



CABRINI COLLEGE

Resume Writing Guide

Career and Professional Development

Cabrini College

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Before Getting Started

Your resume is a custom-designed marketing tool developed to capture the attention of a prospective employer— within 30 seconds! That's how long it takes a reader to formulate a first impression; that's how long you've got to create an impact.

Communicating your professional qualifications quickly and effectively will determine your chances of being considered for an interview.

A resume is a descriptive summary of your background, concisely written (one or two pages) and presented attractively.

- Clearly communicate a sense of purpose, professionalism, and honesty.
- Focus the reader on your strongest points and career goals.
- Follow the rules of grammar, punctuation, and structure.

A cover letter should accompany each resume.

Take time to prepare by reviewing your achievements, skills, experiences, and strengths.

A systematic assessment of what you do well and enjoy doing will help you develop a career objective and present your qualifications to an employer. Keep in mind that your strengths and abilities are what "sell" you.

Also keep in mind the organizations to which you will send your resume and cover letter. A human being may never read your resume. It may be scanned into a computer database upon arrival at the organization. You may send it directly to that computer database through electronic means, or you may post it on a career website. There are slight variations in writing style required for each situation. You may want to call the organization to determine which type of resumes to send.

What Is A Resume and How Is It Used?

A resume is a marketing tool. You use it to sell yourself. It demonstrates achievements, attributes, strengths and highlights one's expertise. It **never** contains negative information or weaknesses. The primary purpose of the resume is to obtain an interview.

Resume Content

DO Include

- Name, address, email, and telephone number
- Education: degree, name of institution, city and state, major, minor, date of graduation
- Experience: job titles, company name, city and state, responsibilities and achievements, employment dates; may include volunteer experiences, field experiences, co-ops, internships, and summer employment
- Activities: professional, educational, extracurricular, or civic organization involvement and leadership responsibilities
- Awards, certifications, or memberships in professional organizations
- Relevant skills: technical and computer proficiency and foreign languages

DO NOT Include

- References: instead note "References available upon request."
- Lies, exaggerations, or misrepresentations
- Photographs
- Salary expectations: this will be discussed in a later interview or in a job offer.
- Irrelevant personal information: age, sex, marital status, race, religion, national origin, political affiliation, social security number, or health status
- Any negative information

Possible Section Headings

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Job/Career Objective | • Relevant Course Work | • Relevant Training |
| • Professional Goal | • Education | • Publications & Patents |
| • Qualifications Synopsis | • Summary of Achievement | • Activities |
| • Employment | • Professional Affiliations | • Travel |
| • Computer Experience | • Thesis | • Accomplishments |
| • Related Experience | • Military Experience | • Equipment Knowledge |
| • Honors and Awards | • Accreditations & Licenses | • Experience |
| • Leadership | • Management Experience | • Volunteer Associations |
| • Experience/Skills | • Work History | |
| • Career Summary | • Languages | |

Appearance

Make your resume attractive and easy to read.

- Style your resume using CAPS, bullets, underlining, **bold**, *italics*, margins (no more than 1 – 1 ½ inches) and font (10–12 pt.).
- Be careful with these additives if writing scannable or electronic resumes.
- **Bold** or CAP headings.
- Always make your name larger than the rest of your resume.

Consistency in graphics

Use graphics only when a person will be reading the resume.

Concise

Resumes are typically one page for the new or recent college graduate.

Write in phrases, not full sentences.

Free of spelling, grammatical, and typographical errors

Proofread your resume thoroughly, and if possible have someone else double-check.

Print on neutral color cotton bond paper

Use ivory, white, or light gray bond/ resume paper.

Use white if it will be scanned.

Send a cover letter with every resume

When mailing, print the cover letter and the resume on the same paper.

Resume Formats

- Chronological
- Functional
- Combination

Self-Assessment Questions

To help you to summarize your experience, consider the following questions:

- What skills have you developed as a result of your experiences?
- What were your job responsibilities?
- How did they change or develop over the course of the experience?
- Did you supervise any people? Did you help other people in any way?
- Did your experience involve working with co-workers? Teamwork?
- Did you assume any leadership roles?
- Did you gather any information? Did you analyze any information?
- Were you involved in any planning responsibilities?
- Did you operate any equipment?
- Did you produce any written document and/or written reports?
- Did you make any decisions or recommendations?
- How well were you able to meet deadlines and handle pressure?
- Can you quantify the results of your work?

Identify Your Skills

A skill is an ability you possess and demonstrate in your accomplishments. Transferable skills are those that apply to a wide variety of environments and occupations.

The key to a successful job search is being able to explain to a prospective employer what you do well. When writing your resume, keep in mind the skills that an employer may be looking for. Highlight the skills that best fit your career objective.

The following simple exercise is designed to help you identify your skills. Write yours below.

A. FUNCTIONAL

Skills that enable you to relate to data, people and/or things.

Examples:

- Communication/Selling
- Interactive/Counseling
- Research/Analyzing
- Managerial/Supervising

B. SELF-MANAGEMENT

Skills related to managing yourself in relation to others and/or the work environment.

Examples:

- Coping with deadlines
- Attention to detail
- Risk taking
- Sense of human dignity
- Loyalty

C. CONTENT-SPECIFIC

Skills that require specific training

Examples:

- Computer skills
- Fluency in foreign language
- Proposal writing
- Account management

Resume Worksheet

EDUCATION

Name and location (city, state) of colleges/universities/training programs from which you earned a degree or certificate.

Institution _____

City _____ State _____

Credential Earned _____

(Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Social Work, Master of Science, etc.)

Month and year credential was (or will be) awarded _____

Overall GPA (if a 3.0 or above) _____

GPA in Major (Include only if higher than overall GPA.) _____

Major _____ Minor (if any) _____

SKILLS/HONORS

List courses taken in major (and minor), as well as any skill courses and honors (such as computer applications, technical writing, etc.) that might be useful in a job setting.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Write out this information for each job or position of responsibility you have had, regardless of whether it was paid, volunteer, part-time, or temporary. Include student teaching or internship experiences.

EXPERIENCE

Employer _____

Employer's Location (city) _____ (state) _____

Beginning and Ending Dates of Employment (month and year) from _____ to _____

Job Title _____

Type of Company/Organization (products or services produced)

What were your responsibilities?

Describe actual tasks you performed.

Describe your accomplishments or the results of your work.

Key Words

The words that you use to describe your experience, activities, and other categories should convey skills that you have developed and what you have to offer an employer. Use strong action verbs and self-descriptive words. This will help get the potential employer's attention.

One thing to beware of when using these words is that you do not want to sound boastful or arrogant. In addition to using action verbs, be certain that you use concise phrases, instead of complete sentences, and quantify as often as possible.

ACTION VERB LIST

accelerated	attained	concentrated	designed
accomplished	attended	conceptualized	detailed
accepted	audited	conciliated	determined
accounted for	augmented	concluded	developed
accrued	authorized	conditioned	devised
accumulated	automated	conducted	devoted
achieved	awarded	configured	dialogued
acquired	began	considered	digested
acted	bolstered	constructed	diminished
activated	boosted	construed	directed
actualized	bought	consulted	discovered
adapted	briefed	continued	discussed
added	brought	contracted	dispersed
adhered	budgeted	contributed	displayed
adjusted	built	controlled	distributed
administered	calculated	convinced	documented
advertised	cataloged	cooperated	drafted
advised	caught	coordinated	dropped
affected	caused	copied	earned
affirmed	chaired	corrected	edited
afforded	changed	counseled	educated
aided	charted	counted	effected
allocated	checked	created	elaborated
alphabetized	chopped	credited	elected
analyzed	chose	critiqued	eliminated
animated	clarified	dealt	emphasized
announced	classified	debated	employed
anticipated	closed	debriefed	encouraged
applied	coached	debugged	energized
appointed	coded	decided	engaged
appraised	collaborated	deciphered	engineered
approved	collected	decoded	enhanced
arbitrated	combined	decreased	enjoyed
argued	commanded	defined	enlarged
arranged	communicated	deflected	enlisted
ascertained	compared	delegated	ensured
assembled	completed	deleted	entered
assessed	compiled	delivered	entertained
assigned	completed	deregulated	established
assisted	composed	demonstrated	estimated
assumed	computed	derived	evaluated
assured	conceived	described	examined

excelled	influenced	modified	protected
exchanged	informed	molded	proved
executed	initialized	monitored	provided
exercised	initiated	motivated	publicized
expanded	innovated	moved	published
expedited	inspected	multiplied	purchased
explained	inspired	named	qualified
explored	installed	narrated	quantified
exposed	instituted	navigated	quickened
extended	instructed	negotiated	questioned
extrapolated	insured	netted	raised
facilitated	integrated	networked	rated
familiarized	interested	neutralized	realized
financed	interfaced	normalized	received
fixed	internalized	notified	reclaimed
forecasted	interpreted	notarized	recognized
foresaw	interviewed	observed	recommended
formulated	introduced	obtained	reconciled
fostered	investigated	officiated	reconstructed
founded	invented	opened	recorded
functioned	inventoried	operated	recouped
furnished	inverted	orchestrated	recovered
gained	involved	ordered	recreated
gathered	issued	organized	recruited
gave	joined	overcame	rectified
generated	judged	oversaw	recycled
governed	juried	paid	redesigned
grabbed	justified	painted	redecorated
graded	kept	participated	reduced
granted	keyboarded	perceived	reentered
graphed	labored	performed	registered
greeted	launched	persuaded	regulated
grew	leased	photographed	rehired
grossed	lectured	piloted	related
guaranteed	led	pinpointed	reimbursed
guided	lessened	pioneered	reinforced
handled	licensed	placed	related
hasted	linked	planned	released
headed	loaded	played	relocated
healed	located	practiced	repaired
heightened	looked	predicted	replaced
helped	made	preempted	replenished
highlighted	mailed	prepared	reported
hiked	maintained	presented	represented
hired	managed	presided	required
housed	manipulated	pressed	requisitioned
hunted	mapped out	processed	rescued
identified	marketed	procured	researched
illustrated	mastered	produced	reshaped
implemented	maximized	profited	resolved
improved	measured	programmed	responded to
included	mediated	prohibited	restored
incorporated	merchandized	projected	resulted in
increased	merged	promoted	retained
indexed	ministered	proofed	retired
indicated	moderated	proposed	retooled

retrained
retrieved
returned
revamped
revealed
reviewed
revised
rewired
robotized
routed
saved
scanned
scheduled
scored
scouted
screened
scrutinized
sculptured
selected
sensed
send
served
set objectives
set up
shaped

shipped
showed
sifted
simplified
smoothed
sold
solicited
solved
sorted
sought
spearheaded
specified
spoke
sponsored
stabilized
staffed
started
stimulated
straightened
streamlined
strengthened
structured
studied
styled
subcontracted

submitted
succeeded
suggested
summarized
supervised
supplied
supported
surmounted
surveyed
syndicated
tabulated
targeted
taught
telecommunicated
televised
terminated
tested
tightened
took over
totaled
toured
tracked
trained
transacted
transferred

transformed
translated
transmitted
traveled
treated
troubleshoot
tutored
typed
typeset
uncovered
used
utilized
validated
verified
video taped
visualized
vocalized
voiced
waited
waived
weighted
welcomed
won
worked

Writing Your Objective

Be as specific as possible. You may have several versions of your resume with various, specific objectives. You may even write your objective to reflect the qualifications described in an advertisement to which you are responding. You may cite a company or organization by name or type of organization (small, large, public, private) in the objective. You may also alter the order of your work experience or activities to reflect your different objectives.

Be certain that your objective is consistent with the organization's needs, and aim for **simplicity**.

Employers will not read past the first line if it is a lot of fluff.

Your objective should be clear and to the point, stating what you can bring to and do for a company, not what the company can do for you.

Sample Career Objectives

Seeking a full/part-time _____ in the _____ field

Position as _____ in the _____ field/industry

A position as _____ in a _____ firm/organization/company/agency

A position as _____ working with the _____ population

Position in _____ or _____ dealing with _____

or _____ focusing on _____

Entry-level position in a _____, leading to _____

Employment in the _____ field enabling me to increase/utilize/manage

_____ with focus on developing _____

A professional position in _____ where I can offer leadership skills and exceptional motivation to succeed

Position in _____ utilizing my _____

to assist in the advancement of the _____ department

POOR EXAMPLE:

A challenging position which utilizes my skills and education for professional advancement

Employment History - Duties and Responsibilities

Utilized management skills to....	Analyzed program objectives...
Provided services for...	Coordinated activities...
Replenished depleted supplies...	Managed (number) employees...
Acted as liaison for...	Interfaced with supervisors and staff...
Monitored inventory control of stock...	Evaluated staff's performance...
Motivated employees by...	Initiated contact with customers...
Assisted in the production of...	Implemented management guidelines...
Supervised staff scheduling...	Computed employee payroll...
Resolved customer complaints...	Responsible for quality control...
Operated various machinery...	Maintained specified standards...
Created, prepared and implemented...	Inspected for quality of workmanship...
Promoted sales campaigns...	Prepared appropriate paperwork...
Cross trained in several areas...	Processed data for daily bookkeeping...
Completed daily reports...	Reorganized filing procedures...
Compiled productivity paperwork...	Distributed and received correspondence...
Delegated responsibilities to...	Monitored shipping and receiving...
Interpreted government contracts...	Planned and developed alternatives...
Facilitated the development of..	Trained new employees...
Organized daily activities for...	Increased sales by ___%
Interacted daily with foreman...	

Order

When designing a resume, keep in mind the order of information. Although it is appropriate to list experience in reverse chronological order, **be sure that the most relevant information appears nearest the top of the page**. Your resume will be viewed very quickly. Make every second count!

If your most recent work experience is not the most relevant, create a separate heading for **Additional Work Experience** (or something similar) and include it further down your resume.

If including **Relevant Course Work, Activities, or Skills**, think carefully about the order in which you list those items. Even within descriptions, be sure to list *very* important accomplishments and duties above important accomplishments.

Creating a Scannable Resume

A resume scanner is an electronic device which has been programmed to search resumes for key words or phrases that pertain to a particular position. For example, if an **accounting** position were open, the scanner may search for words like: **spreadsheets, Excel, tax returns**, etc.

Read through the position description thoroughly and research the organization or company to add particular qualifications to your resume that a scanner will be likely to pick up.

More companies are beginning to use scanners in order to more easily find an individual whose resume suits their needs. The best way to ensure that your resume is formatted properly is to call the company's Human Resources Department and ask what their specifications are. If you are unable to obtain this information follow these steps:

- Letters should not touch each other. Scanning systems have difficulty deciphering characters that run into each other. Italics and bold are fine, as long as the letters do not touch.
- Choose a common font that most systems will be familiar with and keep your font size 10-12 points.
- You may use underlining, horizontal/vertical lines, and slashes as long as the lines do not touch the letters. (If necessary add a slash in between letters, *e.g.* BS / MSW).
- Do not use ampersands (&), percentage signs (%), or foreign characters. They may not translate properly.
- Use white cotton bond resume paper.
- Do not staple or fold your resume. Send it in an 8 ½ x 11 envelope.
- Be sure to have key words throughout your resume that will get picked up.

Resume Checklist

APPEARANCE

- Is your resume neat and professional looking?
- Is your format consistent?
- Is your resume easy to read?
- Is it free of typographical errors, spelling errors, and grammatical errors?
- Have you used space, capitalization, underlining and type styles to highlight important information?

CONTENT

- Does it include all your personal identification
- Does your name stand out?
- Did you include both a temporary and permanent address, e-mail address, and phone number? Is it clear when you may be reached by each?
- In describing jobs and activities, did you answer the questions: with, to, and for whom?
- With what specific skills? With what results?

OBJECTIVE

- Is the objective carefully worded to convey a sense of direction to the employer?
- Is your objective brief and to the point?

EDUCATION

- Have you included the degree received or anticipated?
- Graduation date(s)?
- Name and location (town) of institution(s) attended?
- Your major (if not clear in the degree), minor and/or concentrations?
- Academic experience most related to your objective (courses, co-ops, etc.)?
- Honors and awards?

EXPERIENCE

- Have you presented experiences in reverse chronological order?
- Does your experience best represent your current professional objective and qualifications?
- Have you used action verbs in your description to convey the skills you have developed?

- Have you included job titles, name and location of employers, responsibilities and dates?
- Have you chosen section headings that best describe the types of experiences included?

ACTIVITIES

- Have you been clear when describing activities, avoiding the use of acronyms and describing organizations that may not be well known?
- Have you listed appropriate activities emphasizing leadership positions?
- If you have included organizations that might be controversial, have you considered how a potential employer might react?

SPECIAL INFORMATION

- Have you used special information such as relevant courses, skills, areas of experience, workshops, seminars, and professional memberships to enhance your resume?

REFERENCES

- Have you prepared a separate list of three references with names, addresses, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, and relation to you?

OVERALL PRESENTATION

- Is the most important information highlighted and listed first?
- Have you had at least two other people proofread your resume?
- Are *you* proud of your resume?