

Tips for Preparing A Résumé and Cover Letter

Preparing a résumé and cover letter is an opportunity to highlight, in a clear and concise manner, how your skills, experience and education meet the requirements of a position.

The following are tips to remember when preparing a résumé and cover letter.

RÉSUMÉ:

- A résumé should:
 - be factual, current and include specific and relevant skills, experience and education which make you qualified for the position being considered;
 - include relevant and current contact information such as address, telephone numbers and email address;
 - outline your past work experience including title of position, company name, location (city, province) and the dates you started and finished work (month, year). The listing of duties for each position you have held in the past should start with the most relevant and significant duties;
 - outline your formal education starting with the most recent including name of school/post-secondary institution; city, province; year you started and completed; and list any certificates, diplomas or degrees received. If you are still enrolled and not completed the educational program you must note that it is “in progress” or “currently enrolled”;
 - be free of spelling and grammatical errors. It is always a good idea to have someone proof-read and review your resume prior to submitting;
 - be easy to read – use a font such as Arial or Times New Roman in size 10-12, use bulleted lists where possible and include white space by allowing for 1 inch margins; and
 - include any relevant volunteer or extra-curricular experience and any related training or supplementary courses.

COVER LETTER:

- A cover letter serves to introduce you as a candidate for consideration and should give a brief overview of why you feel qualified for the position. An ideal cover letter is 1-2 pages in length.
- A cover letter should:

- be customized for each position you apply for and add a personal touch to your application for employment;
- include the title of the position you are applying for and competition number or Job ID if applicable;
- outline in a concise manner why you feel you are an ideal candidate and reason for your interest in the position;
- refer to your attached resume for additional and detailed information on your skills, experience and education; and
- include current contact information including the easiest and fastest method to be contacted.

Sample Résumés

There are a number of different formats you may consider when preparing your résumé, and there are many websites and resources that can guide you in the process. Here are three basic formats of résumés.

Chronological Résumé

- A chronological résumé highlights job history and formal education starting with the most recent.
- This type of résumé is best used when the job is very much in line with your experience and educational background.

If you use this format remember to use present tense for current position and past tense for prior positions. You should ensure that you include information regarding the roles/responsibilities that you have performed that closely reflect the position to which you are applying. Depending on the length of work experience and number of employers, you may also include a subsection entitled “Other Work Experience” where you list the jobs and if necessary the type of environment (for example fast paced).

(Chronological Resume Template)

Name
Street
City, State Zip
Phone, Email

JOB OBJECTIVE: The job you want next

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- How much experience you have in the field of your job objective, in a related field, or using the skills required for your new position.
- An overall career accomplishment that shows you'd be good at this job.
- What someone would say about you as a recommendation.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 19xx-xxes Job Title, Company Name, City, State
- An accomplishment you are proud of that shows you're good at this profession.
 - A problem you solved and the results.
 - A time when you positively affected the organization, the bottom line, your boss, your co-workers, your clients.
 - Awards, commendations, publications, etc., you achieved that relate to your job objective.
- 19xx-xx Job Title, Company Name, City, State
- A project you are proud of that supports your job objective.
 - Another accomplishment that shows you're good at this line of work.
 - Quantifiable results that point out your skill.
- 19xx-xx Job Title, Company Name, City, State
- An accomplishment you are proud of that shows you will be valued by your next employer.
 - An occasion when someone "sat up and took notice" of your skill.

EDUCATION

Degree, Major (if relevant), 19xx (optional)
University, City, State

Functional Résumé

- A functional résumé focuses on transferable skills such as “analytical skills” instead of chronological work experience.
- This type of résumé should be used when you have limited experience and education relevant to the qualifications of the position.

If you choose to use a functional résumé format, ensure that you have included experience that supplements stated competencies. For example, if you state you have strong analytical skills, it should be clear within your resume how and where this competency was acquired and/or developed.

(Functional Resume Template)

Name

Street
City, State Zip
Phone, Email

JOB OBJECTIVE: The job you want next

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- How much experience you have in the field of your job objective, in a related field, or using the skills required for your new position.
- An overall career accomplishment that shows you'd be good at this job.
- What someone would say about you as a recommendation.

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

MAJOR SKILL

- An accomplishment you are proud of that shows you have this skill.
- A problem you solved using this skill and the results.
- A time when you used your skill to positively affect the organization, the bottom line, your boss, your clients.
- Awards, commendations, publications, etc., you achieved that relate to your job objective.

MAJOR SKILL

- A project you are proud of that supports your job objective.
- Another accomplishment that shows you're good at this line of work.
- Quantifiable results that point out your skill.
- An occasion when someone "sat up and took notice" of your skill.

WORK HISTORY

19xx-present	Job Title	COMPANY NAME and city
19xx-xx	Job Title	COMPANY NAME and city
19xx-xx	Job Title	COMPANY NAME and city
19xx-xx	Job Title	COMPANY NAME and city

EDUCATION

Degree, Major (if relevant), 19xx (optional)
University, City, State

Combination Resume

This format may be used when an applicant wants to emphasize transferable skills and a progressive work history and follows the following format:

- Lists a summary of skills and accomplishments at the beginning
- Lists past experience in reverse chronological order

A Combination resume combines aspects of both the chronological resume and the functional resume and is used to highlight your skills and abilities for the job, and also highlights your current and/or past employment history that includes responsibilities and accomplishments.

(Combination Resume Template)

Name
Street
City, State Zip
Phone
Email

JOB OBJECTIVE: The job you want next

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- How much experience you have in the field of your job objective, in a related field, or using the skills required for your new position.
- An overall career accomplishment that shows you'd be good at this job.
- What someone would say about you as a recommendation.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

20xx-pres. Job Title, Company Name, City, State

MAJOR SKILL

- An accomplishment from this job, which shows you have this skill.
- A problem you solved using this skill and the results.
- A time when you used your skill to positively affect the organization, the bottom line, your boss, your clients.
- Awards, commendations, publications, etc. you achieved that relate to your job objective.

MAJOR SKILL

- A project from this job you are proud of that used this skill and supports your job objective.
- Another accomplishment with quantifiable results that point out your skill.
- An occasion when someone "sat up and took notice" of your skill.

20xx-xx Job Title, Company Name, City, State

- A project you are proud of that supports your job objective.
- Another accomplishment that shows you're good at this line of work.
- Quantifiable results that point out your skill.

20xx-xx Job Title, Company Name, City, State

- An accomplishment that will be valued by your next employer.
- An occasion when someone "sat up and took notice" of your skill.

EDUCATION

Degree, Major (if relevant), 20xx (optional)
University, City, State