

# Resume Writing

## **What's a resume for?**

Typically, a resume organizes and presents your work experience, education and training, skills and abilities, and other information relevant to a position you may be seeking (a “targeted” resume). However, a resume can also help you get a picture of what you’ve accomplished in your professional life, which can help you make decisions about what you want to do in your future and what training or education you may need to get there (an “inventory” resume). An inventory resume can also be used to present yourself generally to a diverse audience.

## **What is included in a resume?**

Resumes tend to include the writer’s name, address, phone, and other contact information such as e-mail addresses. They also include general education and any specialized training you might have had. Work history is almost always included in resume. Other items that may appear on resumes include special skills (technology, for example), people skills, volunteer work, organizations and memberships, and anything else that creates a picture of your professional life.

## **What does a resume look like?**

Resumes typically are arranged in sections, including education, work history, special skills, and training. They can be organized chronologically (when you held a job or received a degree) or functionally (what skills/abilities that job or that education gave you), or even a combination of the two. The organization of your resume depends on its purpose. Targeted resumes will have different formats depending on the type of job you are seeking. A job in a marketing company or art gallery will require a different look than one targeting a job in an accounting firm. Also, people are more and more often putting their resumes on-line. This requires formatting that will stay put through downloading, different computer systems and so on.

## **How important is grammar/spelling on a resume?**

Usually, all of the “surface” issues of writing, such as grammar, spelling and punctuation are very important when writing a resume. Even though it’s not accurate to do so, many people equate intelligence and/or ability with good spelling and grammar. Even if they don’t do this, errors on resumes almost always signal carelessness or laziness, two attributes employers typically don’t want in employees. Also, a resume is usually the first impression you make on a potential employer. Finally, most employers get more applicants than they can hire, so they have to find reasons to pick one resume over another. Put these things together, and you’ve got to be sure that your resume is error-free.

## **Do resumes have to be typed?**

Yes. Along with error-free writing, your resume needs to look neat and clean as well. It should be typed or word-processed, using an easy-to-read font.

The Community Writing Center has several books that give examples of targeted and inventory resumes. They will provide you will questions to help you get started, outlines to help you organize your resume, and tips for making it an effective representation of your professional life. CWC Writing Assistants are available to assist you in any stage of your writing process. Just ask to sign up for an appointment.

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