# How to write an effective resume

**On average, recruiters and hiring managers spend about 6 seconds looking at your resume before they decide whether they want to move forward with your application.**

Yes, you read that right—6 seconds. If you get through this first filter and get an interview, your interviewer will spend a lot of time with the resume. And by a lot of time, we mean maybe 2-3 minutes. So you have to make your resume stand out for the quick reader and yet give lot of the substantive punch in the text.

For the quick reader, if essential information is hard to find in your resume, you will likely end up in the reject pile. The easier you make it for the recruiter or hiring manager to find what they’re looking for, the higher your chances of moving forward with the application process. Your resume is prime real estate, and it is crucial that you make every word count and use appropriate sign posts. Look at different resume styles and adopt one that satisfactorily gives all the information we suggest below in a page (or two if absolutely essential) without appearance of clutter or overcrowding. Use good judgement and be sure to get input from a few reliable people before you press SEND.

So how do you go about making a resume that a potential employer will notice? The guidelines below will help you whether you’re fresh out of college and looking for your first job or you have several years of experience under your belt and you’re ready for your next big step.

First, your resume should include the following:

1. **Contact Information:**Include your name, address, email address, and phone number at the top of your resume.
2. **Optional—Objective Statement OR Profile Statement:**An objective statement helps clarify what type of position you are hoping to obtain. If your education and experience are directly related to the job for which you are applying, you probably don’t need an objective statement. If you have a varied background or are making a career change, then it might be useful. Your objective statement should be focused and no longer than 1-2 sentences.

An example of an effective objective statement is: “I am looking for a position in marketing where I will use my skills and experience gained from running my own travel blog with a viewership of 8000+ per month to increase site traffic and propel the company’s growth.”

A profile statement is a summary of your qualifications and can include your education, skills, and experience with an industry focus. This is particularly useful if you are transitioning to a different industry where your skills are transferrable or if you have a lot of experience and want to summarize your key qualifications on the top of the page. A profile statement should be no longer than 2-3 sentences.

An example of an effective profile statement is: “Administrative assistant with 3+ years of experience in a sensitive corporate environment. Outgoing and detail-oriented, I am proficient at building and maintaining professional relationships. Have an Associate’s degree in Office Administration.”

You should generally avoid listing both an objective statement AND a profile statement, but instead choose one or the other if necessary.

1. **Education:**This should include your school name, location, degree, date of graduation, major(s), minor(s), and your GPA (if it’s 3.6 or higher on a 4.0 scale). For this section, focus on college and beyond. If you attended a prestigious high school, then it’s okay to include it.
2. **Honors:**Awards or scholarships you have received.
3. **Optional—Relevant Coursework:**Don’t list all the courses you took during college and grad school. If you choose to list courses, choose 3-6 courses that are directly related to the job you are seeking or the ones in which you did really well.
4. **Experience:**This can include paid and unpaid work, internships, and volunteer positions. If you wish, you may include separate sections for each of these types of experiences. For each position, list the name of the organization, location, start and end dates, title, and brief descriptions of your accomplishments and responsibilities. Descriptions should be concrete, action-oriented, and results-oriented. All experience should be listed in reverse-chronological order, meaning that your most recent experiences should be listed first.
5. **Activities:**List your involvement in clubs, athletics, and community organizations. Include any leadership positions held and your impact within these organizations. Here again, you want to focus on your extracurricular involvement in college and beyond.
6. **Skills:**This section should list both hard skills and soft skills. This can include computer skills, foreign languages, technical skills, lab skills, research skills, and interpersonal skills. Make sure there is a clear connection between the skills you are listing and the experience and education you’ve presented.
7. **Optional—Interests:**You might be wondering why your personal interests outside of work have any place on your resume—an otherwise factual and professional-focused document. As it turns out, just as important as your acumen to your job candidacy is how well you fit within the culture of the organization. Listing your interests is your opportunity to showcase to the recruiter a sliver of your personal side. After the recruiter has read your interests, they should be excited to meet you, perhaps thinking, “This is someone I would enjoy talking to at lunch or during a coffee break.”

You should include your interests only if you think they are unique, impressive, or related to your industry. Be specific. Avoid general categories such as “reading” and “traveling,” which do not convey much information and are way too common. However, if you were to highlight the types of books you read, the speed at which you read (for example, four novels a week), the amount of traveling you do (perhaps 50 countries before the age of 30), or the type of traveling you do (for example travel photography or travel blogging), you would come across as much more interesting and have a greater chance of building a rapport with your interviewer.

Now within each of these sections, what can you do to impress whoever is reviewing your resume?

1. **Quantify your Impact.**Demonstrate your accomplishments not just with words, but with numbers. Numbers are a much more powerful way to illustrate your qualifications. Questions that your descriptions should include: How much money did you manage? How many people did you manage? How many people attended your last event? How much money did you bring in at the latest fundraiser? By how much did you increase your company’s customer base? How many views, likes, and re-tweets did your blog posts get? For example, our recent blog on [How to Write a Killer College Essay for the College Admission You Deserve](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__konversai.us14.list-2Dmanage2.com_track_click-3Fu-3De66a534909bcc6843ab563e2f-26id-3D3ef2e7ebcc-26e-3De48467ceb6&d=DwMFaQ&c=imBPVzF25OnBgGmVOlcsiEgHoG1i6YHLR0Sj_gZ4adc&r=Yqh1QcfHABdWrPnWjegwqXDsy-TB2usZLernPb2c5ZM&m=nruMTAqx-rHPglKL6PhCXF5VWGKLnAXtwCV6MargOXw&s=ayhde1wcSsLp1bhumu8IZatuK0f-2HjeCHQxgXvWmgI&e=) got 5,700 Facebook likes and our blog on New Year’s resolutions got 5,200 Facebook likes. If we were applying for jobs, we would want to include these statistics on our resumes.
2. **Show the Competition.**When you list any honors or awards you received, demonstrate just how impressive they are by demonstrating what you were up against. You want to show that while many people tried, **you** succeeded.  
   Therefore, you might mention how many competitors or applicants there were, the admittance rate, or anything else that can quantify your accomplishment. For example, maybe 500 applicants applied for an award of which only 20 (including you) won. Or perhaps your team came in 3rd place out of 280 teams that entered. This is also especially helpful if the recruiter or hiring manager hasn’t heard of the award or honor.
3. **If Possible, Associate Yourself with Big Brands.**Even if you haven’t directly worked with any big brands, you can still include them in your resume. For example, maybe some of your clients have been well-known. Perhaps your company was backed by major venture capitalists. Did you hire and/or manage any ivy-league graduates? Have you or your work been featured in any major publications. Including well-known brands in your resume is a great way to build credibility and to make yourself stand out.
4. **Incorporate the “Rule of Seven.”**  
   You should be sending a consistent message throughout your resume. Ample research shows that someone has to see something seven times before it makes an impact. So do some research about the company and find any keywords or buzzwords and include them (and related words) at least seven times throughout your resume. For example, if you’re applying for a job at a startup, you might include active verbs like “built,” “created,” “initiated,” “established,” and “innovated.”

It’s also a good idea to get feedback on your resume before submitting it. If you already have a contact at the organization you’re applying to, ask them if they wouldn’t mind taking a look at your resume and giving you their input. By virtue of already working there, current employees are privy to the organizational ins and outs and therefore can provide you with valuable input. Furthermore, having an internal connection is a great way to ensure that your resume will get reviewed.

##### If you don’t know someone at that particular company, try to at least find someone in the industry who can give you feedback on your resume.

Importantly, make sure that your resume does not include any typos or inconsistencies—this is a major red flag to employers. Getting another set of eyes to look over your resume is helpful. You’ve probably reviewed your resume multiple times already, but a fresh pair of eyes might be able to catch any errors that you might have missed.