

# Résumé Writing Basics

## What is a Résumé?

A résumé is a brief summary of your qualifications, skills, and background which represent your educational and work experiences in terms relevant to potential employers. The purpose of a résumé is to obtain an interview, at which time you will have an opportunity to describe in person what you can contribute to the organization.

You will need a résumé when applying for jobs, internships, college or graduate programs, scholarships, or other types of opportunities in which your previous experiences are part of the evaluation process. Therefore, it is important for your resume to represent you in a clear, well-organized, and easy-to-read manner.

***An employer spends an average of 15 to 30 seconds reviewing a resume.  
Keep it clear, concise, and focused on the information that will sell you best.***

***Make your first impression a good one!***

## Types of Résumés

There is no single, best way to design a resume. The resume format you choose should summarize and highlight your strengths clearly.

There are three basic resume formats: Chronological, Functional, and Combination.

### **Chronological Résumé**

This format lists job positions in a progressive sequence, beginning with the most recent and working back. This format is simple, straightforward, and useful for anyone with relevant work experience. Employers prefer the Chronological Résumé because it focuses on time, job continuity, growth, advancement, and accomplishments.

### **Functional Résumé**

This format emphasizes skills rather than work experience. It highlights your skills, abilities, and accomplishments by skill areas to accentuate strengths rather than focus on specific jobs or dates of employment.

### **Combination Résumé**

This format combines both the chronological and functional formats. Your strengths are typically grouped in a skills summary towards the top of the resume and your education and work experiences are listed in chronological order at the bottom.

# What to Include on Your Résumé

Not sure what kind of information to put on your resume or looking for ways to spice your old one up? Below is a list of suggested sections that can help market your abilities and qualifications.

## Contact Information

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Your identifying information is at the top of your resume and should include your name, address, and telephone number (email address is optional).

- It is important to provide accurate information so a potential employer can reach you.
- Avoid using nicknames.
- If you have an answering machine, remember to record a neutral/professional message.
- If you include an email address, list an address that sounds professional (i.e. joe\_smith@yahoo.com versus hotstuff@aol.com).

## Objective

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A short sentence stating the position for which you are applying. The objective should be specific and tailored for each job you apply to.

Sample Objective Statements:

A position as an Administrative Assistant.

Desire a position as an entry-level Process Technician.

Seeking an accounting position requiring dependability, commitment to quality, and effective communication skills.

To obtain a position in marketing with the opportunity to use sales ability and strong communication skills.

## Education

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Current students and new graduates without a lot of work experience should list their educational information near the top of their resume. This section includes the school's name, city and state where school is located, degree or certificate awarded, date of graduation, and GPA.

- Only list current schools attended or those from which you received a degree or certificate. List most recent educational information first.
- Adding your GPA is optional. However, a GPA of 3.5 or higher should be included. GPA can be expressed as Overall GPA and/or Major GPA.
- Unless you are a freshman or sophomore, high school information is generally not included. Some exceptions are: if you received an award relevant to the position, if you attended an extremely noteworthy high school, or if you are applying for a job in the same geographic region of your high school.
- May include significant coursework/certifications. Only list courses taken that are relevant to the position for which you are applying.
- Can include academic honors such as Dean's List, scholarships, and honor societies.
- If you financed the majority of your college tuition, you may want to add the phrase, "Financed 90% of education". This may demonstrate responsibility and time management, as well as show employers that you are hardworking and goal-oriented.

### Sample Education Section:

Lee College, Baytown, TX

**Associate Degree in Instrumentation**, Awarded May 2006; Overall GPA: 3.6/4.0

Relevant Coursework: Instrumentation Technology, Instrumentation Calibration, Automatic Control, Distributed Control & Programmable Logic, and Fieldbus Process Control Systems.

### Work Experience

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Include information about part-time, full-time, volunteer, and internship experiences as they relate to the job you are seeking. Include the following information for each experience: title of position, name of organization, city and state where job was located, beginning and ending dates of employment (month and year), and brief descriptions of major responsibilities, job duties, accomplishments, and results.

- Always list your jobs in reverse chronological order (most recent job first).
- Quantify your experience whenever possible. For example, “planned and managed a budget of \$10,000” or “supervised a crew of four”.
- Describe your duties using short, direct phrases. Avoid using complete sentences and personal pronouns, such as I, me, and my.
- Use **ACTION WORDS** to describe your job duties and be sure to use the correct verb tense. Use past tense verbs for past jobs and present tense verbs for current jobs.

### Sample Work Experience Section:

#### **Work History:**

Lee College, Baytown, TX

08/2005 - Present

**Laboratory Assistant** – Computer Technology Department

- Deliver one-on-one assistance and training to users.
- Troubleshoot hardware and software problems and installed software packages and operating systems.
- Provided general office assistance.

OR

#### **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**MEDICAL RECORD SPECIALIST**

1/2003 -12/2005

Community Hospital, Baytown, TX

Analyzed medical records for quality of content and ensured accurate submission of all medical data necessary to properly bill patient accounts. Maintained daily hospital inpatient census and interfaced with physicians and other departments.

- Successfully initiated and implemented standardized medical records procedures resulting in increased productivity and quality, smoother work flow, and consistency.
- Maintained excellent rapport with staff, co-workers, patients, and physicians. Nominated for Employee of the Month twice.

### Optional Sections

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You may want to include additional sections on your resume based on your background and the qualifications you believe will be important or of interest to a potential employer. The Job Placement Specialist at Lee College can assist you with this decision. You may want to add the following sections:

- Computer Skills
- Languages

- Honors and Awards
- Professional Affiliations
- Military Experience
- Community Service
- Outstanding Accomplishments
- Strengths, Skills, or Qualifications
- Summary (Generally included near the top of the resume and used by individuals with several years of professional, full-time experience to highlight their achievements and demonstrated skills.)

## References

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Generally references are listed on a job application and are not included on your resume. You may type "References Available Upon Request" at the bottom of your resume, but it is understood that they will be provided, so this is optional. If references are requested, present them as a separate list on stationary matching your resume and cover letter.

- List 3-5 people who will speak positively about your work ethic, academic achievement, or abilities. Employers, extra-curricular advisors, college professors, or administrators are great sources. Avoid using personal references such as family and friends.
- Include their name, job title, organization name, mailing address, phone number, and possibly email address.
- It is important to contact your references before giving their names to potential employers.
- Tell the reference person some of the questions he/she might be asked: time he/she has known you; your relationship with each other; your job title/position; your most important duties; key projects you worked on; your greatest strengths/weaknesses; the timeliness, quality and quantity of your work; whether or not he/she would rehire you, as well as additional comments he/she would like to make.

Sample Reference Section:

### REFERENCES

**Dr. Beth Johnson**  
*Mathematics Professor*  
 Lee College  
 P.O. Box 818  
 Baytown, TX 77522-0818  
 (000) 000-0000  
 email@address.com

**Mr. Paul Smith**  
*General Manager*  
 XYZ United Corporation  
 RR 1, Box 000  
 Baytown, TX 77520  
 (000) 000-0000  
 p.smith@emailaddress.com

# Résumé Guidelines

There is no one way to write an effective resume. However, all good résumés share certain features and characteristics. The following are standard guidelines to consider when writing your resume:

## Organization

- Keep it short, simple, and to the point. Keep the length to one page unless you have extensive work experience relevant to the job.
- List the most important and relevant information first to catch the employer's attention.
- Page must be easily reviewed; categories are clear, text is lined up.
- Save your resume in more than one location. If you have it saved on your hard drive, keep a copy on a back-up disk.

## Format/Design

- Résumé must be neat and easy to read. Use font such as Times New Roman or Arial in size 11 or 12. Do not use more than 2 fonts or 2 sizes.
- **Bolding**, *italics*, and CAPITALIZATIONS are used minimally and consistently.
- Be sure to maintain equal margin and line space.
- Avoid using templates. They do not allow you to easily move information or change/update items.

## Content

- Résumés must be flawless. Always double check for typing, grammatical, and spelling errors.
- Be sure capitalization, punctuation, and date formats are consistent.
- Avoid using personal pronouns (I, my, me).
- Use short, action-oriented phrases versus complete sentences.
- Do not include personal information such as age, marital status, height, weight, or Social Security Number.

## Appearance

- Printed on high quality, 8 ½ x 11-inch white or ivory resume paper.
- Smudge-free, neat appearance.
- If your resume is printed on two pages, use a paperclip to attach them. Never use staples.

The Job Placement Specialist can help you design or critique your resume. Drop off your resume at the Student Career & Employment Office or call 281-425-6572 to schedule an appointment.