

Resume Writing Checklist

By Neal Litherland

Preparation

- Location** ;Choose a quiet place with no distractions to assemble your resume.
- Organization** Gather all of your previous employment information in one place at your desk for easy access.
- Fact-checking** Check all of your resume information to make sure it's still accurate. Business phone numbers and addresses, names of managers and company positions can all change over time.
- Prioritize** Decide what you will and won't include in your resume. Jobs you held more than five years ago, or which don't fit the field you're currently applying for, shouldn't be included unless you have no other history.
- Outline** Write it out by hand. This will give you an idea of what your resume will look like before you even open your word processor.
- Style** Look at other people's resumes to get a feeling for what yours should look like before choosing a style.

Writing

- Job titles** Select titles that make your resume pop. Saying you were in accounting might be true, but calling yourself an "A/P and A/R Manager" might be more effective.
- Straightforward language** Don't use flowery wording on your resume. Hiring managers want you to explain in as few characters as possible why you fit the job.
- Keywords** Words like "team player" and "self starter" might sound good to you on a resume, but consider if they're cliched. Tired or over-used keywords can lose you a job.
- Format** Lay out your personal contact information followed by education and then job experience.
- Tone** Resumes need to have a formal writing style. Use full sentences and proper grammar, and though you can write in first person, make sure that your resume never becomes informal.
- Font** Select an appropriate text style like Times New Roman for your resume. While Boilerplate might look great for a hard-boiled detective novel, in reality it's more of an annoyance than a bonus to a potential boss.
- Length** Keep your resume to one page, or two pages if absolutely necessary. If you find yourself going over that limit, cut out material.
- Unique awards** List personal awards or achievements, if they're applicable to the job, at the end of your resume.
- Bullet points** If given the choice of writing a paragraph or making a list, make a list because it's easier for employers to read through quickly.
- Proofread: Check over your resume at least twice, and have someone else read it after that** Make sure you catch all mistakes before handing it out to potential employers, who won't be forgiving of errors.