

# RESUMES

A resume is NOT a professional biography.  
It IS a **marketing tool** used in selling yourself to a potential employer.

**An effective resume will show the employer how your qualifications match what they're looking for.** Therefore, to be effective, resumes you send out must be TARGETED to the specific position you're applying for. This means each resume you send out should be different!

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## *What goes on a resume?*

There are some basic things that should always be on your resume, like your education, experience, and contact info, but the key to knowing what to include in your resume is to ask yourself, "*How have I obtained the qualifications to do this job I'm applying for?*" Those are the things to include and highlight in your resume.

**Heading:** Consists of your name and contact information (mailing address, phone number, and email address)

**Education:** Start with your most recent education. Include:

- Degree Title and Major (even if you're not done- can put "Pursuing" in front or "(in progress)" behind)
- Name of School, City, State
- Minors or Emphasis areas
- Graduation date (or anticipated date if close to finishing, or date began – Present if not yet close)
- Only include your GPA if it is exceptional!
- You do NOT need to include your high school diploma/GED once you have started college

**Experience:** Can include anything hands-on you've done that is **relevant to the job you're applying for**, whether it was paid employment or not. *Internships, full-time jobs, part-time jobs, summer jobs, volunteer experiences, service learning projects, extracurricular involvement, research, class projects*, etc. can all count if the experience is relevant. When it's a job that you're listing, you are expected to always include:

- Your Job Title (or position title, like "Volunteer Tutor")
- Name of Company or Organization you worked for, City and State where the company was located
- Dates you worked there (if still there, write starting date – Present)
- You may also include info about what you did, depending on the format you use (see next page)

**Other things to include:** Design the resume that works best for you to show off your qualifications. You can make up your own category titles, but some other things you might include on your resume are:

- Honors/Awards/Scholarships
  - Community Service/Volunteer Work
  - Extracurricular Activities
  - Relevant Coursework or Projects
  - Relevant Licenses/Certifications
  - Professional Organizations
  - Trainings/Workshops/Conferences
  - Service Learning
  - Research Projects
  - Foreign Languages
  - Relevant Computer Skills/Languages
  - Link to online portfolio
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## **Resume Layout:**

The visual layout is up to you, but here are some basic guidelines to follow:

- You should lay out your info strategically so the reader sees your most important info in 5-10 seconds
- It should look professional, and like you put time and effort into creating a polished document
- Your formatting should be consistent throughout the resume
- It should appear clean and organized, and there should be clear divisions between categories
- Use a font size of 10-12pt (half-sizes are ok too), with 0.5-1" margins
- Use a standard font to ensure compatibility on other computers
- Use bolding, underlining, or italics to draw the eye to the most important things (but do not overuse!)
- You should fill the page (first page), and white space should be evenly distributed

## TYPES OF RESUME FORMATS

There are 2 main types of resume formats, chronological and functional.  
The difference between the two is primarily in the way your experience is organized and presented.

	CHRONOLOGICAL	FUNCTIONAL
<b>What is it?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your <b>work history</b> is the main focus of your resume</li> <li>Your previous jobs are listed <b>in order</b> by date starting with the most recent</li> <li>Your relevant experience is described through your work history</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Relevant skills and experiences</b> are the main focus of your resume</li> <li>Your skills and experience are organized and listed under categories, not under specific jobs</li> </ul>
<b>When should you use it?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When your work history is related to the job you are applying for</li> <li>When your work history shows an upward progression towards the position you're applying for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When you have little or no work experience</li> <li>When you don't have any directly related experience</li> <li>When you are changing careers</li> <li>When you want to minimize something like major gaps in employment</li> </ul>
<p>Most resumes are <b>COMBINATION RESUMES</b> which combine elements from each format in different ways. For instance, you might have a Chronological layout, but break your experience into Relevant Experience and Other Employment categories in order to highlight only your most important (and maybe non-job) experiences.</p>		

*See a Career Counselor for help designing the best format for you.*

## TARGETING YOUR RESUME

Because a resume is a marketing tool, there is no such thing as a general resume. Each one must be targeted!

**There are 2 types of targeted resumes:**

- *Job-targeted resume:* targeted to a specific opening. When applying for a specific opening with a specific company, you should always create a job-targeted resume for that position.
- *Field-targeted resume:* targeted to a type of job rather than a specific opening. You will want to have a field-targeted resume for networking, and may also use these when applying for student jobs that don't provide a job description. (see Getting a Part-Time Job handout for info on student job resumes)

### HOW do I create a targeted resume?

**Job descriptions are your cheat sheets!** They are giving you the answers to the test. If there is a posted job description for the position you're applying for, this tells you exactly what the employer is looking for. **The best resume is the one that most closely matches the job description!**

**The basic steps to targeting your resume are:**

1. Address everything from the job description that you can.
2. Remove details that are unrelated to the job description.
3. Use the language from the job description (keywords).
4. Modify your format if necessary to highlight your qualifications.

**Tips for working through a job description:**

- You need to address the ENTIRE job description, including Responsibilities, not just Qualifications.
- Start by going through the job description and marking all the key nouns, verbs, and other keywords.
- Separate out the verbs- this will give you a lot of the "action verbs" that you will want to start each of your bullet points with when describing your experience.

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*Tips for working through a job description continued:*

- Look at one job responsibility at a time, and for each, ask yourself if you've done this before, done something similar, or done something where you used the same skills. If yes, write a bullet directly explaining this, and plug it in where it fits on your resume.
- If you can't address an entire task, see if you can use the key noun or verb in a slightly different way.
- Don't leave out anything in the job description that you've done or can do, even if it doesn't seem important to you. If they put it on there, they think it's important!

### **What if there isn't a job description?**

Sometimes you won't have a description, or it might just not be a very useful one. In this case, there are a few resources you can use. One is the company's website, which will usually give you plenty of clues about the language they use (keywords), what you might be doing, the values of the company (characteristics they would be looking for in you), etc. You can also call the company and ask questions about the job. Additionally, search for similar job postings and look for themes. Another good resource is O\*Net ([onetonline.org](http://onetonline.org)), which provides info on all types of jobs and is like a generic job description.

### **What about my field-targeted resume?**

When putting together a resume that address your ability to do a particular type of work, the process you'll follow is similar, you just won't have one particular job description to work from. Start by using O\*Net to look up the type of job you're trying to get, which will list tasks, skills, abilities, and characteristics to include in your resume. Also search for similar job descriptions using the professional association website for your field, or general job posting sites like the ones listed on the Job Search Process handout (look nationwide). Look at several descriptions and identify themes and common keywords.

## **Other Targeting Tips**

### **Think about how your resume might be reviewed, and what that means for how you design it.**

Possibilities include:

- *It could be screened by the HR department.* If it's a medium or large company, it will almost always be screened first by someone in HR, and their job is to weed out as many resumes as possible and only give a few of the best resumes to the department you will actually be working in. They usually have lots of resumes to look at and not much time, so they will often decide after a 10-15 second glance whether your resume will go into the "no" pile or the "maybe, will look at in more detail later" pile. Think about what all this means. Someone in your field may be able to see how your experiences could have prepared you for this job, but the HR staff have a background in HR, not in your field. They know the job description well, however, and those are the things that will catch their eye and tell them you're qualified. You'll need to be explicit in stating your qualifications- be direct and clear about how your experience relates to the job you're applying to, and don't make them have to guess or assume anything. You'll also need to design a format that will allow them to see the overview of your qualifications in only a few seconds.
- *It could be electronically scanned by a software program* to determine how qualified you are, with only the "most qualified" resumes ever being seen by a person. These programs are set to detect certain keywords, and whether or not the program deems you qualified for the job depends on how many of those keywords it picks up. Your best clue as to what words it will be searching for is the job description.
- *It could be scored by a person,* which typically happens when you apply to a government agency. Government agencies will have a point system to ensure that all applicants are given fair consideration. Again, your best clue as to what you'll get points for is the job description. For these positions, you want to include as much relevant detail as possible relating to the things on the job description, even if it means a longer resume, because it will be looked at more closely, and your goal is to maximize your points.

**Strategically place the information on your resume.** There are no real rules about the order of your categories or placement of the info in them. Determine where to put things by what your strongest selling points are and what the employer is going to care most about. If they glance at your resume for only a few seconds, what would you want to jump out at them? For example, are they going to be more interested in your education or your experience? Which would you rather them see, your job title or the name of the company you worked for? The degree you got or the school you got it from? Make your resume format work for YOU.

## FAQs

### ***Is it true that my resume needs to be only 1 page?***

There is no real “rule” about how long your resume must be. It will depend on:

1. How much relevant experience you have.
2. The type of job you’re applying for. If you’re applying to a private company, shorter, summary resumes are more common (never more than 2 pages). If you’re applying to a government agency (federal, state, or local), longer resumes are appropriate because they are looking for more detail.
3. How long and detailed the job description is. This is a good way to tell how much detail an employer would like to see on your resume. Remember, your goal is to address everything you can in the job description, so a job description with more detail might mean a longer resume.

Except when applying to a government position, one-page resumes are usually ideal when you don’t have a lot of experience in your field yet. There are lots of tricks to making it fit, like shrinking your margins or your font size, or adjusting your layout and spacing.

### ***Do I have to include my entire work history?***

Not necessarily. Here are some guidelines:

- If your work history is very short, you probably want to include everything.
- If you have a longer work history, you can probably get rid of irrelevant jobs you had years ago.
- You have the option of leaving off irrelevant jobs, but you don’t want to create employment gaps in the middle of your work history. If you take a job off, make sure that time is accounted for somewhere else on your resume, such as if you were in school.

Here are some options for how to deal with work history issues:

- If your work history is really long, scattered, or irrelevant, switch to a functional format.
- In the chronological format, split your experience up into 2 different categories- “Related Experience” and “Other Experience.” Only include bullets describing what you did for the relevant jobs.

### ***Should I include personal interests and hobbies on my resume?***

As a general rule, no, unless your interest/hobby is a job qualification, such as if you’re applying to a sporting goods company, and the job description asks for candidates who have a passion for sports. Also, DON’T include any personal data like birth date, social security number, physical characteristics, marital status, etc.

### ***Do I need to have an Objective statement?***

No, it is optional these days. Some employers like them and some don’t. When deciding whether to include one, consider how much value it could add to your resume. In many cases it won’t add much, but it can sometimes be useful for two things: working the job title into your resume if you think it’ll be scanned for keywords, or on a field-targeted resume to remind your contacts of your goal. If you include an objective for an advertised job, however, it needs to be specific to that particular job, including the job title and company name.

### ***What’s a Summary section?***

Another optional section, called something like “Summary of Qualifications,” or “Professional Profile,” that lets you make your strongest selling points more visible. This section usually consists of 3-5 bullet points, and will address the most important qualifications the employer is looking for. It should go at the top of your resume, right under your heading. This section can help you tie everything together, and give the employer a reason to want to review the rest of your resume in more detail.

### ***Do I need a curriculum vitae (CV) or a resume?***

Employers often mistakenly use the two terms interchangeably, when they really mean resume. Resumes focus mostly on experience, whereas CVs focus on academic achievements. CVs are typically only used for academic or research-oriented jobs that require a graduate degree, or for applying to research-oriented graduate programs. Most jobs, as well as professional graduate programs usually want a resume. If you’re not sure which to use, see a Career Counselor.

Sample Resume – COMBINATION Format (Chronological-hybrid)  
for a marketing job

# JOHN A. DOE

55 West St., Boise, ID 83725 • (555) 123-4567 • JohnDoe@internet.com  
www.johnsportfolio.com • www.linkedin.com/in/johndoe

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## SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Experience in the development of print and electronic ad campaigns
  - Highly skilled at social media marketing; proven ability to increase customer engagement on social media sites
    - Proven ability to communicate with clients in a way that results in consistent satisfaction
    - Proficient at design and layout work using Adobe Creative Suite
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## EDUCATION

**Bachelor of Business Administration in Marketing**  
Boise State University, Boise, ID

Expected: May 2013

## RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

### **Marketing and Promotions Intern**

August 2012 – Present

Johnson and Dean Marketing Associates, Boise, ID

- Assist in the design and development of print and electronic media ad campaigns for two local businesses
- Generate original, innovative ideas for new campaigns in collaboration with the client and other staff
- Analyze and interpret data from market research and previous campaigns, and make actionable recommendations
- Develop effective working relationships with clients, ensuring the client is satisfied with the level of communication and service as well as the final product
- Use Adobe InDesign, Photoshop, and Illustrator to design and lay out advertisements

### **Social Media Marketing and Web Development Intern**

May 2012 – August 2012

Idaho Whitewater Adventure Supply, Eagle, ID

- Developed and managed social media sites for the business, building followers to 300+ on Facebook and 200+ on Twitter within the span of 3 months
- Created a new business website using WordPress, conducted a keyword analysis, optimized the site (SEO), and tracked site data using Google Analytics, resulting in a 40% increase in site traffic

### **Vice President, Phi Alpha Beta Business Honor Society**

August 2011 – May 2012

Boise State University, Boise, ID

- Designed advertising for print and electronic media to promote the group's quarterly fundraising events
- Created and managed the group's Facebook and Twitter pages, resulting in increased attendance at meetings

## OTHER EMPLOYMENT

Sales Associate, Idaho Whitewater Adventure Supply, Boise, ID

June 2010 – Present

Server, Olive Garden Restaurant, Boise, ID

August 2009 – May 2010

Camp Counselor, Sawtooth Wilderness Camp, Stanley, ID

Summers 2008 & 2009

## ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- Active member of Pi Sigma Epsilon, National Marketing Fraternity, 2010 – Present
- Recipient of the Smith Foundation Scholarship, awarded for academic achievement and community involvement
- Employee of the Year, Idaho Whitewater Adventure Supply, 2011
- Regular volunteer for the Idaho Humane Society, 2009 – Present
- Boys and Girls Club volunteer mentor, 2008 – Present

Sample Resume – FUNCTIONAL Format  
for a public relations internship

# JANE DOE

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55 West St., Boise, ID 83725  
(555) 123-4567, JaneDoe@internet.com

## EDUCATION

**Bachelor of Arts in Communication with a Certificate in Public Relations** – in progress  
Boise State University, Boise, ID, Expected graduation: December 2013

*Relevant Coursework:*

Principles of Public Relations	Public Speaking
Public Relations Campaigns	Contemporary Public Communication
Public Relations Writing	Organizational Communication

## RELEVANT SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

### Public Relations

- Manage public relations initiatives for the Boise State Urban Gardeners Club (UGC)
- Design fliers to educate students about urban gardening and recruit new club members, including writing copy and laying out the fliers
- As an administrator of the UGC Facebook page, distribute group information, news, photos, and other relevant media info on urban gardening to current and prospective members

### Event Coordination

- Assist in the planning and coordination of events for the “Lights Off” program, which provides safe, alternative nighttime entertainment options for local teens
- Collaborate with the Lights Off director and other volunteers to constantly develop new ideas for events that will drive participation
- Manage varying planning logistics on a rotating basis, such as reserving venues, booking entertainment, and coordinating catering, as well as working each event

### Communication

- Over 4 years of work experience communicating with the public
- Experience communicating with customers in multiple industries, including retail, food service, education, and recreation
- As a desk assistant, effectively deliver information about programs and services to existing and prospective Campus Recreation users via phone, email, and Facebook
- Highly skilled in responding to customer complaints in a way that leaves customers with a positive impression of the company, gained through 4 years of customer service experience
- Effective at selling through the ability to assess customer needs and describe products and services in a way that addresses how it will meet their needs

## EXTRACURRICULAR INVOLVEMENT

Kuna Youth Center, Lights Off Program Volunteer  
Boise State Urban Gardeners Club, Co-founding Member  
Public Relations Student Society of America, Boise State Chapter, Member

## EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Desk Assistant, Campus Rec, Boise State University, Boise, ID, August 2011 – Present  
Sales Clerk, Foot Locker, Boise, ID, June 2009 – July 2011  
Sandwich Artist, Subway Restaurant, Meridian, ID, August 2008 – June 2009