Career Development
Résumé and Cover Letter Writing Activity

Read over this sound advice from Services for Youth, a division of the Government of Canada (http://www.youth.gc.ca/eng/topics/jobs/resume.shtml).

Once you have read over this section, please select the type of resume that fits you best, and use the associated template to help you get started. The templates are available on my website - stephentravis.wordpress.com

Types of résumés

Depending on your work experience, the job you're applying for, or your personal preference, you may want to use a particular type of résumé. Here are two types of résumés to choose from:

A <u>functional résumé</u> focuses on your skills

If you haven't had a lot of (or any) work experience, a functional résumé that focuses on your skills is a good way to market yourself to potential employers.

Instead of focusing on your previous work experience, a skills-focused résumé highlights the transferable skills you gained from previous activities, experiences, or volunteer work.

It's most commonly used when you've had a large gap in your employment history, or if you have never worked before. **CHOOSE THIS OPTION IF YOU <u>DO NOT HAVE</u> FORMAL WORK EXPERIENCE.**

- Example of a functional résumé
- Template of a functional résumé

A <u>chronological résumé</u> focuses on your experience

Focusing on your work history is one of the more popular ways to structure a résumé. It shows employers all your work experience, focusing on positions you've held and your past responsibilities and accomplishments.

The chronological résumé is organized with your most recent information first. The goal is to give a comprehensive work history, organized by each job you've held. You give your position title, place of employment, how long you worked there, and a breakdown of your responsibilities or accomplishments. **CHOOSE THIS OPTION IF YOU <u>HAVE</u> FORMAL WORK EXPERIENCE.**

This is a great multi-purpose résumé that works for most job applications, including retail.

- Example of a chronological résumé
- Template of a chronological résumé

Important information to include in your résumé

There are a variety of different headings you can use in your résumé, depending on what type of résumé you choose to write.

However, regardless of the type of résumé you choose, here are three of the most important things it should include:

Your personal information

The first thing your employer should see when looking at your résumé is your name. Make sure it is clear, stands out, and is easy to read.

Your résumé should include your full address, contact phone numbers, and an e-mail address that incorporates your first and last name.

Things you should not include on your résumé:

- your height, age, weight
- a photo of yourself
- your Social Insurance Number

Education

List your education, starting with the most recent, and work backwards from there. Include the name of the school, the city or town where each school you attended is located (secondary and beyond), and the years you completed.

Be sure to list any certificates or diplomas you received, including those for mini-courses like computer or software courses, first aid, or any other training that might be useful in the job you are applying for.

Skills and experience

Use your résumé to show where you worked, what you learned, and how your skills and experience apply to the job you're applying for. Highlight abilities, skills, and experience that relate to the job you're applying for. These can come from paid or unpaid work, volunteer experience, and even hobbies.

If all of your experience is in an unrelated field to the job you're applying for, focus on the transferable skills you learned that can be applied to the new job you're applying for.

When listing your work experience, include the location (city, province) and the dates you worked (month, year) for each job or volunteer position. Use action words to describe what you did in the positions you held. Focus on the top-five duties for each job.

Other relevant information

You may also want to include your job goals, the languages you speak, or any relevant achievements or awards. You can also include interests or activities that say something positive about you. Don't forget, however, that the point of your résumé is to show why you are the right person for the job.

There are no official rules for what headings you should include on your résumé. Just remember to keep it concise, with the most important information at the top.

For example:

- Let's say you are applying for a job in software development and, although you have never worked in that field, you have a diploma in software engineering. In this case, be sure to put your education section at the top.
- If you are applying to work in the food services industry and you have a lot of experience working in restaurants, be sure to list that information before your education details.

Top-12 résumé tips

1. **Think ahead.** If you wait until the last minute to hand in your résumé, you could miss the deadline and risk not being considered for the job.
2. **Tailor your résumé.** Include information on your résumé associated with the job you are applying for.
3. **Chunk it out.** If there is a lot of information, break it into separate sections with specific headings.
4. **Use action words**. Focus on things you have accomplished, and avoid starting every sentence with "I".
5. **Proofread.** Never rely on spell check.
6. **Repeat Tip 5.** Seriously, even one misspelled word could put you in the "do not consider" pile.
7. **Make it presentable.** Make sure your résumé looks clean and organized. Use letter-sized paper (8.5 x 11-inch) and a font that's easy to read, like Times New Roman or Arial.
8. **Keep it concise**. Try to keep your résumé as short as possible—ideally one page, two pages maximum.
9. **Be honest.** Lying on your résumé is never a good idea. Many people who lie on their applications end up losing their jobs when their employers find out the truth.
10. **Be professional.** Remember, this is a business document, so don't include unnecessary embellishments like flashy paper or a picture of yourself.
11. **Use point form.** You don't want it too wordy. Just the facts with details like dates and official titles for all experiences, certificates, previous jobs etc.
12. **Try to keep the format consistent throughout.** You should align things to the left and consider your use of white space. You want the page to have some balance without text crammed in one corner or to one side only.

The following activities courtesy of: http://www.stannes-bristol.org/jobboard/docs/resume-writing-info.pdf

PERSONAL INFORMATION:

Full Name:	
Address:	
Telephone Number:	

Social Security #:		Date of Birth:	
Emergency Contact:		Telephone Number:	
Do you have a driver's license?	☐ YES	☐ NO	

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

School Name:		School Address:	
Course of Study (Honors, Tech Prep, etc.):		Dates of Attendance:	From: To:
Degree/Diploma Received or Grade Level Completed:			

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Course of Study (Honors, Tech Prep, etc.):		Dates of Attendance:	From: To:
Degree/Diploma Received or Grade Level Completed:			

Extracurricular Activities (teams, clubs, volunteer work, etc.): _____

_____

Honors and Awards Received: _____

_____

Computer Skills (hardware and software you can use): _____

_____

Machine Skills (include machines you can operate): _____

_____

Specialized Skills (foreign language spoken, auto repair, etc.) _____

_____

WORK EXPERIENCE (List Most Recent Position First)

Employer:		Dates Employed:	From: To:
Address:			
Telephone Number:		Position Held:	
Starting Pay:	per	Ending Pay:	per
Supervisor's Name:		Supervisor's Title:	
Duties and Responsibilities:	1. _____ 2. _____ 3.		
Reason for leaving:			

Employer:		Dates Employed:	From: To:
Address:			
Telephone Number:		Position Held:	
Starting Pay:	per	Ending Pay:	per
Supervisor's Name:		Supervisor's Title:	
Duties and Responsibilities:	1. _____ 2. _____ 3.		
Reason for leaving:			

Employer:		Dates Employed:	From: To:
Address:			
Telephone Number:		Position Held:	
Starting Pay:	per	Ending Pay:	per
Supervisor's Name:		Supervisor's Title:	
Duties and Responsibilities:	1. _____ 2. _____ 3.		
Reason for leaving:			

Employer:		Dates Employed:	From: To:
Address:			
Telephone Number:		Position Held:	
Starting Pay:	per	Ending Pay:	per
Supervisor's Name:		Supervisor's Title:	
Duties and Responsibilities:	1. _____ 2. _____ 3.		
Reason for leaving:			

Resume Worksheet

REFERENCES (List At Least 2)

Name: Job Title:		Employer:	
Home Phone #:		Work Phone #:	
Home Address:		Work Address:	
How long has this person known you?			
Has this person given permission to be used as a reference? ☐ YES ☐ NO			
Why can this person recommend you for employment? _____			

Name: Job Title:		Employer:	
Home Phone #:		Work Phone #:	
Home Address:		Work Address:	
How long has this person known you?			
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Home Phone #:		Work Phone #:	
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Why can this person recommend you for employment? _____			

Building A Résumé

Avoid online programs promising to organize and polish your résumé for you. These programs want to sell you there services. They may give you one to start, but rarely will you be able to save it or edit in the future without paying them $$$$s. Rarely do they work well to produce a well formatted final product and you will end up having to redo this work after the fact. Save yourself the $$$$ and trouble and get more familiar with a Word Processing software that you know you will be able to access in the future.

Avoid using space bar or tabs to align text. Learn how to use the indent button to get thing to line up where you want them to go.

To complete this activity, you will use the information that you entered in the last 3 pages.

First things first – what résumé style works best for you?

Circle your choice.

FUNCTIONAL   CHRONOLOGICAL

Using the template and the personal information sheet, complete your résumé! If you are accessing this worksheet on a computer, you can click on the words above to get the résumé you were looking for.

Writing a Cover Letter

To complete this activity, you will also use a template from my website. You can adapt this template for any job that you are applying for. For today's activity, write one for you current place of employment, or for a business that you would like to work at. You can actually use this letter in the real world!

Web address:

Click here for the template.