Resume Format – Step by Step

To help you tackle writing your resume, follow this step by step guide. Once you have gone through each step, you will be ready to create your resume draft. Bring your draft into the Career Center for a critique.

1. Heading

Since a resume is a formal business document, you should not abbreviate any words or use slang. This includes words such as Road and Ohio.

The heading should include:

Your Full Name
Address
City, State, Zip Code
(Area Code) Telephone Number
(If applicable, list both college and home/permanent address)
E-mail address

You can set up this section in a variety of ways—just make sure that all of the information is readable (at least 10 pt font, but preferably 12 pt).

Examples of Headings:

Jennifer R. Smith	*Kevin Dickerson*
467 Fairmount Boulevard	12678 Lander Road
Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44106	Pepper Pike, Ohio 44124
(216) 381-4494	(440) 646-1212
jrs999@case.edu	kxd99@case.edu

Anne Z. Twiggs
Azt999@case.edu

Campus Address	*Home Address*
1596 East 115th Street #317	724 Elm Street
Cleveland, Ohio 44106	Columbus, Ohio 43221
(216) 555-0010	(614) 555-6464

2. Objective

This section can be labeled Objective, Career Objective, or Professional Objective. The objective informs prospective employers of your career aspirations. Many job seekers think that including an objective statement on a resume is too limiting. It is usually the most difficult section to write, however, a well-defined objective may capture the attention of an employer.

Other than your name, the objective will be the first item the employer reads; therefore, it is a vital part of the resume. If you want to explore more than one career option, develop two or three resumes each with a different objective aimed at separate types of positions.

When writing a profession objective include three components:

- **Job function (position) desired**: research analyst, editor, social worker, professional, full-time, cooperative education, internship

- **Organization type or general career field**: hospital, consulting firm, business, computer engineering

- **Knowledge, experience, or skills offered**: software development, problem solving skills, organizational skills, technical knowledge, and database management skills.

Avoid writing "self-centered" objective. Your objective should focus on what you have to offer the employer and not what you want the employer to offer you. An example of a "self-centered" Objective would be *" A challenging position with opportunities for professional training and career advancement."*

Objective Examples:

OBJECTIVE   To obtain a professional position within a management consulting firm that will utilize my communication and organizational skills.

Objective
Seeking a cooperative education position with a biomedical engineering firm which will utilize my technical skills and background.

Objective   Seeking an internship opportunity with a non-profit agency with specific interests in community outreach and event management.

---

3. Education

As a recent graduate, or an undergraduate looking for a co-op or internship, you should keep your educational information near the top of your resume. Once you have been in the world of work for several years and have strong, relevant work experience, then you can move the education section lower in your resume.

Always list your most recent education first. Provide the full name of the school, college, or university and the city and state or country where it is located. List degrees received and the year received or your anticipated date of graduation. If you are a co-op student, make sure that your graduation date includes your co-op experiences.

If you transferred to Case Western Reserve University, you do not need to list your previous school. You may want to list it only if you had some leadership activities or work experience associated with your prior school. You should list those higher education institutions from which you received a degree.

If you are a first or second year student, you may continue to list your high school information if you choose. However, that information should be dropped once you reach junior and senior status. At that point, you should have enough college experience with activities and work that high school information becomes obsolete.

You can include any academic honors such as the Dean's List and current grade-point average in this section. The general rule for GPA is to list it if it is above a 3.0. Should you cite your major GPA rather than the overall GPA, be sure to state this on the resume so as not to mislead the employer. It is also acceptable to list relevant course work, special academic projects or research projects in this section.

Education Examples

Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio
Bachelor of Science, Chemical Engineering, May 2006
GPA: 3.5   Minor: English

Case Western Reserve University   Cleveland, Ohio
Bachelor of Arts, History, May 2005   GPA: 3.8

Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio
Bachelor of Arts, Management, May 2006
GPA: 3.4

---

4. **Coursework**

Some students include a separate section listing specific classes they have completed. This is especially helpful if you have a second major or a minor that is different from most students, such as a Chemical Engineering major with an English minor. Please note that you can include this information in your education section if you prefer.

When listing classes, select no more than eight of the highest level classes you have completed. This will not overwhelm the employer and will show them what content knowledge you might have based on the classes you have taken.

Coursework Examples

Related Coursework	Thermodynamics, Process Control, Process Analysis and Design, Polymer Technology, and Separation Processes

---

Coursework	Industrial Relations, Corporate Finance, Business Policy, Operations Research, Urban Life and Culture, Law and Society

---

5. Experience

This portion of the resume may contain any experiences that are relevant to the position you seek: summer jobs, internships, co-ops, research projects, volunteer work, and student leadership experiences. As in the education section, be sure to always to list your most recent experience first.

Depending upon which format you choose for your resume, the content of this section will vary. If you choose a resume style with the experience portion, list your place of employment, your title, location of company (city and state or country), and your responsibilities and qualifications. The reader of your resume needs to get an idea of what your position(s) entailed and what accomplishments were attained.

As you prepare to write the experience section, do not only think about what you have done, but what skills you have acquired. Break the job down into parts or categories. Each position has different aspects to it. Part of a job may be working with people; another part of your job may be organizing a project, or working with machinery. What percentage of your positions involved working with people, data, and things or objects?

If you're having a difficult time writing this section, try listing what you did on the job and divide it into categories before you properly phrase it on the resume. Refer to the lists of Action Words or Skills Groupings in this guide to help you recall some of your position responsibilities.

Remember: you must be able to write a winning resume, as well as articulate the skills and qualities listed on the resume in an interview. Be sure to list each of the relevant duties of the position(s) and quantify your accomplishments if possible.

This section calls for the use of action words or nouns. If the reader can skim through your resume and identify relevant action words, s/he is more likely to put it in the "call-back pile" and look at it again once after the initial resume screening. The list of action words and skills groupings can be found later in this section. When using action words, be consistent using the same verb tense.

Experience Examples

Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio
Laboratory Assistant, August 2004 – Present
- Assist in the overall organization and maintenance of the laboratory
- Communicate safety information to individuals utilizing the laboratory
- Arrange experiments for laboratory classes.

Intern – May – August 2005
ICG Communications, Inc., Cleveland, Ohio
Assisted in the creation of communication plans for retail businesses and a non-profit agency. Worked on the development of clients' organizational literature and advertisements. Wrote and managed client websites through HTML and Java. Communicated firm's goals to prospective clients.

Night Shift Manager, April 2003 – January 2004; *Shift Member* – May 2002 – April 2003
McDonald's Restaurant, Canton, Ohio
- Supervised and scheduled tasks of five shift members
- Communicated with customers regarding concerns
- Oversaw cash transactions through the management of shift cashiers
- Contributed to an increase in store sales over employment and a decrease in shift worker tardiness and absences

---

Be sure to include these elements in your experience section:

Organization Name
Location
Your title
Dates there

Duties: (generally list at least 3)

Accomplishments

Additional Sections of a Resume

• Honors/Awards

This would include anything you think is relevant and noteworthy, such as Dean's List, scholarships, valedictorian, Who's Who.

Honors/Awards Examples

HONORS   Tau Beta Pi, Engineering Honor Fraternity
                 Dean's High Honors
                 Case Alumni Scholarship

Honors

Provost Scholarship	Golden Key Honorary
Dean's List	Psi Chi, Psychology Honor Fraternity

• Skills

This section can be very helpful in listing the skills that prospective employers might be looking for. Do not underestimate the skills you have or think that "everybody knows that." It is better to be thorough then to leave off a skill. In this section, you can list special skills such as computer knowledge, fluency in foreign languages, or lab skills.

Skills Examples

Computer Skills
- Extensive experience with Windows 98, Windows NT, Windows 2000, and Windows XP
- Knowledge of Microsoft Office 2000 Suite, WordPerfect Office 2000 Suite, Netscape Communicator, Microsoft Internet Explorer, Windows NT networking systems, C++, Visual Basic
- Extensive experience in personal computer repair

COMPUTER SKILLS
C++, SQL, Assembly Language (MIPS), Verilog, VHDL, OCaml, Oracle, MultiMedia Logic, Altera Board, TI Code Composer Studio, HTML, Macromedia Dreamweaver MX, UNIX, Linux, Microsoft Office

---

• Leadership

Employers like to see that you have outside interests and are well-rounded. Leadership experience and extracurricular activities are two important criteria employers use when evaluating potential employees. Whether you are a member of an organization or an officer, list your status. This not only shows what activities you are involved in, but the employer can pick up on leadership and organizational skills and the ability to be a team player.

Leadership Examples

ACTIVITIES   CASE College Democrats, President, April 2005 - Present

International Club, Treasurer, March 2004 – February 2005
CASE Model United Nations
Weatherhead Business Association

Leadership

- Co-op Student Association
- Society of Women Engineers
- American Society of Civil Engineers
- CASE Commuter Club
- CASE Habitat for Humanity
- Alpha Chi Omega

• **Community Service**

Many CASE students participate in activities or organizations which focus on helping the community surrounding the university. While you may include these activities in your Activities section, you may also choose to have a section specific to those experiences.

Community Service Example

Community Service **Habitat for Humanity**, Volunteer – August 2005 - Present
Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio
- Assisted with the construction of three houses within the Cleveland Community

• **References**

Having a list of references, three to four people, who can attest to your work style, academic profile, and/or personal qualifications is important. Employers interested in hiring you do check references, so choose your references carefully. It is important that your reference know who you are as an individual and what you are capable of accomplishing. Professors, supervisors, high school counselors or teachers, clergy, neighbors, or university staff members, can be good references. Ask your references first to ensure that they will provide you with a **strong** recommendation. If they feel comfortable providing a strong recommendation, make sure you verify their full name, title, address, and phone number with area code and e-mail.

If you have room, you may list on the bottom of the resume one of the following: References Furnished Upon Request, References Upon Request, or References And Transcripts Furnished Upon Request. The actual list of references with addresses should be on a separate sheet of paper. Make sure to have your resume header on the reference page.

Have at least five to ten copies of the reference page printed and carry it with you to your interviews. After the interview, hand it to the interviewer. It makes for an impressive presentation.

Reference Examples

Dr. Susan Adams
Professor, Case School of Engineering
Case Western Reserve University
10900 Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44106
(216) 368-0000

Mr. James Manno
Process Control Engineer
Loranger Manufacturing Corporation
12 Clark Street
Warren, Pennsylvania 21360
(612) 599-8400

Common Resume Mistakes

Does YOUR resume have any of these flaws?

- Too long
- Too short
- Has "Resume" written along the top
- Wordy
- Vague
- Use of the words "I" and "we"
- Too much "fluff"
- Exaggerated
- Hard to read
- Poor design
- Use abbreviations (like B.S. and Rd.)
- Poor grammar
- Misspellings
- No locations listed for employments
- Using complete sentences
- Poorly focused
- Misleading
- No "punch"

Resume checklist:

Career counselors in the Career Center will critique your resume with you. Although drop-ins are welcome, it is usually to your advantage to make an appointment in advance. Before having your resume critiqued, please complete this checklist:

For each of the sections, did you remember to…?

Heading
- put your name at the top?   Is it larger than all other information? Is it bolded?
- use a current address where you can be reached or where someone will know your current address? If you included two addresses (school/college and permanent) did you includes dates when you can be reached at each?
- include(a) phone number(s) where a message can be left or someone will generally be available to answer the phone?
- include a fax number, if you have one?
- include a professional-sounding e-mail address that you check regularly?

Objective:
- state your objective in a clear and concise manner? Does it list a position? Include skills, setting, or long-range goals?

Education:
- list your college or university?
- list the city & state of your college or university next?
- list your degree and major?
- include the month and/or year of completion of your degree?
- list GPA information (if over 3.0)?
- if applicable, did you show percent of schooling for which you paid (or assumed responsibility)?

Coursework:
- if you've included "specialized" or "relevant" courses, does your list include only electives or those courses relevant for your objective but outside your major?

Experience:
- list your position title, employer, city and state, and dates of experience, preferably in that order?
- use bullets to make important points?
- begin each phrase with a powerful action verb describing your accomplishments?
- include only skills important in the type of position you seek?

Honors/Awards/Activities:
- include those that demonstrate important abilities or characteristics in the workforce?
- prioritize these elements (by dates or by relevance)?
- include leadership positions?

Formatting and Finalizing:
- leave at least a ½" margin on all four sides?
- include lots of white space? Does important information (section headings, for example) stand out?
- treat all section headings the same?
- use only one easy-to-read font? (Arial, Times, or Helvetica?)
- use a spell checker?
- look for consistency in punctuation?

Final question:

Have you omitted personal data that may be used against you? (including age, height, weight, marital status, nationality or ethnicity, photograph).