Your resume is your first impression with an employer and your ticket to an interview. Employers spend about 5 to 7 seconds looking at your resume, so you need to grab the reader's attention right away.

There are 3 main types of resumes:

Chronological

- Starts with most recent experience.
- Highlights consistent employment.
- May expose gaps and hide skills.
- Ideal for showing growth in a field.
- Favored by employers.

Functional

- Highlights skills and strengths.
- Common for career changers.
- Downplays work history gaps, but may raise questions.
- Generally not favored by employers.

Combination

- Combines skills and work history.
- Highlights skills first, then lists experience.
- Risk of work history being overlooked if it's on the second page.
- Balances showcasing your fit with providing a work history.

General Tips

- Update your resume frequently, not just once a year or when you need a new job. They are living documents!

- Do not include a photo of yourself on your resume.

- Your resume can be longer than 1 page, but 3-4 pages is too much.

- Just one spelling or grammatical error could have your resume thrown out. Have a friend or family member review your resume and check for errors. You can also make an appointment to have your resume reviewed at the library or with one of our community partners.

- 76% of resumes are ignored if the email address is unprofessional. Make sure you check this email account regularly. Don't miss out on a job opportunity because you didn't check your email!

Key Elements of a Resume

No matter what type of resume you use, they all have similar key elements. The type of resume determines the order and extent of each section.

You can add many optional sections as well, depending on the job/field you are applying to.

- **Heading/Contact Information**
- **Summary**
- **Skills**
- **Work Experience**
- **Education**

Summarizing Your Skills and Experience

- Objectives are no longer used on resumes. The employer knows you want this kind of job, that's why you are applying! Instead, use a summary (3-5 sentences) showing why you are better than your best competition.

- Use action words to start all of your bullet points. See the "Action Words" sheet included in this toolkit.

- Resumes typically go back about 10 years.

- For any position that you do not currently hold, all of the bullet points need to be in past tense. *(Ex. Managed a team of 15 employees NOT Manages a team of 15 employees)*

- Remember to include volunteer and unpaid work. This counts as experience!

- Make sure you are quantifying your experience whenever possible (use numbers).

Listing References

Do not put "references available upon request" on your resume. You should have references ready to go!

- List references on a separate piece of paper
- Make sure you have permission to list someone as a reference before you do!
- Avoid family and relatives.
- The addresses and phone numbers need to be accurate.

Keywords are Key

Most employers use Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS), and your resume needs a 50-80% keyword match to be seen by a human. This is why you'll need multiple versions of your resume, tailored to each job.
To find the right keywords:

- Mirror the language used in the job posting and on the employer's website, but stay truthful about your skills and experience.

- Use a word cloud tool like Worditout.com or Tagcrowd.com to identify key terms from the job description and your resume.

Where to find resume keywords:

- **Company website:**
  - What terms do you consistently see reflected on the site? Pay attention to their mission and values.

- **Job description:**
  - Plug the description into a word cloud tool to find frequently used words.

- **Industry specific:**
  - What terms are specific to your field? Look for similar job descriptions.

- **Education:**
  - Does this job require certain degrees or certifications? List those!