

Resume Writing + Action Verbs

Guide

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The Basics of Writing a Résumé

Résumés offer you the opportunity to demonstrate your unique skills and qualifications. A résumé is typically a one-page document (for current students and recent graduates) detailing your education, experience, and skills.

Things to Keep in Mind

Focus on format: You want your résumé to be well organized and easy to read. Make sure your font is uniform in size and style (size 11-12), with your margins balanced on all sides (½ inch to 1 inch).

Keep it simple: Avoid using colors and excessive symbols. These can distract the reader from your content.

Limit the length: Résumés should aim to be one page in length. Keep your résumé short, allowing a reader to skim within 8 to 10 seconds. For seasoned professionals, two pages is the absolute limit.

Tailor the content: Whether or not you submit a cover letter along with your résumé, you want your résumé to be able to stand alone and show that you are uniquely qualified for the job. Read the position description carefully, then you can incorporate keywords into your résumé. Adjust the skills and attributes to mimic those requested in the job description. Reorder the bullets in your résumé to list the most relevant skills and experience first.

Own your résumé: Résumés are as unique as you. There is no one way to write a résumé. Keep in mind, your résumé is the first impression you make on a hiring manager.

Typical Contents & Sections

Heading & Contact

- This section should include your name, location (city, state; ex: Brooklyn, NY), phone number, email address, and your profile, website, or LinkedIn.

Education

- List in reverse chronological order (most recent to least)
- Include institutions, location (city, state), degree, majors and minors, and graduation or expected graduation date.
- Optional: include your GPA, if it is 3.5 or above.

Experience

- List job title, employer/organization, location (city, state), and dates of relevant employment.
- Include a minimum of 2–3 bullet points describing the skills used in your role.
- Start with action verbs.
- If you lack experience, list courses or projects (with descriptions) that are relevant to the position.
 - Focus on electives and advanced courses.
- Show your professional growth by providing details and data to show impact.

Skills

- Include all computer and technical skills.
- Consider skills relevant to the position that speak to your unique strengths and abilities.
- Include skills specific to the industry you are applying to. List only skills that are measurable (hard skills) and save soft skills for the job bullets
- Avoid using infographics that are based on arbitrary measurements of ability.

Honors/Awards (Optional)

- List honors, scholarships, or awards you've received.
- Include anything from community, civic organizations or volunteer work.
- Focus on major-related honors/awards that make you stand out and tell your story.

Activities (Optional)

- Include club memberships, community service, and hobbies.
- Emphasize leadership roles.

Additional Information

- Summary of Qualifications, similar to skills list the knowledge that accompanies your discipline ie: research, prototyping, project management.
- Volunteer work
- Extracurricular activities, coursework or professional development such as certificate programs

Curriculum Vitae

The Curriculum Vitae or CV can be translated as “the course of one’s life/career.” This document provides a comprehensive overview of your academic background and professional accomplishments. Many of the rules of writing a résumé can also be applied when writing a CV.

In the United States, a curriculum vitae is used primarily when applying for academic, education, scientific or research positions. It’s also applicable when applying for fellowships or grants. When applying for jobs in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, or Asia, expect to have to submit a CV instead of a résumé.

- Keep in mind that overseas employers often expect to read personal information that would never be included on an American résumé, such as date of birth, nationality, and place of birth.

Research the program or position that you are applying to so that your CV is relevant to the requirements of the program or position.

Your Curriculum Vitae should be well organized and consistent. Since these are usually longer than résumés, it is extremely important to make them as readable as possible. You should be descriptive and include numbers wherever possible. Just like on a résumé, make sure to include relevant information to match and support your professional, academic or research objective.

What to Include When Writing Your CV

Headings Within a CV	Description
Personal Information	Your name should appear on every page and include a page number after the first page. Your contact information only needs to be on the first page, but should include your address, phone number(s), and email address.
Summary of Qualifications	Include a section that is a lengthy and more detailed summary of your most important skills and accomplishments.
Education	List your institution, degree, major or field of concentration, and the date when each degree was received. You should also include your coursework. You may include the title of your dissertation and the name of your advisor here or in a separate section.
Honors /Awards / Grants	List name of honor or award and the date it was received. You can list grants here, or in a separate section. Include the name of the funding agency and/or grant and the project(s) it is funding.
Experience	Describe all teaching, research, and professional work experience that is relevant to your professional objective. Only provide detail on experiences that are related to this objective. You can condense any unrelated professional experiences as well.
Publications /Presentation	Any publications or presentations should be included near the end of the CV. These should always be written in a bibliographic format. Items to be included under publications are books, articles, research papers, unpublished manuscripts or book chapters.
References	Name, organization/affiliation, and contact information of people who have written letters of recommendation for you.
Other sections that can be included	Community Involvement/Volunteer Experience, Technical Skills (Computer Skills), Travel/Exposure to Cultural Experiences, Foreign Language Skills, Research Interests

What to Include When Writing Your CV

Highlighting Your Thesis

- Including a one-to-two page abstract of your thesis is recommended but optional. If you do provide an abstract, write “(See Abstract Attached)” in the Education section of your CV after the name of your thesis title.
- If you are working on or have recently finished your doctoral degree, at least include a brief, clear summary of your thesis topic in the Education section.

Dissertation Abstract

- This should be included as a separate page at the end of the CV. Briefly summarize content, placing your work within its scholarly context, and noting its contribution to the field. Your abstract should be:
 - Comprehensible to people outside your field.
 - Scholarly enough to interest people in your field.

Sample Curriculum Vitae Template

Contact Information

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Telephone

Cell Phone

Email

Summary Statement (Optional)

Include a brief list of the highlights of your candidacy.

Education

List your academic background, including undergraduate and graduate institutions attended.

Graduate Institution, City, State

Degree, Major

Date of Graduation

Thesis

Undergraduate Institution, City, State

Degree, Major

Date of Graduation

Employment History

List in chronological order, including position details and dates.

Postdoctoral Training

List your postdoctoral experiences, if applicable.

Fellowships

List internships and fellowships, including organization, title and dates.

Licenses/Certification

List type of license, certification or accreditation and date received.

Publications/Books

Professional Affiliations

Skills/Interests

Résumé vs. Curriculum Vitae (CV)

A résumé works to present a concise picture of your skills and qualifications for a specific position. In contrast, a CV presents a full history of your professional experience and academic credentials. See the chart below for a more complete breakdown.

	résumé	CV
Audience	Standard for US and Canada for a variety of positions	Academics; Jobs outside the US; Graduate students
Goal	To demonstrate your skills and experience relevant to the position you are seeking	To present your full academic history, including teaching, research, awards, publications, and service
Focus	Represent your experiences and skills gained from jobs, extracurriculars, volunteer work	Demonstrating your academic achievements and scholarly potential
Essential Information	Skills and experience you have gained as related to the job you are seeking	List of publications, presentations, teaching experiences, education, honors, and grants
References	Keep as a separate document, deliver when asked	Included
Length	One page	As long as necessary

Whether you're creating a CV or résumé, either document must provide a persuasive account of your skills and experiences as they relate to the specific opportunity.

Artist résumé

What is an artist résumé?

An artist résumé is a record of your accomplishments as an artist, with a specific emphasis on exhibitions. This résumé can be provided to commercial and non-profit galleries. Artists typically use these types of résumés to search for exhibition opportunities, as well as using them in residency and grant applications. Artist résumés are usually an abbreviated document (1-4 pages) tailored to reflect a specific expertise.

General Tips

1. Follow the tips given from the general résumé section.
2. Always keep a master copy of this résumé that you can then tailor to specific opportunities.
3. List everything in reverse chronological order.
4. Place the most important, relevant, and recent information near the top.
5. Keep records and files that prove you had an exhibition, received a grant, gave a visiting-artist lecture, etc.

Artist Résumé Typical Contents & Sections

Contact

- This should include your name, city, phone number, email, and website.
- Print your name in a bold, large font size—you may include a logo/text treatment, but make sure the name is legible.

Education

- List in reverse chronological order.
- Include institution, location (city, state), degree, majors and minors, and graduation/expected graduation date.
- Most people list the places where they attained their degrees.

Exhibitions

- This may be separated into different categories, such as solo exhibitions, group exhibitions, or collaborative projects.
- List the name of the exhibition, the gallery or space where it took place, location (city, state), and dates.
- Provide the names of prominent jurors or notable details of the selection process (if there were any).
- You may want to include the names of other artists for a group exhibition.

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Bibliography

- All materials published about you, such as print media, radio/television interviews or features, blogs, etc.
- Include the year, name of author, title of the article, name of the publication or material, volume number, location, issue month & date, and page number.

Publications/Reviews by Artist

- This section contains materials you have written.
- Include year, title of the article, name of the publication or material, volume number, location, issue month & date, and page number.

Public Collections

- This is a record of the places that have your work within their collection (museums, foundations, non-profits, libraries, universities, etc).
- Include the name of the institution and its location—city, state, and country if applicable.

Teaching/Lectures/Workshops

- Focus on art-related experiences that involve professorships, presentations, artist talks, etc.
- List title/type of presentation, location, and date(s).

Other Categories

Depending on your experience, you may include additional sections such as: Awards, Commissions, Residencies, Fellowships, Grants, Competitions, Exhibitions Curated, or Gallery Affiliations/Clients lists.

Sample Resumes

Pratt Center for Career and Professional Development

Email: Career@pratt.edu

Phone: 718.636.3506

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Action Verbs for Resume

Management

Analyzed
Assigned
Chaired
Consulted
Delegated
Directed
Excelled
Improved
Increased
Mastered
Maximized
Oversaw
Planned
Prioritized
Produced
Recommended
Reviewed
Scheduled
Strengthened
Supervised

Communication

Addressed
Authorized
Contacted
Corresponded
Developed
Drafted
Edited
Expressed
Formulated
Influenced
Interpreted
Lectured
Mediated
Moderated
Motivated
Persuaded
Promoted
Publicized
Recruit
Reported
Translated
Utilized

Clerical/Detail

Approved
Arranged
Cataloged
Classified
Compiled
Dispatched
Generated
Implemented
Observed
Participated
Prepared
Processed
Proposed
Purchased
Recorded
Retrieved
Screened
Specified
Validated

Research

Achieved
Collected
Compared
Compiled
Conducted
Critiqued
Discovered
Evaluated
Examined
Gathered
Identified
Inspected
Interviewed
Organized
Prevented
Resolved
Specialized
Summarized
Surveyed

Action Verbs for Resume

Financial

Administered
Advanced
Allocated
Audited
Balanced
Budgeted
Calculated
Computed
Estimated
Exceeded
Increased
Marketed
Negotiated
Obtained
Projected
Raised
Reduced
Researched
Secured
Sustained

Creative

Accomplished
Acted
Acquired
Conceptualized
Combined
Created
Designed
Established
Explored
Founded
Illustrated
Instituted
Integrated
Introduced
Invented
Originated
Shaped
Visualized

Supporting

Advised
Advocated
Aided
Anticipated
Assessed
Assisted
Cared
Clarified
Collaborated
Cooperated
Counseled
Demonstrated
Educated
Expedited
Facilitated
Familiarized
Mentored
Recognized
Referred
Represented

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