

RESUME GUIDE - A DEEP-DIVE

What Makes a Good Resume?

A good resume should be tailored to the position you are applying for. It should highlight your skills and accomplishments, be consistent in formatting and communicate your fit for the role.

Building Blocks for Your Resume

Although the exact format of your resume is flexible, there are certain expectations for professional resumes. We recommend building in sections with titles at the top of each section:

- **Contact information:** full name, phone number, a current, active email address, and a link to your LinkedIn profile
- **Education:** college. Location, degree or major area of interest, date or expected date of graduation, thesis, study abroad, relevant coursework, possibly varsity athletics
- **Skills or Summary of Qualifications:** technical skills, language skills, certifications, interpersonal skills; all relevant to the role to which you are applying
- **Relevant Experience:** work, internships, leadership roles, etc. – all that emphasize or demonstrate your abilities to fulfill the role you wish to fill
- **Additional Experience:** categories such as additional work or leadership experience, community or campus engagement, volunteer service, activities, honors, professional memberships

Formatting is Everything

There are some general rules to follow when formatting your resume which will make your document attractive, easy to skim/read, and professional.

1. Limit your resume to one page. Don't use full sentences or narrative. Don't use personal pronouns and watch verb tense to ensure consistency; should be written in past tense. Resume information should be presented in phrases.
2. Use clear section titles and vary font sizes to easily lead a reader through the most relevant information.
3. Font size should be 10-12 pt. and in an easy to read style (Calibri, Arial, Times New Roman, etc.).
4. Margins should be between .5" and 1".
5. Avoid large empty spaces and balance white/dark space. Large white spaces draw the reader's eye away from the content.
6. Content should be presented within each section in reverse chronological order (most recent or current at top) and dates are more easily skimmed if they are aligned along the right margin.
7. Avoid resume templates. They can be dull and difficult to edit.
8. Convert your resume to the right format (Word.docx or PDF) before distributing to potential employers. Check the submission requirements to determine the right format. This will ensure that it can be read and printed without impacting your formatting based on software used.

Content is Key

Education Section:

Your academic experiences should be listed in reverse chronological order. If you attended school abroad or took part in an educational program outside of Whitman College, you may include those experiences here as well. Some items that would appear in the Education Section include:

- GPA: list your overall or major GPA, depending on what is better and the field to which you're applying
- Related Courses: You may want to include classes that are relevant to the position desired. Do not include basic courses in your major; particularly related advanced courses may be listed. List course name - not number - and don't include course descriptions.
- High school experience is only relevant through your sophomore year. By the time you're a junior, you should have enough relevant experience from your college career to fill a one-page resume.

Skills Section:

When your experience is relatively limited or not directly related to the role to which you're applying, it is best to place this section between the Education and Experience sections. This will allow you to demonstrate the skill sets you possess and where you gained those relevant skills.

- Build a list of 6-8 bulleted skills that include context, such as: *"Ability to quickly develop rapport with clients and coworkers leading to high productivity"*
- Ensure your list includes both technical and interpersonal skills, work readiness and problem-solving skills

Experience Section:

The experience sections of your resume are the most important. It is through these sections that a prospective employer or graduate program can learn the most about the skill sets you possess and how you acquired them or used them previously. This will allow them to see your potential in their position or program.

- The Relevant Experience section includes information that is directly related to the job, program, company or industry to which you are applying.
- Roles in each Experience section should be listed in reverse chronological order with the most recent listed first.
- Each role should include: Position Title, Employer/Organization, Location (city, state) and Dates of Service (month/year) in the first 1-2 lines
- Each role should be accompanied by 2-4 bullet points that list accomplishments and/or ways that you made an impact in that role. A great way to do this is to build out bullet points that answer: what you did, how you did it, why you did it, and the impact/result of your work.

Example:

What – sold gym memberships, How – utilizing administrative and interpersonal skills, Why – to expand and grow customer base of business; Result – increased revenue by 25%

Resulting bullet would be:

Sold year-long gym memberships using administrative and interpersonal skills to expand the businesses' customer base increasing revenue by 25%.

- Data can be used as strong evidence of your success in a previous role. Include data to demonstrate outcomes when relevant, impactful and accessible
- Additional (Work) Experiences can be included to demonstrate roles in which the transferrable skills might be valuable to an employer or help you stand apart from other candidates.

Some Final Resume Tips:

Create a master resume document with all of your educational information, work experiences, skill sets, leadership roles, or any other information about your professional abilities.

CUSTOMIZE! When you find a position that you think may be a good match for you, select the material from your master resume that will demonstrate a strong match between your background and the requirements of the role. Format that specific information into a one-page document. This way, you can ensure that the resume you use to apply or send to a network contact is directly related to that position. Use language that is consistent with the language in the job description. Another plus: when you use a master resume, you only have to update one document, and you prevent many mistakes, such as sending a resume to the wrong company.

PROOFREAD! Spelling or grammatical mistakes are a red flag to potential employers that you do not possess attention to detail. Have friends or family members review your resume, or bring it to the Career and Community Engagement Center for a formal review by a staff member or a Student Career Advisor.