

## Career and Transfer Resource Center

# Resume Guide

### Why is it important to have a great resume?

- Illustrate the connection between your skills and the needs of the employer, outlined in the job posting
- Highlight the skills, abilities, and education that make you a great candidate
- Inspire employers to invite you for an interview

### Your resume should be:

- Easy-to-read
- Clear and concise
- Customized to the position of interest
- Optimized for Applicant Tracking Systems

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### Did you know?

The average employer looks at your resume for only 6 - 15 seconds

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# RESUME FORMAT FOR ATS

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## What is an Applicant Tracking System (ATS)?

Employers often receive hundreds of applications for one open position. Many employers use Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) to manage all these applications and streamline the hiring process. ATS is a scanning software that sorts, screens, and scores your resume before a human reader ever sees it.

Resumes that cannot be read by ATS or score below a certain threshold **may never be seen by a person.**

## Tips to get past ATS:

- Add keywords and phrases found in the job description to tailor your resume to the job posting
- Do not use a resume template
- Do not use graphics, images, colors, symbols, text boxes, columns
- Do not put contact information in the document header
- Create/save your resume as a MS Word document (unless a different file type is specifically requested)
- Do not use a functional resume format
- Include easy-to-read dates (i.e. June 2022 or 06/2002) so ATS can calculate your years of experience
- Avoid abbreviations
- Left align all sections

# GENERAL RESUME GUIDELINES

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## Resume Dos:

- Do keep your resume to 1-2 pages (1 page is typical for a recent grad; more experience warrants 2 pages)
- Do check your spelling!
  - Use spellcheck and proofread your entire resume (Spellcheck does NOT proofread words in ALL CAPS)
- Do optimize your resume for Applicant Tracking Systems
- Do organize and format your resume, so it is easy for the reader to find the most relevant information.
- Do give the document a professional and specific name (ex. FirstnameLastname\_Resume)
- Do keep font sizes 11-12 for text, 12-14 for headings, and 16-22 for your name; use one professional font (Times, Calibri, Arial, Verdana, etc.)
- Do keep margins between .5 inch to 1 inch (narrow to normal settings on Microsoft Word); if your resume looks short or you do not have a lot of experience, use 1-inch margins

## Resume Don'ts:

- Don't exaggerate titles or responsibilities; honesty is always the best policy
- Don't use a template created by Microsoft Word or found online
  - Instead, start with a blank Word document
- Don't include references or "References Upon Request"; provide references in a separate document when asked
- Don't include personal information: hobbies, family, social security number, birthdate, etc.
- Don't use personal pronouns such as "I, me, my, their"
- Don't overuse bold, italics, underlining

## Organizing your Resume

There are a few ways to organize a resume. Your format will depend on your experience and goals.

Chronological Resume: Organized with the most recent experience listed first and older experiences follow in reverse chronological order.

Functional Resume: Organized with your relevant skills and experiences listed first. This format may have headings for skills such as Project Management, Leadership, etc. A work history section is generally included separate from skills. This resume format is generally not recommended as it can be difficult for employers and ATS systems to interpret.

Combination Resume: Mixes format of a chronological and functional resume by including optional sections like summary and skills.

# RESUME SECTIONS

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There are a variety of sections you could include on your resume. The sections you include will depend on your experience and job target.

**REQUIRED SECTIONS:** These sections should be included on all resumes.

## Contact Information

- Do NOT include your contact information in the header in MS Word, instead simply type your name and contact information at the top of the page
- Use the same heading all your application documents (resume, cover letter, and references)
- Include one phone number and one professional email, address is optional
- Do NOT include your full address if you are posting your resume to an insecure website or job board (Monster, Indeed, CareerBuilder, etc.)

## Education

- SPELL OUT your official degree name rather than using abbreviations like AS, A.A.S., DIP (i.e. Associate of Science in Business Administration)
- Include the full name of the institution, city and state
- Indicate month and year of graduation (if graduated within the last 5 years, otherwise graduation date is optional); if you have not yet graduated, include expected date (i.e. Expected May 2023)
- GPA is optional and should only be used if over 3.0

## Work Experience

- Include the position title, company, city, state, and dates of employment (spell out months or use 2 digits for month, 4 digits for year, i.e. June 2022 or 06/2022)
- Add 3-5 bullets under each position that explain what you did and what skills you used or gained (see Page 6 for more direction on building skills statements)

**OPTIONAL SECTIONS:** Pick and choose sections based on your experience and job target.

## Summary

- A Summary section is highly encouraged on all resumes
- Capture the reader's attention and show your strongest connection to the role

## Technical Skills

- Demonstrate mechanical, maintenance, software, or technical knowledge/skills
- Refer to the job posting to determine which of your skills to highlight

## **Skills**

- Include job specific skills; avoid generic skills (i.e. detail-orientated, good communicator, time management)
- Review to the job posting to determine which of your skills to highlight

## **Relevant Courses**

- Important if you lack experience in your desired field
- Include 4-6 courses that relate to the position for which you are applying

## **Applied Professional Skills/Academic Projects**

- If you have limited work experience, this section gives an opportunity to showcase skills/experiences gained through academic projects

## **Certifications/Licenses/Training**

- Based on your background you may have multiple sections for training, certifications, and/or licensure
- Include the official certification name, certifying body, and certification date or timeframe it is valid
- For licensure, include license type, licensing state/body, license name and number, and expiration date
- Add relevant training obtained outside of formal academic programs

## **Related Experience and/or Additional Experience**

- Work experience can be divided into multiple sections in order to highlight your most relevant work
- Particularly helpful for job seekers returning to the workforce after a career break or making a career change

## **Campus Involvement/Community Involvement/Volunteer Experience:**

- Showcase participation in school clubs and/or volunteer work; can split into 2 sections based on involvement
- Format volunteer experience like a paid work experience; include title, organization, city, state, dates of service, bullet points (you can also put under your Experience section if relates directly to job target)

## **Professional Organizations/Professional Associations**

- Membership in professional organizations shows commitment and connection to industry
- Include organization name, dates of membership; if you've worked on committees, format similar to a work experience

**Languages:** Include if fluent or have working proficiency in more than 1 language.

- Indicate proficiency level such as beginner, proficient, fluent, native

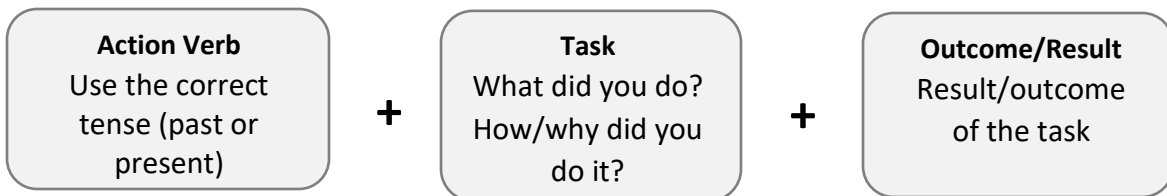
# Writing Effective Skills Statements

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## What are skill statements?

- These are what make up the bullet points under each of your experiences
- They explain what you did, transferable skills you used/gained in that position, and the results or achievements in that position providing proof of how well you performed these tasks
- Each position should have 3-5 strong bullet points underneath that speak to transferable skills gained from that position or accomplishments made in that position
- Look at the skills/qualifications in the job description to help you decide which skills to highlight in your resume

## How to construct a skill statement



## Tips on choosing action verbs:

- Strong action verbs include: Organized, implemented, performed, managed (see next page)
- Weak action verbs (don'ts) include: Did, worked, tried to, responsible for...

## When writing skills statements, ask yourself these questions:

- WHO ?** Who did your job help? The company? The clients? Customers?
- WHAT ?** What did you do? What were the results?
- WHY ?** What was the purpose of doing this activity?
- WHEN ?** When did this happen? Daily, weekly, monthly?
- WHERE ?** Where did your duties occur?
- HOW ?** How or why did you do this activity? How did your job duties help or add to the organizations ability to function?

## Effective Statements samples:

**Bad:** Organized customer service surveys

**Better:** Organized 100+ customer service surveys by department and summarized into report used to implement new policies to improve customer experience

**Bad:** Managed the office

**Better:** Managed 5-person team and oversaw office operations, including staffing, onboarding, scheduling, and administrative functions

**Bad:** Greeted guests and answered questions

**Better:** Provided excellent customer service while utilizing professional communication to enhance customer experience and encourage return visits

**Highlight strengths in your  
skill statements by using  
**Action Verbs****

Accelerated	Conducted	Enlisted	Logged	Recruited
Accomplished	Consolidated	Established	Lowered	Rectified
Achieved	Constructed	Evaluated	Made	Reduced
Acted	Consulted	Examined	Maintained	Referred
Adapted	Contracted	Exercised	Managed	Reflected
Addressed	Contributed	Expanded	Manipulated	Reinforced
Administered	Controlled	Expedited	Marketed	Reorganized
Advanced	Cooperated	Experimented	Mediated	Repaired
Advertised	Coordinated	Explained	Moderated	Reported
Advised	Corrected	Facilitated	Modified	Represented
Allocated	Corresponded	Familiarized	Monitored	Researched
Analyzed	Counseled	Filed	Motivated	Resolved
Applied	Created	Focused	Navigated	Responded
Approved	Critiqued	Formulated	Negotiated	Restored
Arranged	Decided	Gathered	Observed	Revamped
Assembled	Decreased	Generated	Obtained	Reviewed
Assessed	Defined	Graphed	Operated	Revised
Assigned	Delegated	Guided	Ordered	Routed
Assisted	Delivered	Heard	Organized	Saved
Audited	Demonstrated	Helped	Originated	Scanned
Automated	Designed	Hired	Overhauled	Scheduled
Balanced	Detected	Hosted	Oversaw	Screened
Bargained	Determined	Identified	Participated	Selected
Budgeted	Developed	Implemented	Performed	Served
Built	Devised	Improved	Persuaded	Simplified
Calculated	Diagnosed	Improvised	Planned	Solicited
Cared	Directed	Increased	Prepared	Solved
Catalogued	Disbursed	Indoctrinated	Presented	Specialized
Catered	Discussed	Influenced	Presided	Spoke
Chaired	Dispatched	Informed	Prioritized	Stimulated
Changed	Dispensed	Initiated	Processed	Streamlined
Charted	Dissected	Inspected	Procured	Strengthened
Clarified	Distinguished	Inspired	Produced	Structured
Classified	Distributed	Installed	Programmed	Studied
Coached	Diversified	Instituted	Promoted	Summarized
Collaborated	Drafted	Instructed	Proofed	Supervised
Collected	Earned	Integrated	Proofread	Supplied
Communicated	Edited	Interpreted	Proposed	Supported
Compared	Educated	Interviewed	Protected	Surveyed
Compiled	Eliminated	Invested	Proved	Symbolized
Completed	Enabled	Investigated	Provided	Synchronized
Composed	Encouraged	Involved	Publicized	Synthesized
Computed	Enforced	Judged	Published	Tabulated
Conceived	Engineered	Launched	Purchased	Tested
	Enlarged	Learned	Qualified	Trained
		Lectured	Raised	Translated
		Led	Received	Understood
		Listened	Recommended	Up-Graded
		Lobbied	Reconciled	Validated
		Located	Recorded	Visualized

# RESUME CHECKLIST

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Use this checklist to perform a self-review of your document to ensure you're following resume writing best practices.

## GENERAL FORMAT

- Resume is 1-2 pages
- Document is **NOT** in a resume template
- File name is professional and includes name (i.e. Donald Smith Resume)
- Resume is a .doc, .docx, or .rtf format (unless otherwise requested)
- Name/page number is included on page 2 (if 2-page resume)
- No inappropriate information is included (hobbies, marital status, personal info, etc.)
- Resume does not include personal pronouns (I, me, we, they, their, etc.)
- Content of each section is listed in reverse chronological order
- Date format includes month and year; placement is consistent throughout resume
- Does not include "references" or "references available upon request"

## EASY TO READ

- Font is size 10-12 for text, 12-14 for headings, and 16-22 for your name
- One professional and easy to read font is used throughout (Times, Calibri, Arial, Verdana, etc.)
- Margins are between .5 inch to 1 inch
- Document is single-spaced
- Consistent use of bold, italics, capitalization
- Sections are left aligned
- Does not use color, tables, columns, graphics, shading, symbols
- Limited use of acronyms/abbreviations
- Standard headings are used (Summary, Education, Experience, etc.)

## CONTACT INFORMATION

- Contact information is in body of document; not in header
- Includes full name, one phone number, one professional email address

## SUMMARY

- Resume includes summary section (2-4 sentences or bullet points)
- Summary is focused on specific position and highlighting your most relevant experience and/or education

## EDUCATION

- High school is excluded, unless highest level of education
- Official degree name is accurate, spelled out (i.e. Associate of Applied Science in Accounting)
- Includes college/university name, city, state
- If still in school, expected graduation date is included (i.e. expected May 2022), otherwise graduation date is optional

## EXPERIENCE

- Each employment entry includes: position title, employer name, city, state, dates of service
- Each bullet point begins with a verb; verb choice is varied
- Verbs are written in correct tense
- Bullet points are focused on results and tell the reader what you did, how you did it and the result(s)
- Punctuation is consistent
- Bullets do not include negative/passive wording, i.e. "Responsible for" "Duties include"

## CUSTOMIZATION

- Additional sections are included that are applicable to current job target (i.e. technical skills, languages, professional organizations, training & certifications, related work experience, volunteer, etc.)
- Older positions (10+ years old) are excluded unless relevant to current job target
- Resume content, language, and skills listed mimic key words in job posting(s) of interest



## Sample Student

123-456-7890 | samplestudent@email.com

### SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- 8 years of experience in automotive industry providing quality service
- Self-driven with strong customer service and professional communication skills
- Ability to develop and maintain strong lasting relationships with customers
- ASE Certified

### EDUCATION

**Associate of Applied Science – Automotive Technician**

May 20XX

Dakota County Technical College, Rosemount MN

### RELATED EXPERIENCE

**Automotive Technician**, Super Service, Rosemount, MN

February 20XX-Present

- Diagnose and repair to specifications ensuring 40-50 daily serviced vehicles are safe to drive
- Inspect parts like hoses, belts, plugs, and fuel systems, while paying close attention to detail
- Adequately explain technical diagnosis and required repairs to customers and employees with varying background automotive knowledge
- Continue learning new technical information and techniques in formal training sessions to stay current with rapidly changing automobile technology and provide efficient service

**Lube Technician**, Tires Plus, Rosemount, MN

March 20XX-February 20XX

- Performed fast paced maintenance and in bay shop shared with 8 other technicians per shift
- Excelled at high quality service on 20-30 vehicles per 8-hour shift
- Executed basic maintenance such as changing oil and/or transmission fluid and filters
- Installed batteries and parts including shock absorbers and exhaust systems

**Mechanic Assistant**, Super Service, Rosemount, MN

August 20XX-March 20XX

- Transported and fueled 20-30 fleet vehicles per shift, completing daily fueling logs
- Managed a 400-item parts inventory while paying close attention to detail
- Performed pre/post trip inspections and light maintenance on 10-15 vehicles daily

### ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

**Server**, Applebee's, Rosemount, MN

April 20XX-August 20XX

- Provided excellent customer service by accurately filling orders for up to 10 tables at a time

**Cashier**, Freddy's Frozen Yogurt, Rosemount, MN

May 20XX-December 20XX

- Prepared condiments by cutting fruit and refilling sauces while following sanitation procedures

### CERTIFICATIONS

**ASE Certified**

June XXXX

National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence

### TECHNICAL SKILLS

Chassis Systems, Brake Systems, Suspension Systems, HVAC, Electronics and Computers, Safety Systems

## Sample Student

123-456-7890 | samplestudent@email.com | www.linkedin.com/in/suesample

### EDUCATION

**Associate of Science, Business Administration;** GPA 3.5  
Dakota County Technical College, Rosemount, MN

Expected May 20XX

Related Coursework: Include 3-6 relevant classes (keep to two lines)

### APPLIED PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

**School Project Title, Class, Institution, Time**

- GIVE an Example of a School Project using the STAR technique as illustrated below
- SITUATION (S) and TASK (T) - what you were seeking to solve/create/work towards
- ACTION (A) - what happened and who did what (you and classmates)
- RESULT (R) of your accomplishment and what you found/experienced for outcome(s)

**Persuasive Issue Presentation, College Writing, DCTC, Fall 20XX**

- Collaborated in group of 5 to create SWOT analysis for Fortune 500 company; identified market expansion opportunity with potential to increase revenue by 12%

### EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

**Position, Company, City, State**

Month - Year

- What you did/how you did it/ result (Look to page 5 for more direction)

**Cashier, Sharon's Super Store, Rosemount, MN**

January 2023 - Present

- Provide excellent customer service by assisting customers with purchases, returns, transactions
- Restock shelves, monitor inventory and product loss to ensure accurate ordering and budget estimates
- Train new employees on point-of-sale (POS) systems

**Cashier, Freddy's Frozen Yogurt, Rosemount, MN**

May 2021 - December 2022

- Served 50+ customers per shift; prepared custom orders, exchanged payment, answered questions
- Prepared food while following health and sanitation procedures ensuring safe and quality product
- Maintained shop by cleaning, and reorganizing inventory, resulting in positive customer experience

### CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

**Position, Organization name, City, State**

Time Frame

**Student Ambassador, DCTC, Rosemount, MN**

September 20XX-Present

- Led new student tours and conducted outbound calling campaigns to newly accepted students

**Volunteer, Feed My Starving Children, Rosemount, MN**

October 20XX-March 20XX

- Packed meals monthly for malnourished children in nearly 70 countries