

Writing a Resume

Developing Resume Content from Your Experiences

Step 1: Begin by brainstorming and writing down your previous and current experiences: work, volunteer, student leadership, research with faculty, class projects, or anything else where you gained experience you would like to share with an employer. Avoid listing experiences from high school, unless they are exceptionally relevant to your job search or career goals.

Step 2: For each one of your experiences, write down phrases detailing the work you did. Ask yourself:

- What is your role? Why does your role exist?
- What skills, traits, and knowledge does it take to successfully perform your tasks/duties?
- What are the measures of success within your role? Or for the company or department itself?

Step 3: Using the bullet statement formula (see “Writing Strong Bullet Statements”), select active verbs that best represent the skills you used. Then, using specifics (including any quantifiable information), detail how you used that skill and what results you achieved.

Formatting the Resume

The average recruiter spends 7-10 seconds on the first look at your resume, and you need to make sure it is easy for them to find the information they need. To ensure this:

- Use a simple easy to read font: Times New Roman, Arial, or Calibri. Minimize any color.
- Your resume should be a consistent font size throughout: 11 or 12. No lower than 10.
- For your name, use a font size that is slightly larger than the rest of your resume: 14 or 16.
- Margins should be ½” to 1” on the top, bottom, and sides.
- Avoid including your photo, birthday, and other personal information.

Begin with education, unless you have extensive professional experience. The education block should include:

- The school name, type of degree (e.g. “Bachelor of Science”), and major/minors.
- Graduation date—don’t include the start date, even if you’re still in school.
- Any achievements such as a high GPA*, honors, relevant or important scholarships.
- Study abroad—include the university, location, and date range you were there (including months and years).
- Optionally, you can also list special projects and relevant coursework.

*Some industries require GPA, even if it’s low. Check with your career advisor if you’re unsure about including GPA.

The bulk of your resume will consist of blocks detailing your past experiences, from most recent to oldest.

- Include your position title, the organization/company name, the city and state, and the date range you were there (including months and years).
- List roughly 2-5 bullet point statements under each experience. The experiences that you want to highlight will have more bullet point statements than other experiences that are less relevant.



Taylor Santos

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EDUCATION

University of Denver, Denver, CO

Expected: June 20xx

B.A. Sociology & Psychology, Minor in Business Administration

- GPA: 3.78
- Accomplishments: Dean's List (Fall 20xx, Spring 20xx), Cherrington Global Scholar, Microsoft Office Excel Certified
- Relevant Courses: Foundations of Psychological Science, Child and Lifespan Development, Communication in Personal Relationships, Speaking on Ideas that Matter
- Study Abroad: Rikkyo University - Tokyo, Japan

September 20xx – December 20xx

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Campus Engagement, University Admissions - University of Denver, Denver, CO

Tour Guide

November 20xx – Present

- Administer weekly campus tours providing insight into DU's academic and social climate
- Utilize strong public speaking and communication skills when presenting to large groups or when working individually with students and parents to ensure all questions and concerns are addressed

Denver Metro Partners, Denver, CO

June 20xx – July 20xx

Lead Summer Academy Intern

- Guided and counseled 10 at-risk youth through a 6-week educational and life-skill improvement program
- Upheld rules, managed attendance and pay, tracked students' weekly progress using the Compass Learning Program
- Facilitated weekly discussions and activities promoting women's empowerment, higher education, and professionalism to promote college readiness

Three Tomatoes - Sonoma, CA

Summers 20xx – 20xx

Hostess

- Greeted guests and made them feel comfortable and welcomed upon arriving
- Efficiently covered the front desk by answering the phone, relaying messages to managers and other staff members, and organizing the seating of the restaurant

Nanny/Childcare Provider - Denver, CO

August 20xx – July 20xx

- Managed work for multiple families and maintained relationships with both the parents and children
- Integrated enjoyment, creativity, and structure for after school activities, meals, and nighttime routines

Kappa Kappa Gamma Sorority

January 20xx – June 20xx

New Member Educator

- Designed and taught a 6-week new member program aimed at creating relationships and educating 45 new members on the rules and expectations, history, culture, and benefits of the organization
- Planned and executed an \$11,000 welcome event including food and entertainment for 120 members
- Developed a chapter-wide mentorship program. Advised 12 mentors through a 3-month long mentorship process

The Bridge Project

Sept. 20xx – May 20xx

Volunteer/Tutor

- Tutored a 4th grade student through the academic year, building a trusting relationship personally and academically
- Oversaw the completion of homework, facilitated a reading program, and engaged student in a series of games and activities to encourage academic growth

ADDITIONAL SKILLS

Proficient in Microsoft Office (Excel, PowerPoint, Word, Outlook), conversational Spanish, intermediate photoshop



Strengthening Your Resume

Why are strong position descriptions (bullet points) important?

When describing your past experience on your resume, position description statements provide the most information in a way that is easy to read and understand quickly. It is critical to start your statements with action verbs that are the best skills you used in a given experience. Incorporate additional skills into your descriptions as well, not just tasks. Make your statements easy to read by listing them on your resume preceded by a bullet point.

Use this three-part “formula” to create a strong bullet statement:

Action Verb/Best Skill	+	Details/Skills	+	Results
Start with your best skill. <i>Communicated... Designed... Analyzed...</i>		Who? What? What skills did you use? Can you quantify?		What was the positive outcome of your effort? How did it help?

Brainstorm information within each category and add the details and skills most relevant to the position you are applying to.

Example 1:

Action Verb/Best Skill	+	Details/Skills	+	Results
Communicated		Students and staff (who) Dozen/daily (quantify) Appointments/questions (what) Professional/friendly (skills) Problem solved (skills)		Positive customer experience

Before: Answered phones.

After: Communicated with over a dozen students daily about appointment scheduling and problem solved issues in a professional manner to ensure a positive customer experience.

Example 2:

Action Verb/Best Skill	+	Details/Skills	+	Results
Researched		Protein folding (what) Faculty (who) Two (quantify) Collaboration (skills) Analyzing data (skills)		Presented results at research symposium

Before: Assisted faculty with research.

After: Researched and analyzed protein DNA interactions in collaboration with two faculty members and presented results at the Denver Research Symposium.



Action Verb/Best Skill	+	Details/Skills	+	Results
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Sample Bullet Statement:

Sample Action Verbs & Skills

Accommodate	Cooperate	Flexible	Multitasking	Sell
Accurate	Coordinate	Forecast	Negotiate	Simplify
Achieve	Counsel	Formulate	Network	Social media
Adapt	Courteous	Founded	Obtain	Strategize
Adjust	Create	Friendly	Observe	Strengthen
Advertise	Critique	Gather	Operate	Structure
Advise	Critical thinking	Generate	Organize	Summarize
Allocate	Cross-cultural	Graph	Oversee	Supervise
Analyze	understanding	Guide	Patient	Support
Appraise	Customer service	Handle logistics	Perform	Survey
Articulate	Customize	Host	Persistent	Synthesize
Assertive	Delegate	Hypothesize	Persuade	Systematize
Assess	Demonstrate	Implement	Pilot projects/plans	Tailor
Arrange	Design	Improve	Plan	Teach
Audit	Detailed	Incorporate	Positive attitude	Test
Balance	Determine	feedback	Prepare	Train
Brainstorm	Develop plans	Initiate	Present	Transform
Budget	Devise	Innovate	Prioritize	Translate
Build relationships	Direct	Interpersonal skills	Problem solve	Tutor
Calculate	Display	Interpret	Process	Verbal ability
Chair	Document	Launch	Produce	Work
Coach	Draft	Lead	Professional	independently
Collaborate	Edit	Learn quickly	Promote	Write
Collect data/info.	Educate	Listen	Program	_____
Communicate	Efficient	Maintain	Provide	_____
Compare	Empathize	Make decisions	Publish	_____
Complete	Encourage	Manage	Publicize	_____
Compose	Engineer	Market	Recruit	_____
Compute	Enhance	Measure	Reliable	_____
Computer skills	Establish	Mediate	Report	_____
Conceptualize	Estimate	Meet deadlines	Represent	
Conduct meetings	Evaluate	Mentor	Research	
Confident	Examine data	Microsoft Office	Resolve conflict	
Confidentiality	Expedite	Monitor	Restructure	
Construct	Explain	Motivate	Review	
Consult	Facilitate	Motivated	Schedule	



Cover Letter Guide

Writing the Cover Letter

A cover letter is an opportunity for you to tell an employer why you are interested in the position you're applying to. While your resume describes your past experience, your cover letter describes why that experience makes you a good fit for the position you're applying to.

Formatting

The cover letter needs to follow a business letter format, such as that used in the sample on the back of this resource. This includes:

- A maximum of one page long
- The same header as on your resume, including your name and contact information
- The employer's name and contact information
- The date you are writing the letter
- A formal salutation, such as "Dear Pat Johnson:"
 - *Note: Some industries may prefer that you use an honorific (Ms., Mr., Dr.)*

Opening Paragraph

Express interest in the position/employer. This paragraph should include:

- A lead: Capture interest with something unique or interesting about you professionally in the first sentence
- An introduction: What position are you applying for? Why are you excited about this employer?
- An organizational statement: List 2-3 reasons why you're a good fit

Middle Paragraph(s)

Focus on your transferable skills and experiences. This can be one paragraph, or a paragraph for each of the 2-3 reasons you've listed in your organizational statement. For each of these skills/reasons, make sure to:

- 1) provide specific examples of work you have done, academic or other types of accomplishments, and
- 2) describe how those experiences relate directly to the position and/or the organization.

In some industries, or for some people with extensive work experience, this middle paragraph may take a different form using bullet points or a table. You may wish to discuss these options with your career advisor.

Closing Paragraph

Reiterate your interest in the position and communicate next steps by inviting contact from the employer. Thank the employer for the opportunity and the time to review your application.

Additional Tips

- Each cover letter should be targeted to the job/internship that you are applying for. Have the job description available when you are writing your cover letter and highlight the skills/qualifications that are most relevant.
- If the hiring manager's name is not mentioned in the job description, do some research. If their name cannot be found, use "Dear Hiring Manager:" or "Dear (company name):"
- Keep in mind: a cover letter isn't just about you. It should demonstrate employer research and answer the question "Why?" Why are you interested? Why are you a good fit for them? Why are they a good fit for you?



Sample Cover Letter

This sample cover letter demonstrates the methods described above, and is presented as an example of how to write the cover letter. As you write your own original cover letter, use this sample as inspiration, not as a template.

LES O'HARA

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Pat Johnson
LMNO Company
1234 Business Loop, Ste. 4
Denver, CO 80123

February 2, 20xx

Dear Pat Johnson:

I discovered my passion for marketing during my internship last summer at ABC Company. As I anticipate my graduation in June 20xx, I look forward to utilizing my bachelor's degree in Strategic Communication to obtain a full-time opportunity in digital marketing. I am writing to you today to submit my resume and application for the open position of Communications Associate at LMNO Company. My communication degree, internship experience, and commitment to the beauty industry would make me a strong contributor to your team.

During my time at the University of Denver I have consciously taken courses that help me stay current on trends in digital marketing. For example, in my capstone course I spent 10 weeks developing a comprehensive campaign for a beauty brand much like the Elemeno line produced by LMNO Company. I developed a marketing strategy that utilized multi-media resources including: email lists, blogging, social media, and digital ads, specifically using Google AdWords. As the Communications Associate is expected to develop marketing campaigns independently, my experience with this project demonstrates that I am ready to contribute to the marketing campaigns for LMNO Company's products.

In addition to classroom experience, I spent last summer in a communications internship with ABC Company. Gaining hands-on experience with marketing at a similar large company to LMNO Company ignited in me my passion for this work. Specifically, I was trained in SEO copywriting and interpreting analytics reports from Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter advertising to help shape content strategy for various marketing campaigns. This experience is a valuable foundation that I will bring with me to the Communications Associate role, allowing me to hit the ground running on day one.

Finally, my commitment to the beauty industry is an important asset that I will bring the Communications Associate role. Not only am I passionate about marketing, but I am also an avid fan and consumer of various LMNO Company product lines, including Elemeno and QRS Products. I look forward to merging my personal interest in these products with my professional skills in marketing, and leveraging the connections I have built with influencers to strengthen the brands I love. This commitment is something that I believe sets me apart from other candidates, and will make me a strong asset as LMNO Company seeks to expand its partnerships with influencers on Instagram.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you regarding the Communications Associate position at LMNO Company. I have included my resume for your review and invite you to contact me with any questions at (303) 123-5555.

Sincerely,

Les O'Hara

