

# Chapter 5 - Resumes and Correspondence

## Writing Your Resume

Your resume is a powerful marketing tool to land an interview. It's an important part of your total package, and must be clear, concise, appealing, and informative. There is no right or wrong way to write your resume. It should reflect your unique experience, personality, and style. Your objective is to communicate what makes you stand out as a stellar job candidate.

### Why Create a Resume?

Looking good on paper is often the first step to an interview. It summarizes your skills, education, activities, and on-the-job experiences, and demonstrates how your qualifications match the employer's needs. Resumes should be customized or tailored to a specific job description.

**Employers typically view a resume for no more than 15 to 30 seconds.**

Take advantage of that time by crafting a resume that is clear, concise, and quickly demonstrates how you meet their needs.

### Four Steps to a Power-Packed Resume

1. Take stock of what you have to offer.
2. Prioritize your skills and experience.
3. Pull it all together.
4. Put it on paper.

### Take Stock

Before you touch your fingers to the computer keyboard, take an inventory of what you can offer an employer. The following exercises can help you thoroughly assess your professional abilities, technical skills, personal attributes, experience, and accomplishments.



### What are my special, technical, or field specific skills?

Highlight qualities that will respond to employers' needs, such as skills in bilingual communication, word processing, spreadsheet and database management, programming languages, clerical, cash handling, customer service, and sales.

### What are some of my more important personal attributes? How do they relate to the world of work? Where have I successfully used these abilities?

Make a list of special qualities that set you apart from other applicants. Employers will be looking for examples of:

- Your ability to deal with high-pressure situations
- Willingness to assume responsibility
- A high energy level
- Strong interpersonal skills and initiative.

Think of specific examples of where and how each skill or attribute led to a tangible result or achievement. Include work experience, internships, volunteer activities, clubs and organizations, research projects, sports, etc.

### Write down your personal attributes, relevance to job performance, place, or situation. Generate a list of your accomplishments.

Prospective employers want to know what you have achieved and how your performance made a difference. Identify at least three accomplishments for each example or situation you listed in the preceding exercise. Your answers to these questions may help you to identify challenges or problems you faced, your solutions, and the accomplishments of which you are most proud.

Have you:

- Done something faster, better, or cheaper?
- Increased membership, participation, or sales?
- Saved your organization any money or eliminate waste?
- Identified and/or helped solve any problems?
- Instituted any new methods, systems, or procedures?
- Suggested a new service, product, or project?
- Re-organized or improved an existing system?
- Refined the nature of an existing task?
- Maintained a consistently high level of performance?
- Demonstrated leadership skills and exhibited good team player skills?
- Reached out for more work or more responsibility?
- Achieved results with little or no supervision?
- Motivated others?
- Coordinated any event or project?
- Trained another person? What were the results?
- Tutored anyone? Did their grades improve?
- Acquired industry-specific knowledge?

### **Emphasize the Results**

Quantifying your accomplishments gives prospective employers a sense of how you went about an assignment or project and the bottom-line results of your performance. Numbers speak volumes to people who make hiring decisions. Consider how much more impressive it is to show measurable results to an employer.

For example, this sentence, “Organized all sorority philanthropic events which resulted in contributions of over \$4000” is much more impressive than “Organized all sorority philanthropic events.”

Here’s another example of how quantifying your accomplishments can be quite powerful, “Developed tact and diplomacy in dealing with customers in a fast-paced environment” is more effective than “Served food.”

The statement, “Commended for efficiency and accuracy in completing office duties” gives you more mileage than, “Responsible for typing and filing.”

### **Prioritize Your Skills and Experience**

Identifying your primary career objective will help you decide which skills and experiences to emphasize and which ones to omit when creating your resume. If you haven’t yet made a career decision, it may be helpful to enroll in the Career Center’s Skills Assessment or “How to Discover Your Dream Job” workshops and to consult with a career counselor.

Ideally, each resume you produce will be tailored to fit the specific job for which you are applying. When precise tailoring is not possible, construct your resume so that it is targeted towards your primary career or job objective. You can then use your cover letter to emphasize or add job specific skills.

Think about your primary career objective and write down your principal abilities, skills, attributes, and experience desired by employers in this field.

### **Pull it All Together**

Regardless of the format you have chosen, the following information should be included in your resume. Consider using the CARR Method (see page 52).

#### **Heading**

At the top of the page, list your name, mailing address, email address, and a telephone or cell number where you can be reached or a message can be left. Keep your outgoing messages and email address professional. Be sure to check regularly for incoming messages.

#### **Objective**

Whether to include an objective section is optional. If you decide to use one, state your objective clearly and succinctly. Avoid lengthy, meaningless statements, such as “A challenging and rewarding assignment in a dynamic company that will use my exceptional managerial skills.”

If you have more than one career interest, you can prepare several versions, each tailored to a different objective. Or you can mention your objective in your cover letter and omit it from your standard or “master” resume. For general use, such as for distribution at career fairs, we recommend that you create a version without an objective statement so that your resume does not “screen you out.”

### **Qualifications Summary**

Most recent graduates probably will not use this section or may title it “Special Skills.” Only people who have several years of experience and/or technical skills they want to bring to the attention of prospective employers generally use a “Summary of Qualifications.” The key word is “summary.” You do not need to provide details or tell where you gained the special skill. This information will be included in your “Experience” section.

### **Education**

This may be the first section of the resume for many students and recent graduates. List “Education” before “Experience” when education is your strength, and “Experience” first when it is your greatest asset. This principle of leading with your strengths should be used in deciding on the order of major sections and for prioritizing information within sections.

If your major is not career related, but some of your coursework is relevant, you may want to include a subsection that begins, “Relevant courses: . . .” Include your Grade Point Average if it is high and you are a continuing student or recent graduate.

### **Experience**

Your experience is not limited to paid positions. Also include non-paid and volunteer work. You may choose from different ways to portray your experience:

#### **Reverse Chronological Order**

You may include all part-time jobs, internships, and other work experience in one section. Or you

may create special sections (e.g., Marketing Experience and Related Experience), and arrange the positions in reverse-chronological order within each section (list most recent first followed by the previous position and so on).

### **Categorized by skills and major areas of accomplishment**

Some “skills” categories might be:

- Leadership
- Teamwork
- Research
- Communication
- Technical
- Interpersonal Skills

### **Activities and Honors**

- List student organizations, professional associations and committees, indicating any offices held.
- University activities that show evidence of leadership, initiative, community involvement or the use of special skills may be listed under “Leadership.”
- Organize the information to highlight your greatest skills and achievements.
- Recent graduates and continuing students also should include academic honors (Dean’s List, honor societies, and scholarships). You may list honors separately or as a bullet-point under “Education.”

### **Other Information**

You may want to highlight other achievements or skills that are not easily incorporated into the other sections. This may include such things as licenses, certifications, credentials, research, or publications. Simply create an appropriate heading and insert it in your resume so that it gets the attention it merits.

### **References**

You do not generally list your references on your resume. Instead type them on a separate sheet of paper, using the same heading as your resume, and take them along to the interview.

## Personal Data

Under most circumstances, it is not appropriate to include your ethnicity, age, marital status or religion. In some countries, including this information is required. See “Work Abroad Resume / International CV Resume” on page 73.

## Put It On Paper

The next step is to put all the information in front of you together in a layout that is graphically pleasing, attention getting, easy-to-read, and focused on your accomplishments and results.

Your overall objective will be to present yourself, skills and accomplishments in the best possible light and catch the reader’s attention in about 30 seconds. It should be presented in a clean, simple, professional, easy to read manner where the employer should not have to “work” at finding what they need to on your resume.

## The Final Draft

Congratulations! You’ve completed your resume draft. Before you send it out, make sure your resume is persuasive, targeted, and memorable:

- Bring your resume to the career center and receive feedback from a Career Counselor or Peer Advisor.
- Ask one or more managerial-level individuals from your target industry to critique your resume before sending it off to a prospective employer.
- Proofread! Proofread!! Proofread!!!

### Career Library / Lab Resources

- *The Adams Resume Almanac*
- *Encyclopedia Of Job-Winning Resumes*
- *The Job Hunter’s Word Finder: The Complete Guide to Key Words and Phrases for Resumes, Cover Letters, Interviews, and Job Descriptions*
- *Best Resumes for College Students and New Grads*
- *Designing Creative Resumes*
- *From College to Career: Entry-Level Resumes for Any Major*
- *Perfect Phrases for Resumes*

## Guidelines to Crafting Your Resume

### Content

Emphasize accomplishments and results most likely to increase your appeal as a job candidate. Minimize job descriptions and listings of responsibilities. What you did to make a difference is important to a prospective employer. Speaking of position titles, you do not have to use your precise payroll title. Use titles that are descriptive of your responsibilities. For example, “Accounting Clerk Intern” is much more descriptive than “Intern.”

### Layout

Leave some white space to create an uncluttered, organized look. Be consistent in your use of indentations, capitalization, fonts, and spacing.

### Proofread

Check and double check to make sure your finished draft contains no mistakes in spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

### Paper

When printing your resume, use high quality 8 1/2 x 11 bond in white or ivory, laser printed, on one side only. If possible, buy envelopes and letterhead paper to match or complement your resume.

### Style

Brisk, active phrases convey energy and enthusiasm. Use a “bullet” format, listing one task or accomplishment per line. You will probably think of points to add once you begin composing your resume.

### Length

Strive to be brief and concise, yet provide pertinent information. Remember that a prospective employer will spend less than a minute evaluating your resume. Unless you are working in a very technical field and have many years of experience, limit your resume length to one page – two at the most.

## **Appearance**

Choose a standard, easy-to-read font (such as Arial, Calibri, Century Gothic, or Times) in a 10-12 point size. Do not excessively bold or italicize words/bullet-points, as many organizations use computer-based resume scanning systems to make the initial cut. Some of these programs have difficulty “reading” bold and italicized fonts and flashy graphics.

## **Format**

Choose the format that best represents you and your career objective. The “Resume Formats” section of this guide offers advantages of different styles. Dozens of books are available at the Career Center Library and at bookstores to give you additional ideas.

## **Resume Formats**

There are three basic formats for resume preparation: chronological, functional, and combination. There is no magic or prescribed formula, each has its own advantages. The best advice is to choose a format that best portrays your skills and experience at a glance.

### **Chronological Format**

Chronological resumes are the easiest to prepare and read, and the most commonly used. This format puts emphasis on past experience and employment, such as work experience, community service, relevant course work, special projects, student groups, and extra-curricular activities. Information about your current or most recent position is listed first and then previous positions follow in reverse chronological order. This format is most common for college students.

### **Functional Format**

The functional format enables you to focus on skills and qualities that can be applied to a number of work situations. It is best suited when you want to deemphasize your employment record. You might choose this format if you have

no work experience, have significant gaps in your employment record, have a pattern of short term jobs (subsequent to graduation from college), or have held several positions in which you have exercised the same skills. The functional format is often used by job seekers who are making a drastic career change and want to emphasize their transferable skills.

### **The Combination Format**

As the name implies, the combination format merges elements of both the functional and chronological resume. It stresses skills and capabilities, but adds positions, employers, and dates. The main advantage is that it shows the potential employer where and when you gained the skills you are highlighting. If you have a stable employment record, it is important to include a job history to help remove some of the suspicions that often rise in the minds of employers reading functional resumes.

### **The Technical Resume**

Although the technical resume uses one of the traditional formats (chronological, functional, or combination), there are some nuances in the content and presentation. Individuals targeting positions in information technology, engineering, or consulting should consider using this approach. Some subsections that may be viable are “Technical Skills,” “Projects,” or “Relevant Coursework.”

- Include all paid and unpaid experiences, projects, or hobbies that relate to the industry that you are targeting.
- Include operating systems, hardware platforms, environments, programming languages, software applications, communication protocols, databases, etc., of which you are knowledgeable. Remember to use “buzz” words that would catch the eye of the employer or scanning programs. However, do not misrepresent your skills by including programs with which you are not familiar.

- List relevant coursework or projects that emphasize your technical skills, knowledge, and experience. List coursework by title, e.g., “Logic Design” rather than by course number.
- Summarize your technical skills and knowledge in an itemized fashion (e.g., a bulleted format) and prioritize them by your proficiency using them.
- Quantify your experience whenever possible. Cite numerical figures, percentages of efficiency improvement, lines of code written or debugged, numbers of machines supported, etc. If appropriate, also include accomplishments achieved in coursework, student activities, etc.
- Include your GPA if it’s 3.0 or higher. Many technical companies assume that if your GPA is not listed, it is below 3.0. You can list your overall, major, or upper-division coursework.
- Use simple, traditional fonts and avoid heavy use of italics and underlining. Usually, a one-page resume is adequate for an undergraduate level of accomplishment. If your resume has more than one page, your name and page number should be on all successive pages.
- This is the time to “market” yourself in an honest way. Make sure you are highlighting your strengths and qualifications.

### The Scannable Resume

Many companies today use software that scans resumes looking for specific keywords or phrases that match the job opening. By using this method, the company can quickly match qualified job seekers with positions.

For more information, refer to *Electronic Resume Revolution* by Joyce Lain Kennedy and Thomas J. Morrow, available at the Career Center Library and most bookstores.

### Keywords and Nouns

You can improve your odds of securing an interview by filling your electronic resume with keywords (most keywords are nouns).

- Use nouns that state specific job functions, skills or responsibilities, such as marketing, competitive analysis, sales quota, or TQM (Total Quality Management). Get noun ideas by reading job descriptions. Note nouns used by firms on your prospect list.
- If responding to a specific job opening, try to use as many keywords as possible from the job description.
- Forget the admonition about not using jargon and “buzz words.” But only include terminology appropriate for your profession or industry.

### Scannable Resume Tips

- Choose a simple font such as Arial, Times, Calibri, or Century Gothic in size 10-12 points.
- Keep it simple. Avoid complicated layouts, graphics and shading. Use all caps for major headings, and avoid overusing bold, italics, or underlining.
- Always include a cover letter to supplement your resume.



# CARR Method

## For Writing Resume Bullet-Points

The best approach to writing your resume is to apply the CARR method to construct your bullet-points. This method allows you to think about the various aspects of each experience to help you write an action oriented statement to help you describe your experiences and accomplishments.

**C**ontext: Workplace Environment, Employees, etc.

“Small, fast-paced literary management office of six employees: One President / CEO, Two Managers, Two assistants and one intern (me!)”

**A**ction: Explain your actions, framed in the context of the situation.

“Kept office informed of different changes with clients, Made sure clients were happy—handled conflict when manager was not available...”

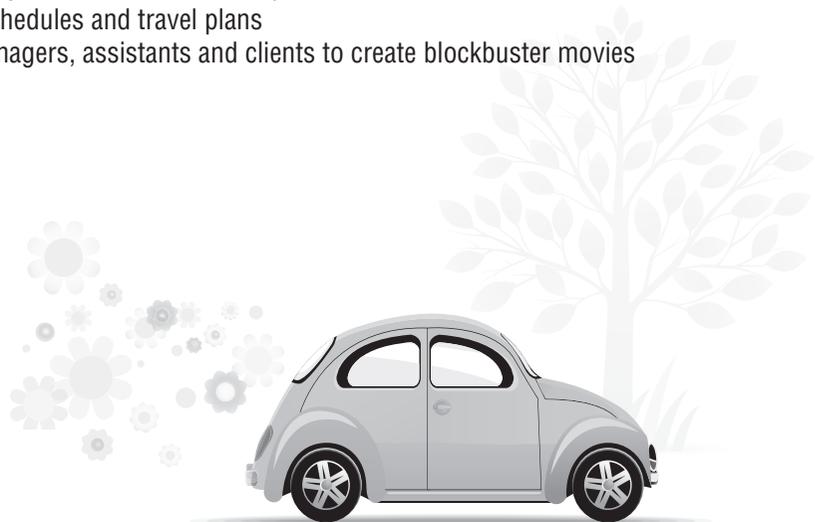
**R**esult: Explain the result and its benefit.

“Clients and managers were happy, office ran smoothly, projects were able to meet their dead lines—eventually a movie was made.”

**R**elate: Connect your experience with the desired qualities to write your bullet points.

- Maintained high-quality client service in a fast-paced environment
- Co-managed client schedules and travel plans
- Collaborated with managers, assistants and clients to create blockbuster movies

*Use the “CARRS Worksheet”  
to try out this exercise with  
your own experiences*



The “CARRS Worksheet” is available for download at [ucla.in/pNHnJ4](https://ucla.in/pNHnJ4).

# Power Verbs That Enhance Your Resume

Accelerated	Collected	Empowered	Informed	Prescribed	Secured
Accommodated	Commissioned	Enabled	Initiated	Prioritized	Served
Accomplished	Committed	Encouraged	Innovated	Processed	Set goals
Acquired	Communicated	Endorsed	Inspected	Procured	Settled
Acted	Compared	Engineered	Inspired	Produced	Shaped
Activated	Compiled	Enhanced	Instituted	Programmed	Smoothed
Added	Completed	Enlarged	Instructed	Projected	Sold
Addressed	Composed	Enlisted	Integrated	Promoted	Solicited
Adjusted	Computed	Enriched	Interceded	Publicized	Solved
Administered	Conceptualized	Enumerated	Interpreted	Purchased	Sought
Admitted	Concluded	Envisioned	Interviewed	Queried	Spearheaded
Advanced	Confirmed	Equipped	Introduced	Questioned	Specified
Aided	Consented	Established	Invented	Raised	Spoke
Alleviated	Consolidated	Estimated	Investigated	Rated	Stimulated
Allocated	Constructed	Evaluated	Involved	Realized	Streamlined
Allowed	Contracted	Examined	Issued	Recommended	Strengthened
Altered	Contributed	Excelled	Judged	Reconciled	Studied
Ameliorated	Controlled	Executed	Justified	Recorded	Submitted
Amended	Converted	Exercised	Launched	Recruited	Substantiated
Appointed	Cooperated	Expanded	Lectured	Rectified	Suggested
Apportioned	Correlated	Expedited	Led	Reduced (losses)	Summarized
Appraised	Corresponded	Explained	Licensed	Refined	Supervised
Apprised	Critiqued	Extended	Lightened	Referred	Supplemented
Approved	Customized	Extracted	Linked	Reformed	Surveyed
Approximated	Debugged	Fabricated	Maintained	Regarded	Sustained
Arbitrated	Decided	Facilitated	Managed	Regulated	Synthesized
Arranged	Deciphered	Familiarized	Marketed	Rehabilitated	Systematized
Ascertained	Dedicated	Fashioned	Measured	Reinforced	Tabulated
Assembled	Delegated	Figured	Mediated	Rejuvenated	Tailored
Assessed	Deliberated	Finalized	Minimized	Related	Taught
Assigned	Delivered	Forecasted	Mobilized	Relieved	Traced
Attained	Demonstrated	Formulated	Modeled	Remedied	Trained
Attested	Designated	Fostered	Moderated	Remodeled	Transacted
Audited	Designed	Founded	Modernized	Repaired	Transformed
Augmented	Determined	Fulfilled	Modified	Reported	Translated
Authorized	Devaluated	Generated	Monitored	Represented	Transmitted
Balanced	Developed	Grew	Motivated	Researched	Updated
Bolstered	Devised	Guaranteed	Multiplied	Reserved	Upgraded
Boosted	Diagnosed	Guided	Negotiated	Resolved (problems)	Validated
Brainstormed	Directed	Handled	Officiated	Restored	Valued
Budgeted	Disbursed	Hired	Operated	Retrieved	Verified
Calculated	Dispatched	Identified	Orchestrated	Revamped	Visualized
Catalogued	Displayed	Illustrated	Organized	Reviewed	Wrote
Centralized	Drafted	Implemented	Originated	Revised	
Certified	Eased	Improved	Overhauled	Revitalized	
Chaired	Eclipsed	Improvised	Performed	Revived	
Charted	Edited	Increased	Persuaded	Sanctioned	
Clarified	Educated	Indexed	Pioneered	Satisfied	
Classified	Elevated	Indicated	Planned	Scheduled	
Coached	Elicited	Inferred	Polished	Screened	
Collaborated	Employed	Influenced	Prepared	Scrutinized	

# Action Verbs by Functional Skill Area

COMMUNICATION	CREATIVE	DETAIL ORIENTED	FINANCIAL	MANUAL SKILLS	PROVIDING SERVICE
Aided	Active	Analyzed	Administered	Arranged	Advised
Arbitrated	Abstracted	Approved	Allocated	Assembled	Attended
Advised	Adapted	Arrange	Analyzed	Bound	Cared
Clarified	Composed	Classified	Appraised	Built	Coached
Consulted	Conceptualized	Collated	Audited	Checked	Coordinated
Co-authored	Created	Compared	Budgeted	Classified	Counseled
Collaborated	Designed	Compiled	Calculated	Constructed	Demonstrated
Coordinated	Developed	Documented	Computed	Controlled	Explained
Counseled	Directed	Enforced	Developed	Cut	Furnished
Defined	Drew	Followed through	Evaluated	Designed	Generated
Enlisted	Fashioned	Met deadlines	Figured	Developed	Inspected
Formulated	Generated	Prepared	Maintained	Drove	Installed
Influenced	Illustrated	Processed	Managed	Handled	Issued
Informed	Imagined	Recorded	Performed	Installed	Mentored
Inspired	Improvised	Retrieved	Planned	Invented	Delivered
Interpreted	Integrated	Set priorities	Projected	Maintained	Referred
Interviewed	Innovated	Systemized		Monitored	Repaired
Mediated	Painted	Tabulated		Prepared	Provided
Merged	Performed			Operated	Purchased
Negotiated	Planned			Repaired	Submitted
Promoted	Problem solved			Tested	
Publicized	Shaped				
Recommended	Synthesized				
Represented	Visualized				
Resolved	Wrote				
Suggested					



ORGANIZING	LEADERSHIP	TECHNICAL	RESEARCH / INVESTIGATION	TEACHING SKILLS
Achieved	Administered	Assembled	Calculated	Extrapolated
Assigned	Chaired	Built	Cataloged	Evaluated
Consulted	Convinced	Calculated	Collected	Gathered
Contracted	Directed	Computed	Computed	Identified
Controlled	Examined	Designed	Conducted	Inspected
Coordinated	Executed	Engineered	Correlated	Investigated
Decided	Expanded	Fabricated	Critiqued	Monitored
Delegated	Facilitated	Maintained	Diagnosed	Proved
Developed	Improved	Operated	Discovered	Reviewed
Established	Initiated	Programmed	Examined	Surveyed
Evaluated	Managed	Remodeled	Experimented	Tested
Negotiated	Oversaw	Repaired		
Organized	Produced	Solved		
Planned	Recommended			
Prepared	Reviewed			
Prioritized	Supervised			
Produced				
Recommended				
Reported				

