

GOAL: Write a Resume

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Introduction

Writing a great resume is one of the critical steps you must take in order to land your dream job. The main purpose of a resume is to gain an employer's interest so they contact you for an interview. The information you include on your resume, combined with how you present that information, will help determine whether you get that interview.



Usually, your resume only has a few seconds to impress the employer. They will be making a judgment about you based on the content and format of your resume. Your resume should be an honest representation of your skills, qualifications, and experiences.

Although there are many resources devoted to resume writing and many opinions on how to write the “perfect” resume, there are some basic fundamentals of writing a successful resume. Your resume should contain various pieces of information that can be arranged in different order depending on what you want to call the most attention to.

Getting Started

You will want to get started by collecting the information to include on your resume. Filling out a resume worksheet is a good way to put all your information in one place. You and your tutor can brainstorm about your past job experiences. Perhaps you can tell the tutor about your jobs and your tutor can write down what you say. You will want to remember when you started and stopped a job and the things you did at the job. The things you did are your accomplishments. A resume worksheet is included here (below) with some guidelines that will help you gather and present your job history.

Books & Materials

Check your library catalog for books on resume writing or ask a reference librarian for assistance. New Readers Press publishes a book called Job Search. The book will give you some practice writing resumes, going on job interviews, and more. It includes reproducible forms. It is available for \$30.95 but be sure to check your library shelves for a copy first. Also, recommend that your Literacy Staff purchase a copy for the Literacy Collection.

Key Vocabulary

- ◆ Accomplishment
- ◆ Objective
- ◆ Chronological
- ◆ Professional
- ◆ Format
- ◆ Resume
- ◆ Functional

Reading Practice

Read Other People’s Resumes. Together with your tutor, read as many resumes as you can find. Think and talk about which ones you like and think about why you like them. Are any of them similar to your education and experience? It’s O.K. to copy some of the information if it applies to you.

There are a couple of places you and your tutor can go to find sample resumes:

- > You can ask the librarian how to find sample resumes.
- > You can also use a computer at the library. Your tutor can show you how to use a search engine, like Google. Do you know what it means if someone says “Google the word ‘resume’?”
- > You can also take a field trip to your local Employment Development office to pick up sample resumes.
- > You might even have a friend or relative that will show you his or her resume. Practice reading all the resumes you can find.

Writing Practice

Write your resume. Writing your resume begins with gathering information and organizing it. So to start, use this resume worksheet (pages 3 & 4) to begin collecting information about your job history. Where you see numbers (❶, ❷, ❸) refer to page 5 where you will find additional explanation.

Resume Worksheet

1 Name
Address
Telephone Number

Objective: *[In one line, tell what job or position you want.]* **2**

Relevant skills/experience or highlights of qualifications:
[List the skills or accomplishments that show you can do the job.]

Work Experience: *[List your most recent job first, next most recent, etc. Go back ten years.]*

Employer name: _____ **3**
City, State: _____
Job title: _____
Dates of employment *[beginning and ending]:*
Duties/Responsibilities: _____

Employer name: _____
City, State: _____
Job title: _____
Dates of employment (beginning and ending):
Duties/Responsibilities: _____

Resume Worksheet (continued)

Employer name: _____

City, State: _____

Job title: _____

Dates of employment *[beginning and ending]*:

Duties/Responsibilities: _____

Employer name: _____

City, State: _____

Job title: _____

Dates of employment (beginning and ending):

Duties/Responsibilities: _____

[Repeat the employer information as often as you need to cover your work experience for the last 10 years.]

Education *[most recent first]*: **4**

Name of school: _____

City, State: _____

Diploma/degree earned/year completed:

Name of school: _____

City, State: _____

Diploma/degree earned/year completed:

References: **5**

Resume Worksheet: Additional Explanation

1 Personal information

Name - If you go by a nickname include it with your full name.

Address - Use your mailing address.

Telephone - Make sure a responsible person can take a message for you and make sure your voicemail message is appropriate and professional.

E-mail - Include it if you check it frequently. Make sure your e-mail address is appropriate and professional. Set up another e-mail account if you have to.

Tip - Do not include other personal information like your birthday, social security number, or driver's license number.

2 Objective

This is where you tell the employer what kind of job you want. It should be clear, to the point, and targeted to the job position. Talk with your tutor about what kind of job you want. Then talk about ways to write about it in one or two sentences.

3 Work Experience

This is where you write about each of your previous jobs. You only have to go back 10 years, so even though you may have been the best pizza delivery person 12 years ago, you don't want to include it. Your most recent job comes first.

- Employer-name, city and state
- Job title
- Dates of employment-beginning and ending, you don't put months, just the year, so if you started a job on July 5, 2008 and left it on January 8, 2009, you would put, 2008-2009. (This isn't cheating even though it makes it look like you were there longer. Your application will show the month and year.)
- Accomplishments- this is where you brag about yourself and where you use action words (see below). You and your tutor can brainstorm some action words and find ones that describe you and the job you did.

4 Education

If you did not graduate or get a GED put the school or schools and the years you attended. Your most recent school comes first.

- School-name, city and state
- Dates of attendance-beginning and ending, again using the years only.

5 References

Make a list of professional references with name, position title, business address, and telephone number. It is important to always get permission before you give names to prospective employers. It is a good idea to tell people you are using them for a reference

so they will be prepared and expect the call. You can also tell them what kind of job you are applying for.

Action Words. On the resume worksheet under “Work Experience” you were asked to fill in your “duties and responsibilities” for each job. When you describe your work you will want to use “action words,” verbs that make your job history come alive. On the table below there are many different words to describe what a person does at work, which can be used on a resume. Review these action words and circle those that apply to you. Write sentences using those action words and insert them into your resume. Think of your own action words to describe your work if you do not find the words you need here.

Communication Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertised • Called • Discussed • Instructed • Showed 	Cooperation Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed • Consulted • Facilitated • Provided 	Administrative Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administered • Budgeted • Enforced • Hired • Signed • Supervised 	Managerial Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collected • Delivered • Guided • Inspected • Trained • Worked
Creative Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authored • Created • Established • Formulated • Invented • Wrote • Produced • Drafted • Designed • Compiled 	Results Words <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changed • Earned • Marketed • Reduced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined • Monitored • Maintained • Developed • Selected 	Problem-Solving Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solved • Discovered • Negotiated
	Clerical Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Filed • Ordered • Sorted • Organized • Summarized 	Verbal Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lectured • Delivered • Chaired • Counseled • Participated 	Manual Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installed • Fitted • Coded • Fixed • Built

Finishing Touches. Once you have finished writing your resume you are ready to apply the finishing touches. Here are some additional things to think about so your resume stands out:

Format – When you were looking at other resumes, did you see some that appealed to you? Can you identify why you liked one resume instead of another? To help yours look its best, you will want it to be:

- Well organized and easy to read.
- Consistent
 - Use bullets, capital letters, or italics.
 - Use a standard and easy to read font size
 - Ariel or Times.
 - No smaller than 10 pt.
 - Try to leave one inch margins.
- Professional

- You do not want your resume to be on pink or green paper and you do not want to include a photo of yourself. No jokes or cartoons either. Think and write professionally.

Length - Try to keep your resume to one page if possible but no more than two pages. If you need another page make sure your contact information is at the top of the next page.

Language - Stay away from slang and abbreviations. Spell out words for instance don't say CD or 4WD, write out compact disc or four wheel drive.

Paper - Use white or off-white resume paper. Find some that is a little thicker than regular paper.

Independent Practice/Homework Ideas

You could start writing your resume at the computer from the very start or you can brainstorm and write sentences on paper with your tutor and then transfer those ideas to the computer at the end of the process. If you need practice on a computer, this is a good time to get it because it is critical to have an electronic copy of your resume so you can easily print new copies and update it as you need to or to send your resume out as an attachment to e-mail.

You can type your resume into the computer at home if you have a computer or at the library. Your tutor or Literacy Staff can help you with the basics of any word processing software (like Microsoft Word). As a bonus, when you are comfortable with a computer, you can mention computer skills on your resume.

Milestones

- ◆ ***Initial Effort*** – Look at other resumes (from friends or in resume writing books) and think about which resumes have the most impact and why. Collect your own employment history including company names, locations and the dates you worked, going back ten years. Begin to fill-in the resume worksheet. Select the action words that best describe your on-the-job duties and responsibilities.
- ◆ ***Making Progress*** – Finish the resume worksheet. Use the action words you have selected to create sentences and then paragraphs describing your work. Type your resume into the computer and print out a first draft. Review it with your tutor and look at how you can improve the format, the length of the resume, and the language. Pay special attention to spelling and grammar. Revise your resume as needed.
- ◆ ***Accomplished*** – Once you feel like your resume is ready for outside eyes, ask another person to review the resume, perhaps a staff person in the Literacy Office or someone in a hiring position, and ask them to give you some constructive feedback. Incorporate those comments to improve your resume as you see fit. Once the resume has been written to your satisfaction, you can begin submitting it to potential employers. Great work!

Contributor's Biography

Susan Sheehan. Susan ♥ her job! She has been the Calaveras Adult Tutoring Literacy Program Coordinator for a little more than one year after a career as a social worker. She has a Master's Degree in Counseling Psychology. Both her previous career and education have prepared her well for her current job.