

PREPARING THE RESUME

INTRODUCTION

Why the Resume Matters

A great resume can play a central role in launching your career. It can make the difference in getting a competitive internship, in landing a first job after college, in winning a scholarship, and in getting into a competitive graduate program.

Your resume performs several important functions for you in a job search or in applying to graduate school. It represents you when you can't be there, both before and after any interviews. It helps interviewers know what to talk about with you during interviews. It lets the interviewer know what you have done, what you think you can do, and what you think is important. Perhaps its most important function is getting you an interview in the first place.

The time it takes to write a good resume is time well spent. This is an important life skill to master, as it will come up again and again. Being able to catalog your accomplishments relevant to someone else's needs will be a continuing career advantage. Economists predict that your generation will have more jobs and more employers than any prior generation. Even if you stay with the same employer, you will want to be able to represent your accomplishments to get favorable performance reviews, win raises, and compete for the most coveted assignments.

In this module we're going to learn an easy way to write a persuasive, targeted resume. You don't need to be a skilled writer or a business major or an honors student to do a great job. You just need to think logically and follow the directions that follow.

Some Guidelines for Resume Writing

Here are the guidelines for good resume writing.

- You must tell the truth.
- It is your job to sell yourself.
- A resume is about your future, not your past.
- You put the information in order of interest to your reader.

You must tell the truth in your resume. That's not negotiable. It is simply unethical to invent any part of your background. Besides, employers find it very easy to verify the basic facts on any resume, especially your title, dates of employment, prior salary history, and your major and degree. If you do find a job, you won't have any job security. Most employers will dismiss employees, even *years* later, if they are discovered to have lied on their applications. Remember, your resume, and everything on it, becomes part of your permanent personnel file. Being creative and persuasive are expected, but a fabrication on your resume is a grievous mistake.

A resume is no place for modesty. Employers will expect you to scour your entire background and let them know what skills, abilities, talents, traits, and experiences you have relative to their needs. They will *not* expect you to hold back. You are doing them a favor if you put your best foot forward, because they are looking at your resume specifically to discover your talents and abilities. Think about it.

If you have trouble claiming your accomplishments, imagine what someone else, who likes you a lot, would say about you. What would your best friend, sister, mom, dad, favorite professor, or biggest fan say



about you? That's what belongs on your resume. Just make sure it's all true.

Most students have *much* more to offer than they realize. You've got to stop thinking about *employment* and start thinking about *experience*. We'll learn in a moment how to wring the most, resume-wise, from student activities, travel, volunteer work, and so on.

Finally, a good resume is focused toward your future. As much as possible, the information should be in order of interest to your reader. It should be customized to the needs of each application, whether that is a graduate program or an internship or a job opportunity. Ultimately, you should plan on customizing your resume *every time you use it*.

So a resume should be designed to help create the future you want, not just report your past. This is why we start working on your resume not by compiling information from your past, but by imagining your future.

STEP 1

Imagining Your Future

What future is your resume supposed to help you create? Is it supposed to help you get into a business-to-business sales position where you think you'll wear a suit every day? Or is it supposed to help you land a position with a nonprofit organization providing services directly to indigents in a distressed urban setting? Or will you be seeking opportunities as a technology specialist, where you expect to be able to work all night whenever you happen to feel like it? Each of these is a distinctly different future and would require a distinctly different resume.

Perhaps you don't know much about your future. Many students prepare resumes to meet class requirements or in order to prepare for career counseling sessions, and so on, without really knowing what they want after college. This is not a problem, but even if this is your case, you may have a hint or an inkling of where you're headed. Following are a few questions to ask yourself.

Possible Careers, Functions, Industries, and Job Titles

Even if you have a crystal clear vision of the career you want after college, and especially if you don't, answer all the following questions in a notebook or journal:

What are your career fantasies? When you imagine cool jobs that you might like to do, what are they? See if you can list ten or more careers you've daydreamed about.

Who do you admire? You can make a list of celebrities and sports heroes and such, but then be sure to concentrate on people you personally know or know of. See if you can list ten or more people you admire, and then consider the careers they have pursued.

What are you really good at? Have people always commented on some skill or talent that you possess? What jobs might utilize that skill best? List at least five things you're good at.

What are you really interested in? What do you really like to do? What really gets you excited? What would you do for free even if you weren't paid to do it? Of course lots of people want to be an MTV reporter or a river-rafting guide, but suppose you really like to talk to people? That would indicate that you might like to start your career with a position in sales or public relations or customer service. Make a list of five to twenty things you like to do and jobs that might be able to feature that talent.



What do your career counselors suggest? Career counselors are great sources of ideas for career directions you may not know about or may not know much about. Career counselors can also guide you to career aptitude and interest tests that are fun and easy to take. These evaluations can generate lists of career ideas for you and can serve as a place to begin considering which direction to go in your future.

What do people in your family do for a living? Consider the career paths of your grandfather, grandmother, aunts, uncles, cousins, and everyone in your extended family. Consider whether any of these careers is of interest to you.

What do your parents' friends do? Have you discussed their careers with them? Consider whether any of these careers is of interest to you.

What do your friends' parents do? Consider whether any of these careers is of interest to you.

Using these exercises, you should be able to generate a list of industries, functions, and positions that are of interest to you.

NOTE: Some people, the first time they do these exercises, can generate lists of industries and jobs but then aren't personally interested in pursuing any of the careers represented on the lists. If this happens to you, don't worry about it. This is just an exercise, and you can still write a great resume. However, when you do know more about what you want, you'll need to reconsider and revise that resume.

Your Values

What really matters to you? What is important for you to do, or not do, in your life? Basically, a value is at the root of almost any aspect of a job that is strongly attractive or repulsive to you.

In a career setting, values need to be considered both positively and negatively. Positively, consider which values you need to express on the job in order to feel fulfilled, to find meaning, and to enjoy feelings of accomplishment.

Do you need to help others? Express yourself creatively? Earn a lot of money? Conduct original research? Work on Wall Street? Work for peace and social justice? Have public recognition for your contributions? Join a prestigious organization with a solid history? These are all expressions of values that one might be attracted to in a career. So, what values do you need to express on the job in order to be happy with that job?

Negatively, consider which values you need to avoid expressing on the job in order to feel fulfilled. Would harming the environment make you miserable on the job? If you had to lie to clients, would that rob you of any satisfaction you might take from other aspects of your job? Would wearing a suit to work negate any other benefits an employer might offer? Or would not wearing a suit bother you more? Consider what you would *not* do or *not* give up in order to go to work in your future.

Consider these issues carefully, because one of the biggest ultimate causes of career unhappiness is conflict between the values of the employee and the values of the employer.

NOTE: Again, this is not an easy exercise the first time someone attempts it. Be satisfied if you can understand the issues and begin to consider what values are most important to you, career-wise.





See Yourself at Work in Your Workplace

You should now be able to imagine yourself at work in some possible future. Where do you work? What work do you do? Who works with you? What hours do you keep? Where is this job you want? Is it in an urban, suburban, edge city, rural, or wilderness area? What does it pay? Do you have flextime or telecommuting as an option? What technologies will you use? Is this a new or an old organization? Is this a large or a small organization? Is it a risky new start up or a large and (at least theoretically) stable organization? What kind of benefits does your employer provide for you? What kind of people do you work with? What is the *atmosphere* at work on any given day? Do you work mostly independently or is guidance always right at hand? Who gives you your assignments? Is the work seasonal or project-based or does it stay mostly the same year round? What does your desk look like? Who do you see in a typical day? How much travel is involved, if any? How many hours a week will you work?

Now, here are the really important questions:

What knowledge, skills and abilities are critical to performing in this position?

What kind of person or personality would thrive in this situation?

What skills would be critical for continued advancement?

If you were hiring someone for this position, what would be most important to you?

You should be able to list five or more things after each of these last four questions. Take your time and perhaps work on this over a period of several days. This is critical work for making a focused resume.

NOTE: Again, not all people who want to write a resume will be able to complete these exercises. If you give it a try and don't succeed, just proceed to STEP 2.

A WARNING ABOUT ALIGNMENT: Your career plans and the rest of the vision of your future need to align. For example, if you need an expensive house in the suburbs with a picket fence *and* you want to dedicate your life to being a social worker in the inner city, something is going to have to give. If you want to be a successful entrepreneur *and* you want to work forty hours a week or less, there's something wrong with this picture. Or if you want to be a famous movie star but you don't want to leave the neighborhood, then trouble lies ahead. So when you get done envisioning your future, take a moment and consider whether it makes sense and is possible.

STEP 2

Considering What You Have to Offer

After you have imagined what the employer (or graduate school admissions committee) is looking for, your next task is to survey your entire background to see if you have any evidence whatsoever that you have the knowledge, skills, abilities, and personality traits that they value.

Consider your summer employment, of course, but also consider part-time work (paid or unpaid), internships (paid or unpaid), volunteer work, student activities, community service, sports, travel, church/synagogue/mosque/ashram participation, and everything you ever did in class.

For example, you may have analyzed a job you are interested in and discovered that organizing groups is





one aspect of the work. If you organized a poetry reading or an investment club, that would be clear evidence of your ability “to organize, energize, and focus the energies of others onto a common goal.”

If it is a critical task to speak to others on the phone as part of your imagined future job, you might list as evidence that you “worked the telephone help desk as a volunteer for the campus computer center during the sophomore year.”

If you are trying to win an assistantship in graduate school that will involve teaching, you might remember that you “tutored all grades of high school in math and physics” as a part-time entrepreneurial activity during college. Then, if you think harder still, you may remember that you “presented a one-hour talk on string theory to physics senior symposium, PHYS 485” last September.

Be as specific as you can about what evidence presents each knowledge, skill, ability, and trait that would be attractive to your resume reader. Print out or electronically copy the following table and fill it out until you run out of ideas, then show it to a friend. Often, a friend’s fresh perspective will help you *double* the amount of evidence that you have to present to a potential employer or grad school. Now print out or electronically copy the following form, and fill it out to create the raw data you will use to construct your resume.

Writing tips:

- Use an exact figure whenever you can. That is, tell exactly how many people, dollars, departments, arrests or whatever were involved. Never write “Organized SummerFest” when you can write “Organized SummerFest, an event drawing 5,000 students to participate in 17 alcohol-free activities, total budget of \$23,600, all-volunteer staff of 35.”
- Use a superlative whenever you can. Report if you were the first, only, best, fastest, largest, or most. For example, you can say, “SummerFest was the largest student-planned event in the history of the alcohol awareness program.”
- Be accurate in reporting your skills, but report *all* of them. For example, when it comes to computer applications, report the programs you have mastered, but also report the ones you have “some exposure to.” Likewise, with foreign languages, report your skill in categories such as “fluent,” “proficient,” “can read but not speak,” and “basic.” You don’t want to oversell your abilities, but you don’t want to leave anything out, either.



**Knowledge, skill, ability, or trait
desired by employer or grad school**

**Evidence that you possess the
knowledge, skill, ability, or trait**





Basic Background Information

Your name:

Your school address:

street
city
state
zip
phone
fax
cell
email

Your permanent address:

street
city
state
zip
phone
fax
cell
email

Any friends or family members living near where you want an internship or job:

College you are in now:

type of degree expected
date of (expected) graduation
major
minor or secondary academic emphases
GPA overall
GPA in your major
activities
honors
awards
sports

Prior college:

type of degree pursued
dates attended
major
minor or secondary academic emphases
GPA overall
GPA in your major
activities
honors
awards
sports





High school:

- date of graduation
- academic interests
- GPA
- activities
- honors
- awards
- sports

List of community service:

List of honors and awards not mentioned with schools above:

List of places you have traveled to (cities and/or countries):

List of sports you've played not mentioned with schools above:

Hobbies and activities not mentioned above:

Computer skills (*all* hardware, software, languages, development tools, applications):

Other equipment you can operate:

Professional licenses and credentials:

Professional and/or academic organizations:

Academic meetings attended:

Publications:

Classroom presentations:

Languages you speak or read or understand, for better or for worse:

Famous people you know:

Special talents not mentioned elsewhere:

Major research projects or other types of major projects from your college career:





Experience of Interest to Your Reader

Now, print out or electronically copy the following table and fill it out for each “job” you’ve had, with emphasis on those jobs that indicate you have the desired knowledge, skills, abilities, and traits. Remember that a “job” may include full- or part-time employment, volunteer or community service, a leadership role in a student organization, an unpaid role as a teaching assistant for a class, ad infinitum. Every time you had a promotion or a major reassignment of duties, treat it like a separate job and fill out a separate form.



Experience Listing

Organization:

City and state:

Dates of involvement:

Your title:

Your supervisor's title:

Anyone who reported to you or that you supervised, even if it was informal:

Your duties:

Your contributions above and beyond the daily routine:

Any travel:

Any special training or skills that you had to teach yourself:

Any special recognition:

How did you leave the situation better than you found it:





Finally, college students tend to forget some of the skills that college is specifically designed to inculcate. Perhaps because many of your peers have these same skills, you overlook them. Nevertheless, here are a few examples. These are not provided as a list for you to check off, but to stimulate your thinking one more time about skills you possess as a result of succeeding in college.

- The ability to work on your own, with limited supervisory input.
- The ability to meet deadlines.
- The ability to read and summarize written material.
- The ability to persuade others, orally and in writing.
- The ability to deal with incomplete data sets, and to make decisions with incomplete or ambiguous data.
- The ability to teach yourself new computer programs from the documentation alone.
- The ability to work on project teams.
- The ability to conduct original research using multiple resources (library, Web, telephone interviews, etc.).

Think what skills such as these that you bring to the table, and list them in your notebook or journal.

STEP 3

Constructing Your Resume Piece by Piece

Now that you have some idea of what your reader is looking for and what you have to offer, you can construct a basic business resume. We're going to approach this project the easy way: piece by piece. Then, we'll consider adding some of the more common bells and whistles, such as an objective, profile, or list of special projects. Finally, we will briefly consider alternate forms such as scannable and electronic versions.

This tutorial is designed to develop a standard resume quickly. This is a straightforward and conservative style, and there are many alternative styles.

Set your margins for one inch all around, and set the default font size at 12, 11, or at the smallest, 10. Choose a common font, such as Helvetica or Times Roman. Now we begin.



The Heading

Place your name in the middle of the page, in size 16 bold type. It's a good idea to use your full legal name, as in:

Catherine Ann Johnson

If everyone you know calls you by a nickname, you can include it in quotations, like this:

Theobald Harrison "Wally" Wallace

If your gender may not be evident to your reader, consider placing a small "Mr." or "Ms." in parentheses after your name, like this:

Carroll Ward (Mr.)

Then, place your mailing address, phone number, email and Web address as demonstrated below. Many students will choose to list more than one address. In particular, if you are about to graduate, you will want to list a permanent address. An employer may try to contact you a year *or even more* after you submit a resume. Be sure to extend your college email account as long as you can. If you can list a permanent or temporary address near the job or graduate school you're contacting, that may also be beneficial. You can use a friend's or family member's address by placing "c/o" in front of their family name. Finally, any phone number you use during a job search or during the application season to graduate school should have a business-like message, with your first and last name mentioned clearly.

Gabriella Marcella Garza

email: gmg33@student.pacific.edu or ggarza33@aol.com

Web page: www.pacific.edu/students/gmg33/web-res

cellphone w/ voicemail and pager: (310) 555-1685

west coast address
Student Box 1387
Pacific College
Los Angeles, CA 90010
voice: (310) 555-3185

permanent address
1243 SW 18th Street
San Antonio, TX 78201
voice: (210) 555-8395
fax: (210) 555-8304

east coast address
c/o Santiago
44 West Broadway, Apt. R-12
New York, NY 10014
message only: (212) 555-3018

[The body of the resume begins here.]

Of course your address does not need to be as complicated as all that, but the easier it is to reach you the more likely you'll be reached.

The Education Listing

On student resumes, education is usually listed before experience. If you went to five undergraduate



colleges and universities, it's usually a good idea to list just the one granting your degree (unless one of the others is particularly prestigious, or in the neighborhood where you will be applying for a job or internship). If your degree is not completed, you are a degree "candidate" or your degree is "expected" on a certain date. If that date seems enormously far off in the future, another choice is that your degree program is "ongoing."

You can spell out your degree or use the standard abbreviations, B.A. for bachelor of arts, B.S. for bachelor of science, B.F.A. for bachelor of fine arts. List the major if it would be attractive to your reader, but not if it detracts from your candidacy. List the GPA if you fall into either of these categories: **(a)** you are going to be meeting with college recruiters on campus, or **(b)** it is particularly high. Otherwise you can omit it at your discretion.

Additionally, you can report honors, awards, activities, and coursework relevant to your intended reader. With honors, awards, and activities, your goal is to demonstrate leadership, mental acuity, drive, teamwork skills, community-mindedness, and similar attractive traits.

With coursework your goal is to identify which classes--*or what specific work within your classes*--may be of particular interest to your targeted reader. By using the word "coursework" instead of the word "classes," you are free to list work that you may have done within classes that had an entirely different name. In other words, you may have learned about "e-Commerce and B2B Portal Design" in a class titled, "Small Business IT Solutions." It's a lot more pertinent to list the knowledge, skill, or ability that the company is most interested in, rather than the name of a class. Do not, however, take this as an invitation to list skills you do not really possess. If you didn't grasp the material, you cannot mention it.

Remember that you are listing *relevant* education, that is, education of interest to your potential employer. Sometimes you will want to omit information entirely if it is simply not relevant to your reader. If you went to stenography school for a year, then decided to study brain surgery after all, it's probably a good idea just to omit reference to the unrelated studies.

Here are four examples. Model your education listing after these. Remember, this is your first draft effort, and you can change it later. Note that sometimes it is attractive to put some of the details in a smaller type, as in some of the examples below, but this is certainly an optional design choice.

Oppenheimer University
B.A., Economics (GPA: 3.66/4.0)

High Lowlands, CT
expected May 2001

Honors:

- Dean's List (four semesters)
- Herbert Hoover Scholar
- Test Proctor

Coursework:

- History of Bubble Economies
- Macroeconomic Forecasting
- Globalization
- Economic Modeling Theories
- Business Law
- The Banking System
- Pricing & Valuation
- Challenges of Deflation
- Consulting Practices

Activities:

- Entrepreneur's Club - Treasurer (elected)
- Student Senate - Treasurer (appointed)
- Finance Club
- The Oppie Investment Pool - Founding Member (23% annual return)

* * *



Oppenheimer University
B.S., Computer Science, minor in **Mathematics**

High Lowlands, CT
expected May 2001

Honors:

- GPA in computer science, 3.82; GPA in mathematics, 4.0; GPA overall 3.35

Areas of Academic Emphasis:

- Artificial Intelligence
- Fuzzy Logic
- Neural Networks
- Theoretical Physics
- Game Theory
- Epistemology
- Brain Physiology
- Cognitive Psychology
- History of Science

Activities:

- New York Marathon (twice)
- Tutor, mathematics, Woodrow Wilson High School, High Lowlands, CT

* * *

B.A., Political Science, Oppenheimer University, High Lowlands, CT

expected May 2001

Coursework Included:

- Microeconomics
- Macroeconomics
- Research Methodologies in the Social Sciences
- Issues in International Trade

Activities:

- Co-wrote the revised Student Senate election procedures, adopted 1990.
- Organized retirement party for Prof. J. Solinski.
- Teaching Assistant to Prof. R. Taylor's "Introduction to the Political Sciences."

* * *

Oppenheimer University
Candidate for the Bachelor of Business Administration

High Lowlands, CT
expected May 2003

Areas of Interest:

International Business / International Trade

Special Projects:

- Conducted research into the relationship between global trade patterns and shared languages, resulting in a predictive formula for the cash value of the bias for a trading partner with a shared language.
- Prepared a five-year pro forma financial forecast for a restaurant chain involving various scenarios for expansion.
- Delegate, International Trade Association Student Forum, Boston, 2000.

Of course, your listings don't need to be as fancy as these examples, but it's usually best to write long on your first draft and worry about how to make it all fit on your second draft.



The Experience Listing

The most important thing to remember about the experience listing is that you can list any relevant experience that establishes you have the background the employer is seeking. The key word is “experience,” not “employment.” So consider your full-time paid experiences, of course, but also remember to consider your part-time and unpaid experiences of all types, as well. If you filled out the forms properly in STEP 2, you already have an excellent catalog of relevant experience.

Experience listings are usually listed in reverse chronological order, which means that your most recent experience will be listed first. Because of this convention, if you want to put your best material forward in the resume, you may choose to divide your experience listing into parts, such as “Related Experience” and “Additional Experience,” or “Professional Experience” and “Student Employment,” or “Teaching Experience” and “Other Experience,” or “Sales & Marketing Experience” and “Additional Business Experience.”

The guideline to follow is this: **Put the information in order of interest to your targeted reader.** Anything that establishes that you have the knowledge, skills, abilities, or personality traits that an employer is seeking should be featured before other experiences that do not establish these points quite as well.

Some students will even place headings down the left margin to alert the resume reader to what is important about the experience listed to the right. Highlights such as “leadership” or “sales” or “accounting” or “writing” help a reader to notice these aspects of an experience listing. See below for examples of this technique.

Throughout your resume you should follow the peculiar conventions of “resume English.” Write the resume in the first person, but omit first-person pronouns such as “I” or “we.” It is understood that “I” is the subject of most sentences. Use the active voice; avoid such constructions as “duties included” or “was responsible for.” Instead, start your sentences with action verbs such as “created,” or “launched” (see list below). Finally, verb tenses should be accurate. If you are reporting something that you continue to do, use the present tense; if you are discussing an accomplishment or task that has been completed, use the past tense. These rules will be easy to follow if you use the examples as your guide and write naturally.

An intelligent resume writer will focus on accomplishments. Although many entry-level jobs provide few opportunities to make major contributions, a little extra effort here can really spice up your presentation. As a humorous but facetious example, if you are assigned to sweep the dock and you switch from a 10" broom to a 12" broom, you have “contributed to a 20% increase in productivity.”

Generally, you will want to favor “hard” accomplishments and contributions over “soft” accomplishments and contributions. “Hard” accomplishments are quantified and easily verified, such as “sold 17% more widgets than any other rookie.” “Soft” accomplishments are real and important, but less quantifiable and less easy to verify, such as “improved account loyalty” or “improved morale on the project team.”

Also consider your basis for comparison. You can compare your performance to other new hires or to everyone in the department, for example, or to the numbers from last year or the projected numbers for this year, and so on. You can report your effort in dollars, pounds, units, or percentages. Think hard about the best way to accurately report your contributions.

Some creative attention to your contributions will result in a much better resume. Just remember to be 100% honest. If a resume reader discovers a lie, or comes to believe that you are overstating your abilities, your resume will be the opposite of effective. Remember, you can use such qualifiers as “co-





managed,” “contributed to,” “partially responsible for,” and “some exposure to” to squeeze every ounce out of your background without overstating it.

Start the listings with the name of the company, the city, the dates, and your title. If your title doesn’t tell much about your job, you can add a functional title in parentheses after you list your official title, like this:

Student Worker II (Assistant Manager of the Undergraduate Chemistry Lab)

Sometimes it is useful to depict the type of company involved if it will matter to your reader. Thus “Eoff Industries” might be described as “a \$12 million plastics extrusion plant” if you are looking for another industrial opportunity, but not if you were looking for a position in another industry entirely, such as education or services.

Be consistent! If you list the city for one employment report, you have to list them for all. If you bold your title for one job, you have to bold the title for all. An inconsistent design is a resume faux pas of the first order.

Review the following examples, then choose how to organize your experience listings. Once you have a rough idea of what you want to feature, write up each experience in a format similar to one of the examples. You can change them around later, so don’t worry about the details and just get started. Be excited about yourself! Let the reader know what you did above and beyond show up every day! Here are some action verbs to spur your creativity:

acted
activated
adapted
analyzed
assigned
built
chaired
clarified
commanded
compared
compiled
conceived
consolidated
constructed
counseled
created
customized
designed
developed
devised
diagnosed
directed
drafted
drove
enabled
energized
engineered

enlisted
envisioned
erected
established
evaluated
fixed
forecasted
founded
generated
identified
improved
initiated
inspected
instituted
introduced
invented
investigated
jumpstarted
kicked off
launched
managed
mobilized
moderated
monitored
motivated
opened
organized

originated
persuaded
pioneered
planned
prepared
prioritized
produced
programmed
projected
promoted
publicized
recommended
recruited
repaired
researched
resolved
restored
reviewed
revitalized
scheduled
solved
started
strengthened
surveyed
triggered
upgraded
wrote





Here are the examples in different formats. Model your efforts after the one that appeals to you; you can change it easily later.

This first example shows how to list two jobs with the same employer. It also shows how much mileage a student can get from a student "activity" in terms of knowledge, skills, abilities, and traits of interest to an employer.

MANAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Sigma Epsilon Chi, Oppenheimer University High Lowlands, CT
Treasurer Fall-Spring 2000-2001

- Prepared and managed \$64,000 non-food operating budget for the fraternity and collaborated with national organization to prepare the House capital budget (\$116,000 in most recent budget cycle). Food budget is handled through a separate process.
- Projected a budget with 3% variance, the lowest budget variance in twenty years.
- Migrated accounting process from Quicken to HousePlan, a much more sophisticated budgeting tool.
- Improved the depreciation projection system for the House by preparing a twenty-year maintenance schedule. Used free estimates from local contractors to generate the maintenance plan at no cost to the fraternity.

Service Chair Fall-Spring 1999-2000

- Reinstated the service mission of Sigma Epsilon Chi, which had not been active for a number of years.
- Collaborated with entire house on selection of family violence and childhood poverty as House "challenges."
- Generated \$3100 in two fund-raising events, and established direct service opportunities with four local agencies focusing on the needs of challenged families.
- Also indirectly increased the standing of the House with university administration, local authorities, and local media.

* * *

This example shows a different style, with most of the information moved to the right. Interestingly enough this style and the one above use about the same amount of space, so it becomes an aesthetic decision which you prefer.

EXPERIENCE Oppenheimer University Development Department High Lowlands, CT
sales **Capital Fund Representative (Alumni Outreach)** Summer 2000

- Represented the university's new Capital Fund drive to alumni nationwide. Provided a range of appeals, including some fairly sophisticated financial presentations, to justify increased giving. Learned to deal with a wide range of individuals in a sales role.
- Selected to train other student fund raisers on calling techniques, including best methods to handle different types of responses.
- Ranked #1 on the student team. Offered a permanent position with the development office upon graduation from Oppenheimer due to consistently outstanding performance.

public relations Seven Flags Over Arizona Phoenix, AZ
Group Host Summer 1999

- Served as a park guide for groups, about 20% business, church, and incentive





groups from all over the U.S. and about 80% foreign business and leisure travelers. Used Spanish and Japanese language abilities on the job.

- Attended Betty Forrester’s “Global Relations Training Program for Sales & Service,” a three-day intensive course on social and business protocol in cultures all over the world.

field research Profs. R. Cook and W. Stevens

High Lowlands, CT

Research Assistant

Spring 1999

- Conducted field research into consumer behavior both by direct observation and by direct survey. This was an outside consulting assignment managed by Profs. Cook and Stevens of the Oppenheimer psychology department.
- Trained in objective interviewing techniques. Also was the only field research assistant who was invited to review the first draft of the study for comment.
- Letter of recommendation available.

* * *

The following version shows how a student can combine a series of seemingly different experiences into a cogent argument that he or she possesses the knowledge, skills, abilities, and traits an employer seeks.

WRITING EXPERIENCE

Slam Poet and Promoter, Oppenheimer University English Department, 1998-present

- Featured poet at six student poetry readings, including a rare solo reading spring 2000.
- Promoted slam poetry as a performance art form. Tripled attendance at poetry events and created campus-wide buzz about this exciting form of live composition.
- Taught a workshop for all students on using live composition to spur creativity.

Office Assistant (Advertising Assistant), Watkins Realty, Summer 2000

- Drafted all advertisements for houses for sale, initiating a shift away from abbreviations and acronyms indecipherable to all but real estate professionals in favor of mood ads, such as “Hard working professional? Pour a glass of wine and sit in front of your own fireplace.” These ads had double the response rates of traditional ads.
- Also provided general administrative and office assistance.

Office Intern (Constituency Correspondent), Senator Diane Feinstein, Summer 1999

- Drafted letters in response to constituency queries and appeals. Wrote memos and queries to government agencies on behalf of constituency concerns.
- Special honor: Selected to conduct original research and draft white papers on topics of concern to the senator.
- Monitored legislation to ensure timely and accurate communication of status of legislation in process.
- Also provided general office support in a very busy, mission-critical office.

Again, your listings don’t need to be as fancy as these examples, but it’s usually best to write long on your first draft and worry about how to make it all fit on your second draft. Some experience listings, the least important ones, for example, might be as brief as this:

Food Server, Alice’s Vegetarian Restaurant, Iowa City, Iowa, Summer 2000



Bells & Whistles

The most common bells and whistles on student resumes are a “Profile” or “Objective,” and an “Additional” section. When you know exactly what job you want, an objective can convey that clearly. Objectives and profiles go at the top of your resume, directly under your heading. Here is an example.

OBJECTIVE

A copy writing position with Altruistic Advertising.

This technique lets the reader know that you have prepared this resume specifically for her or him. Try to avoid vacuous overstated objectives like the following, which in fact come across to the reader as a list of demands:

OBJECTIVE

A challenging and rewarding position with opportunity to continue to advance and develop my skills with a progressive and nurturing organization dedicated to eliminating poverty while preserving our precious natural environment.

Yuck!

A profile, on the other hand, is a list of the skills and abilities that you hope to apply on the job. A profile is, in ten lines or fewer, an advertisement of the skills you most want to utilize. “Profile” sections may be titled anything from “Profile,” “Strengths,” and “Areas of Knowledge & Ability,” to “Expertise,” or similar. Here is a typical example:

STRENGTHS

Copy Writing and Editing

- Can generate a large volume of ideas quickly.
- Business writing experience in a variety of styles (informative, persuasive, humorous).
- Mastery of standard American business English; knowledge of *AP Stylebook*, *Chicago Manual of Style*, *MLA Handbook*, *Fowler’s*, and the other standard usage guidebooks.
- Trained professional writer; able to function on a creative team.

Of course, you can combine the objective and the profile formats, which would come out something like this:

OBJECTIVE

A copy writing position with Altruistic Advertising offering an opportunity to apply my education, skills, and abilities.

Strengths:

- Fully committed to the Altruistic Advertising business model: “We do it for free!”
- Can generate a large volume of ideas quickly.
- Business writing experience in a variety of styles (informative, persuasive, humorous).
- Mastery of standard American business English; knowledge of *AP Stylebook*, *Chicago Manual of Style*, *MLA Handbook*, *Fowler’s*, and the other standard usage guidebooks.





- Bilingual, English-Spanish. Can write advertising in English or Spanish.
- Trained professional writer; able to function on a creative team.

Objectives and profiles are important when a resume has to compete with dozens, or even hundreds, of other resumes. They tell the reader what's coming in the resume to follow, and keep students from being screened out whose background is not immediately applicable. When a student has guaranteed access to an employer, however, objectives and profiles may have a limiting effect. For example, the interviewer may have filled the copy writing job yesterday, and is now trying to fill an account executive slot. In a case where a student has a guaranteed interview, a safer objective might be:

OBJECTIVE

A position with Altruistic Advertising offering an opportunity to apply my education, skills, and abilities.

"Additional" sections on a student's resume generally fall at the bottom, after the experience listing and may contain any information considered pertinent to the reader, but not important enough to have been featured in the profile, education, or experience listings above. "Additional" sections can be grab bags of information, containing a reference to additional paid employment, sports, hobbies, activities, honors, awards, foreign language skills, and countries to which the student has traveled. If a student has only one type of information in an "Additional" listing, such as sports or travel or hobbies, then the additional section should probably just be named "Sports," or "Travel," or "Hobbies."

This section can also be used to convey a little personality, especially if the rest of the resume has been pretty dry. (Note: hobbies are usually excluded from professional resumes after you have a few years of experience, but they are commonly listed for students and recent college graduates.)

Remember, you are presenting information that is intended to persuade the reader to interview you for a job or consider you for a graduate or other academic opportunity. So, if your additional information does not contribute to that goal, leave it out! The image you have so carefully constructed above may be destroyed by admitting that your hobby is "watching TV news channels with the sound turned off," or whatever. Be prudent.

Here are two examples:

ADDITIONAL

Knowledge of business protocol in Latin America and the Iberian Peninsula. Fluent in Spanish; basic Portuguese. Travel to Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Portugal, Spain, Japan.

Hobbies include translating science fiction from English into Spanish and designing and flying novelty kites.

* * *

ADDITIONAL

Additional experience in retail sales and customer service, gaining strong interpersonal skills in addition to technical employment listed above.

National Outdoor Leadership School, 2000. Hobbies include long-distance hiking (trekking) and





wilderness canoeing. Marathon runner (one time; once was enough).

Available for unlimited travel and/or relocation for a company offering continuing advancement.

* * *

Foreign students, or those domestic students who are very likely to be mistaken for foreign students, may wish to include a "Personal" section such as one of these:

PERSONAL

French citizen; U.S. resident alien, valid "Green Card," qualified for immediate employment anywhere in the U.S. or E.U.

* * *

PERSONAL

Citizen of Brazil; F-1 student visa, qualified for one year of full-time employment related to my major area of study; details on request.

Students not possessing the right to work, and needing visa sponsorship from an employer, are probably better off not mentioning it at all. See your foreign student liaison for more information on your visa status and your rights and responsibilities.

Students applying internationally need to know that all over the world *except the United States* date of birth, place of birth, and marital status are required information on resumes. Here's an example:

PERSONAL

Citizenship: U.S. citizen, valid passport, ready for immediate assignment.
Date of birth: August 26, 1983. Place of birth: Seattle, Washington.
Marital status: Single.

(Just for the record, on domestic resumes, do not provide a picture, your date of birth, place of birth, marital status, names and ages of children, height, weight, or social security number. These practices were eliminated by about 1975, so you'll look pretty foolish if you do.)

Other types of bells and whistles are lists. "Publications" would contain a list of articles published, as well as articles "submitted," "pending," or "in press." See a professor for the proper citation format for your discipline. "Affiliations" would contain a list of the pertinent professional or academic organizations of which you are a member or a student member. "Technical Skillset" would contain a laundry list of your technical skills, such as your computer skills or your skills with specialized laboratory equipment. If the lists are too long, attach them to the resume and cite them as in this example:

PUBLICATIONS

See addendum.

It is not necessary to place, anywhere on a resume, "References available upon request." This is understood; it's now considered old-fashioned to say this, and it wastes a precious line you could use to better represent your skills.



Scannable & Electronic Versions

Optical character recognition technology has made major advances in recent years, and most companies that scan resumes don't ask for a special version. However, if you know you are writing a resume to be scanned, or if you wish to translate a regular resume into a scannable version, here are the most important tips:

Remove bold, italics, asterisks, symbols, bullets, borders, dingbats, and especially any underlining. Use the same size and type of font throughout the resume. Convert any color options to black ink.

Remove *all* indentation, so that every single line starts on the left margin.

Convert your bulleted tables and lists into plain linear lists or regular sentences, so that

Coursework included:

- Analytical Chemistry
- Theoretical Physics
- Fractals

becomes

Coursework included Analytical Chemistry, Theoretical Physics, Fractals.

Favor nouns over verbs. Human readers may be excited to learn that you “launched” or “created” or “managed” but machines will be looking for “Linux,” “Portuguese,” or “artificial intelligence.” This is true about all electronic forms of a resume.

Web-based resumes present a different opportunity, however. For one thing, there is no length limit. By using HTML, you can always link to more and more information. Use links such as “For more on financial and budgeting skills, click [here](#).” You can also provide a picture and more of a “magazine-look” layout, if you want. Otherwise, the front page of your resume should pretty much look like your paper version.

(Note: you can provide a picture on your own Web-based resume if you want, that is, on the resume that is on *your own home page*; however, if you submit your HTML resume electronically you must remove it. It is against the law for an employer to seek a picture with a job resume, so most employers get pretty nervous whenever one comes into the office.)

When an employer invites you to submit your resume electronically, you must provide it in the requested format, whether that is ASCII, Word, RTF, HTML, or whatever. The standard, like it or not, is to submit your resume in Microsoft Word for Windows (commonly called the IBM format). If not otherwise directed, this would be your best choice. Be aware that most employers will not open an unsolicited attachment, no matter what you promise them is inside. If you send it unsolicited, it's better to pull the entire resume into the body of the email message.

Following is an example of a complete draft resume, assembled from the examples in this module. The student's next effort would be to pare down all this good information until it fits onto one page, and make sure the design was attractive and consistent throughout. Best of luck with your resume writing efforts, and remember, this is a life skill to master, not just a one-time task!





Gabriella Marcella Garza

email: gmg33@student.pacific.edu or ggarza33@aol.com

Web page: www.pacific.edu/students/gmg33/web-res

cellphone w/ voicemail and pager: (310) 555-1685

west coast address

Student Box 1387
Pacific College
Los Angeles, CA 90010
voice: (310) 555-3185

permanent address

1243 SW 18th Street
San Antonio, TX 78201
voice: (210) 555-8395
fax: (210) 555-8304

east coast address

c/o Santiago
44 West Broadway, Apt. R-12
New York, NY 10014
message only: (212) 555-3018

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Strengths:

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- Bilingual, English-Spanish. Can write advertising in English or Spanish.
- .Trained professional writer; able to function on a creative team.

EDUCATION

Oppenheimer University
Candidate for the Bachelor of Business Administration

High Lowlands, CT
expected May 2003

Areas of Interest:

International Business / International Trade

Special Projects:

- Conducted research into the relationship between global trade patterns and shared languages, resulting in a predictive formula for the cash value of the bias for a trading partner with a shared language.
- Prepared a five-year pro forma financial forecast for a restaurant chain involving various scenarios for expansion.
- Delegate, International Trade Association Student Forum, Boston, 2000.





EXPERIENCE Oppenheimer University Development Department High Lowlands, CT
sales **Capital Fund Representative (Alumni Outreach)** Summer 2000

- Represented the university's new Capital Fund drive to alumni nationwide. Provided a range of appeals, including some fairly sophisticated financial presentations, to justify increased giving. Learned to deal with a wide range of individuals in a sales role.
- Selected to train other student fund raisers on calling techniques, including best methods to handle different types of responses.
- Ranked #1 on the student team. Offered a permanent position with the development office upon graduation from Oppenheimer due to consistently outstanding performance.

public relations Seven Flags Over Arizona Phoenix, AZ
Group Host Summer 1999

- Served as a park guide for groups, about 20% business, church, and incentive groups from all over the U.S. and about 80% foreign business and leisure travelers. Used Spanish and Japanese language abilities on the job.
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Hobbies include translating science fiction from English into Spanish, and designing and flying novelty kites.





If you have any queries, comments, or suggestions, feel free to forward them to the author of this module: Donald Asher, Asher Associates, San Francisco, (415) 543-7130, fax (415) 441-0389, donasher@ix.netcom.com.

Donald Asher is a business writer specializing in career development and higher education issues. He has written three books on resumes, including *From College to Career: Resumes for Any Major from Accounting to Zoology* (wetfeet.com press, 1999), *The Overnight Resume: The Fastest Way to Your Next Job* (Ten Speed Press, 1999), and *Asher's Bible of Executive Resumes: And How to Write Them* (Ten Speed Press, 1997), as well as the best-selling guide to graduate admissions, *Graduate Admissions Essays: How to Write Your Way into the Graduate Program of Your Choice* (Ten Speed Press, 1999). Donald Asher also lectures on career development issues at colleges and universities from coast to coast. He lives in San Francisco.

