

Résumés from Start to Finish

Résumés are designed to give potential employers a sense of your background at a glance. They function as a summary of your education, skills, and work history, and they should convey an awareness of your role at previous jobs. To that end, you should use a set format, concise language, and action words to create an efficient and easy-to-scan résumé.

Basic Formatting

Most potential employers prefer a one-page résumé; because a hiring manager may see numerous résumés in a single day, it is key to ensure your résumé conveys information as efficiently as possible. Even if a résumé is longer, it must be clear, concise, and organized.

Font and Typefaces

Serif and sans-serif are the two main font typefaces you can use to create a hierarchy of information in your résumé. Serif fonts have structural strokes on the letters, and sans-serif fonts are without structural strokes on the letters.

Serif (Times New Roman)	Sans-Serif (Arial)
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The two typefaces will help guide your reader by differentiating types of information.

- Use sans-serif fonts to stop the eye. They are best for titles and headings to help the reader quickly locate information.
- Use serif fonts to help keep the eye moving along the text. They are best for body text.
- Remember to keep the fonts consistent. You should stick to two fonts, such as Times New Roman and Arial.

Online Résumé

Remember that online résumés may require a different format.

- Be aware that many scanning and email programs limit how you can format your résumé. They may not accept boxes, lines, italics, graphics, parentheses, or unusual typefaces.
- Create a PDF version of your résumé to ensure that your formatting remains consistent. Most Microsoft Word software will convert your document to a PDF file.

See the next page for an example of a properly formatted, one-page résumé. Please note that this is only one example. While there is no standard or required formatting, your résumé should still be efficiently organized to convey information.

Monica B. Johnson
monica.johnson@sjsu.edu

4235 1st Street
San José, CA 95112
Mobile: (408) 555-3255

2805 Range Line Ct.
Lake Park, CA 95092
Home: (555) 542-1111

Experience

Spartan Daily Campus Newspaper San José, CA
Advertising Staff, Spring 2012-Fall 2012

- Developed and maintained client relationships to build the company's network
- Designed and illustrated original artwork to add diversity to newspaper's advertising
- Managed the advertising sales and production of the newspaper, overseeing publication of over twenty-two successful issues

Warp Technologies Sunnyvale, CA
Marketing Intern, Summer 2012

- Assisted in planning and executing local and national in-person and viral campaigns
- Managed social media presence on company blog, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, increasing readership and followers to expand company's audience
- Drafted and proofread various written materials, such as grant-related correspondence

Campaign for State Senator Bob Dutton Rancho Cucamonga, CA
Campaign Worker, Summer 2009

- Distributed materials to widen the outreach of campaign
- Performed administrative office tasks to help maintain a clean and professional environment

Education

San José State University San José, CA

- Bachelor of Science degree in Marketing, expected graduation in May 2013
- GPA: Overall – 3.5; Major – 3.8
- Dean's Scholar: spring 2011, fall 2011, spring 2012

Lake Park High School Lake Park, CA

- Class of 2009
- Future Business Leaders of America, Communications Director

College Activities

Latino Business (2009-Present)

Club Tennis (2009-Present)

Advertising Club (2009-Present)

Full Circle Farm Volunteer

Skills

Experience with graphic design and video editing programs, such as Photoshop and InDesign.

References are available upon request.

Résumé Content

Contact Info

This sample résumé provides information in an easy and logical order. Begin by including basic contact information such as name, email address, physical address, and phone numbers. This information will immediately convey to a hiring manager who you are and how to contact you.

Monica B. Johnson monica.johnson@sjsu.edu		
4235 1st Street San Jose, CA 95112 Mobile: (408) 555-3255		2805 Range Line Ct. Lake Park, CA 53092 Home: (555) 542-1111

Work Experience

Your work experience is perhaps the most crucial section, and as such it should come first. This will inform a potential hiring manager about your previous jobs and the tasks you completed while working. Include basic information such as the name of the company, the city where the company is located, your position or title, and the time period you worked there.

Experience		
<i>Spartan Daily</i> Campus Newspaper Advertising Staff, Spring 2012-Fall 2012		San José, CA
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developed and maintained client relationships to build the company's network• Designed and illustrated original artwork to add diversity to newspaper's advertising• Managed the advertising sales and production of the newspaper, overseeing publication of over twenty-two successful issues		

The bullet points are the most important part of your résumé. Yes, they describe your duties at previous jobs, but the bullets should do more. Do not simply describe your tasks: "Developed and maintained client relationships." Hiring managers will read countless bullets like this. Instead, differentiate yourself from other applicants by also describing how your duties contributed to the overall goals of the company: "Developed and maintained client relationships to build the company's network."

This will inform a hiring manager not only of the skills you possess, but also that you are aware of your role within the bigger picture of the company.

Education

Include your college education. Some hiring managers do not require a GPA; however, if you are not certain, it is better to include it. If you have not graduated yet, be sure to list your expected graduation month and year.

Education		
San José State University		San Jose, CA
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bachelor of Science degree in Marketing, expected graduation in May 2013• GPA: Overall – 3.5; Major – 3.8• Dean's Scholar: spring 2011, fall 2011, spring 2012		

Action Words

When working on your bullet points, begin each one with an action word that carries specific meaning. Remember: when you write a résumé, every word counts. Make your résumé concise; instead of saying “was in charge of,” say “managed” or “oversaw.” Learn how to avoid weak “to be” verbs so that your résumé will be strong and straightforward.

Below is a list of helpful, meaningful 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	supervised
designed	motivated	taught
developed	negotiated	tested
devised	obtained	trained
discovered	operated	used
doubled	organized	

Specific and Concise Verbs

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 the following: "**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.

Double-Duty Meanings

Let's try another situation. Imagine that you worked as a social media manager, and you want to include an item on your résumé that describes a blog you created. You might say, "**Created** a company blog to engage and inform consumers about the company's products."

In the above example, we know exactly what you did—you created a blog. However, this could potentially be interpreted as your beginning the blog but then passing it on to someone else. Your action words should not only be specific but also work double-duty, conveying multiple meanings. For example, consider the following edit: "**Cultivated** a company blog to engage and inform consumers about the company's products."

The action word "cultivated" implies that you not only created a blog, but you helped the blog to grow as well. Carefully consider each action word and the multiple meanings it might imply.

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.

Conclusion

Now you have the tools to portray accurately and completely your unique qualities as a potential employee. Keep in mind that the ultimate goal of your résumé is to help you stand out from other applicants. Consider what makes you unique. Why are you the right applicant for the job? What information do you feel is the most crucial for a hiring manager to know? Ask yourself these questions, and good luck!