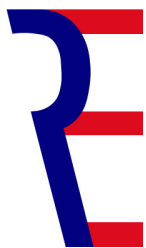


YOUR RESUME AND YOU

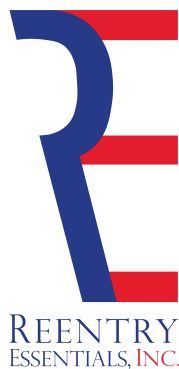


REENTRY
ESSENTIALS, INC.

LIFE SKILLS SERIES: BASIC SKILLS FOR LIFELONG SUCCESS
A PROJECT OF REENTRY ESSENTIALS

**THIS PROJECT WAS MADE POSSIBLE
THROUGH THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF
MARTY SOKOLOFF OF GOOD GROCERIES**

YOUR RESUME AND YOU



Life Skills Series
Basic Skills for Lifelong Success



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This workbook belongs to:

You may find it helpful to keep important names and phone numbers handy.

Write them below.

Local career center

Name _____

Phone _____

Address _____

Networking contacts

Name _____

Phone _____

Name _____

Phone _____

Name _____

Phone _____

Name _____

Phone _____

Other important numbers

A GOOD RÉSUMÉ CAN HELP OPEN DOORS.

Even in a challenging job market, a well written résumé can get you noticed.

A résumé is an important tool in your job search.

It lets employers know that you have the skills and experience necessary to do the job.

Your résumé should help you stand out.

A well-written résumé should highlight your skills and experience in a way that is clear, concise and easy-to-read.

There's a lot you can do to create a résumé that is more effective.

This workbook can teach you how to:

- present your skill and experience
- set the right tone
- prepare your résumé for electronic formats

Create the résumé that gets you your next job!

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WHAT IS A RÉSUMÉ?

It's a brief history of your accomplishments that can help you get your next job.

Your résumé is your introduction to an employer.

It gives the employer a brief summary of your:

- education
- skills
- experience

You want it to show the employer why you should be considered for a job.

The goal of a résumé is to get you an interview.

An employer is looking for people with certain qualifications for the job being offered. A hiring manager will look through résumés for candidates who have those qualifications. Those candidates will then be invited to interview for the job.

Once you have an interview, you have an opportunity to sell yourself and convince the employer you are the best candidate to hire.

A well-written résumé can help you stand out from the crowd.

Hiring managers usually have to sort through many résumés for each job opening—sometimes hundreds. As a result, a hiring manager is likely to give each résumé a quick scan first to see if a person seems to have the qualifications the employer is seeking. He or she will immediately set aside the résumés that don't seem to meet those qualifications.

So a résumé needs to catch the hiring manager's attention at first glance. It's important to know how to help yours get noticed.

Your résumé needs to make a good first impression.

A hiring manager should be able to take one look at your résumé and decide whether you are a candidate he or she should consider.

Your first job is to create a more effective résumé.

This is something you can do yourself. There are many services that offer to write your résumé for you. But some are quite expensive, and there is no guarantee you will be happy with the results. Also, nobody knows about your background and abilities better than you! This will take some time and effort. But you're worth it! And remember, your effort is going to pay off with a new job.

Your résumé will also change over time.

For example, you can add to it as you:

- work different jobs
- get promotions
- continue your education
- learn new skills

You can also customize your résumé for a specific job you are applying for. (See page 17.) This means changing your résumé to give more emphasis to certain skills and abilities you have that match what an employer is seeking.

What are your job goals?

Think about the career fields you'd like to work in, and the kinds of jobs you would be interested in. What skills do those jobs generally require? Write them below.

Field(s) you want to work in:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Jobs you would consider:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Skills needed for those jobs:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

WHAT TO INCLUDE

Depending on your background and the job desired, your résumé should include:

A heading	A job objective or professional profile	Education/training
<p>This usually includes your:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • full name • complete address • personal telephone number • personal e-mail address 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An objective lets the employer know what type of position you are looking for. If you are a new graduate, have varied experience or are changing careers, including an objective can help focus your résumé. Avoid being vague. But don't be so specific that you eliminate yourself from other positions that may interest you. Poor: "A challenging position that uses my education and creativity." Good: "A sales position in a growing retail organization." 	<p>This section may contain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • names and locations of schools or programs • dates of attendance • degrees, certificates or licenses awarded • major honors, awards, scholarships or elective offices <p>If you are a recent graduate, you may also want to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your grade-point average, if 3.0 or above • Coursework related to the job you want
<p>Work experience</p> <p>This can include any full or parttime, seasonal or volunteer work. For each job listed, provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • names and locations of employers • dates of employment • job titles • major responsibilities and accomplishments <p>In general, leave out experience that's very old unless it relates to the job you are seeking.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A professional profile or qualifications summary gives the employer a summary of the skills and experience you would bring to the job. It highlights your key skills and achievements. Poor: "Knowledge of many areas of public relations." Good: "Creative, detailoriented public relations specialist with over two years' experience in strategic planning and media relations." 	<p>Activities/special skills</p> <p>You may want to mention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interests and activities that demonstrate job-related skills (such as leadership and organization) • personal accomplishments (for example, "paid my own way through college") • special abilities, such as specific computer skills or knowledge of a foreign language

Your Résumé Information

Refer to the information you write below when you create your résumé.

Work Experience

Job Objective or Professional Profile

(See pages 10 and 12.)

Education/Training

Activities/Special Skills

(See page 14.)

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD RÉSUMÉ

Your résumé should be:

Brief

Limit your résumé to no more than 1-2 pages. Remember, a hiring manager does not have a lot of time to read through résumés, so it's best to get straight to the point.

Easy-to-read

Make sure your résumé is pleasing to the eye, and not too text-heavy. This means making good use of:

- fonts
- headings
- bullets
- whitespace

(See page 15 for tips on formatting a résumé.)

Honest

Never lie on your résumé. A skillful interviewer will be able to spot any exaggeration or false information. Also, employers often verify information in résumés and applications.

Customized

Employers will advertise the skills they are looking for in job candidates. On your résumé, emphasize your skills and accomplishments that make you a good fit for the position. This can help you get the attention of the hiring manager.

Specific

When possible, use numbers to describe your accomplishments. For example, a résumé could include:

- the number of employees you managed
- the size of a budget you were responsible for
- quarterly or annual sales figures
- the amount of money you saved an employer on a project

Action-oriented

When describing your experience and skills, use the active voice. For example, begin sentences with words such as:

- accomplished
- budgeted
- supervised
- operated
- guided
- persuaded

Complete

It's OK to leave out experience from early in your work history if it's not related to the job you are seeking. But otherwise, be sure your work and education history is complete. One thing employers generally do not like to see is gaps in work history. These raise questions, and hiring managers may decide to consider another candidate instead.

When possible, include the reason for any gap in your work history. (For example, you went back to college, volunteered, etc.)

AVOID COMMON MISTAKES.

These mistakes can hurt your chances for being considered for employment.

Don't use gimmicks.

For example, don't use photographs, unusual formats or brightly colored paper. Some people think these will help attract attention to their résumé. And they will—but not in a good way.

Don't include salary requirements.

If you are asked for this information, include it in your cover letter. Otherwise, this shouldn't be discussed until after you receive a job offer. (The Occupational Outlook Handbook has salary ranges for different types of jobs. See page 29.)

Don't use personal pronouns.

When describing skills and accomplishments, don't use "I" or "me." Save those words for your cover letter.

Don't use abbreviations.

For example, don't use an abbreviation for the college you attended or a company you worked for. Spell out the full name.

Don't include unnecessary personal information.

The employer needs to know some of your personal information, such as where you live and how to get in touch with you. But the employer does not need to know your:

- race
- religion
- political affiliation
- hobbies
- height or weight
- age or date of birth
- marital or parental status
- reasons for leaving a previous job

Don't emphasize skills and job activities you no longer want to do.

This is especially important for job seekers who want to change careers. (See page 23.) For example, you may have worked in sales but now want to get a different type of job. Emphasizing your skills as a salesperson is going to work against you.

Don't emphasize older experience.

If you have been in the workforce a long time, put emphasis on skills and work experience you've had within the past 15 years.

Don't use job-description language for skills.

Job descriptions use phrases like "duties include" and "responsible for." Avoid these phrases when describing your skills and accomplishments. Use action-oriented words instead. (See page 7.)

A CHRONOLOGICAL RÉSUMÉ IS THE MOST COMMON TYPE.

The format emphasizes your experience.

A chronological résumé gives a timeline of your work history.

It starts with your most recent job, then goes backward. This highlights your work history for employers.

A chronological résumé lets employers easily see:

- how long you worked at each job
- the skills and experience you gained at each job
- if you have any gaps in your work history

How is a chronological résumé organized?

It often lists:

- a job objective or professional profile
- a summary of your skills and other accomplishments
- your professional experience, from your most recent job to your earliest job
- your education

Who should use a chronological résumé?

Consider using this format if you are:

- looking for a similar position in your current field
- trying to advance in your current field
- proud of your most recent position

Give a clear picture of your work history.

For each job you list, include:

- the years you worked at that company
- the company name
- the company location (city and state)
- your job title(s) while you worked there
- a brief list of your accomplishments during that time

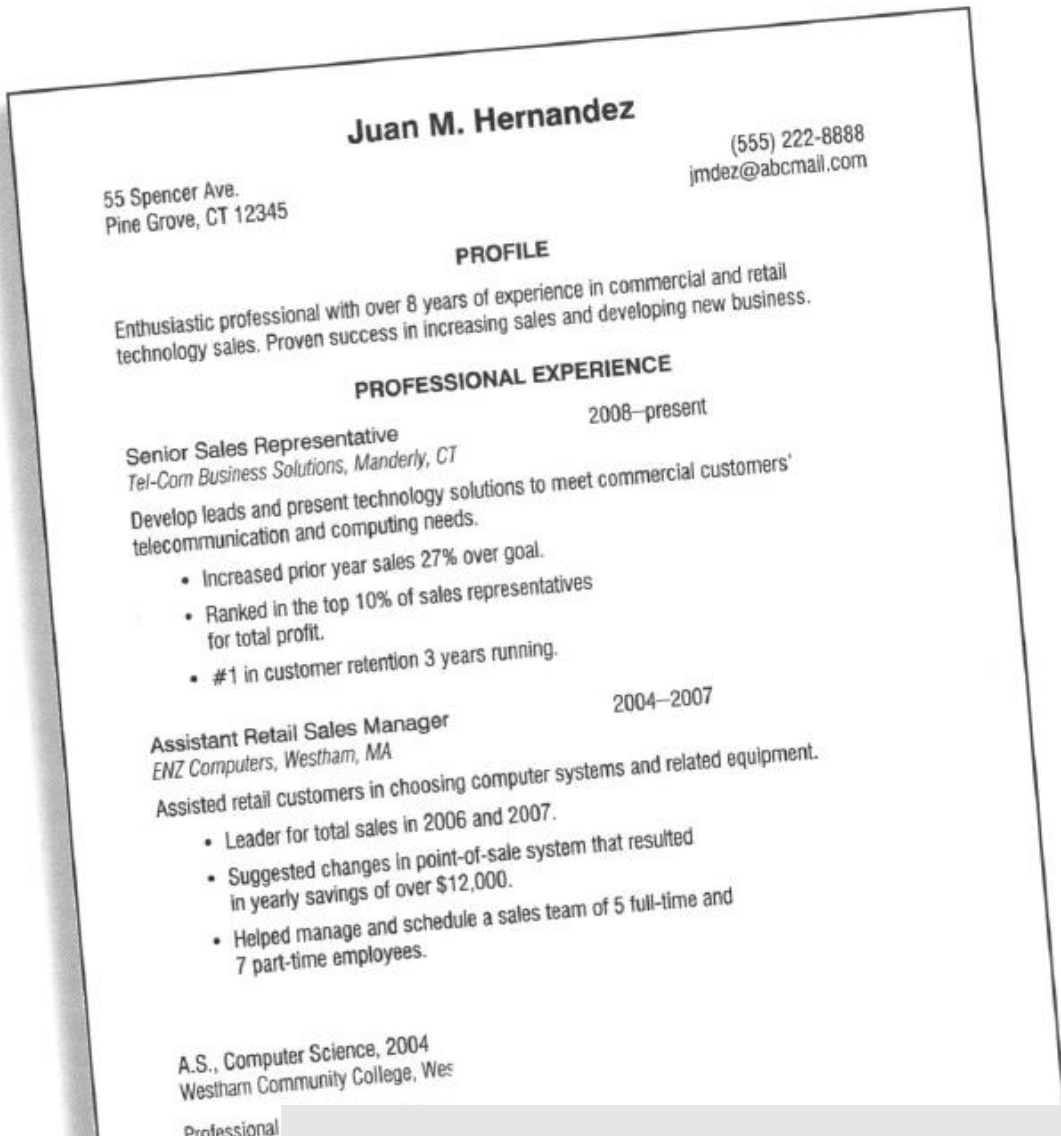
If you have a gap in your work history, you can fill it with an activity relevant to the job you are seeking—for example, an internship or volunteer work.

Advantages

- This format gives a clear picture of where you have worked and what you have accomplished.
- It's logical and easy to follow.
- Many employers prefer this format.

Disadvantages

- Limited experience or gaps in employment may stand out in this format.
- This format works against job seekers who are changing careers.
 - If you've changed jobs often, that will stand out.



Write your professional profile.

Your profile is a description of you in your working life. It is usually one sentence and describes some of your skills and experience. For example:

“Creative, detail-oriented public relations specialist with over two years’ experience in strategic planning and media relations.”

Practice writing your own professional profile. Look over some of your skills to get some ideas. Try to find words that best describe what you do.

ANOTHER TYPE IS THE FUNCTIONAL RÉSUMÉ.

This format emphasizes your skills.

A functional résumé gives a listing of your relevant job skills.

It lets employers easily see all of your major skills and accomplishments in different areas. For example, you may have skills in:

- organization
- leadership
- sales
- writing
- software
- dealing with people

How is a functional résumé organized?

It often has:

- a job objective or professional profile
- a complete listing of your major skills
- a brief summary of your work history
- your education

Who should use a functional résumé?

Consider using this format if you:

- are changing careers
- are a parent who is reentering the workforce
- have been unemployed for a long time
- had the same responsibilities for years and years at multiple job sites
- have experience and skills as a volunteer
- are an older job seeker who wants to emphasize skills or experience from earlier in your work history

List all the skills you think can help you get the job you are seeking.

Look through the employer's ad for the job. It should list the skills they want candidates to have. Be sure to list all the skills you have that match.

Advantages

- This format highlights your skills and accomplishments while placing less emphasis on your work history.
- This format can benefit job seekers who are changing careers or don't have much experience.

Disadvantages

- Some employers may be suspicious of this format and wonder if you are trying to hide something.
- This format doesn't link your skills with specific jobs in your work history.

ANNE E. BATES

16 East Street
 Kingston, Minnesota 06006
 (333) 555-5555
 aebates@anyprovider.net

JOB OBJECTIVE To obtain a position as a full-time reporter for a major daily newspaper.

KEY SKILLS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS**Interviewing**

- Regularly interview local officials while covering political events.
- Conducted on-the-scene interviews for local TV news team.
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills.

Writing

- Report on local politics for city newspaper with a daily circulation rate of over 25,000.
- Wrote local news pieces for evening TV news broadcast reaching over 30,000 viewers daily.
- Wrote feature articles for college newspaper.
- Able to translate and write in Spanish.
- Skilled in use of word processing and office software.

Editing

- Edited articles for features section of college newspaper.
- Provided editing services as college writing tutor.

WORK HISTORY

The Kingston News, Kingston, Minnesota (2012–present)
Alexandria College News, Alexandria, Minnesota (2009–2011)
WXL Channel 52, Ashland, Minnesota (Summer 2009)

EDUCATION

B.A., Communications, June 2011
 Alexandria College, Alexandria, Minn
 Journalism Award, 2011
 Cumulative GPA: 3.75

Write a job objective.

What kind of job do you want? What kind of company do you want to work for? Think about your goal for your next job and practice phrasing it as a job objective. Write it below.

If you're having trouble coming up with a job objective, look over ads for jobs you are interested in.

A COMBINATION RÉSUMÉ IS ANOTHER TYPE.

It combines the chronological and functional formats.

A combination résumé focuses on your skills and experience.

It combines:

- the work history timeline in the chronological résumé
- the listing of major skills in the functional résumé

This allows you to link the major skills you have with each job you've held. Employers can compare the skills they are looking for with the skills you have used in the past.

How is a combination résumé organized?

In order, it often lists:

- a job objective or professional profile
- a summary of your qualifications
- your work history, with a list of major skills used for each job
- your education

Who should use a combination résumé?

Consider using this format if you are:

- a student or recent graduate with little work experience
- a worker with a long, consistent work history (no gaps)
- changing careers
- re-entering the workforce

A combination résumé gives you some flexibility.

You can structure it in a way that works best for you. It allows you to:

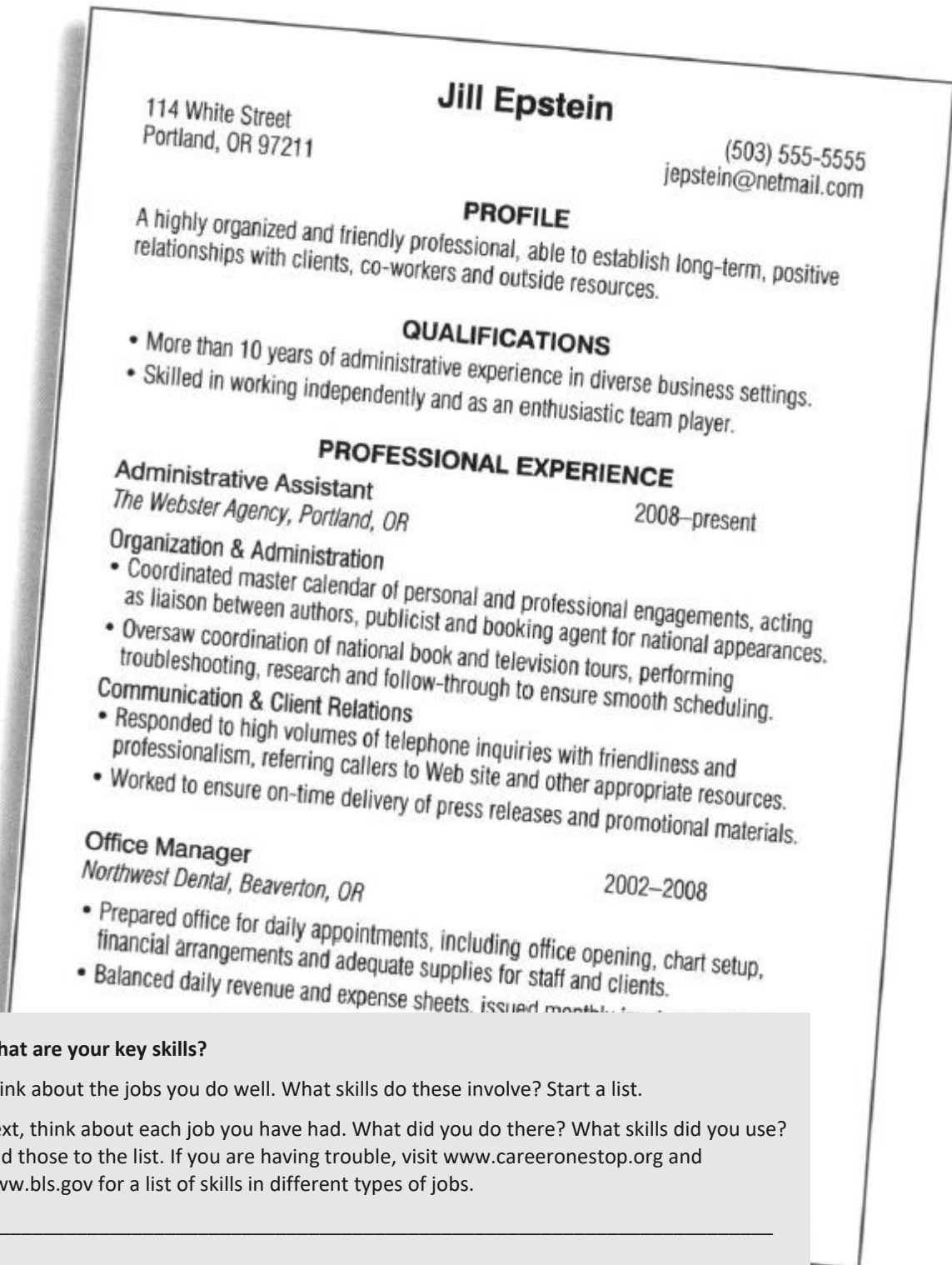
- emphasize your strongest skills in a summary of your qualifications
- go into detail about skills you used at specific jobs in a chronological work history

Advantages

- This format gives your work history in a chronological order, which some employers may prefer.
- This format links your skills with specific jobs in your work history.

Disadvantages

- It may be repetitive if you list similar skills in different positions.
- This format may be longer than résumés in a chronological or functional format.



What are your key skills?

Think about the jobs you do well. What skills do these involve? Start a list.

Next, think about each job you have had. What did you do there? What skills did you use? Add those to the list. If you are having trouble, visit www.careeronestop.org and www.bls.gov for a list of skills in different types of jobs.

MAKE YOUR RÉSUMÉ PLEASING TO THE EYE.

Here are some tips for designing a résumé that is easy for employers to read.

Make good use of white space.

Use at least one-inch margins on your résumé. Leave some blank space between sections and paragraphs so your résumé doesn't seem dense or text-heavy.

Limit the fonts you use.

Word processing software comes with a lot of different fonts. It can be tempting to use many of them to try to get an employer's attention. But the more fonts you use, the less readable your résumé will be. Limit yourself to two. For example, use one font for the headings and another for the body text.

Use boldface and italics.

Boldface and italics can help certain parts of your résumé stand out. For example, you can use boldface or italics for:

- section headings
- subheadings
- job titles

But don't use them too much. Avoid underlining.

Emphasize skills and accomplishments with bullet points.

This makes it easier for employers to quickly scan your résumé for your skills. Bullets help grab the reader's eye and lead him or her to key points.

Be consistent.

For example, if you use boldface for your first job title, use boldface for all job titles you list. If you center one section title, center all section titles. Being consistent helps make your résumé easier to read and follow.

Consider using a template.

Word processing software often includes different templates for creating résumés. These templates are already formatted with headings and selected fonts. Choose one that looks appealing to you.

SETTING THE RIGHT TONE

Let your résumé show that you are a dynamic individual with a lot to offer!

Be confident.

Your résumé should give the impression that you are proud of your skills and accomplishments. An employer wants to hire someone who is confident in his or her abilities.

Emphasize the positive.

Sell your strengths. Focus on the positive contributions you have made to your employers, your school and your community. Omit any negatives—such as being fired or having a low grade-point average.

Highlight accomplishments.

List your most important qualifications first. If you are a recent graduate, list education before experience since that is your most important qualification.

Avoid wordiness.

- Use keywords and phrases instead of complete sentences.
- Use the active voice. (See page 7.)
- Be direct.

Poor: “I staged a large campaign to cut costs and increase overall profits from fund-raisers by 10% in the course of one year’s time.”

Good: “Increased profits from fund-raisers by 10% in one year.”

Use familiar terms.

Use language appropriate to the type of job that interests you. But, be sure you are clear and easily understood.

Be neat.

Make sure there are no coffee stains, smudges, errors, corrections or anything else that detracts from the résumé's appearance.

List some of your accomplishments here.

Use the active voice.

CUSTOMIZING YOUR RÉSUMÉ

Tailoring your résumé to each employer can increase your chances of getting hired.

Research the employer.

Visit the employer's Web site, if there is one. Do an online search for more information about the company, as well. Look for press releases or news stories.

- What does the company do?
- How does the job being advertised fit with the company's mission?
- What is the company philosophy? Goals?
- Who are the company's customers?
- Who are the company's competitors?

This information can help you customize your résumé and cover letter to explain how your skills and experience can help the company.

Research the job being offered.

Learn all you can about the responsibilities that usually come with that job title. Look up the job description in:

- the Occupational Outlook Handbook www.bls.gov/ooh
- Career One Stop www.careeronestop.org
- ads for the same position from other companies
- job-finding Websites

Make it clear which job you are interested in.

If you use a job objective, state the job title. If you use a professional profile, include relevant skills used in the job being advertised. Or include them in a summary of qualifications.

Highlight relevant skills and experience.

List the most important and relevant skills and accomplishments first. This can help your résumé stand out.

Remove information that is not directly related to the job.

For example, leave out work experience and skills that are not relevant to the job you are seeking. If doing so will leave a gap in your work history, you can list non-relevant jobs, but don't provide further details.

Look for keywords.

An employer’s ad will use certain words and phrases to describe the skills the employer is looking for in job applicants. For example:

- “work closely with others” means you work well as part of a team
- “communication skills” means verbal and written skills, effective listening and taking direction
- “multitasking” means you can organize and prioritize several activities
- “problem-solving skills” means you can identify, prevent and solve any problems that come up as part of your work

Employers often use software to scan résumés to search for keywords. So be sure to identify keywords in ads and use them in your résumé, if appropriate.

Read an ad for a job that interests you.

Can you spot any keywords? Write them below.

What skills and accomplishments do you have that match those keywords? Write them below. Highlight these in your résumé.

THE FINISHING TOUCHES

Use this checklist.

Final read-through

- Résumé is focused, and it's clear what type of job you're looking for.
- The order of the sections makes sense.
- It seems easy to read.
- Action words are used to describe skills and accomplishments.

Feedback

Ask someone to read through your résumé for no longer than 20 seconds.

- Can he or she easily see what your skills and accomplishments are?
- Is there anything that is confusing or unclear?
- Is there anything that raises questions?
- What does the person remember most about your qualifications?

Proofreading

- I proofread my résumé carefully.
- Someone else also proofread my résumé carefully.

Printing

- Type is neat and clean.
- Paper is high quality with matching envelopes. (White or off-white is best.)

Or:

- I had my résumé professionally printed.

CREATE AN ELECTRONIC VERSION OF YOUR RÉSUMÉ.

It can be an important part of your job search!

General tips

- Save your e-friendly résumé as a plain-text file. E-mail it by pasting it into an e-mail. (Only use other file types and attachments if an employer says it's OK.)
- Don't list your street address when posting a résumé online.
- List your cell phone number.
- If you e-mail or upload your résumé, take a printed copy of your résumé to an interview, too.
- If an employer asks you to fax or mail a scannable version of your résumé, Use 8½" x 11" plain white paper. Print on one side only. Don't fold or staple it. Mail it flat in a large envelope.

Content

Be sure to include keywords related to the skills and experience you have that employers in your field are looking for. Look for those used in their job ads, for example. Screening software may search for these. (You can include keywords as a separate section. Or you can incorporate them into your existing résumé.)

Saving

In some cases, you can save your résumé in a file that keeps formatting intact, such as a PDF. You can then send it to an employer or upload it to their site.

Plain text

In other cases, you will be asked to fill out fields with your:

- name
- phone number
- e-mail

Then you are asked to paste a plain-text version of your résumé into another field.

Creating a plain-text version of your résumé

To create this:

- Remove all special formatting, such as indents, tabs, bullets, graphics, boxes, shading and horizontal or vertical lines.
- Align text to the left.
- Remove any underlining, italics or boldface. (You can replace them with asterisks, hyphens, and standard quotation marks.)
- Use capital letters for section headings.
- Use a basic font (such as Arial), 10-14 points in size.
- Place your name on the top line. Your street address, city and state, phone number and e-mail address should each go on a separate line.

<p>ANNE E. BATES Kingston, Minnesota 06006 (333) 555-5555 aebates@anyprovider.net</p> <p>JOB OBJECTIVE To obtain a position as a full-time reporter for a major daily newspaper.</p> <p>KEY SKILLS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS</p> <p>Interviewing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly interview local officials while covering political events. • Conducted on-the-scene interviews for local TV news team. • Strong interpersonal and communication skills. <p>Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on local politics for city newspaper with a daily circulation rate of over 25,000. • Wrote local news pieces for evening TV news broadcast reaching over 30,000 viewers daily. • Wrote feature articles for college newspaper. • Able to translate and write in Spanish. • Skilled in use of word processing and office software. <p>Editing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edited articles for features section of college newspaper. • Provided editing services as college writing tutor. <p>WORK HISTORY <i>The Kingston News, Kingston, Minnesota (2012–present)</i> <i>Alexandria College News, Alexandria, Minnesota (2009–2011)</i> <i>WXL Channel 52, Ashland, Minnesota (Summer 2009)</i></p> <p>EDUCATION B.A., Communications Alexandria College, Alexandria, Minnesota Journalism Award, 2011 Cumulative GPA: 3.75</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">PDF</p>
	<p style="text-align: right;">Plain text version</p> <p>ANNE E. BATES Kingston, Minnesota 06006 (333) 555-5555 aebates@anyprovider.net</p> <p>JOB OBJECTIVE To obtain a position as a full-time reporter for a major daily newspaper.</p> <p>KEY SKILLS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS</p> <p>Interviewing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Regularly interview local officials while covering political events. * Conducted on-the-scene interviews for local TV news team. * Strong interpersonal and communication skills. <p>Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Report on local politics for city newspaper with a daily circulation rate of over 25,000. * Wrote local news pieces for evening TV news broadcast reaching over 30,000 viewers daily. * Wrote feature articles for college newspaper. * Able to translate and write in Spanish. * Skilled in use of word processing and office software. <p>Editing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Edited articles for features section of college newspaper. * Provided editing services as college writing tutor. <p>WORK HISTORY The Kingston News, Kingston, Minnesota (2012–present) Alexandria College News, Alexandria, Minnesota (2009–2011) WXL Channel 52, Ashland, Minnesota (Summer 2009)</p> <p>EDUCATION B.A., Communications, June 2011 Alexandria College, Alexandria, Minnesota Journalism Award, 2011 Cumulative GPA: 3.75</p>

CHANGING CAREERS

Create a résumé that shows you are ready to hit the ground running in your new chosen field.

Highlight your transferable skills.

Many skills can be used for different jobs and careers. Learn about which of your skills are transferable by reading job descriptions (such as those found in the Occupational Outlook Handbook at www.bls.gov/ooh).

Consider using a functional résumé. This will allow you to put more emphasis on the relevant skills and accomplishments from your previous career.

Include all experience you have in your new career.

This includes:

- volunteering
- internships
- part-time work
- classes or workshops
- conferences
- industry events

Do some research.

Learn all you can about:

- your new field
- companies in that field
- jobs at those companies

In your résumé and cover letter, show employers that you have done your homework and are ready to contribute.

Don't sell yourself short.

It's normal to feel nervous about starting a new career. But don't let your employer get that idea from your résumé! Project confidence in your abilities, skills and achievements, even though they were in your old career.

Talk to people working in your desired field.

Ask them to review your résumé and to offer any suggestions for changes.

ENTERING THE WORKING WORLD

Here are some tips for writing a résumé if you are a new graduate.

Don't oversell yourself.

Be sure to emphasize any related skills and experience you gained from:

- internships
- school projects
- training programs
- certifications
- previous jobs

But don't exaggerate your qualifications. If you're applying for an entry-level position, hiring managers will pay more attention to your aptitude and potential.

Don't ignore the job requirements.

You may apply for a job that asks for some qualifications you don't have. And there's nothing wrong with that. Sometimes, employers will hire candidates who don't have all the qualifications they asked for. But don't ignore those qualifications, either. For example, in a cover letter, you can explain how you are working toward fulfilling those requirements (for example, by taking a class).

Emphasize your academic accomplishments.

For example, point out:

- any honors (such as dean's list or Phi Beta Kappa)
- your grade point average, if it is 3.0 or above
- any coursework relevant to your major and career objective

Emphasize the skills you've used in previous jobs.

Even if you've worked only part-time jobs, you've still gained some skills and experience. For example, if you were a cashier at a supermarket, you handled cash transactions and provided friendly customer service. If you mowed lawns over the summer for different clients, you ran a lawn-care business.

Include any relevant extracurricular activities.

This could be related to:

- clubs
- social groups
- sports

For example, if you ran a charity fundraising event for a school club, that could impress an employer.

Consider including a job or career objective.

For example, if you want to work in the banking field, you could list "entry-level management position in the banking industry" as your objective.

IF YOU ARE UNEMPLOYED

Keep your résumé up-to-date, even if you aren't working right now.

Stay busy.

If you are out of work for some time, there will be a gap in your employment history. But you can fill this gap by:

- volunteering
- taking a class
- tutoring
- consulting
- doing temp work
- doing freelance work

This shows potential employers that you have been actively using and improving your skills.

Highlight any new skills or accomplishments gained in those roles. For example, if you volunteered to run a fundraiser, stress your organization of the event and include the amount of money you were able to raise.

Cover up smaller gaps in employment by leaving out months.

For example, you may have lost a job in January and started a new one in November of that same year. But if you only include the years in your start and end dates, it won't look like there is a gap in your work history.

Consider using a functional résumé.

This will put more emphasis on your skills and accomplishments than on your work history. Or use a combination résumé. (See pages 11-14.)

Be honest.

Offer a brief explanation for any gaps in your résumé or cover letter. For example, if you lost your job during a layoff, tell that to your potential employer, no matter how much time has passed.

TAKING AGE OUT OF THE EQUATION

Older job seekers can take steps to reduce the risk of age discrimination.

Keep it recent.

Only include your skills and accomplishments from the last 15 years. Employers are interested in what you have done recently to help the companies you've worked for.

Include older experience if it's relevant.

But don't mention the dates associated with it. For example, you can include highlights of this older experience in the summary of your qualifications. Or you can include it at the end of your résumé in a section titled "additional experience."

Share some of your work history, but not all.

For example, you might have had different job titles at the same company for 20 years. Instead of including your entire history at that company, you can begin with the start date of your most recent position.

Leave the date off your education listings.

Including the year you got your college degree may be a tip-off to your age, so leave it out. But be consistent. If you leave the date off of your education, leave it off for all degrees and training.

Consider a functional or combination résumé.

This lets you put more focus on your skills and accomplishments, and less on your work history.

Highlight your achievements.

This will show an employer how hiring you is in their best interests. Highlight:

- decisions you made that had positive results
- money you saved a company
- problems you solved

Be careful with phrasing.

Avoid descriptions that indicate you are an older worker. For example, you don't want to point out that you have "over 20 years of experience" in a career field.

Remember, it's about getting an interview.

That's where you can really sell yourself to the employer. Being confident, knowledgeable and enthusiastic will help convince an employer you are the right person for the job.

ALWAYS INCLUDE A COVER LETTER WITH YOUR RÉSUMÉ.

It will be the first thing a potential employer reads.

A cover letter is your introduction to the employer.

It is where you provide some information on your qualifications and persuade the employer to consider you for a job by taking a closer look at your résumé. Check career reference books and Web sites for help with writing your cover letters. Most cover letters include:

- your name, address and phone number
- the date
- the contact and organization name
- your purpose for writing (the specific position you are interested in and where you learned about the position)
- your background and skills as they pertain to the job
- your specific qualifications for the job
- when and how you will follow up
- strong action words and phrases that will grab the attention of the reader

Follow these tips for writing a cover letter.

- Use the full and correct name and title of the contact person. Call the organization to find out the correct address and spelling. If possible, avoid addressing your letter “to whom it may concern.”
- Do your research. If possible, mention specific aspects of the organization that interest or impress you.
- Explain how your specific skills and experience connect to the position. Highlight how you could benefit the organization and help them meet their goals.
- Check the letter carefully for errors and misspellings.
- Keep the letter to one page in length, and print it on high-quality white or off-white paper that matches your résumé.

There are 2 types of cover letters.

- Some are written in response to an advertisement. When you see a specific job advertised, you can tailor your résumé and cover letter to the needs of the job. Send your résumé and cover letter very soon after you see an advertisement. Some jobs are only listed for a few days before the employer has already lined up several interviews.
- Other cover letters are written with hopes that an organization may have unlisted job openings. This is a type of “cold” contact. You may send a cover letter and résumé to inquire about available positions and show your interest in an organization. State in your cover letter what types of position(s) you are interested in and qualified for. It may also help to write that while you understand there may not be any current openings, you would still appreciate meeting with someone to learn more about the organization.

KEEP A LIST OF REFERENCES.

An employer may ask for a list of references after you send your résumé.

Who to include

Choose at least 3 references. If possible, at least one should be a former manager or supervisor.

Other choices include:

- a former co-worker
- someone you worked for at an internship or volunteer job
- a teacher or someone who trained or certified you in specific skills

What to include

For each reference, list the person's:

- name
- affiliation
- work address
- e-mail address
- phone number

Print your reference list on white or off-white paper and include your name at the top.

Getting the most from your references

Your references can really make you stand out as a candidate, so choose wisely. Pick references who know your work skills well and can talk about you in a positive way. (Always ask permission before using a reference.) You should also talk to each reference about the skills you want him or her to highlight and the type of job you want. For example, you wouldn't want your former supervisor to only discuss your computer skills if you are applying for a management position.

Keeping in touch with references

Make sure you always have their current addresses and phone numbers. Follow up often—ask them to let you know when they've been contacted by an employer. Knowing how many phone calls they receive will help you know how your job search is going. Don't forget to thank all of your references (especially after you get a job)!

List potential references here.

Include each person's name, affiliation, address, e-mail address and phone number.

RESOURCES

You can learn more about creating a more effective résumé from:

Your local career center

Find the American Job Center closest to you by visiting www.servicelocator.org. Ask about résumé workshops and other resources.

A career placement service

Review samples of résumés and cover letters. Ask about current trends in employer preferences for résumé styles and formats. If possible, set up a placement file (a collection of copies of documents, such as references).

Your library

Check for sources that list job titles and the skills needed for those jobs. The Occupational Outlook Handbook (also available Online) and professional journals are good examples.

People who have written résumés

Counselors, professors, coworkers, friends and others who have had experience in writing résumés and searching for a job can be valuable sources of help.

The Internet

A wealth of career information is available on the Web. For starters, check out:

- the online version of the Occupational Outlook Handbook at www.bls.gov/ooh/
- O*NET (The Occupational Information Network) at www.onetonline.org
- CareerOneStop www.careeronestop.org

Computer resources and Internet access are available at most schools, colleges, libraries and employment agencies.

Other sources

These may include:

- college career centers
- job search fairs
- professional associations

START CREATING A WINNING RÉSUMÉ TODAY!

An effective résumé can help you make a good first impression on employers. This will bring you closer to the job you want.

Assess your skills and experience.

Identify the skills and accomplishments that you want a potential employer to know about.

Choose the format that works best for you.

This could be a résumé that is:

- chronological
- functional
- a combination

Prepare an electronic version of your résumé.

Most employers prefer to receive résumés this way. You also post this version on job sites or your own Web site.

Put your résumé to work.

Send your résumé to employers who have job openings you are interested in. Customize your résumé and cover letter as needed to point out how you would be a good fit for the position.

Write your own job success story!

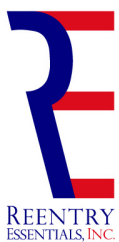
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This series of interactive workbooks is designed to provide readers with real-world guidance and support overcoming some of the most common challenges faced by returning citizens and their families. Developed for a wide-variety of age groups, reading levels and cultural backgrounds, each interactive workbook contains straightforward text to ensure readability. Fill-in sections, worksheets, and other interactive features make workbooks perfect for continued reference.

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Individuals and organizations interested in purchasing single or bulk quantities of workbooks are encouraged to contact us directly for purchasing instructions. Individual titles are available for \$6.00 each. Customized price quotes available upon request.



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