



Resume Writing

A resume is a summary or account of a person's education, experience, and qualifications sent as part of a job application to secure a job interview, leading to successful employment. Resumes should be written with the employer as the audience, which means paying attention to language in the job posting and adjusting the resume document as necessary.

The Basics

Content:

- For work experience entries, use: Action Verb + Skill + Task = Result
- Prioritize skills, experiences, and knowledge that are listed in the job posting
- Use a Professional Summary/Resume Summary as your resume's "thesis statement"

Presentation:

- Bold job titles and education
- Use 0.5"-1" margins on all sides
- Right-align your dates
- Make sure you have white space so the resume isn't visually overwhelming
- Use 1 page, unless you can completely fill a second page, meaningfully (2 pgs maximum)

What Employers Want

	A resume that is...	Which is important because it...
Scannable	Easy to read through quickly	Saves time during the hiring process
Relevant	Customized/tailored to the job	Shows that you're a good fit for the role
Recent	Listing experience in reverse chronological order	Shows you've practiced the skills recently
Professional	Error-free and uses language of the industry	Says you pay attention to detail and shows strong knowledge related to the job
Value-Added	Including achievements and positive results of your work	Makes clear what the employer can expect if they hire you
Action-Oriented	Using action verbs at the start of work and skill experience bullets	Shows what you can do, not just what you know

Eye-Tracking Study by Ladders, 2012 & 2018¹

- On average, recruiters are spending **7.4 seconds** scanning your resume for the first time; if you pass the “first wave”, they may spend longer on a second read-through.
- The best-performing resumes have the following traits in common:
 1. **Simplicity:** Simple layouts and clear headers. **Job titles** are the elements most focused on, so these should be bolded in your resume.
 2. **F- and E-Patterns:** These layouts involve bold job titles and a bulleted list of accomplishments. [See the study here](#) to visualize these patterns.
 3. **Mission:** A mission statement such as a Resume Summary, Professional Profile, or Objective at the top of the first page of the resume.
 4. **Fonts:** Clear, easy-to-read fonts. Period.
- The worst-performing resumes had some common traits, too:
 1. **Cluttered:** Lack of white space overwhelms the brain and makes the document less scannable.
 2. **Poor Layout:** Layouts that don't draw the eye down with the use of headings, bolded titles, and bullets end up leaving the recruiter confused.
 3. **Keyword Stuffing:** Pasting in every key word from the job ad, whether relevant to you, will not help. Present these keywords in context.

Tailoring Your Resume to a Job Posting

Why does it matter?

1. Shows the employer you're a good fit for the job
2. Demonstrates a level of care in your applications that might transfer to the job
3. Helps you get past Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) which filters applications first

For any job posting, the hiring or HR manager chooses the required and optional keywords for the ATS to pick up on and the applications are filtered:

- Required keywords are used to decide if a resume is a “yes” or a “no” to go to HR for review
- Optional keywords are used to sort the “yes” into ranked order

Let's take a look at a sample job posting³:

Marketing Analyst

Responsibilities:

- Develop marketing plans for new and existing products
- Evaluating product competition and market evaluation reports

Requirements:

- University Degree in Business Administration or Commerce. Additional Marketing courses are an asset.
- Demonstrated thorough knowledge of marketing principles and the ability to practically apply theories.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills and the ability to deal effectively with others.
- Demonstrated analytical and problem solving ability.

The important keywords are “marketing”, “product”, and “communication”. Mention these throughout your resume! Additional marketing courses are an asset – add them if you have them!

Resume Summary

“Recent Business Administration graduate with speciality in marketing plans, market evaluation, and interpersonal communication...”

Education

Bachelor of Business Administration

- Related Courses: *Introduction to Marketing, Strategic Marketing, and Marketing Research*

Skills

Experience developing market evaluation reports for local businesses as part of the course *Marketing Research*.

“Good Fit” – The talk at the hiring table!

This is more than just your experience and skills matching with what the employer is looking for. They are also looking for someone who they would want to represent them! Go to the employer website and look at their Mission, Vision, and/or Values statement(s) and see if there are words or phrases that are also important to you that can be included in your resume.

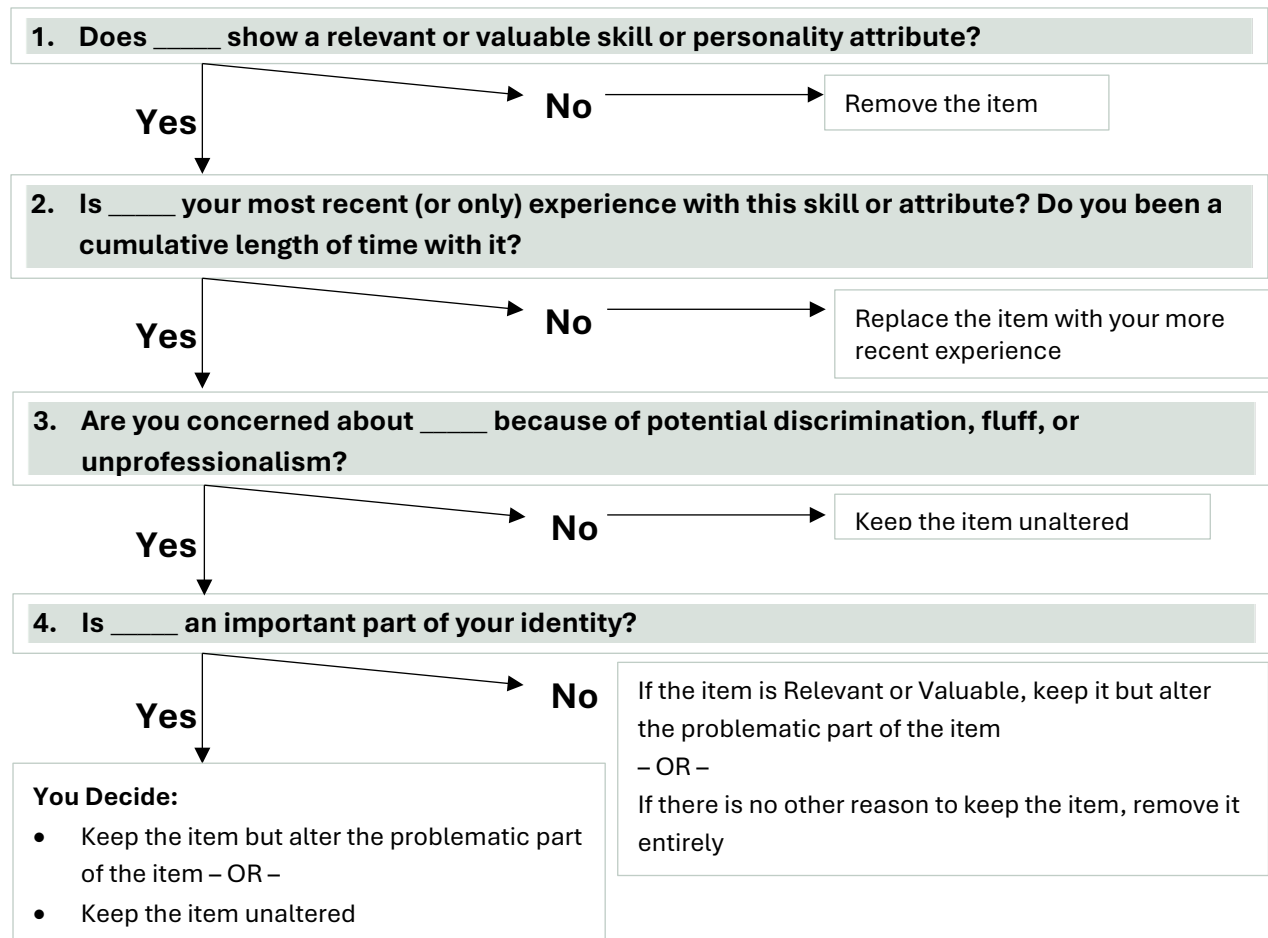
Deciding What To Put Where

In Randazzo’s 2020 research article, “A Framework for Résumé Decisions: Comparing Applicants’ and Employers’ Reasons”², the **top 3 things to consider** when making resume decisions are:

	Definition	Example actions an applicant can take
Relevancy	Fit with the employer’s job requirements, organizational culture, and/or larger career field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using keywords in bulleted lists of items Discussing the company culture in the cover letter
Recency	Items that happened recently ; updated information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cutting items older than 5-7 years Putting positions in reverse chronological order
Value	Items that show how an applicant can be monetarily valuable to a company (added by hirers during second phase of research)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Including information about increasing efficiency or sales at a previous employer Referencing the amount of money raised for an event

Resume Decision Tree

Use this decision tree, developed by Randazzo (2020), to help you decide if certain aspects of your resume should be kept and where they should go. **If the biggest concern about an item is related to potential discrimination, fluff, or unprofessionalism, start at Question 3, then 1, 2, and 4. Otherwise, start at Question 1 and work your way through!**





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Professional Summary

Justice-oriented and client-centred History graduate seeking to start my career in supporting community-based Law. Over 3 years of proven experience in responding to client inquiries, resolving customer complaints, and providing status updates to stakeholders when necessary. Strong skills in research and document drafting under strict timelines. Working knowledge of current legal terminology.

Experience

Community Associate (part-time) Dec 2021 - Present

International Workplace Group (IWG) Inc. | *Regina, SK*

- Achieved a client retention rate of 85% through proactive relationship management and effective problem-solving, contributing to increased center occupancy rates.
- Managed administrative and support tasks for a diverse client base, ensuring smooth daily operations within the workspace center.

Community Clinic Assistant (volunteer) Apr 2023

Pro Bono Law Saskatchewan | *Regina, SK*

- Assisted clients with checking in to the Free Legal Clinic and directed them to the appropriate lawyer based on their needs.
- Maintained strict confidentiality of clients and ensured lawyers in attendance had all necessary information prior to meeting with their clients.

Sales Associate Jan 2021 – Dec 2021

Vintage Vintage Finds | *Regina, SK*

Education

Bachelor of History (Honours), Minor: Justice Studies Dec 2024

University of Regina | *Regina, SK*

Honours Thesis: "Roots of Justice: Unveiling the Ethical Landscape of Historical Land Settlements in Saskatchewan"

- Conducting comprehensive ethical analyses of historical events, integrating primary and secondary source research to critically assess the fairness and impact of policies.

Certifications & Training

Frontline Training Jun 2024 **Indigenous Canada** Mar 2023

FASD Network of Saskatchewan | *Saskatoon, SK* University of Alberta | *Online (Coursera)*

References Available Upon Request

Digging into the Details

Name & Contact Information

- The name is clear and professional
- The contact information has a professional email, a local number, and the applicant’s city and postal code to demonstrate where they are applying from.

Note: Only use a LinkedIn, GitHub, or portfolio link if it has been recently updated as it may be the first impression an employer has of you outside of your resume and cover letter.

Professional Summary

- A short, 2-3 sentence introduction of you as a professional and the best candidate for the job. Think of this as your thesis statement; the rest of your resume is the supporting evidence.
- Look at the job posting to see:
 - **Personal Attributes:** Pay attention to *adjectives*. Descriptors like “enthusiastic”, “detail-oriented”, “collaborative”, show the type of person they are looking for. If these relate to you, show that in your experiences or Professional Summary.
 - **Skills:** Pay attention to *verbs* and *adverbs*. Action words like “research” or “respond” with qualifiers like “timely” or “diligently” describe what you should be able to do and how. Choose achievements related to these skills.
 - **Knowledge:** Pay attention to *nouns* here. Terms like “legal terminology” or “stakeholders” will tell you what you should understand. Be clear that you understand these terms.



Professional Summary Template for Students³:

Recent/current [Field of Study] graduate/student seeking to [Goal] in [Field]. Strong skills/# years’ experience in [Relevant Skill #1], [Relevant Skill #2], and [Relevant Skill #3]. Practical/related experience in [something you've done in your field related to this job] on a [internship/course project/volunteer placement].

Education

Some basic best practices for writing your education section are:

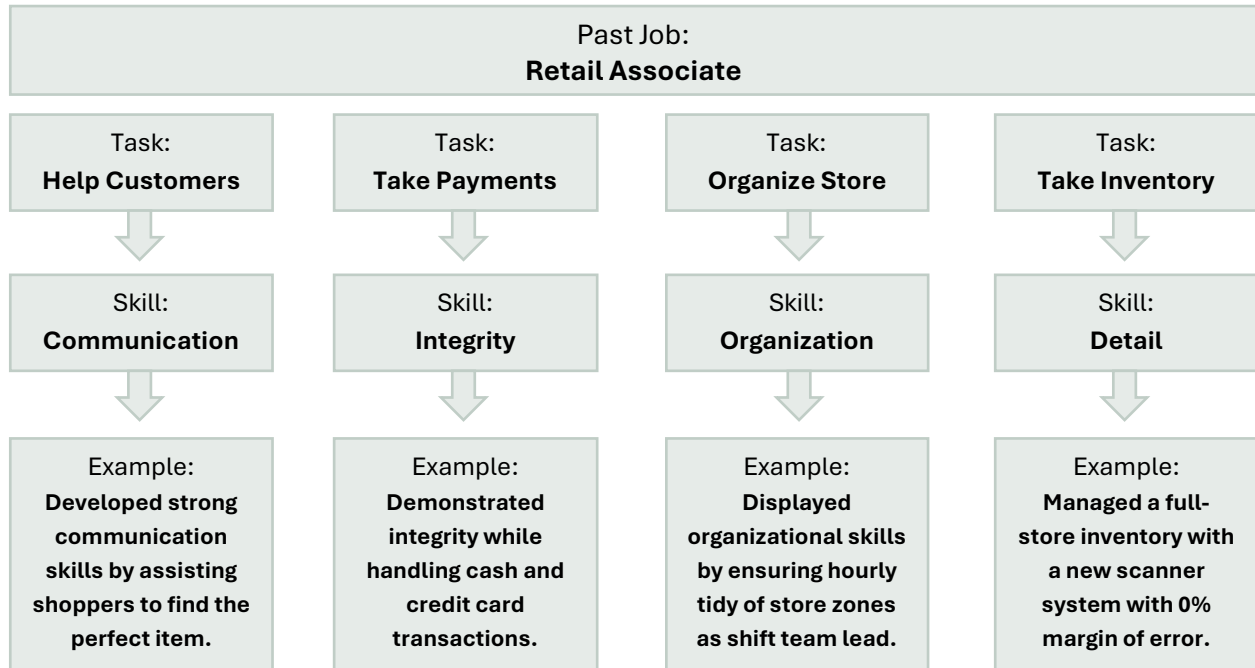
- Write **the name of the degree/certificate/diploma** you have received (or will receive), right-align the dates, and note the name of the institution and its location. You can add your major/minor.
 - For dates: If you haven’t graduated yet, still add the degree/diploma/certificate and the month and year you intend to complete your courses with “ongoing” or “tentative”.

Bachelor of Secondary Education (Major: Biology)	Dec 2024
University of Regina Regina, SK	(tentative)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awarded the Mitschke Family Scholarship in Science Education • B.Ed. with Honours (GPA: 82.34%) 	

Experience Entries⁴

The bullets in your work entries should give the employer an idea of the kinds of tasks you are capable of *and* tell them that the work you do has a positive outcome. Use the following formula to help you write your Work Experience entries:

$$\textit{Action Verb} + \textit{Skill} + \textit{Task} = \textit{Result}$$



Other tips for your work entries:

- Bold the Job Title and right-align the date(s)
- Make **the first bullet point the most related** to the job you're applying to now.

The examples below show a formatted work experience entry and some examples of bullets points.

Teacher Assistant, History 100	Jan – Apr 2024
University of Regina Regina, SK	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided constructive feedback on over 60 student essays and presentations, which the instructor shared was repeatedly praised in the Student Course Evaluation forms. 	

Junior Software Developer (Co-op Term)	Aug 2023 – Apr 2024
Computer Science Labs Regina, SK	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborated with team members on code reviews and debugging, ensuring high-quality code and a more reliable product. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Technical Skills: Java, C++, Python, C#, Selenium, Agile* 	

**Remember: Technical skills and knowledge of programs are great to have in your resume, but if you can show the context of where you used the skill then the employer will have a clearer sense of what you can do.*

Specialized Program Sections

Some programs require different layouts or sections to best outline your related skills and experience. See below for some examples of Teaching and Project experiences, which can be adapted for other types of placements, if they don't fit a standard Work Experience section.

Teaching Experience

Internship

Sep 2023 – Dec 2023

Fort Qu'Appelle Elementary School, Fort Qu'Appelle, SK

Supervising Teacher: Elsbeth Desnomie

Assignment: Taught a diverse Grade 7/8 class

- Developed dual-grade, culturally-responsive, and scaffolded learning opportunities for a class of 19 students, utilizing outcomes in student-friendly language to show overall goals.
- Commended by Cooperating Teacher for high level of organization in lesson plans, clarity in success criteria for students, and ease in developing rapport with a group of very busy teenagers.

Projects

Smart Home Assistant for Elderly Care, Capstone Project

Dec 2023

- Developed a simplified Smart Home Assistant system tailored to the needs of elderly users and their caregivers, meant to enhance quality of life and independence.
 - Technical Skills: UI Design (Adobe Illustrator), HTML/CSS, JavaScript, Agile/Kanban

Skill Sections

If you don't have work experience that showcases the relevant skill (not necessarily relevant *tasks* but *relevant skills*), you may want to use a section in your resume to connect your skills with the job posting. If you have no work or volunteer experience at all, then a Skills Section is going to help you. Remember what is most relevant, recent, and valuable is what should appear closest to the top of your resume!

Related Skills

Communication

- Learned to lead with curiosity and active listening when meeting new clients as a sales representative to better understand their needs and successfully built strong working relationships with 6 key accounts.
- Developed a communication plan to effectively coordinate material delivery to multiple work sites while serving as an Engineer in Training.

End Matter

End Matter are the pieces at the end of the resume that add *value* by showing *your values that align* with the employer. Is the employer community-minded? Include some volunteering. Do they mention collaboration as important? Include Memberships & Committees. Do they think continuous learning/improvement is important? Add some additional certifications you've earned that show a connection to the work.

Memberships & Committees

VP Communications, Arts Students' Association, *University of Regina*

Apr 2024 – Present

Member, Saskatchewan Writers' Guild, *Regina, SK*

Dec 2022 – Present

Student Member, Saskatchewan Library Association, *Regina, SK*

Nov 2022 – Jan 2024

RESUME RUBRIC

Resume Learning Outcomes:

- Creating a resume that describes the students' education, skills, experiences and measurable achievements with proper grammar, format and brevity
- Demonstrates an ability to target the resume to the appropriate audience and purpose

	Proficient	Developing	Beginning	Comments
Professional Summary/Objective Clarifies career interests and potential for contribution to the company; stays "on brand".	<input type="checkbox"/> Defines interest in a specific industry and/or job type <input type="checkbox"/> May include specific skills the candidate can contribute to the organization	<input type="checkbox"/> States a broad job goal (e.g. science) vs. specific career objective (e.g. microbial research) <input type="checkbox"/> Includes skills that are very general (e.g. communication) or not directly related to the position	<input type="checkbox"/> Vague and not specific to job type or industry <input type="checkbox"/> Does not include specific relevant skills/experiences; instead focuses on personal goals such as career progression or salary goals rather than contribution of skills to employer	
Education Highlights relevant educational achievements and non-negotiable qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/> Includes institution, degree, completion date, and major/minor, including GPA (as applicable) <input type="checkbox"/> Describes coursework and/or projects which relate to the summary (as applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/> Provides most basic degree information <input type="checkbox"/> Lists general courses, does not elaborate on relevant courses, projects or honors (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/> Missing information such as location of institution or expected graduation date <input type="checkbox"/> Fails to mention relevant courses or projects (as applicable)	
Experience Describes relevant experiences (paid and unpaid)	<input type="checkbox"/> Includes the name of the employer, city, province, job title, and dates <input type="checkbox"/> Defines and quantifies skills and accomplishments <input type="checkbox"/> Bulleted statements begin with a strong action verb; the most relevant action statements are listed first <input type="checkbox"/> Experiences are in reverse chronological order	<input type="checkbox"/> Employment heading has most information, but missing some items (e.g. location, title) <input type="checkbox"/> Lacking details to fully understand what was done (why, how or for whom) <input type="checkbox"/> Includes irrelevant information not targeted to the intended career field <input type="checkbox"/> Bullets start with weak repeated action verb or verb is repeated frequently	<input type="checkbox"/> Is missing employer name, job title, location or dates <input type="checkbox"/> Short, not detailed and does not describe activities with clarity; does not use numbers to depict scope of activities <input type="checkbox"/> Description of work does not begin with action verbs <input type="checkbox"/> Does not follow chronological order	
Presentation & Format Visually appealing with proper use of grammar	<input type="checkbox"/> Layout is visually appealing; uses bold, capitalization and italics for stylized appearance and highlights name and headings <input type="checkbox"/> The resume fills the page without appearing crowded; tabs and margins are consistent and aligned <input type="checkbox"/> Free of errors	<input type="checkbox"/> Layout is technically correct, but does not draw visual interest through use of bolding, italics, attractive font choice, indentation or line use <input type="checkbox"/> Does not fill complete page or spills partially onto a second page <input type="checkbox"/> Few punctuation and/or spelling errors	<input type="checkbox"/> Layout too crowded, does not allow white space; name and headings do not stand out from the text <input type="checkbox"/> Document is too long or fails to fill complete pages <input type="checkbox"/> Contains punctuation and/or spelling errors	
Relevancy, Recency & Value Reflects research and knowledge of the field and targets employer and/or job posting with relevant, recent, and valuable information	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevant experiences are grouped and located near the top of the resume to gain notice <input type="checkbox"/> Keywords that may be used to search for resumes in a database system are included and help brand the resume <input type="checkbox"/> Headings are targeted to the support the Professional Summary <input type="checkbox"/> Skills statements are listed in priority order	<input type="checkbox"/> Includes irrelevant information not related to the position which detracts from key messages <input type="checkbox"/> Does not include keywords related to the position or industry <input type="checkbox"/> Does not position the most relevant information under category headings <input type="checkbox"/> Skills statements are listed, but not in priority order	<input type="checkbox"/> Description of activities is unrelated to stated objective/summary and fails to illuminate relevant skills <input type="checkbox"/> Does not include keywords related to resume's purpose <input type="checkbox"/> Does not use category headings to label related experiences <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant skills or experiences are not positioned where they will be noticed (near top)	

⁴ This rubric was adapted from the North Dakota State University (NDSU) Career Center resource of the same name, which was originally generated by NDSU in partnership with NACE and 30 career professionals in the Minnesota region. Minimal changes have been made to formatting and to reflect Canadian requirements and CESL training language.

