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# **CREATING AN EFFECTIVE RESUME**

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# Creating an Effective Resume

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## □ **What is a Resume?**

- A selling tool that outlines your skills and experience so an employer can see, at a glance, how you can contribute to his or her workplace



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## **Why it is important:**

- An employer will decide in 10 to 20 seconds whether you should be considered for the job.
  - It creates an employer's first impression of you.
  - It will get you--or lose you--a chance at an interview.
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- Is one resume okay for all job openings?**
  - No. If you are applying for a specific job, your resume should be tailored to fit the advertised requirements for that job. Some employers use software that hunts for key words used in ads.
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## **How do I get started?**

- Know the sort of job you want.
  - Research the potential employer.
  - Design your own format. No templates.
  - Choose headings that invite interest, e.g. Education, Related Experience, Skills, Honors, Achievements, Activities, Affiliations, Other Experience.
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- A resume works on two levels:
    - A quick scan that lets the recruiter assess your basic qualifications
    - A deeper look at the details of your experience
    - Your format should enable both the scan and the deeper look
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## □ Content

- Make your heading prominent. Include name, phone, email, Twitter handle, LinkedIn and **your portfolio website**
  - Don't label cell, email, etc. except for LinkedIn.
  - Include home address when applying for a local position or one in another state. Leave it out if the distance might deter an employer (e.g., leave out Ronkonkoma when applying to a Manhattan job; leave it in for Long Island jobs).
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- ❑ **Make a portfolio website.**  
Recruiters insist on this.
  - ❑ Include PDFs of your work, not just links. WordPress, Wix, SquareSpace and other sites provide templates.
  - ❑ Create different sections for written work and multimedia.
  - ❑ Include the portfolio link in your resume heading.
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- ❑ **Related Experience** (related to job you are seeking)
  - ❑ - Include on-campus experience, e.g. SBU Now, WUSB radio, Statesman, etc.
  - ❑ - Include off-campus internships
  - ❑ - Include relevant full- and part-time jobs
  - ❑ - Include job titles and dates, e.g. intern, staff writer, webmaster, editor, freelance writer, anchor, sports reporter, desk assistant.
  - ❑ Another option: Professional Experience (for internships, freelance) vs University Experience
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- ❑ **Cite numbers** to convey size and/or scale of project, e.g. “Managed team of 15 student reporters and oversaw publication of campus newspaper targeting student body of 22,000.”
  - ❑ **Give examples** that demonstrate desirable personality traits such as leadership and teamwork, e.g. “Led team of 20 students in redesign of campus online news publication.”
  - ❑ **Begin each bullet point** with an action verb. Use past tense or present tense as appropriate.
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## ☐ Skills

- ☐ **Visual:** Final Cut Pro X; Photoshop; Dreamweaver; Motion; Flash; videography and digital photography
- ☐ **Social media:** Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat
- ☐ **Equipment:** Sony V1U HD video camera; Canon HG10, HF20 and HFM-31 video cameras; Canon Rebel XTI; Nikon D300S, digital voice recorders
- ☐ **Studio:** Camera operator, teleprompter, audio, switching
- ☐ **Research:** Lexis-Nexis, Factiva, Bing, JSTOR
- ☐ **Languages:** Fluent in Spanish; basic French
- ☐ **CMS:** Wordpress, Blogspot
- ☐ **Other:** AP style, Microsoft Office

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- ❑ **Education** – Include university and school; major(s); expected graduation date OR Class of 20XX; GPA if 3.7 or better.
  - ❑ No high school or high school achievements unless exceptional.
  - ❑ Do not list B.A. (or M.S.) until you have actually graduated. Instead, list majors/minors.
  - ❑ Include other colleges you attended **only** if you received a degree or are listing related experience, such as another college's newspaper.
  - ❑ Leave out the date you began attending.
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## **Honors and Achievements**

- Honors** (Relevant) (with dates), e.g. Dean's List, honor societies, awards, scholarships, contest finalist or semifinalist
  - Achievements** (Relevant), i.e.:
    - Published 40+ stories in national and local media
    - Launched local science website
    - Elected fraternity president
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**□ Activities** - Include interesting activities and memberships in relevant organizations. Being a member of a journalism association shows your commitment and offers a talking point.

- - Society of Professional Journalists
  - - National Association of Hispanic Journalists
  - - Academic Judiciary Committee
  - - Student Ambassador
  - - School of Journalism Student Advisory Board
  - - University marching band - trombone
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## □ **Style**

- Use action verbs such as led, managed, produced, covered, created, wrote, reported, planned, developed, launched and founded.
  - Avoid unnecessary words, sentences, phrases, such as duties include, hired to, project involved, responsible for.
  - Keep descriptions short or omit them if the item is self-explanatory (e.g., Cashier, waiter)
  - Avoid self-flattering terms like highly skilled, successful, outstanding or excellent; don't use "I."
  - Be consistent with grammar and format.
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## □ Format



*"I see by your résumé that you've got a big problem with formatting."*

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## **Format**

- Create your resume in Word. The screening software some employers use can't read graphic elements such as InDesign.
  - If you are applying for a job with a graphics or design component at a smaller employer unlikely to use screening software, show your design skills. Otherwise, use a simple, straightforward format.
  - Send finished copies as PDFs.
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## **Format**

- Stick to one page. Balance your items to fill the page, using space between sections to avoid a gap at the bottom.
  - Keep font size no smaller than 12 point.
  - Be generous with margins on the sides.
  - Make the page pleasing to the eye at a glance.
  - Underline, bold, use bullets – not hyphens, italicize consistently and appropriately, but don't overdo.
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## **Format (cont' d)**

- Align all dates where they can be seen easily.
  - Use consistent format for dates.
  - List items in each category from most recent to oldest.
  - Remember: Your resume must be organized to enable both a quick scan and a deeper look.
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## **Final Edit**

- Be sure your resume fits the specific qualifications of the job for which you are applying or of a specific employer.
  - Ask a professor or copy editor to review your resume for clarity and effectiveness.
  - Proofread hard copy for spelling, punctuation, grammar, capitalization, consistency.
  - Proofread again, and again, and again. Read every item out loud.
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## **Final Product**

- Print on one side only.
  - Do not fold or staple the resume.
  - Send the right resume to the right employer – the one that fits the specific job for which you are applying.
  - If sending resume electronically, send as a PDF to avoid browsers ruining the format.
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## □ **Final Tips**

- Bring extra copies of your resume to interviews.
  - Bring separate, well-executed list of references - all of whom have agreed *recently* to be a reference.
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- ❑ *Created by Marcy McGinnis and Barbara Selvin*
  - ❑ Sources for this presentation include:
  - ❑ [www.freeresumetips.com](http://www.freeresumetips.com)
  - ❑ [www.resume-help.org](http://www.resume-help.org)
  - ❑ [www.mit.edu](http://www.mit.edu)
  - ❑ [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov)
  - ❑ *Resume Magic*, Third Edition, 2007 by Susan Britton Whitecomb: 2007.
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