

WRITING A RESUME

All job application letters and most letters of inquiry about employment opportunities should be accompanied by a **resume**, also known as a personal data sheet. The resume sums up for a prospective employer your qualifications for a given position.

A resume is short – a single page, if possible; two pages tops – and groups information into six basic categories: Career Objective, Education, Employment Experience, Personal and Professional Interests, Personal Data, and References. The phrasing of these headings may be altered to suit your writing style and purposes.

Likewise, the sections may occur in any order, depending on which abilities or achievements you wish to emphasize about yourself. For example, an applicant who has attained a degree but has little full-time work experience would be advised to present Education before Employment Experience, in order to emphasize that strength. An applicant with plenty of relevant work experience but no formal education, however, would reverse this order.

Employers and personnel directors do not painstakingly read every word of every sentence on a resume; they tend to scan for particular information and highlights. Therefore, you will want to use the following techniques to create an organized, easy-to-browse resume:

1. Underline and / or capitalize main headings to make them stand out on the page.
2. Work backwards when listing education and employment experience, beginning with your current job and ending with your oldest (this is called reverse chronological order). Employers are most interested in your current employment and highest level of achievement in school.
3. Use verb phrases rather than complete sentences to describe your responsibilities and skills (ie. “Supervised accounting department and developed current inventory system”). This technique conserves space, allowing you more room to brag about your many accomplishments. Besides, these sentences don’t need subjects because we know you’re talking about yourself.

Following are the six major sections of a resume and a brief description of the information typically presented in each.

HEADING

Centered at the top of your resume, the heading includes your name, address, telephone number, and email address on four or five separate lines. Frequently, the name is presented in bold type with all capital letters; you are, after all, the focus of this document.

CAREER OBJECTIVE

The career objective presents your immediate employment goal (usually the job for which you are applying) as well as suggesting your long-term career and educational directions. This one-sentence statement should show potential employers that you are ambitious and confident of your abilities.

EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

This section lists your full-time jobs – part-time jobs if your experience is limited – in reverse chronological order. Beginning with your most recent job, tell when you held the job (beginning and ending dates), The name of the employer, and job title.

If a previous job required skill relevant to the job for which you are applying, list them concisely in short verb phrases. If the skills are not relevant, simply provide a brief job description.

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS

In this section, list your memberships in professional, civic, and academic organizations. Your goal here is to let potential employers know that your interests in these area runs beyond merely drawing a paycheck. This or other miscellaneous information, if relevant to the potential job, may be listed under captions such as “Honors,” “Memberships,” “Publications,” “Activities,” and “Interests.”

PERSONAL DATA

This section is **OPTIONAL**. Information that could be included is date of birth, height, weight, marital status, and health conditions. Unless this information is relevant to a specific position, it **need not** be included in the resume.

REFERENCES

An employee usually will not contact references until after he/she has spoken with the applicant. Include the heading anyway but following it, simply write, “Available on request.”

The style and structure of resumes vary from job to job and from person to person.