Making a Resume

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Go to bit.ly/CeNAM-resume or:

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After this presentation, what do I want you to know?

1. The purpose of a resume and how people use them

2. How to make a compelling resume (and cover letter)

3. That there are resources out there - including your university's career office - that can help you a lot, and that you should take advantage of!

First - what's the difference between a CV and a resume?

- Nomenclature: "Resume" and "Curriculum Vitae" (or "CV") are not used in the same way everywhere! When in doubt, check with your potential employer.

- In the US: "Resume" = short-form document that **briefly summarizes** your experience, qualifications, and skills (employment history, education, tech/professional skills)

- In the US: "Curriculum Vitae" (CV; translates to "course of life") = long-form document that provides **complete information** about your accomplishments (as above, plus all talks, posters, etc.)

What should your goals be in creating a resume?

- To convey your experience, qualifications, and skills

- To represent you as the best-qualified person for the <u>specific position you are applying to</u> (and thus should be tailored to the position/job ad!)

- To get you an interview! (Which requires a whole other skillset.)

An important note about resumes/CVs

- The person who reads it (if a human actually reads it!) is never going to spend as much time on it as you want them to.

- Their goal is to perform triage on the stack of resumes in front of them and find the applicants who are best-suited for the position.

- You thus have very limited time/space to make a pitch that you are a great candidate for the position!

- The layout and what you put in (or leave out) is going to help you make that pitch!

A **very important** piece of resume advice

- People screening resumes are typically looking for specific things about candidates, which should be aligned with the job ad they've written (rubrics FTW)

- Make sure to tailor your resume to the job you're applying for!

  - Read the job description/job ad carefully

  - Make sure you address <u>the required and desired qualifications</u> as closely as possible in your resume!

  - Don't lie - just make sure that you present yourself in the best possible light for this job!

What goes into a resume? (Part 1)

Keep it to <u>no more than two pages</u> - one is preferable!

"Profile" or "Summary": Short (3-5 sentence) paragraph summarizing your career <u>as it pertains to this specific position</u>:

- Top achievements, skills, years of experience.
- Written in active language and include specifics
- If you don't have a long employment history, frame this in terms of career objectives.

Contact information: Name, email, phone number. Optional: LinkedIn, address (city+state+zip code is fine), personal pronouns

What goes into a resume? (Part 2)

Education: College + grad school (not high school or lower).

- Include name of school, city/state, date of graduation (or expected date), degree(s)/minor(s)/transcripted certificates
- Include course highlights if relevant
- Include GPA if it's reasonably high (but not if you think it's low!)
- Put education above employment history if you have graduated recently.

Employment history including summer positions, internships, volunteer work.

- Include position title, company/org name, city/state, dates
- Include brief list of job duties using action verbs and the WHO ("what/how/outcomes") format

What goes into a resume? (Part 3)

Awards and honors: academic, volunteer/service, other recognition. Include name of honor, who awarded it, when it was awarded.

Skills/certifications:
- "soft"/professional skills and training (e.g., communication or mentoring experience; problem-solving skills; conflict resolution training; leadership experience; time management)
- Technical skills (e.g., programming languages; HPC/cloud computing experience; version control; software packages; data analysis; engineering experience; spoken language proficiency; specific math/stats/data science skills; etc.)

What goes into a resume? (Part 4)

Extracurricular activities/hobbies:

- Only put these on if they relate to the job you're applying for or display specific positive traits you want to convey!
- Positive example: "Captain, MSU Kaggle Data Science competition team, 2021-2023; took 1st place both years I was captain."

What **stays out** of a resume? (Part 1)

- Exact address (just use city/state/zip code)

- Photograph (unless it's relevant to the position or culturally expected)

- Personal information (age, marital status, info on kids, sexual orientation, religious or political affiliations, social security number, height/weight, any social media except LinkedIn, anything a prospective employer can't ask about)

- Citizenship/permanent residency status (unless it's relevant - e.g., security clearances)

- Publication/presentation/poster list

What **stays out** of a resume? (Part 2)

- Day-to-day tasks from previous jobs

- High school or very old jobs (> 10 years ago)

- Reasons for leaving previous jobs

- References or "References available upon request"

- Salary information (including current or expected salary)

- Unrelated hobbies (if they don't add to qualifications or show you'd be a good cultural fit for that position). This can be very distracting!

Formatting

Important point: most resumes are uploaded to a website, then converted to another format and automatically screened.

Don't get too clever, 1: anything that makes the person screening your resume struggle to find key information is bad! (Formatting that's too clever, puts information in non-standard order, etc.)

Don't get too clever, 2: simple formatting makes it more likely that an auto-screening tool will be able to find the info you want to convey (so, stick with one column, no sidebars, etc.)

Cover letters: the resume's weird friend

- A cover letter is a sales pitch - it gives you a chance to clearly state why you are interested in this job and why you are qualified for it.

- Should be 1 page, 4-5 paragraphs.

- Aim for clear and direct writing style - this is not the time to be humble!

- Address letter to a specific person if possible, otherwise "[title of posted job] Hiring Committee"

- Content: show you understand the employer, the position, and you've done research about it. Use keywords from the job posting!

One final piece of advice

Use your university's career office! They can:

- Help you find career paths and identify strengths

- Share resources for all aspects of the job search and interview process

- Use your school's alumni network to find opportunities (beyond job boards)

- Look at your resume, cover letter, CV, etc. and give you advice on how to improve them

- Help identify problems with your materials and process if you're struggling to find a job.

Summary

- The key purpose of a resume is to communicate your experience, qualifications, and skills for a specific position

- You need to communicate information about yourself as quickly and effectively as possible!

- What you put into your resume, what you leave out, and how you format it all can really impact your chances of getting a given job.

- Use your university's career services office!

Slides at bit.ly/CeNAM-resume or:

Resources, 1

Harvard "Resumes and Cover Letters" guide:
https://hwpi.harvard.edu/files/ocs/files/hes-resume-cover-letter-guide.pdf

MSU Career Services Network: https://careernetwork.msu.edu/

MSU Career Services Network resume resources:
https://careernetwork.msu.edu/resources/category/resumes/

MSU Career Services Network Career Handbook:
https://careernetwork.msu.edu/resources/msu-career-handbook/

MSU CSN resume basics:
https://www.flipsnack.com/986EEFDD75E/resume-basics-2022-23/full-view.html

MSU CSN advice for bullet points and action verbs:
https://www.flipsnack.com/986EEFDD75E/action-verbs-bullet-points-2022-23/full-view.html

Resources, 2

MSU CSN advice for cover letters:
https://www.flipsnack.com/986EEFDD75E/cover-letters-2022-23/full-view.html

MSU CSN sample resumes: https://careernetwork.msu.edu/resources/sample-resumes/

Resume.io templates: https://resume.io/resume-templates (Note: don't use photos!)

Reddit r/resumes: https://www.reddit.com/r/resumes/

Reddit r/resumes wiki: https://www.reddit.com/r/resumes/wiki/index/

Indeed.com resume advice: https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters