

Wentworth

Co-ops & Careers

Grammar Guide for Advanced Resume Writing

Resume writing requires special consideration of both grammar and spelling. Carelessness with word choice can be reason enough for a hiring manager to pass over your resume. Resume writing is different than both composition and speaking. Keep your writing concise and specific with a professional tone. Avoid the following:

- **First-person pronouns (I, we):** We know this document is about you, so this is implied. Also avoid 3rd person they/he/she pronouns – this is not a narrative. Start each action statement with a verb.
 - YES: *“Trained new hires and organized team schedules.”*
 - NO: *“I trained them and organized their schedules.”*
- **Articles (the, a, an):** Articles don’t clarify or add meaning and end up crowding sentences.
 - YES: *“Maintained lab equipment for students.”*
 - NO: *“Maintained the lab equipment for the students.”*
- **Helping verbs (have, had, may, might):** Helping verbs weaken credibility. Instead, take ownership of your actions and avoid these passive phrases.
 - YES: *“Researched effective techniques to implement.”*
 - NO: *“Have researched effective techniques to possibly implement.”*
- **“Being” verbs (am, is, are, was, were):** Being verbs suggest a state of existence rather than a state of motion. The active voice gives a stronger, more confident delivery.
 - YES: *“Created sketches in SolidWorks.”*
 - NO: *“Sketches were created in SolidWorks.”*
- **Shifts in tense:** Use the present tense for a job you’re still in and the past tense for jobs you’ve left. Maintain present tense throughout current work experiences, even if that action has been completed.
- **Complex sentences:** Unless you keep your sentences lean and clean, readers won’t take time to decipher them.
 - YES: *“Reduced waste by 20% by developing and implementing lean procedures.”*
 - NO: *“Identified excess and then developed a plan to eliminate waste that would be implemented into production process, ultimately reducing production waste by 20%.”*
- **Overwriting:** A thesaurus does not always provide the most appropriate synonym.
 - YES: *“Designed prototype,” “developed prototype,” or just “prototyped.”*
 - NO: *“Fabricated a prototype.”*
- **Adverbs (usually ends in “-ly”) and flowery language:** Favor strong verbs over adverbs ... most of the time. Show – don’t tell – the reader what you have accomplished.
 - YES: *“Provided customer service by addressing client concerns, offering cost effective solutions, and communicating company policy.”*
 - NO: *“Effectively provided excellent customer service to patrons.”*
 - AVOID: *Consistently, continually, skillfully, effectively, etc. (do use adverbs to quantify, i.e. “weekly”)*
- **Non-descript words:** Be specific and explain your abilities with descriptive action verbs.
 - YES: *Collaborated, contributed, monitored, sketched, drafted, engaged. (See action verb guide)*
 - NO: *Assisted, worked, responsible for, utilized, experience with/in, observed.*
- **Misspelled words:** These can be detrimental to your application. Be sure to consistently spell proper nouns or industry specific terms throughout your resume (SolidWorks, 3D print, etc.) ***Spellcheck will not catch** all proper nouns or titles in ALL CAPS.