

Résumé Action Words

When you write a résumé, every word counts. Make your résumé concise by choosing verbs that carry meaning. Instead of saying “was in charge of,” say “managed.” Learn how to avoid weak verbs, such as “to be,” so that your résumé will be strong and straightforward.

Action Words

Below is a list of helpful action words that you can use in your résumé.

achieved	drafted	originated
acquired	edited	oversaw
adapted	eliminated	performed
addressed	enforced	planned
administered	established	prevented
analyzed	evaluated	produced
anticipated	expanded	programmed
assembled	explained	promoted
assisted	forecasted	provided
audited	formed	publicized
budgeted	founded	published
calculated	generated	recruited
centralized	guided	reorganized
changed	hired	reported
collaborated	implemented	researched
composed	improved	resolved
condensed	informed	reviewed
conducted	insured	selected
constructed	interpreted	separated
contracted	interviewed	set up
converted	launched	simplified
coordinated	maintained	solved
created	managed	surveyed
cultivated	marketed	staffed
demonstrated	minimized	supervise
designed	motivated	taught
developed	negotiated	tested
devised	obtained	trained
discovered	operated	used
doubled	organized	

Using the List

Now that you have the words at your fingertips, let's see how they work in context. Pretend one of your job tasks was to give exams to students in a lower-division course. On your résumé, you could say, "**Gave** exams to 30 students in English 1A and 1B."

The above sentence explains what you did, but the verb "gave" is a bit vague. We do not know if you created the tests, distributed the tests, or were responsible for the whole process. If you want to be more specific, you might say, "**Administered** exams to 30 students in English 1A and 1B."

In this revised example, we still learn what you did. However, we also learn that you managed or were responsible for the entire exam. "Administered" has a more specific meaning than "gave," which therefore makes this item on your résumé more concrete and impressive.

Let's try another situation. Imagine that you worked as an administrative assistant, and you want to include an item on your résumé that describes your day-to-day activities. You might say, "**Was** responsible for organizing meetings, creating schedules, analyzing data, and enforcing policies."

In the above example, we know exactly what you did. However, you are listing your responsibilities as nouns. If you look closely, each of these nouns can be written as an active verb. Re-write the item as follows: "**Organized** meetings, **created** schedules, **analyzed** data, and **enforced** policies."

Once again, the use of active verbs will make your résumé more concise. We still learn your responsibilities, but we can now visualize them. Active words make you seem more competent, and they impress potential employers.

Activity 1

Below you will find a sample from the employment section of the résumé of an individual who worked in a daycare center. Replace the weak verbs with stronger, more active verbs from the list.

Organized Supervised Surveyed Doubled [as] Formed

Sunshine Daycare Center

November 2011—March 2012

1. Was in charge of watching 20+ children of all ages. (1)
2. Put together special events for holidays and client birthdays. (2)
3. Was a secretary for the front desk in the aquatics department. (3)
4. Got close relationships with parents. (4)
5. Had to do surveys of the equipment, ranging from sporting goods to electronics. (5)

Answer Key: Activity 1

1. Supervised
2. Organized
3. Doubled [as]
4. Formed
5. Surveyed

Activity 2

Rewrite the following résumé bullet points using some of the action words from the list on the first page.

1. Made the Administrative Support Assistant manual simpler.
2. Had talks with both the administration and the board.
3. Had collaboration with the marketing and research departments.
4. Was responsible for the interviewing and hiring of seasonal employees.
5. Made the social media outreach larger to build the face of the company.

Answer Key for Activity 2

1. Simplified the Administrative Support Assistant manual.
2. Communicated/Negotiated with both the administration and the board.
3. Collaborated with the marketing and research departments.
4. Interviewed and hired seasonal employees.
5. Expanded social media outreach to build the face of the company.