

How to Write a Solid Resume

To begin, gather all your supporting materials for your resume. Once you have your information together ask yourself:

- Is this my first job?
- Am I seeking entry level employment?
- What resume format is best for my application?

Your formatting decision comes down to three choices:

- Reverse-Chronological
- Functional
- Combination.

Before we get started on the formatting, here are some general tips of the writing trade for use in writing your resume:

- No pictures, not ever, no emojis, cartoons, graphics, or illustrations. This is straight writing with no embellishments.
- Stick with black ink and white paper.
- Do not add a border.
- Do not use exclamation points!
- Be honest and do not exaggerate. Someone will always find out you were less than honest and you will lose big time, don't do it. Your name, your word, your reputation as a person of integrity is the most important attribute you possess.
- If you don't like to do something, don't include it as a skill. When you love what you do, all that you do, you understand you are working to live, not living to work.
- Be sure to state up front your military experience.
- Be sure to include any internships, volunteer service, experience with service organizations such as Peace Corps. Also include community service: work at the food pantry, supporting the local Boys/Girls Club, substitute teaching, Girl/Boy Scout leader, coaching Little League or any other youth organization, cooking/serving holiday meals for the Salvation Army, etc.
- Stay clear of any religious and/or political affiliations. Work on political causes, if not controversial, can add to your activities. Just remember, everything is controversial to someone so use your common sense here.
- Have someone edit your writing, check your grammar, spell check, spell check, spell check. Check the accuracy of your punctuation and capitalization. Look at this document with the eyes of an old School Ma'm and be clear, concise, and correct.

Each format has advantages and disadvantages and each one orders the sections of a resume in a specific way.

Format 1: Chronological

This is the most traditional format and what used most in the working world. Chronological resume formats are generally more flexible and can be used by applicants with any level of work experience.

Details of the resume sections of the chronological format:

1. **Contact Information:** The most consistent element across all three resume formats, contact details must be outlined near the top and include name, address, telephone number, email address, and mobile number if different from home number.
2. **Resume Objective:** This type of resume introduction can be used by anyone and allows jobseekers to customize their resume to their prospective employer.
3. **Work Experience:** For this format, you must have a consistent work history with no holes in the history.
4. **Additional Skills:** Your skills section can be used to highlight personal attributes, talents, and abilities you are proud of.
5. **Education:** Your degrees and certifications should be highlighted.
6. **Accomplishments:** Be sure to mention awards and honors.

Format 2: Functional

The chronological resume emphasizes career progression, a functional resume is a skills-based resume. This format emphasizes the applicant's qualifications so functional format is more suitable for those with a solid level of experience.

The functional format has many of the same resume sections as the chronological, but with some differences:

Details of the sections on the functional format:

1. **Contact Information** – Regardless of your format, this will be always near or at the top of your resume. The most consistent element across all three resume formats, contact details must be outlined near the top and include name, address, telephone number, email address, and mobile number if different from home number.
2. **Resume Introduction** – The functional resume uses a more robust introduction, such as a qualifications summary to highlight your strongest areas right off the bat.
3. **Work Experience** – Note how small this section is, and how time periods are omitted. This is to de-emphasize experience, and highlight other sections.
4. **Relevant Skills Section** – Skills are the greatest selling point for someone who lacks a clear work history, so this section must be robust.

5. **Education** – Include your highest degree, and feel free to list a key (relevant) certification here too.
6. **Accomplishments** – If you have any notable work-related awards, list the most significant.

Format 3: Combination

The combination resume format merges parts of both chronological and functional formats. As in the functional format, the combination format focuses on specific qualifications and the body of the resume contains professional experience similar to chronological format. This format is generally reserved for those with experience in a particular industry.

Details of the sections on the combination format:

1. **Contact Information:** As in the prior two formats, contact details are at the top.
2. **Professional Profile:** Users of the combination format are often highly skilled and the professional profile can highlight these skills in a clear and concise way.
3. **Work Experience:** Experience is more detailed in a combination resume than it is in its functional counterpart.
4. **Skills Section:** With your work-related skills, you can divide them into two sections based on importance.
5. **Education:** For someone using a combination format, education is secondary to experience and skill level.