 *[substitute your job and dates]*

*[for each, mention results, accomplishments, contributions, promotions;
maximum three lines; begin sentences with action verbs;
indicate the positive difference or impact you made;
be specific, concrete, and concise]*

HONORS, AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS, MEMBERSHIPS

List academic and other honors you have received

List awards and other special recognition you have received

List significant presentations made, group projects presented, reports made,
and independent research projects conducted, grants received

List relevant memberships

*[for each, mention results, accomplishments, contributions, promotions;
maximum three lines; begin sentences with action verbs;
indicate the positive difference or impact you made;
be specific, concrete, and concise]*

RELATED SKILLS

List professional competencies, industry-specific knowledge, and skills

List all computer software you can use, related training and professional development

List written and spoken languages

[present specific, concrete, and concise items that could meet employer needs]

References are available upon request

How To Avoid Resume Pitfalls

An employer's first impression of you is formed by your resume. This simple document reveals your entire educational and work history on just one or two pages. The information is important and the space is limited, so you have to get it right. Here are some common resume pitfalls to avoid:

Do not include typos, spelling errors or bad grammar – Before you send your resume, make sure you proofread it carefully. Have someone else read it. Employers throw out resumes with errors.

Do not use flashy formatting – The overall look and feel of your resume is important. Do not format the document poorly, but also do not be flashy. Create a clean, polished, professional look. Use consistent headings and bullet points. Stay away from jazzy formatting. Don't be creative with unconventional fonts or graphics. Keep your resume simple, bold and professional.

Do not use special papers – Print your resume in black ink on white 24-lb. paper, not on colored paper. You don't need to buy expensive "resume paper." Do not use tricks to stand out such as perfumes or colored inks.

Do not send your resume to a nameless person – If you want your resume to go unread, send it *To Whom it May Concern* or to some unnamed recipient such as *HR Director* or *Personnel Manager*. Take the time to find the name of a real person at the company you are targeting.

Do not send a resume without a cover letter – Send a letter of introduction with your resume. Resumes and cover letters are inseparable. The cover letter is your chance to really sell yourself.

Do not write the resume in the first person – A resume is not a letter, so don't use *I*, *my*, and *me*. First person pronouns go in your cover letter.

Do not use passive language – Use action words. Your resume should make a strong statement about you. Use bold words to describe your accomplishments. Action words like *coordinated*, *achieved*, *managed*, and *implemented* will spark your resume, making it interesting and relevant.

Do not include unrelated information – You don't have much room in a resume, so don't take up space with information with no relationship to the job you want. However, include details of your personal life, such as your hobbies, if that information will help you get the job.

Do not write lengthy descriptions of past jobs – The reader wants to know what you have done, but not complete details of all your duties. List your accomplishments with quantifiable facts to back up your claims. Saying you were responsible for output growth is more impressive than simply saying you worked on a team.

Do not be repetitive – Include variety in your resume. Don't limit your action words. Use a thesaurus, your professors, or other resources for different ways to say the same thing.

Do not send an unfocused generic resume – Your work and education experience may not change, but your resume should, depending on the job you are seeking. Want a journalism job? Slant your information differently from the way you would focus it for a broadcasting or public relations job. Want a sales job? Your resume should have details different from those in a resume for a management job. Make it easy for the reader to see why you would be a good fit for the available job.

A Resume Checklist

A resume is a marketing tool, not a comprehensive personal bio. Include only information that will help you get the job you want. Leave out information that will not:

- Your resume should be one to two full pages in length.
- List your strongest skills/qualifications on your resume, after your experience.
- Do not use personal pronouns like me and I.
- Use consistent and proper punctuation. Run a spell check and proofread.

Contact Information:

- Name. Use a font size larger than the body font in the resume so it stands out.
- Use the same font size for the rest of your contact information as the font in the body of your resume.
- Current address. No need to list permanent address elsewhere unless the employer should contact you there.
- Home phone number. Be sure to have an answering machine in working order with a professional message.
- E-mail address. Employers may contact you via e-mail. You need to be computer literate. Use a professional screen name.
- URL of your web pages. If you have one and only if content is appropriate for employer viewing.
- Undo automatic hyperlinks on your e-mail address and URL in the resume contact list.

Objective:

- Use of an objective statement is not recommended and may waste space. However, if you write an objective, gear it toward how your skills will benefit the company, NOT how the company can benefit your experience.

Education:

- Put your education section in reverse chronological order.
- Put month and year of graduation, not exact dates. If you are graduating on May 11, 2010, put May 2010
- Emphasize your degree by placing it before your university and in bold. Do not bold your institution. Note: UNCP should read The University of North Carolina at Pembroke
- Include GPA if it is a 3.0 or above. Use GPA, not G.P.A., and do not round to more than the 2nd decimal place. i.e. 3.25, not 3.249
- Do not include high school unless you attended a recognizable private prestigious school.
- If you financed your education, say so. For example, "Maintained 3.5 GPA while working full-time to pay 75% of tuition."

Experience:

- List your experience in reverse chronological order. Most recent listed first
- Include full and part-time jobs, paid or unpaid internships, practicum, and volunteer work, especially if they are related to your desired job.
- Do not include whether the jobs were full or part-time.
- Include month and year or else just years of employment, not exact dates.
- Include city and state only for employer location, not complete address.
- Include numbers to quantify experience if possible. For example, number of employees supervised, size of budget managed, number of workshops taught or projects coordinated, dollar amount saved by your ingenuity.
- Be consistent with use of periods i.e. either use them or don't use them on every phrase/sentence
- List minimal job descriptions/duties with bullets instead of writing them in paragraph form.
- Focus your descriptions on what you accomplished and how you made yourself valuable to employers rather than on your responsibilities. For example, instead of "responsibilities included implementation of policies and procedures, and training of new employees," try "Worked with staff and vendors to increase product turnover by 15 percent and sales by 23 percent. Trained 14 new employees, 5 of whom were rapidly promoted."

Skills:

- Include computer skills and name the software programs in which you are proficient.
- Include any other appropriate skills
- Include language skills if applicable. Non-native English speakers should not include English since this is assumed.
- Accentuate skills that relate to job target and major. List most important skills and accomplishments first.

Optional Categories:

Include any of the following if appropriate:

- Volunteer or Community Activities
- Honors/Awards
- Publications
- Certifications/Licenses
- Course Projects
- Research
- Extracurricular Activities

References:

Professional references (i.e. professors, supervisors) should be listed on a separate page in the same style and format as your resume.

How To Prepare For Landing Your First Media Job

Become a good writer:

Practice, practice, practice. Write interestingly, clearly, succinctly, effectively. Take as many writing courses as you can. Write something every day.

Read, read, read:

Read lots of newspapers, magazines, books and professional websites. Listen to radio. Watch TV. Prepare yourself to write in many different formats, styles and lengths.

Develop these important personal attributes:

Be reliable. Have a positive attitude. Want to learn. Think strategically. Meet deadlines. Foster a creative, innovative ability to generate ideas. Ask what you can do to help. Ask questions. Take notes. Spread cheer. Talented creative persons can fail if they display doom and gloom.

Get an internship:

One of the most important preparations for obtaining an entry-level position is completion of an internship. An internship often leads directly to a job.

Top Mistakes Job Seekers Make

1) What you say or don't say:

The number one mistake relates to how interviewees communicate. Some go into an interview with a pre-determined script, which makes them sound as if they're reading from a textbook. Others give one-word answers with no elaboration. Still others use profanity, or ramble on about their personal problems and social lives, rather than answer or ask questions about the job or company.

Other interviewees are too candid. For example, when asked what interested her about the position, one candidate replied: "I'm open to anything; I really need to get some medical insurance." Another person interviewing at a children's organization said that he "hates kids." Sometimes those interviewing for customer service positions confess, "I'm not a people person," or "Customers are annoying." A man applying at a drug treatment facility asked if they drug-tested employees and whether they'd give advance notice.

Other interviewees complain about former bosses. Many make the mistake of bringing up money and hours in the first interview. But the TMI (Too Much Information) Award goes to the 37-year-old candidate who said, "I'm only here because my mom wants me to get a job."

2) How you act:

The second most common problem is being unprepared and knowing nothing about the job or company. Other candidates don't listen to the questions being asked or try to bluff their way through technical questions.

Sometimes an interviewee reveals a lack of common sense or courtesy. Managers complain about candidates showing up late and the surprising number who interrupt the interview to take calls on their cell phones. Some bring their children or pets along. Some managers have complained of nail biting.

Which is worse – the candidate who asked the hiring manager to hurry up because he wanted to have lunch, or the one who pulled out a sandwich and began eating?

3) Dump the attitude:

A third category of mistakes has to do with attitude. Don't be mean, surly or argumentative. No one likes a braggart, know-it-all or name-dropper. Don't have a super ego and demand to be hired because the company can do no better. Don't say you are "used to a higher class of business."

Do show enthusiasm. Managers complain of interviewees who show little energy or interest in the conversation. If at all possible, don't look at your watch.

4) Look right for the job:

Being improperly groomed for an interview is a fourth common mistake. Avoid bad posture, tattoos, facial piercings, fluorescent hair, poor hygiene, dirty fingernails, smelling of alcohol, appearance of having used drugs, wearing jeans and a t-shirt, or no shoes, or a skirt slit to the derriere, or dark glasses during the interview. Be as professional looking as possible.

5) Don't be dishonest:

Be honest. Don't exaggerate achievements or misrepresent knowledge or skills. Don't contradict what you wrote on the application. Don't steal from the interviewer's office.