

Preparing to Write Your Resume

FOR THE TEACHER

Introduction

In this activity students will use the information they've acquired about resumes to begin writing their own resumes. They will:

- Inventory skills they have acquired through various activities and experiences
- Build confidence in their ability to identify and highlight their skills and qualifications
- Become aware of each section of the resume

Setting the Stage

We suggest completing **What Makes a Good Resume** before completing this activity. Classroom discussion can focus on what students have learned (or know) about resume writing. Remind students that their resume may be the only chance they have to impress potential employers who likely have hundreds—or even thousands—more resumes to read through for a single open position. On average, a resume gets less than a minute of consideration from employers, so it's important to make every word count. **(Option: Have students reflect on the challenges of having their resume stand out from those of other applicants.)**

Think about inviting hiring managers from local businesses to speak to your class about what they are looking for when they review applicants' resumes and to provide feedback on some students' resumes. If you'd like to incorporate this activity into other classes, you can modify it so that students research content and write resumes for historical figures, fictional characters, important scientists, or other individuals covered by your curriculum. Including resume writing activities in other classes ensures students get plenty of practice writing strong resumes.

Lesson Overview

- Teacher sets the stage
- Students complete pages 1-3 of the activity. Provide the **Action Verbs** handout (included with this lesson) to help students convey job-related tasks and achievements in a concise and persuasive way.
- After students have completed pages 1-3, review the **Resume Writing Guide** document (included with this lesson) as a class. This will provide an overview of each section of the resume and will assist students in preparing to write each section of their resume.

We recommend following up this lesson with the **Writing Your Resume** lesson.

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PART A: BRAINSTORM RESUME CONTENT

Many job searchers find it difficult to confidently take stock of their abilities and skills, especially if they don't have a lot of work experience. Think about *all* the activities you've participated in, including jobs, clubs, school projects, sports, and hobbies, and answer the following:

1. Describe a situation in which you had to identify and prioritize tasks in order to successfully accomplish something before a deadline.

2. Give an example of a time when you were really proud of yourself, or stood up for yourself.

3. Describe an occasion when you set a good example for members of a group, or motivated others to achieve a goal.

4. Describe how you successfully persuaded a friend, classmate, or parent to see your point of view about an issue that was important to you.

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5. Write about a time you weren't sure how to handle a problem, and what you did to figure it out.

6. Describe an important decision you had to make, and the steps you took to arrive at your decision.

7. Give an example of a time you had to gather and analyze a lot of information in order to give an informed recommendation or opinion about something.

8. Describe an instance when you didn't get along with someone you had to work with, and what you did to resolve the situation and ensure your work got done.

You may not have known you were doing it at the time, but through the experiences you described above, you've successfully demonstrated several skills and characteristics that many employers look for: **organization, confidence, leadership, communication, problem solving, decision making, analytical thinking, and teamwork.**

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In the chart below, make a list of all of your activities, experiences and accomplishments, and identify the skills you acquired or demonstrated through each experience. Use the **Action Verbs** handout included with this activity to assist you in conveying job-related tasks and achievements in a concise and persuasive way for your resume.

<p><u>Activities / Experiences</u> <i>(e.g. jobs, volunteer opportunities, extracurricular activities, special training, important projects, memberships, etc.)</i></p>	<p><u>Skills</u> <i>(e.g. goal setting, creativity, critical thinking, numerical literacy, proficiency in Excel, research, adaptability, etc.)</i></p>

You're ready to get started! Review the **Resume Writing Guide** document included in this activity to get an overview of what should be in each section of your resume.

Action Verbs

accelerated	changed	deployed	equalized	influenced
accentuated	charted	derived	established	informed
accomplished	clarified	described	estimated	initiated
achieved	classified	designed	evaluated	innovated
acquired	closed	detailed	examined	inspected
acted	coached	detected	exceeded	inspired
adapted	collaborated	determined	executed	installed
addressed	collected	developed	exhibited	instituted
adjudicated	combined	devised	exhorted	instructed
adjusted	commanded	diagnosed	expanded	integrated
administered	commercialized	differentiated	expedited	intensified
advanced	commoditized	directed	experimented	interpreted
advised	communicated	discerned	explained	interviewed
advocated	compared	discovered	explored	introduced
altered	compelled	dispensed	exported	invented
analyzed	compiled	displayed	expressed	inventoried
anchored	completed	dissected	extricated	investigated
applied	composed	distinguished	fabricated	itemized
appointed	computed	distributed	facilitated	joined
appraised	conceived	diversified	financed	judged
arbitrated	concluded	diverted	finalized	justified
arranged	conducted	documented	fixed	launched
articulated	configured	dominated	forecasted	led
ascertained	conserved	doubled	forged	learned
assembled	consolidated	drafted	formalized	lectured
assessed	constructed	drew	formed	leveraged
assisted	consulted	drove	formulated	liaised
associated	continued	earned	fostered	licensed
audited	contracted	edited	founded	listed
augmented	contrasted	educated	gained	listened
authenticated	controlled	effected	generated	located
authored	converted	effectuated	governed	lowered
authorized	conveyed	elected	graduated	maintained
balanced	coordinated	eliminated	guided	managed
bestowed	corrected	emphasized	halted	manipulated
brainstormed	corresponded	empowered	handled	manufactured
briefed	counseled	enacted	headed	mapped
broadened	crafted	encouraged	hired	marked
budgeted	created	endeavored	honored	marketed
built	critiqued	endorsed	hosted	mastered
calculated	crystallized	endured	hypothesized	masterminded
calibrated	curtailed	energized	identified	maximized
capitalized	cut	enforced	illustrated	measured
captured	deciphered	engineered	imagined	mediated
catalogued	decided	enhanced	implemented	mentored
catapulted	decreased	enlarged	imported	merged
categorized	defined	enlisted	improved	minimized
centralized	delegated	enlivened	improvised	modeled
chaired	delivered	ensured	incorporated	moderated
championed	demonstrated	entrenched	increased	modernized
modified	monitored	narrated	negotiated	nominated
monetized	motivated	navigated	networked	normalized

observed	realigned	sold
obtained	rebuilt	solidified
offered	recaptured	solved
officiated	received	sparked
operated	recognized	spearheaded
optimized	recommended	specified
orchestrated	reconciled	spoke
ordered	recorded	standardized
organized	recruited	started
oriented	redesigned	streamlined
originated	reduced	steered
outsourced	reengineered	stimulated
overcame	referred	strategized
overhauled	refined	strengthened
oversaw	regained	studied
participated	regulated	structured
partnered	rehabilitated	substantiated
perceived	reinforced	succeeded
perfected	rejuvenated	suggested
performed	remedied	summarized
persuaded	rendered	supervised
piloted	renegotiated	supplemented
pinpointed	renewed	supplied
pioneered	renovated	supported
planned	reorganized	surpassed
positioned	repaired	synergized
predicted	reported	synthesized
prepared	repositioned	systematized
prescribed	represented	tabulated
presented	researched	talked
presided	resolved	targeted
processed	responded	taught
procured	restored	tended
produced	restructured	terminated
programmed	retained	tested
progressed	retrieved	thwarted
projected	reviewed	traced
promoted	revised	trained
propelled	revitalized	transcribed
proofread	satisfied	transferred
proposed	saved	transformed
prospected	scheduled	transitioned
protected	searched	translated
proved	secured	
provided	serviced	
publicized	selected	
published	separated	
purchased	served	
qualified	shaped	
quantified	shared	
questioned	shepherded	
raised	simplified	
rated	sketched	
ratified	slashed	

Resume Writing Guide

Your Name

Address

Phone number

Email address

Career Objectives

Customize the objective to match each position you apply for. Rather than sending out a generic resume to multiple employers, show that you care enough to state why you want this job. The statement should indicate something desirable in your skill set or what you plan to contribute to the company if you are selected for the position.

Educational History

List the diplomas, degrees, training workshops, continuing education programs, and other relevant forms and levels of education you've obtained. You can highlight relevant courses, projects, or achievements, or make any other clarifications about your educational history as required by the job posting.

Work Experience or Skills and Abilities

This section is often considered the “heart” of a resume. Give a brief outline of your career progression by presenting the relevant jobs in your work history. Make sure that starting and ending dates, job titles, and employer information are accurate, and in reverse chronological order.

Include skill/task/tools/result statements that emphasize accomplishments and achievements, rather than just duties performed on the job. Forge strong links between previous positions and the position sought, especially for your transferable skills. Make sure your statements are in past tense, not present tense, ie “developed” rather than “develop.”

Show—don't tell—by choosing action verbs and punchy adjectives over passive verbs and vague descriptors.

If you haven't had an official job, list your skills and specific abilities here and change the heading to Skills and Abilities (see section below on Skills and Abilities).

Skills & Abilities

This section provides a customized snapshot of your unique skill set, qualifications, and personal attributes. Many people, therefore, choose to place it right after the career/job objective so that employers will be more likely to read it. Highlighting valuable skills in this section can be especially helpful for those with less relevant work experience, such as someone who is searching for an entry-level position or changing careers.

Select four to six skills or abilities, and target each to the requirements of the job posting. You don't have to use full sentences, but the descriptions should be free of grammatical errors and inconsistencies. Be precise and accurate in your wording. It might help to include industry keywords, in case an automated system is sorting through applications.

Volunteer Experience

This section describes your unpaid experiences, which can be beneficial for showing that you are a well-rounded person outside of the work environment. Keep this section brief, and tailor it to match the career/job objective or job posting. Highlight relevant skills acquired through your volunteer experiences, such as leadership or organizational skills.

Awards & Certificates

List a selection of relevant academic awards, scholarships, memberships in professional associations, and/or certifications. Include the award title and date awarded as well as the granting institution or any other pertinent information.

Extracurricular Activities

List your relevant activities, including organization name and dates. Explain your role (e.g. Member or Chair), duties performed, and transferrable skills acquired.

Hobbies & Interests

Only include hobbies and interests if they are somehow related to the career/job objective (*e.g. you are applying to be an outdoor tour guide and you enjoy rock climbing and snowshoeing*).

Additional Information

Include this optional section only if the information you want to relay to a potential employer doesn't fit easily under any of the other headings.

References

In general, do not include your references' contact information on your resume. It is also unnecessary to have the notation "References Available Upon Request" on a resume, as this is assumed by the employer. You can prepare and print references separately.

Choose your references carefully, and obtain their permission before forwarding any of their contact information to another party. It's a good idea to give your references a copy of your resume and discuss your qualifications before they are contacted by potential employers.