

The Career Change Resume Writing Guide



1. While a combination resume is widely used, for a career change you can choose a chronological, functional, or a combination of the two.
 - a. A chronological resume, the most common, highlights your past work in reverse chronological order. This format is best if you have had a good progression and maturation in your career. This may not be the best format if you are switching careers or are re-entering the field.
 - b. A functional resume emphasizes your skills more than the job titles. The first job that you list is the one that most pertains to the job you are applying for, which is helpful in a career change. This format has a drawback since employers are suspicious since these are often used to hide things and can make employer do work in order to get a complete picture of your work history.
 - c. The combination is essentially a functional resume with an added section titled "Experience" where the employer names, locations, your title, and dates of employment are listed. This allows you to use the functional format with less risk.
 - i. **This format is best** if your job objective is different than your experience, you are **changing careers**, you have work experiences from unrelated types of work, or you have skills or abilities not related to past jobs.
2. Do a **comprehensive rewrite**. If you haven't updated your resume in a while, you need to spend time updating your resume and thinking through what you accomplished in your past experiences. Re-analyze your skills during the editing process -- you do not want to simply list your duties of your past jobs, but the skills have learned.
 - a. This is a good time to create an **exhaustive resume**. This is not a resume that you will ever send out, but it compiles all of your experiences and skills. This will ideally be pages long. Then, you will choose pieces from this document based on the job that you are applying for. Creating this document enables you to not have to recreate your resume for each job you apply for, but to simply select the portions that are pertinent to the job you are applying to.
3. You need an effective **objective statement** that clearly states what position you are seeking and the skills that you have. This should state the position name and company that you are applying to, and then three detailed skills that you would use in that position.
 - a. Do not be vague [it communicate uncertainty], be employer focused [what you bring to the job not what the job can do for you], avoid clichés, and tailor these statements to each position.
 - b. An objective statement is a **better fit** than a summary of qualification because it may be difficult to tell from the remainder of your resume what you are applying for and what you will bring to the position.
4. You need a **skills section** that shows the skills that you have for your new career. Many of these skills may have been learned in your past career, but they can be phrased in a way that show their use in your new field-- these are called *transferable skills*. See a list of soft skills on the Career Development website Use number when you can. Number speak no matter what industry you are in.

- a. Know what to exclude. You do not need to include all that you did at your previous jobs if it doesn't relate well to new position.
5. It is important to match up **keywords** in your resume from the job description. To do this follow these steps:
 - a. Find several job posting for your ideal job. To do this, first search for your ideal job in Wikipedia. This will give you all the different names that your ideal job could go by.
 - b. Search all various job names for your ideal job on monster.com. This will give you a plethora of job descriptions. Look through all of these and then find the skills listed in all of them.
 - c. Match those skills with your previous experience and education and be sure to include those skills and experiences in your resume.
 - d. You may be surprised to find how many of your skills match up with the relevant skills for your ideal job because so many are transferable.
6. You can use the **accomplishment-based resume model** to communicate how you made a difference in your previous roles. Not all bullet points need to use this model, but you can try for at least one. This model helps to put your work in context and highlight your efforts. This model can also be used in interviewing. Using the **S.T.A.R. technique**:
 - a. **S** - Situation. Define the context, the problem or the who/what/when
 - b. **T** - Task. Identify the key issue or objective that you addressed
 - c. **A** - Action. Describe the action that you took, be sure to emphasize the skills that you used to complete the task
 - d. **R** - Results. Summarize the outcome in business terms, use numbers if you can
 - e. Example:
 - i. Standard statement: Updated an old database
 - ii. STAR statement: Company used an outdated database system that was cumbersome and ineffective, was tasked with coming up with a new system. Designed and implemented a new database that cut entry time by 50% and gave better reports.
7. Include your past experience, otherwise the employer may assume that you are hiding information. If you do a *combination* format, you simply need to list the company names, location and dates work. If you use a *chronological* format, use the section to show the employer all the skills you have developed that will be transferable to your new position. See a list of good action words to use on the Career Development website.
8. It may be helpful to add a job title description, a short descriptor after the official job title that can relate what you did even more to the job you are applying to.
9. Put your most relevant information first. If you just completed a new degree that is most related to your ideal job, you can put that first. You can even include relevant course work to show skills in areas that your work may not cover. If you have been out of school for over five years, then your experience should go before your education.
10. You can also highlight non-work related experience. Be sure to include activities related to your desired role, like association memberships, volunteering, etc.
 - a. If you have a field that you want to get into, start by volunteering – it's a great way to get experience.

Combination Resume – best for career changers

YOUR NAME

111 Street Name, City, AR 11111 • Appropriate Email (no blue hyperlink) • (555) 555-5555

OBJECTIVE

Write the job position and company that you are applying for, followed by three pertinent related skills that you would use in the job. Choose your three skills based on the job description—show the hiring manager that you are a perfect fit. A clear statement of your career or job objective tells the employers exactly what you are wanting so they can verify the compatibility of your aspirations with the organization's needs. A vague, catch-all sentence here will show uncertainty about what you want.

SKILLS

- List any skills your transferable skills here. You can include any foreign language fluency or computer skills.
- Pull skills from all your experience (paid or unpaid, academic or marketplace) that exemplifies the qualities that employers seek [communication skills, work ethic, initiative, creativity, etc].
- Tailor these bullet points to reflect your skills and qualifications based on the job description. If the job description says that they are looking for a person who works well on a team, make sure your résumé lists at least one concrete example of your team experiences.
- You can create section heading if it help to qualify your skills, such as Leadership skills, Administrative skills, Sales skills, Marketing skills, Team-building skills, etc.
- Start each bullet with an action verb.

WORK HISTORY

- List all of your work history.

[EXAMPLE:]

Position Title

Organization Name, City, AR

Year-Year

Position Title

Short job position description if needed [see bullet 8]

Organization Name, City, AR

Year-Year

EDUCATION

Degrees, institutions, and location; graduation date(s) or expected graduate date

- list your undergraduate minor if it will expand your skills, eg: Graphic Design)

GPA only if above 3.0/4.0

Academic honors, scholarships (if applicable)

Highlight significant coursework if you are lacking in the skills in your work experience.

Do not include any high school related experience.

[EXAMPLE:]

MS in _____ Expected graduation, May 20__

John Brown University, Siloam Springs, AR

Related Coursework: _____

GPA: __/4.0

B.A. _____ May 20__

University name, city, AR

GPA: __/4.0

VOLENTEER EXPERIENCE & ASSOCIATIONS

If applicable, you can list any relevant associations of which you are a member or volunteer experiences.

Chronological Resume

YOUR NAME

111 Street Name, City, AR 11111 • Appropriate Email (no blue hyperlink) • (555) 555-5555

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

A clear statement that summarizes your experience in the field, the skills that you would bring, any special achievements or awards, your personal commitment or passions that are of value to the job, and any technical, linguistic, or artistic talents that you have. No more than 50 words and tailor it to the position that you are applying.

EXPERIENCE

-All experience (paid or unpaid, academic or marketplace) that exemplifies the qualities that employers seek [communication skills, work ethic, initiative, creativity, etc] should be listed.

-**The bullet points need to reflect your skills and qualifications, tailor these to the job description.** If the job description says that they are looking for a person who works well on a team, make sure your résumé lists at least one concrete example of your team experiences.

-If you have less work experiences, undergraduate student leadership positions or varsity sports can go in this category.

[EXAMPLE:]

Position Title

Organization Name, Siloam Springs, AR

Year-Year

- Started each phrase with an action verb.
- Utilized only sentence fragments for descriptions.
- Do not simply list job duties, but the soft or transferable skills that you learned.
- Identified the skills in each position that relate to job description.
- Generated sentences with proper and consistent punctuation at the ends.
- Use the S.T.A.R technique, described above, if possible.

Position Title

Organization Name, City, AR

Year-Year

- 1
- 2

SKILLS

List any skills that are not demonstrated in your work experience. Be sure to include any foreign language fluency or computer skills.

EDUCATION

Degrees, institutions, and location; graduation date(s) or expected graduate date

-list your undergraduate minor if it will expand your skills, eg: Graphic Design)

GPA only if above 3.0/4.0

Academic honors, scholarships (if applicable)

Highlight significant coursework if you are lacking in the skills in your work experience.

Do not include any high school related experience.

[EXAMPLE:]

MS in _____ Expected graduation, May 20__

John Brown University, Siloam Springs, AR

Related Coursework: _____

GPA: __/4.0

B.A. _____ May 20__

University name, city, AR

GPA: __/4.0