How to Create a Successful Résumé and Cover Letter Updated February 18, 2016

Part One: Résumés

What is a résumé? A résumé is a snapshot of your experience, skills, and qualifications for potential employers to consider when you are applying for a job.

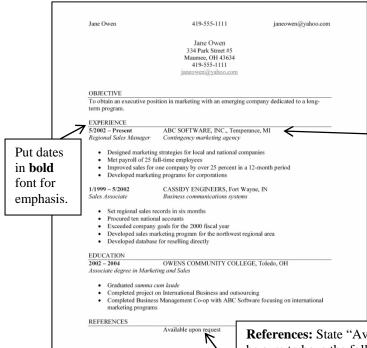
What are the qualities of a successful résumé? You should use the following guidelines to catch the interest of an employer with your résumé:

- Keep length to no more than 2 pages, and make use of margins and spacing to keep your résumé neat and easy to read.
- Use a consistent header to keep application materials (such as the résumé and cover letter) together. In the header, give your name and contact information (phone number and professional email address that includes your name).
- Save a copy of your résumé as a pdf (to preserve formatting in your electronic file), unless another file type is specified, with a clear and logical file name, such as janedoe_resume_2016 (first and last name, document type, and year).
- Focus on your relevant experience, such as sales, management, and computer experience (basically, whatever experience the job advertisement calls for).
- When discussing your computer experience/literacy, be specific about programs and versions you are most comfortable using (ex: Microsoft Word 2016).

- Focus on the following abilities: multitasking, learning material quickly, organization, communication, and teamwork.
- Include educational skills (ex: accounting) and additional skills (ex: written or spoken languages) if relevant.
- Choose the general structure (Chronological, Functional, or Combination) that works best for your situation.
- Use descriptive verbs (see table below) and active voice to describe your contributions.
- Edit your résumé carefully, checking spelling, accuracy of dates, and grammar/punctuation.

	Descriptive	Verbs	
Attained	Budgeted	Implemented	Reorganized
Accomplished	Built	Improved	Reduced
Acquired	Conducted	Initiated	Saved
Adapted	Controlled	Lectured	Supervised
Adjusted	Coordinated	Maintained	Treated
Administered	Developed	Modified	Targeted
Advised	Established	Performed	Trained
Approached	Expanded	Produced	Updated



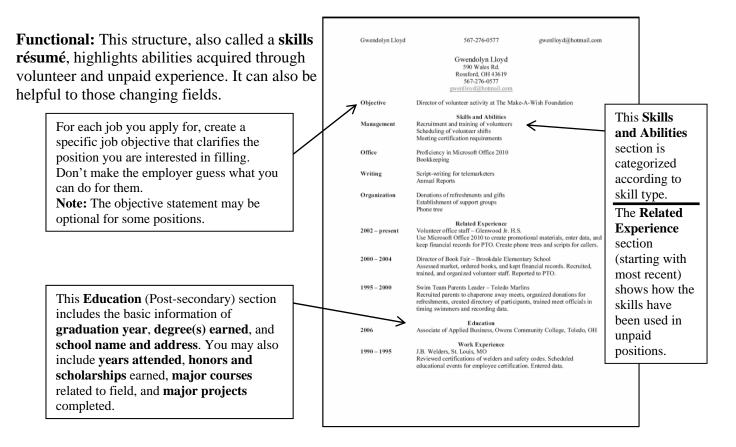


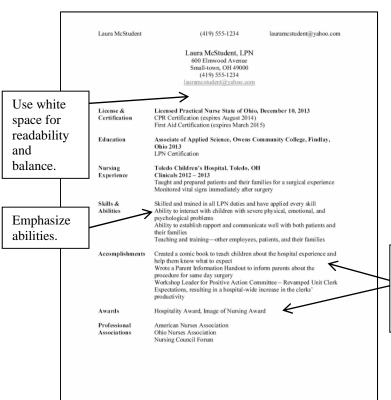
Chronological: This structure works for applicants with strong employment histories who are staying in the same career path. Chronological structure is the most common means of organization and preferred by most employers.

List work experience starting with the most recent job first and include

- Job title and name of company
- City, state, and dates of employment
- Brief description of title and duties; highlight how you improved the company
- Catalogued responsibilities, such as management, budgetary, production, technical

References: State "Available upon request" or exclude this section from résumé. However, be sure to have the following types of references *ready* to provide a potential employer: **Instructors** for classes in your major (Ask for a letter at the end of the semester.); **Employers**; **People working in the field** you are targeting who know of your credentials.





Combination: This structure contains elements (such as educational experience and skills obtained through means other than paid employment) from both chronological and functional résumés. When using this résumé structure, one must avoid repetition and be careful not to create a résumé that is too lengthy.

The Accomplishments and Awards sections are optional and should contain achievements relevant to the position, which will be of interest to the employer.

Part Two: Cover Letters

The purpose: To convey your understanding of the company's current needs and to reflect your skills and personality in depth

- 1. Do some basic research about the specific company, town, and interviewer (if possible) so that you can customize the letter to that specific job.
- 2. State the name of the person who referred you to the position or where you saw the position advertised.
- 3. Include the title and the position for which you are applying.
- 4. Briefly express what you can offer the company and why you are interested in the position, highlighting the qualities not evident in the résumé.
- 5. Express your interest in an interview.
- 6. Keep it short and simple.
- 7. Follow proper business letter format.
- 8. Read it several times, checking for typos and misspellings.

