

Right Your Resume

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What This Workshop Will Cover:

- Purpose of a resume
- Targeting your resume
- Resume formats
- Specific sections of the resume
- Cover Letters and References

Purpose of a resume

- To summarize your qualifications.
- To evoke interest and sell your skills and experience.
- **Most importantly**, it's the first step to an opportunity to interview for the job you want.

****A great resume alone will not get you the job, but it can help get an interview.****

Before you begin, remember

The information you choose to include on your resume must be

RELEVANT

Highlight information that is important to employers and to the job you are seeking.

Resume Language

- Use simple, everyday language
- Do not use complete sentences
- Avoid personal pronouns (I, me, my, mine)
- Descriptions should be concise and clear
- Language should be positive and enthusiastic
- Avoid acronyms, excessive adjectives, and long lists
- Use industry-specific action words
- Use numbers to quantify accomplishments

Resume Layout

- Should be easy to read
- Capitalize and/or bold category headings
- Use fonts that are easy to read (Times New Roman/Arial)
- Be consistent with margins, spacing, and fonts
- Use font size (10-12)
- **Do not** use a template; start with a blank Word document

Targeting Your Resume



- Tailor your resume to a specific position: your skill set and/or the kind of work setting (industry) you are seeking.
- Write your resume addressing the employer's needs and requirements.
- Create several different versions of your resume for different job targets. 7

Example of Targeting

Sample Job Description

Jones & Associates, Schaumburg, IL

Job Title: Data Entry Clerk

Description: Candidates must have excellent data entry skills (+10,000ksph), ability to work accurately in a fast paced environment, good organizational skills, must be detailed-oriented, ability to follow directions, good Excel skills a plus. No degree required. Business major a plus.

What are the employer's needs?

What are the employer's needs?

Skills Needed:

- data entry speed
10,000ksph
- Excel
- accuracy
- detail-orientation
- organization
- follow directions
- business major

Your Skills:

Provide specific,
demonstrable examples of
your skills that match the
job.

Resume Formats

You need to determine how you want your resume organized.

- Chronological Format:

- List past employment in reverse chronological order by dates; list the most recent job first. [See chronological sample.](#)

- Functional Format:

- Experience is summarized in relevant skills categories. [See functional sample.](#)

- Combination Format:

- Combination of chronological and functional formats. [See combination sample.](#)

Chronological Format

- The most common and traditional style.
- Employers find it easy to read and understand.
- Tends to be easier to write and format.
- Emphasizes the progression of responsibilities and job titles.

Functional Format

- Useful when you want to emphasize skills not recently used in work experience.
- Useful when changing careers.
- May be useful when entering the job market for the first time.
- May be useful when you've had a variety of irrelevant work experiences.

Combination Format

- Allows you to emphasize relevant skills and satisfies employer's need for names and dates (employment history)

Sections of a Resume

- Contact information
- Objective
- Education
- Experience



Contact Information

Should include:

Your name

Street address

City, state, zip code

Contact phone number(s)

Email address

William R. Harper

123 Fake Street

Palatine, IL 60067

847-555-1234

wharper@gmail.com

1. Name is in larger/bold font.
2. State abbreviations do not have periods and are two capital letters.
3. Employers must be able to contact you. Use your primary phone number where you are most likely to be reached.
4. Set up an email address solely for job search. Choose a professional, appropriate, and clear email address. Avoid nicknames.

Objective

- An objective should include the name of the position you are seeking. It can also include:
 - Which industry in which you would like to work
 - Skills, education, experience that you will bring to the position
- An objective summarizes what you can offer an employer, it's not about what you want to get from the employer.

Objective Examples

A position as a legal secretary

Seeking a position as a **Data Entry Clerk** in the mortgage industry utilizing previous experience and computer coursework

To contribute my previous work experience, degree in elementary education, and bilingual skills to an **Elementary Education** position

To obtain a position as a **Programmer/Analyst** where I can use my knowledge of programming languages and databases to further benefit the company

Education

- Include institution, city, state, major, actual or expected graduation date
- Information on GPA is optional (3.0 or higher)
- A subsection of Relevant Coursework is optional; 3-6 relevant course titles if you are short on experience
- Do not include high school information

Education Example 1

Education:

Harper College, Palatine, IL

**Pursuing an Associate in Applied Science Degree in
Financial Services – Commercial Credit Management**

Expected graduation: 5/2010

GPA: 3.9/4.0

Relevant Coursework:

Principles of Financial Institution Operations

Commercial Credit and Collection Principles

Introduction to Business Organizations

Education Example 2

Education

Harper College, Palatine, IL
Certificate – Paralegal Studies
May 2008
GPA: 3.7/4.0

Illinois State University, Bloomington, IL
Bachelor of Science – Elementary Education
May 2006

Education Example 3

Education:

Roosevelt University, Schaumburg, IL

Bachelor of Arts, Liberal Arts

May, 2010

Harper College, Palatine, IL

Associate in Arts with an emphasis in English and
Literature

May, 2008

Experience

- Include job title, employer, city and state of employer, dates of employment, and accomplishments.
- Focus on accomplishments that set you apart from other candidates. Use industry specific keywords in descriptions. [Click here for a list of key words.](#)
- Do not limit yourself to paid experience; include volunteer work, lab work, clinicals, internships.
- Try to be consistent in using either present or past tense when writing your experience statement.

Experience Example

WORK EXPERIENCE

Chase Bank, Elgin, IL

06/07-Present

Customer Service Representative

- Provide friendly customer service in a high volume call center setting
- Handle difficult customers with poise and a collaborative problem-solving approach
- Process customer information via an online database accurately

McDonald's, Schaumburg, IL

07/06-06/07

Cashier/Food Preparation

- Executed customer orders quickly, accurately, and efficiently in a fast-paced environment
- Assisted with public relations, food service, and register control

Optional Sections

- Summary of Qualifications
- Skills
- Activities
- Volunteer Experience
- Languages
- Honors and Awards
- Professional Affiliations or Memberships
- Licensing/Certifications
- Military Experience

Irrelevant or Controversial Information (that does not belong on a resume)

- Age or birth date
- Your photo
- Marital status/family information
- Salary information/salary requirements
- Health status
- Religious or political affiliations
- Hobbies (unless directly related to the position; i.e. swim team if you are applying for a lifeguard position).
- Social security number
- Complete addresses from past employers, phone numbers of employers, names of former supervisors

Email/Online Resumes

After you complete your resume, you will also want to create a separate version suitable for email and online applications.

- Email/online compatible resumes typically are not as attractive as word processed resumes.
- Email/online resumes should be stripped of **bold**, *italics*, underlining, ♦ bullets, etc. Instead, use capital letters to identify sections and use dash marks (-) instead of bullets.
- Email/online resumes should be left aligned on the page.

Final Reminders

- Have a clear job target and customize the resume toward a specific job description.
- Include only information that is relevant to the position you are seeking.
- Limit the length of your resume to 1 - 2 pages. If your resume is on two pages, be sure to include your name at the top of the second page and indicate that it's page 2.
- Proofread, proofread, proofread! Check for spelling, grammar, capitalization, punctuation errors and inconsistent formatting.
- Begin statements with action words.

Cover Letters

Your resume typically should be accompanied by a cover letter. Sending a resume without a cover letter is like beginning an interview without shaking hands.

Good cover letters are about the target organization, not about you and what you want:

- Should reflect that you've researched the employer
- Should reflect how you will meet their requirements and goals

Personalize your cover letter for each company you respond to.

[Click here to see a sample cover letter.](#)

A final word on References

- References should not be sent with the resume and cover letter.
- They should be on a separate document and submitted only when the employer requests, typically after the first interview.
- Three references are generally sufficient; former supervisors, former co-workers, former professors or teachers are good references. Friends and family are inappropriate.
- Ask permission and inform your references about your job search.
- Always thank your references.

[Click here for a sample reference page.](#)

Additional Resources and Assistance

- **Currently enrolled Harper students** may obtain a resume/cover letter critique from a career counselor or the Information Specialist in the Harper Career Center. Call 847.925.6220.
- Consult resume samples in the Career Reference Library, A347 and [online](#).
- [More links.](#)

Start using your new resume today!

Upload your resume to

www.collegecentral.com/harper

- Access local job listings at the Harper College Career Center's site,
- Self-register, upload a resume, search local job listings, and track your job search history.

