Résumé Writing Checklist

This document will take you step-by-step through the résumé writing process. Whether you’re applying to a job, internship, graduate program or any other type of position, it’s always important to customize your résumé to the position description. There is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ résumé – keep your audience in mind when you write your résumé to address their specific needs.

# Step 1: Prepare

Experience has shown that the chance of receiving a response from an employer increases exponentially when a résumé is customized to the position, and here is why. The employers take the résumé and put it side by side with the job description to see whether you qualify. Although a general résumé may be impressive, it is likely to result in a lack of responses because it is about you, not about them. So, how do you tailor a résumé? Here are essential steps:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Status** | **Action** | **Description** |
|  | Identify keywords specific to the position in the responsibilities and requirements | Highlight keywords in the position responsibilities and requirements. You will use these keywords to guide the description of your experiences.  You may want to put these keywords into themes (e.g., teamwork/collaboration, customer service, communication, leadership, problem solving, critical thinking, planning and organizing, technical knowledge, quantitative ability/numeracy, creativity/innovation, etc.) |
|  | Circle the keywords that you have previously done | Circle the keywords (e.g., verbs, specific phrases) that match your prior experience (e.g., conduct outreach to build partnerships, track data, adhere to policies, represent programs and services, solve a complex issue or problem). |
|  | Note specific examples of your related experience | Give examples of when you did each circled action (e.g., conduct outreach to high school students in South Los Angeles to help them prepare for college admissions).  Think about your experiences in-class projects, volunteer work, student organizations, internships, jobs, research, etc. (use the Brainstorm Worksheet). |
|  | Consider additional skills that employers value to describe other experiences | Use the [NACE Top Attributes Employers Want to See on Résumés](https://www.naceweb.org/about-us/press/2020/the-top-attributes-employers-want-to-see-on-resumes/) |
|  | Choose a résumé style | There are four styles of résumé: reverse chronological (traditional), functional, combination, and creative (see the Résumé Samples). |

## Step 2: Create

Now that you know what the position requires and how your experiences match the company’s needs, you are ready to create your résumé. You can choose your résumé style based on your situation. (Samples are provided towards the end of this document.)

Traditional: Choose the reverse chronological résumé whenever you have more than one professional experience. The dates of your experiences are organized in reverse chronological order meaning you start with the current date and then go back in time. Most employers prefer this style.

Functional (caution: recruiters may not prefer this format): If you need to focus on areas of expertise rather than on individual experiences, choose the functional résumé. You will describe the areas of expertise in detail without indicating when and where the experiences occurred. At the end, you write the timeline of your experiences in reverse chronological order without providing a description. This résumé works better for candidates who have gaps in work history.

Combination: If a reverse-chronological list of your past experiences does not immediately highlight your abilities, choose the combination résumé. The combination résumé includes a section at the top that focuses on your relevant skills and accomplishments. The next section describes your relevant experiences in reverse chronological order. This résumé works better for candidates who are recent graduates, career changers, veterans, have multiple-track job histories or have a work history with gaps.

Other: If you are seeking positions in creative industries, use the creative résumé.

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| **Status** | **Action** | **Description** |
|  | Add your contact information | This includes your name, city & state, email address (remember to use a professional address), phone number (be sure to set a professional voice message), and LinkedIn URL. You do not need to include your full mailing address. |
|  | Add your education | This includes your full degree(s), name of institution(s), and graduation date (e.g., Spring 2020). If you haven’t graduated yet, put the intended date. You may also consider including your GPA, academic honors, and awards in this section. |
|  | Add your position titles | This includes position titles for relevant experiences, including jobs, class projects, volunteer positions, etc. Write each experience with the job/position title, name of organization, city & state, and beginning & end dates (e.g., 08/2019 – 05/2020). |
|  | Add your accomplishments | Each position title will need accomplishment statements written in bullet points (use the Accomplishment Formula). |
|  | Add your skills | This includes your technical knowledge, language skills, and other specialized knowledge for your position. |

When writing your experiences, list your accomplishments. Start each accomplishment statement with a verb and then describe the task and finish it with the outcome (Verb + Task + Results). Prioritize the order in which you list your accomplishments in each position, with the most relevant ones first. If some experience is related to the job you are targeting, and some are not but taught you valuable transferrable skills, you can list your experiences in two sections, “related” and “other” experience. **Note:** Do not structure the statements with pronouns referring to you.

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| **Accomplishment Formula** | | |
| **Action Verb** | **Task** | **Result** |
| * Designed | a 25-page athletic catalog using Adobe Photoshop & InDesign | to attract diverse audiences |
| * Collaborated | with a diverse group of deans, faculty, staff, and students | to update policies on inclusivity |
| * Persuaded | passers-by to learn about our club while tabling at 10 events | recruiting 50 new members |

### Step 3: Review

Many employers say that they would turn down an application due to a typo. The reason is that the résumé is a sample of how you will represent the organization in the role. Be sure that you always spell your words correctly and make sure that any autocorrection provided a relevant word to the context. Here are a few mistakes to look out for:

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| **Status** | **Action** | **Description** |
|  | Check your spelling and grammar | Accurate spelling and grammar are essential for making a strong impression. Mistakes can cost you the position. Ask another person to review your résumé to ensure that autocorrect did not add irrelevant words (writing tutors are available at the [Center for Academic Success](https://www.calstatela.edu/academic-success)). |
|  | Check for consistency | Use minimal changes in font style (e.g., only bold and font size changes) and be consistent across each label (e.g., bold all position titles, bold all degree titles, abbreviate all months). |
|  | Check your use of space | Use standard margins, include space between each section title, and align dates to the right using the right tab function. Be sure that the information is not cluttered and can easily be scanned by reviewers. |
|  | Check your verb usage | Ensure that you use past tense action verbs when the position was in the past and present tense when the experience is current. |
|  | Check your length | Most résumés for undergraduate students are one full page. If you have several years of experience in the field, you may go to two pages. Be sure that the experiences you include best match the position. Do not include experiences that detract from the position in an attempt to make your résumé longer. This can make it more difficult for the reviewer to see how you fit the role. |

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#### Step 4: Bonus

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| **Status** | **Action** | **Description** |
|  | Watch videos with advice from global experts | [**Career Spots**](http://www.careerspots.com/secure/vidplay_links_secure.aspx?aid=702&vidnum=21) provide real-world career advice from global experts on starting the internship and job search, résumés and communication, networking, your personal brand and elevator speech, internships, interview dress, interview before-during-after, salary and negotiation and social media in the job search. |
|  | Research the organization | Review the company’s website, visit their [LinkedIn](http://www.linkedin.com/) page, and read reviews on [Glassdoor](https://www.glassdoor.com/index.htm). The more you know about the company, the more prepared you will be during the application process. |

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Résumé Brainstorm Worksheet

What type of experiences have you had? What will you do before you graduate?

Below is a list of the different types of experiences that employers may look for on your résumé.

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| **Include** | **Type** | **Description** |
|  | Internships | Provides professional work experience with an employer for some time, usually a semester or summer. Work hours can be part-time or full-time, and the activities on the job may complement what you learn in the classroom. |
|  | Jobs | Part-time & full-time jobs, especially those in your target job or field, can help you: improve life skills and soft skills, develop technical skills, gain industry experience, assess if an opportunity is a good fit for you, prove you’re motivated and build your network. |
|  | Job Shadowing | Observing a professional throughout a workday, or work week, to learn about a particular job and see how what you learn in the classroom can be applied in professional work. It also provides an opportunity to get inside information about the company culture to determine whether you would like to work there. |
|  | Student involvement | Student clubs and organizations are excellent ways to gain skills and relevant experience, especially if you are an officer or participated in a large-scale event. |
|  | Community service | An experience that you typically chose for your desire to help out. Volunteers are not bound by an employment contract and are not eligible for a wage. A volunteer placement should allow for more flexibility and provide guidance, so the experience is mutually beneficial. A volunteer agreement between the organization and volunteer may be signed to ensure protection and outline expectations. |
|  | Class projects | Whether it’s a senior design or capstone project or an extended project in your field, class projects allow you to showcase your knowledge in the subject matter and your qualities (e.g., collaboration, problem solving, innovation, critical thinking, project management, etc.). |
|  | Research | Research experience, including research assistance, provides a snapshot of the knowledge and skills you’ve gained. |
|  | Presentations | Many organizations value public speaking skills. Presentations are a great way to showcase this skill and your knowledge of the subject matter. |
|  | Independent projects | If you are working on projects, in your free time, that match your career plans or you participate in a competition; this is a valuable experience that also showcases your initiative and commitment to the field. |
|  | Conferences/seminars | Furthering your development by attending conferences, submitting proposals, presenting papers, or creating posters has an invaluable effect on your résumé. |
|  | Awards/honors | Include the awards, honors and recognitions that pertain to the position you are applying for because they serve as an easy reference of your ability. |

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Résumé Brainstorm Worksheet

(continued)

Below is a worksheet for you to brainstorm your experiences as they related to the position.

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| **Type** | **Position** (title, organization, dates) | **Accomplishment Statements** |
| *Student Org.* | *Member, Cal State LA Drama Club, fall 2019 – spring 2020* | *Participated in an annual food drive to fundraise for the Children’s Hospital of Los Angeles* |
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Reverse Chronological Résumé Sample

**Jamal harris**

jamarharris@gmail.com Los Angeles, CA 555-555-5555

EDUCATION **Master of Public Health** Spring 2021

California State University, Los Angeles GPA **3.75**

­Dean’s List 2018, 2019

**Bachelor of Science in Health Science** with an option in Community Health Education Spring 2017

California State University, Long Beach GPA **3.5**

RELEVANT COURSEWORK

Research on Chicana/o Community Wellness Vulnerable Populations

Data Analysis for Public Health Research Analysis and Technical Writing

CLASS PROJECTS **Group Leader** Jan. 2020 – Present  
Global Health Epidemics 5001, Cal State LA Department of Public Health, Los Angeles, CA

* Organize group meetings and disseminate individual assignments for group members to progress project
* Research health epidemics in South America related to economic instabilities by reading articles, searching through newspapers and listening to podcasts
* Interviewed a public health official to learn about the industry and discuss solutions
* Develop a poster presentation that will be shown to the class to support visual learners

**RESEARCH**

**The Effects of Infectious Diseases on Chicana/o Communities** Spring 2019

Tested a group of 20 Chicana/o workers age 45 to evaluate the effect of Coronavirus on their age group

WORK EXPERIENCE **Student Assistant** Sep. 2019 – Present  
Cal State LA College of Professional and Global Education (PAGE), Los Angeles, CA

* Create a welcoming atmosphere for all guests who visit PAGE by always keeping a positive attitude and following through on requests
* Triage questions and refer students and staff to appropriate resources to support office operations
* Prioritize data security when updating Excel databases to ensure sensitive information is never leaked

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**Front Desk Clerk** Aug. 2018 – Jan. 2019  
The Best Bookstore, Los Angeles, CA

* Assisted patron product searches and made purchase recommendations to enhance customer experience
* Handled thousands of dollars per day through the cash register, always closing out with the right balance
* Sold bookstore memberships to help frequent customers save money while increasing store revenue
* Received and signed for inventory drop-offs and input new products into the store catalog system

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**VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE**

**Volunteer** May 2017 – Dec. 2017Latinx Upward Mobility Organization, Pasadena, CA

* ­Canvassed multiple neighborhoods to educate citizens on Latinx mobility issues
* Created original marketing materials such as posters, flyers, and handouts to invoke community support
* Utilized excellent interpersonal and global competencies to speak with people from all backgrounds

­SKILLS:   
**Computer:** Microsoft Excel, Word, PowerPoint **Languages:** Basic knowledge of Spanish and Portuguese

Functional Résumé Sample

**ISABELLA ROMERO**

Los Angeles, CA

555-555-5555

isabellaromero95@gmail.com

# EDUCATION

**Bachelor of Arts in Political Science** Spring 2020

California State University, Los Angeles GPA **3.25**

## EXPERIENCE HIGHLIGHTS

**Administrative Support**

* Assisted the executive director on all scheduling matters by proactively checking for schedule conflicts
* Utilized Microsoft Excel to input client data to increase office efficiency and support staff
* Organized accounting data using QuickBooks by double checking all transactions and monthly budgets
* Created a work schedule with deadlines and task delegation to ensure the project consistently moved forward was completed on time

**Customer Service and Reception**

* Answered 50+ phone calls per day and directed customers to the appropriate resources and was repeatedly commended for excellent customer service skills and attention to detail
* Created colorful signboards to display event information to guests and advertise upcoming events
* Listened to customer complaints and always found solutions to improve the company’s public image
* Gave a presentation to 40+ scholars on the economic factors of voter suppression and fielded a Q+A session to facilitate a group discussion on highlighted issues

**Leadership**

* Trained 5 employees on procedures and created onboarding materials to smooth their transition
* Walked door-to-door to help voters register to promote democratic participation
* Volunteered at a local homeless shelter by collecting food and clothing to improve community relations
* Helped create a wellness program to promote employee health and wellbeing
* Accepted feedback with grace to improve public speaking skills and develop leadership skills

**Research**

* Researched 15 peer-reviewed articles on voter suppression enhance literature review
* Utilized Microsoft Excel to manage data collection and generate visual data reports

### EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

**Accounting Assistant**, The XYZ Company Jan. 2016 – Mar. 2019  
**Canvasser**,Get out the Vote Inc. Apr. 2015 – Dec. 2016 **Front Office Assistant**,Customer Service Depot of AmericaFeb. 2013 – Feb. 2015

**Receptionist**, 123 Information Center Jun. 2010 – Jan. 2011

#### PRESENTATIONS

Political Science in the 21st Century (Paper Presentation), Conference of American Studies May 2018

##### SKILLS

**Computer:** Microsoft Excel, Word, PowerPoint, QuickBooks  
**Languages:** Bilingual Spanish/English

Combination Résumé Sample

**Wei li**

Los Angeles, CA

555-555-5555

weili@gmail.com

Graduating senior with background in graphic design, photography, and marketing.

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

Collaborative, creative, and detailed Graphic Designer with knowledge of photographic processes, digital image processing and illustration, design business practices, advertising art direction, and art and design in the community.

Successfully collaborated with creative team members, marketing executives, student leadership, and the community. Experience designing for online and print marketing, and familiar with image licensing procedures. Awarded Employee of the Month and a Phi Kappa Phi scholarship.

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SUMMARY OF SKILLS

**­Technology:** Adobe Photoshop, InDesign, Illustrator, and Lightroom; Microsoft Excel, Word, and PowerPoint  
**Languages:** Fluent in Spanish and some knowledge of Japanese

**Design Business Practices:** Billing, contracts, taxes, marketing, licenses, advertising concept development

EDUCATION **Bachelor of Arts in Graphic Design**, California State University, Los Angeles Spring 2020

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EXPERIENCE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS **Graphic Design Intern** Jun. 2019 – Present  
Sony Entertainment, Inc., Culver City, CA

* ­Design marketing materials for promotional campaigns using Adobe Photoshop & Illustrator
* Abide by image licensing procedures to prevent legality issues and maintain transparency
* Photograph Sony outreach events to enhance community relations and share stories

**Project Team Member** Jan. 2019 – Mar. 2019  
Animation 2032, Cal State LA Department of Graphic Design, Los Angeles, CA

* ­Worked with a team of 4 members in brainstorm sessions, design coordination, and presentation
* Edited group sketches and transferred them to digital forms while maintaining our vision
* Presented our digital design project to a class of 40 by explaining our motivations and innovations and received critical feedback well

**Marketing & Graphic Design Consultant** Feb. 2018 – Nov. 2018  
Sports Logic Developers, Los Angeles, CA

* Assisted marketing director with strategic online and print marketing campaigns by creating mock-ups
* Made multiple updates to design materials to support the marketing director and ensure customer satisfaction
* Enhanced logo in Illustrator to attract customers and portray the company culture in a clear way

**Vice President** Sep. 2017 – May 2018  
Cal State LA Marketing Club, Los Angeles, CA

* ­Organize club meetings by taking surveys and addressing the needs of the group
* Invite guest speakers to discuss leadership experience and promote professional development

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**Volunteer** Mar. 2016 – Aug. 2018  
Latinx Upward Mobility Organization, Pasadena, CA

* ­Created original marketing materials such as posters, flyers, and handouts
* Utilized interpersonal and global competencies to educate citizens on Latinx mobility issues

Combination (Alternative) Résumé Sample

**Wei li**

Los Angeles, CA

555-555-5555

weili@gmail.com

EDUCATION **Bachelor of Arts in Visual Communication**, California State University, Los Angeles Spring 2020

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GRAPHIC DESIGN EXPERIENCE **Graphic Design Intern** Jun. 2019 – Mar. 2020  
Sony Entertainment, Inc., Culver City, CA

* ­Design marketing materials for promotional campaigns using Adobe Photoshop & Illustrator
* Abide by image licensing procedures to prevent legality issues and maintain transparency
* Photograph Sony outreach events to enhance community relations and share stories

**Project Team Member** Jan. 2019 – Mar. 2019  
Animation 2032, Cal State LA Department of Graphic Design, Los Angeles, CA

* ­Worked with a team of 4 members in brainstorm sessions, design coordination, and presentation
* Edited group sketches and transferred them to digital forms while maintaining our vision
* Presented our digital design project to a class of 40 by explaining our motivations and innovations and received critical feedback well

**Marketing & Graphic Design Consultant** Feb. 2018 – Nov. 2018  
Sports Logic Developers, Los Angeles, CA

* Assisted marketing director with strategic online and print marketing campaigns by creating mock-ups
* Made multiple updates to design materials to support the marketing director and ensure customer satisfaction
* Enhanced logo in Illustrator to attract customers and portray the company culture in a clear way

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE **Vice President** Sep. 2017 – Present  
Cal State LA Marketing Club, Los Angeles, CA

* ­Organize club meetings by taking surveys and addressing the needs of the group
* Invite guest speakers to discuss leadership experience and promote professional development

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**Volunteer** Mar. 2016 – Aug. 2018  
Latinx Upward Mobility Organization, Pasadena, CA

* ­Canvassed multiple neighborhoods to educate citizens on Latinx mobility issues
* Created original marketing materials such as posters, flyers, and handouts
* Utilized excellent interpersonal and global competencies to speak with people from all backgrounds

AWARDS

Employee of the Month Nov. 2018

Phi Kappa Phi Scholarship 2019

­SKILLS

**Computer:** Adobe Photoshop, InDesign, Illustrator, Lightroom, Microsoft Excel, Word, PowerPoint  
**Languages:** Fluent in Spanish and some knowledge of Japanese

Creative Résumé Sample

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **FATIMA abbasi** | | | |
| **Digital marketing specialist** | | | |
| Creative social media strategist with a background in marketing and graphic design to deliver quality, customized content in diverse content media – public relations, content marketing, and web content. Reliably meets deadlines and thrives in an agile, quick turnaround environment while finding and engaging new prospects and providing value throughout the buying process. | | | |
| **fabbasi95@gmail.com** | **555-555-5555** | **Los Angeles, CA** | **linkedin.com/in/fatimaabbasi** |

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| MARKETING EXPERIENCE | EDUCATION |
| **Social Media Intern**  Sony Entertainment, Inc.  Jun. 2019 – Present   * Design marketing materials for promotional campaigns using Adobe Photoshop & Illustrator * Abide by image licensing procedures to prevent legality issues and maintain transparency * Created social media campaigns, increasing followers by 40% | **Bachelor of Science in Business Administration**  **Option in Marketing**  California State University, Los Angeles  Spring 2020  GPA **3.5** |
|  |
| **CERTIFICATES**  **Google Analytics Individual Qualification**  2020 |
|  |
| **Project Team Member**  Animation 3032  Cal State LA Department of Graphic Design  Jan. 2019 – Mar. 2019   * Worked with a team of 4 members in brainstorm sessions, design coordination, and presentation * Enhanced videos to attract customers and portray the company culture in a clear way |
| AWARDS  Employee of the Month  Dec. 2019  Phi Kappa Phi Scholarship  2018 |
| SKILLS  Google Ads, Analytics, Tag Manager  Adobe Photoshop, InDesign, Illustrator, Lightroom  Microsoft Excel, Word, PowerPoint  LANGUAGES  Bilingual English/Farsi |
| LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE |
| **Marketing Coordinator**  Cal State LA Marketing Club  Sep. 2017 – Present   * Promoted club events and increased membership engagement by 15% * Invite guest speakers to discuss leadership experience and promote professional development |

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| “Fatima is a valuable contributor to our marketing team and has assisted in the development, tracking and analysis in our digital campaigns that have yielded a return on investment.” – Jane Smith, Sony Entertainment, Inc. |