

MOUNT HOLYOKE

CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER

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30-Second Scan for Resumes

Your resume is designed to get you interviews and eventually a job, an internship, or into a graduate or professional school. It translates what you have done in the past into what you can accomplish in the future. Employers typically skim resumes, spending an average time of *only* 15-45 seconds on each. The decision to consider you for an interview often begins or ends at this point. Your goals are to captivate the reader and answer the question, "Why should the employer want to interview me?" Think of your resume as a 30-second personal commercial.

Use the following checklist to ensure that your resume is in its optimal shape.

- Length**
For a B.A. degree, one full page; for nonprofit (including education) and science, several years experience, or Master's/Ph.D., one or more pages
- Paper Quality**
20-25% bond paper in white, off-white, or ivory
- Letter Quality**
Font Style: Times New Roman, Garamond (avoid serif for scanable resumes), Arial, Helvetica
Font Size: 10 to 12 point for text; 12 to 18 point for name and headers
Presentation: Laser printed with watermark up and facing the right direction
- Balanced Page - Spacing and Placement of Information**
Employers read a resume top left to bottom right, so place most important information across top and down left side. Sections, paragraphs, lines, and words should be evenly spaced. Arrange information so that there is slightly more space between sections than within sections. Margins should be approximately one inch. Be sure there is enough white space to make it easy for the reader to quickly see what is significant
- Name and Contact Information**
Present address on left; permanent address on right. Include e-mail address
- Headings and Subheadings**
Arrange headings and subheadings consistently throughout the resume
Education - include name of institution, city and state, degree, major, minor, and graduation date
Experience - include name of company, city and state, position, and dates worked
- Highlighted Main Points**
Use bullets, **Bold**, CAPS, **BOLD CAPS**, and indentation to emphasize what is most pertinent
- Experience Description**
Begin with strong action verbs (see list on back)
Avoid "duties included" or "responsible for"
Describe your responsibilities and accomplishments rather than the work environment
Identify skills, communicate strengths, emphasize results
Use concrete examples or facts and figures to quantify achievements whenever possible
- End with a Strength**
Leadership, Community Service, Activities, Interests, Skills Summary (computer knowledge, language proficiency or other relevant skills)
- Spelling, Punctuation, and Writing Style:** Proofread! Proofread! Proofread!

Resume Writing Action Plan

The next thing I need to do to improve my resume is...

Resume Preparation Tips

Know your audience and target your resume. Tailor your resume as much as possible to a particular position or career field. Develop a master copy and create different versions of your resume appropriate to various positions or career fields.

You should have a reason for including each item on your resume. If in doubt, ask yourself these two questions, "Does it enhance my candidacy for the position?" and "Does it support my career goal?"

No matter how good the content of your resume, it will be ineffective if it does not get to the right person. If you cannot find the right person's name and address with a phone call, find the name and address of someone at the top of the organization. A resume can more easily filter down than up.

Send a cover letter with your resume. A cover letter introduces your resume and should interest the reader enough that she or he will want to read the resume. Cover letters are targeted to a specific employer. See the CDC handouts *Cover Letter & Thank You Letter Writing* and *30-Second Scan for Cover Letters* for tips.

Action Verbs

accomplished	communicated	drafted	informed	planned	selected
achieved	compiled	dramatized	initiated	predicted	served
acquired	completed	earned	inspected	prepared	shaped
adapted	composed	edited	instructed	presented	simplified
adjusted	computed	elicited	interpreted	presided	sold
administered	conceived	eliminated	interviewed	processed	solicited
advised	conducted	employed	introduced	produced	solved
advocated	consolidated	enlarged	investigated	promoted	specified
allocated	constructed	equipped	judged	proposed	staged
analyzed	contacted	established	lectured	proved	stimulated
applied	controlled	evaluated	led	provided	studied
appraised	conveyed	examined	located	published	succeeded
approved	coordinated	expanded	maintained	raised profits	suggested
arranged	corresponded	explored	managed	recommended	supervised
assembled	counseled	facilitated	marketed	recorded	surveyed
assessed	created	financed	mastered	recruited	synthesized
assigned	critiqued	forecasted	measured	reduced costs	systematized
assisted	decided	formulated	mediated	regulated	taught
attained	delegated	fostered	modified	reorganized	tested
budgeted	demonstrated	functioned	monitored	reported	trained
built	designed	generated	motivated	researched	translated
calculated	determined	governed	negotiated	resolved	tutored
catalogued	developed	guided	observed	restored	updated
categorized	devised	identified	operated	retained	utilized
chaired	diagnosed	illustrated	organized	revamped	verified
changed	directed	implemented	oversaw	reviewed	wrote
coached	discovered	improved	participated	revised	
collaborated	displayed	increased	performed	scheduled	
collected	distributed	influenced	persuaded	searched	

