



# HANDOUT 1



## Get Hired: Resumes - Do's and Don'ts

Creating your very first resume can be a task. This list of resume “do’s” and “don’ts” will help make the task simpler. Consider the following when making your first one or updating your resume to get hired.

Note: While it's illegal to discriminate against a job candidate (based on age, marital status, gender, religion, race, color or ethnic origin), these tips are provided to mitigate unconscious bias within the hiring process.

### Do's

- **Sell yourself**
  - First and foremost, express your unique experience, skills, and abilities
  - Summarize your assertions in a way that answers the question “Tell me about yourself”
  - Include relevant soft skills and personal accomplishments
- **Tailor it**
  - Have a master resume (lists all jobs)
  - Match your skills to the right job and the right employer
  - Make 2 versions – 1) printable 2) scannable – easy for applicant tracking systems
- **Make it legible**
  - Choose easy-to-read fonts
  - Use the same fonts throughout
  - Change sizes in descending order for name, headers, and bullet points
- **Watch your language**
  - Use proper English
  - Be consistent
  - Keep it focused
  - Exclude clichés or jargon
  - Use dynamic, high-energy language
  - Use action verbs and power words
  - Don't use negative phrases
- **Edit it carefully**
  - Upon create or modifying it, check it twice, proofread it thoroughly
  - Always spell check
- **State the facts**
  - Use quantitative information and data, where possible, as you describe your accomplishments
  - Only add relevant information
- **Be honest**
  - Anything not 100% true doesn't belong on your resume
- **Include your contact information**
  - Use your personal information, not your current work information
  - Make sure it has your information is not your nickname, but real name (for hard to pronounce names or very ethnic names consider initials (K. Kelly, etc.))
  - For the home address, it is okay to only use the City and State
  - You can add your personal e-mail, a personal website and LinkedIn URL
- **Maintain a professional presence**
  - Save your resume as Resume of (Your Name) and the year
  - Use an e-mail address with your real name ([Yourname@website.com](mailto:Yourname@website.com))
  - Social media should have a professional presence, as well
  - Google yourself to see what comes up
- **Demonstrate mobility**
  - Show internal movement – up and around within organizations
  - Show global mobility – work in different states and countries
- **Use resume examples and templates**
  - Make a professional version
  - Keep it to 1-2 pages max
  - Minimize the fonts and design
  - Make job titles stand out
  - Use bullets
  - Numerical references use digits

## Don'ts

- **Worry about lacking experience**
  - Fresh out of college, limited experience is expected
  - Use transferable skills, relevant side projects and relevant coursework to show what you can do
  - Include relevant soft skills, volunteer work, and non-work experience
- **Use the exact job description wording**
  - Find a different way to convey it
  - Highlight all job relevant experience
- **Include confidential information**
  - Describe projects and
  - Use the same fonts throughout
  - Change sizes in descending order for name, headers, and bullet points
- **Overshare**
  - Don't tell the whole story or put everything on you resume – most relevant last 10-15 years
  - Don't list controversial organizations
  - No political or religious affiliations
  - Remove any references to gender (only as needed), race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, marital status, parentage, disabilities, etc.
  - Don't include random, unrelated or off-putting hobbies
- **Hide gaps**
  - Group jobs together
  - Some part-time jobs should be omitted, unless that's all you have or it's relevant to the job
  - Explain breaks (i.e., volunteer, family care, etc.) where possible
- **Forgot the Top Section**
  - Capture their attention first
  - Remember it's a marketing tool (above the fold) give them best first impression with a good summary at the top
- **Include salary information**
  - Save the salary information for when it's requested
  - Keep it with your master resume file
- **Wing it**
  - Be prepared and do your homework
  - You have to sell yourself, period
  - Do what you can to make the best first impression
- **Forget that order matters**
  - Always put items in reverse chronological order
  - Neatness counts
  - Keep it simple and work on making it stand out
  - Design it for easy skimming
- **Avoid empty words or being wordy**
  - Limit examples to three
  - Use power words and key words
  - Use one power word or adjective per sentence
  - Be clear and intentional
  - Don't mix up word use
- **Use the exact dates**
  - Maintain actual dates on your master resume
  - Use years to denote actual service dates and tenure
- **Put education first**
  - Experience first, education last
  - Little job experience, use work such as: projects, courses, volunteer and community projects, etc.
- **Focus too much on education**
  - Highlight honors, not GPA
  - Only include relevant online or continuing education
  - Divide up skills by soft skills, language, software, honors/accomplishment – remember easy to skim is the rule
- **Try to be fancy**
  - Unless your job is in art field or some other creative arena, don't get too cute with it
  - Plain professional resume works just fine, keep lines, fancy fonts, graphics, etc. to a minimum
- **Let it become obsolete**
  - Constantly refresh it
  - Add new skills and experiences to the master resume regularly
  - You always want to be ready for the next opportunity
- **Include "References upon request"**
  - References should be on a separate sheet
- **Send it as a Word Document**
  - It's always best to send a PDF version of your file

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Check-out these websites for create job-searching tips, career advise and other helpful resources:

- <https://www.livecareer.com/>
- <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/>
- <https://www.themuse.com>