



## Resumes: Getting Started

### The Purpose of a Resume

A resume is your personal “marketing brochure.” Its purpose is to get you an interview. Employers often have hundreds of resumes to review and spend **less than 20 seconds** with each. To get noticed, your “brochure” should be focused and easy to read.

### Getting Started

Starting with things you have done most recently, make a list of experiences, with the month/year you *started* them and the month/year you *stopped* doing them:

- Full or part-time jobs
- Volunteer positions
- Organizations (on or off campus) you belong to
- Leadership positions
- Major class projects relevant to the jobs you are seeking
- Athletic teams you are/were involved in

As you list experiences, consider the questions to the right. Some questions may not be applicable to every experience. Where the questions apply, write the answer under each experience. That will give you a list from which to start making your resume.

### Resume Guidelines

- Avoid using templates
- Keep it to one page
- In each resume section, the newest information should be at the top, the oldest at the bottom
- Use common fonts: Times New Roman, Arial, Helvetica, Verdana
- Font size range: 10 to 14
- Have consistent formatting throughout the document
- Have consistent punctuation at the end of clauses
- Make headers and contact information larger than body text
- References should not go on a resume (and do not use “references upon request”)

### Consider these questions when writing about your experiences:

- What were your main responsibilities in each job, internship, volunteer position or project?
- What were your most important accomplishments?
- What specific numbers you can cite, such as dollar amounts, numbers of sales, numbers of people you interacted with (you can give ballpark amounts) per shift (or per day or per hour).
- Did you work alone, or as part of a team?
- What computer software, equipment, machines or tools did you use and cite the specific brand name (i.e. Adobe Photoshop, NCR Point of Sale system)?
- Did you earn any awards or commendations, and if so what was the criteria for that commendation (include that criteria)?
- How much inventory did you keep track of, or process?
- How many square feet of space did you keep in order?
- Did you have a budget to work with? If so, how much?
- Did you have to maintain confidential information?
- Did you have to get specialized training or certifications prior to doing a job function? If so, list what you were trained on.
- Did you hire and/or train others? If so how many people did you train and on what topics?





## Types of Resumes

In general, there are two types of resumes: chronological and functional.

- **Chronological** resumes are organized by dates. Newest items go at the top of each resume section, oldest at the bottom. This is the most common resume style. Information in this guide is primarily for this kind of resume.
- **Functional** resumes are organized by job functions, rather than by dates. Functional resumes emphasize skills, rather than work history. This format is helpful to those with a long work history in a specific field or industry, or who may have a gap in their employment history.

## Organization and Format

There is no “one” correct way to organize a resume. Employers spend less than 20 seconds, initially, looking at resumes. Organization (the order of information) and format (the arrangement and style of text on the page) should make it easy for an employer to see how your skills match their job description.

Organizational sections of a resume, at minimum, should include:

- Name and contact information
- Education and/or training
- Experience (or Relevant Experience)

Optional sections can include:

- Skills
- Objective
- Leadership
- Campus Involvement
- Volunteerism or Service
- Awards and Recognition

## Composing Your Resume

- When describing your experiences, utilize action verbs and be sure to include specific numbers, amounts or other details to help an employer understand what you have done.
- Use professional terminology. Using nouns, verbs and phrases common to your chosen field demonstrates that you are informed and qualified.
- There is no need to use first person (“I”) on a resume.
- When you first use a phrase that you’ll usually abbreviate, write it out, then in (parenthesis) put the abbreviation. Example: Indiana University South Bend (IUSB). When you next need to refer to IUSB, all you need is the abbreviation, without parenthesis.
- Once you have created your resume, have someone proofread it. Spell checkers may not catch all errors. Career Planning can help.
- Tailor your resume to each job you apply for, adjusting language in your resume to match the employer’s job description.

### Tip:

To find action verbs, simply do a **Google** search for “action verbs.”

### Tip:

Use past tense verbs for jobs /activities you no longer do and present tense verbs for jobs / activities you are currently doing.





## Contact Information

It is important to include contact information on your resume so that employers can contact you (obviously). But what contact information should you include?

1. **Name:** If you use a shortened version of your legal first name (Mike vs. Michael) on a day-to-day basis, or if you use your middle name, it is appropriate to use it on a resume.
2. **Phone:** If you have more than one phone number, choose the one you use most. Include the area code: (xxx) xxx-xxxx.
3. **Email:** Use a professional email, such as your IUSB email. You may want to make a temporary, job-search-only email. For example: firstname-lastname@nomail.com. Do not use cute, or inappropriate emails.
4. **Postal address:** If you do not permanently live at the same address where you go to school, pick one address to use for your job search. Think about where you are most likely to get mail and use that address.
5. **Other items:** If you have a LinkedIn profile, or an online portfolio of work, it is appropriate to include the web address for those in the contact information area.

### Tip:

If you post your resume on a public job search board (such as Indeed or Monster), do not include your home address, for safety reasons. Also, use a job search specific email, not your personal email, in the same circumstances.

## Replace Vague Comments with Specifics

Vague comments and clichés do not impress employers. Employers want to know *specifics* about you. Here are examples of improving vague comments with specifics.

*Original:* "Customer service experience"

*Improvements:*

- Provided service to an average of 55 customers an hour in a front-line food service setting
- Assisted patrons in the selection of designer garments and used up-sale techniques to ensure daily sales goals achievement
- Managed over 40 calls an hour and greeted walk-in clients seeking directions to one of the 10 area offices

*Original:* "Cashier experience"

*Improvement:* Responsible for an average of \$850 in cash and credit card receipts per sales shift

*Original:* "Balanced books"

*Improvement:* Using QuickBooks and Microsoft Excel, balance and reconcile general ledger accounts, averaging 200 transactions, weekly





## Job Description Language vs. Resume Language

Language used in a job description differs from that of a resume, even though both describe the same job functions. A job description defines what the job does. A resume summarizes your successes while doing that job. Do not simply paste your job description into your resume, “convert” job descriptions to resume entries.

*Job Description:* Manages office appointment schedule.

*Resume:* Scheduled appointments for 12 consultants using Microsoft Outlook, averaging 120 appointments per week

*Job Description:* Prepares tax returns.

*Resume:* Prepared federal and state tax returns for 55 individuals, 10 corporations, and 14 partnerships utilizing Tax Master software system

*Job Description:* Uses social media to market products.

*Resume:* Utilized Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest to promote sales, specials, deals and customer appreciation features. Increased followers on each platform, over a four-month period, by 20 percent. Increased web-based sales by \$4,500 over the previous four-month period

## Microsoft Word Tips

It can be difficult to arrange your resume if you are not familiar with the format settings of Microsoft Office. The following links provide information on the most common format features used in creating resumes:

- [Line spacing, paragraph spacing](https://bit.ly/2P2zV3E) | <https://bit.ly/2P2zV3E>
- [Bullet points](https://bit.ly/2P47RNo) | <https://bit.ly/2P47RNo>
- [Setting tabs](https://bit.ly/2uWWyj5) | <https://bit.ly/2uWWyj5>

