

tions). Used appropriately, social-media sites are another tool to help you land your next job.

WRITING PAPER RÉSUMÉS

For a successful job search, you will likely need to present your credentials both on paper and online. This section discusses the fundamentals for preparing paper résumés. The next section discusses electronic résumés.

Many students wonder whether to write their résumé themselves or use a résumé-preparation agency. It is best to write your own résumé, for three reasons:

- *You know yourself better than anyone else does.* No matter how professional the work of a résumé-preparation agency, you can do a better job communicating important information about yourself.
- *Employment officers know the style of the local agencies.* Readers who recognize that you did not write your own résumé might wonder whether you are hiding any deficiencies.
- *If you write your own résumé, you will be more likely to adapt it to different situations.* You are unlikely to return to a résumé-preparation agency and pay an additional fee to make a minor revision.

A résumé communicates in two ways: through its appearance and through its content.

Appearance of the Résumé

Your résumé has to look professional. When employers look at a résumé, they see the documents they will be reading if they hire you. Résumés should appear neat and professional. They should have

- *Generous margins.* Leave a one-inch margin on all four sides.
- *Clear type.* Use a good-quality laser printer.
- *Balance.* Arrange the information so that the page has a balanced appearance.
- *Clear organization.* Use adequate white space. The line spacing between items should be greater than the line spacing within an item. That is, there should be more space between your education section and your employment section than between items within either of those sections. You should be able to see the different sections clearly if you view it at 50 percent on your monitor or if you stand and look down at the printed résumé on the floor by your feet.

Indent appropriately. When you arrange items in a vertical list, indent *turnovers*, the second and subsequent lines of any item, a few spaces. The following list, from the computer-skills section of a résumé, could be confusing:

Computer Experience

Systems: PC, Macintosh, Linux, Andover AC-256, Prime 360

Software: Dreamweaver, XMetal, Flash, Visual dBASE 7.5, PlanPerfect, Micrografx Designer, Adobe InDesign, Microsoft Office

Languages: C#, C++, Java, HTML, XHTML

When the second line of the long entry is indented, the arrangement is much easier to understand:

Computer Experience

Systems: PC, Macintosh, Linux, Andover AC-256, Prime 360

Software: Dreamweaver, XMetal, Flash, Visual dBASE 7.5, PlanPerfect, Micrografx Designer, Adobe InDesign, Microsoft Office

Languages: C#, C++, Java, HTML, XHTML

Figure 15.2 shows how an unattractive résumé creates a negative impression, whereas an attractive one creates a positive impression.

Content of the Résumé

Although experts advocate different approaches to résumé writing, they all agree that résumés must be informative and attractive.

- *The résumé must provide clear, specific information, without generalizations or self-congratulation.* Your résumé is a sales document, but you are both the salesperson and the product. You cannot gracefully say, “I am a terrific job candidate.” Instead, you have to show the reader by providing the details that will lead the reader to conclude that you are a terrific job candidate.
- *The résumé must be free of errors.* Writing errors cast doubt on the accuracy of the information in the résumé. Ask for assistance after you have written the draft and proofread the finished product at least twice. Then have someone else proofread it, too.

A résumé should be long enough to include all pertinent information but not so long that it bores or irritates the reader. A survey from CareerBuilder.com found that 52 percent of executives prefer one-page résumés for the typical applicant, whereas 44 percent prefer two pages (“Résumés Redefined,” 2008). If you have more experience, your résumé will be longer; if you have less experience, it will be shorter. If the information comes to just over a page, either eliminate or condense some of the material to make it fit onto one page, or modify the layout so that it fills a substantial part of a second page.

 **In This Book**

For more about page design, see Ch. 11, p. 271.

 **In This Book**

For more about proofreading, see Ch. 13, p. 354.

James K. Wislo	1628 Rossi Street Boise, ID 83706 (208) 555 2697 jameswislo@mail.boisestate.edu
Objective	Entry-level position as a general assistant
Education	Boise State University, Boise, ID BS in Biomechanical Engineering Current GPA: 3.1 Expected date of graduation: August 2014 <i>Related course work</i> Basic Mechanics I Skeletal Development and Evolution Biomechanics of Movement Technical Communication
Employment	1/2010–present (20 hours per week): Custodial and maintenance <i>Boise State University, recreation center, Boise, ID</i> Install and maintain soap dispenser machines. Treat all floors (wooden and linoleum) with appropriate chemicals. Pressure-wash showers and sauna using TENNANT 750 machine. Report damaged equipment in the building. Report any shortage or lack of cleaning detergent and equipment. Organize daily and weekly cleaning schedule. 10/2009–1/2010: Food server <i>Aramark Food Service, Boise, ID</i> Serve food across counter. Prepare all condiments to be served. Clean kitchen and eating area after regular open hours. Act as a liaison between students and chef: report on likes and dislikes of students.
Honors	National Dean’s List, 2009–2010 Awarded \$4,500 GEM scholarship from Boise State University
Activities	Member, Boise State University international student organization Certified CPR Instructor, American Red Cross
References	Available upon request

Figure 15.2 Unattractive and Attractive Résumés

The unattractive résumé, with its inadequate margins, poor balance, and poor line spacing, is a chore to read. The attractive résumé is much easier to read and makes a much better impression on readers.

a. Unattractively designed résumé

Figure 15.2 (continued)

James K. Wislo	1628 Rossi Street Boise, ID 83706	(208) 555-2697 jameswislo@mail.boisestate.edu
Objective	Entry-level position as a general assistant	
Education	Boise State University, Boise, ID BS in Biomechanical Engineering Current GPA: 3.1 Expected date of graduation: August 2014	
	<i>Related course work</i> Skeletal Development and Evolution Biomechanics of Movement Basic Mechanics I Technical Communication	
Employment	1/2010–present (20 hours per week): Custodial and maintenance <i>Boise State University, recreation center, Boise, ID</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install and maintain soap dispenser machines. • Treat all floors (wooden and linoleum) with appropriate chemicals. • Pressure-wash showers and sauna using TENNANT 750 machine. • Report damaged equipment in the building. • Report any shortage or lack of cleaning detergent and equipment. • Organize daily and weekly cleaning schedule. 10/2009–1/2010: Food server <i>Aramark Food Service, Boise, ID</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve food across counter. • Prepare all condiments to be served. • Clean kitchen and eating area after regular open hours. • Act as a liaison between students and chef: report on likes and dislikes of students. 	
Honors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Dean’s List, 2009–2010 • Awarded \$4,500 GEM scholarship from Boise State University 	
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member, Boise State University international student organization • Certified CPR Instructor, American Red Cross 	
References	Available upon request	

b. Attractively designed résumé

ETHICS NOTE**Writing Honest Job-Application Materials**

Many résumés contain lies or exaggerations. Job applicants say they attended colleges they didn't and were awarded degrees they weren't, give themselves inflated job titles, say they were laid off when they were really fired for poor performance, and inflate their accomplishments. Companies take this problem seriously. Career-guidance specialist Michelle Goodman (2010) reports that, according to the Society for Human Resource Management, most employers run background checks on applicants, and about a third of these checks reveal significant lies. Employers hire agencies that verify the applicant's education and employment history and check for a criminal record. If the company finds any discrepancies, it does not offer the candidate a position. If the person is already working for the company, he or she is fired.

Two common résumé styles are *chronological* and *skills*. In a *chronological résumé*, you use time as the organizing pattern for each section, including education and experience, and discuss your responsibilities for each job you have held. In a *skills résumé*, you merely list your previous jobs but include a skills section in which you describe your talents and achievements.

Recent graduates usually use the chronological résumé because in most cases they lack the record of skills and accomplishments needed for a skills résumé. However, if you have a lot of professional work experience, consider the skills style.

Elements of the Chronological Résumé

Most chronological résumés have six basic elements: identifying information, objectives or summary of qualifications, education, employment history, interests and activities, and references.

Identifying Information Include your full name, address, phone number, and e-mail address. Use your complete address, including the zip code. If your address during the academic year differs from your home address, list both and identify them clearly. An employer might call during an academic holiday to arrange an interview.

Objectives or Summary of Qualifications After the identifying information, add a statement of objectives or a summary of qualifications.

A *statement of objectives*, used most often by candidates new to the field, is a brief phrase or sentence—for example, “Objective: Entry-level position as a hospital dietitian,” or “A summer internship in manufacturing processes.”

When drafting your statement, follow these three suggestions:

- State only the goals or duties explicitly mentioned, or clearly implied, in the job advertisement. If you unintentionally suggest that your goals are

substantially different from the job responsibilities, the reader might infer that you would not be happy working there and might not consider you further.

- *Focus on the reader's needs, not on your goals.* Instead of stating that you are looking for a position “with opportunities for advancement” or that “offers a high salary,” find out what the company needs: for example, “Position in Software Engineering specializing in database-applications development that enables me to use my four years of experience developing large enterprise-database solutions based on a normalized relational design.”
- *Be specific.* You accomplish little by writing, “Position offering opportunities in the field of health science, where I can use my communication and analytical skills.” Specify what kind of position you want—nurse, physician, hospital administrator, pharmaceutical researcher.

Job candidates with more experience tend to write a *summary of qualifications*. This statement is usually a brief paragraph that highlights three or four important skills or accomplishments. For example:

Summary of Qualifications

Six years' experience creating testing documentation to qualify production programs that run on Automated Test and Handling Equipment. Four years' experience running QA tests on software, hardware, and semiconductor products. Bilingual English and Italian. Secret security clearance.

Education If you are a student or a recent graduate, place the education section next. If you have substantial professional experience, place the employment-history section before the education section.

Include at least the following information in the education section:

- *The degree.* After the degree abbreviation (such as BS, BA, AA, or MS), list your academic major (and, if you have one, your minor)—for example, “BS in Materials Engineering, minor in General Business.”
- *The institution.* Identify the institution by its full name: “Louisiana State University,” not “LSU.”
- *The location of the institution.* Include the city and state.
- *The date of graduation.* If your degree has not yet been granted, add “Anticipated date of graduation” or a similar phrase.
- *Information about other schools you attended.* List any other institutions you attended beyond high school, even those from which you did not earn a degree. The description for other institutions should include the same information as in the main listing. Arrange entries in reverse chronological order: that is, list first the school you attended most recently.

Guidelines

Elaborating on Your Education

The following four guidelines can help you develop the education section of your résumé.

- ▶ **List your grade-point average.** If your average is significantly above the median for the graduating class, list it. Or list your average in your major courses, or all your courses in the last two years. Calculate it however you wish, but be honest and clear.
- ▶ **Compile a list of courses.** Include courses that will interest an employer, such as advanced courses in your major, or communications courses, such as technical communication, public speaking, and organizational communication. For example, a list of business courses on an engineer's résumé shows special knowledge and skills. But don't bother listing required courses; everyone else in your major took the same courses. Include the substantive titles of listed courses; employers won't know what "Chemistry 450" is. Call it by its official title: "Chemistry 450. Organic Chemistry."
- ▶ **Describe a special accomplishment.** For a special senior design or research project, present the title and objective of the project, any special or advanced techniques or equipment you used, and, if you know them, the major results: "A Study of Shape Memory Alloys in Fabricating Actuators for Underwater Biomimetic Applications—a senior design project to simulate the swimming styles and anatomy of fish." A project discussion makes you seem more like a professional: someone who designs and carries out projects.
- ▶ **List honors and awards you received.** Scholarships, internships, and academic awards suggest exceptional ability. If you have received a number of such honors, or some that were not exclusively academic, you might list them separately (in a section called "Honors" or "Awards") rather than in the education section. Decide where this information will make the best impression.

The education section is the easiest part of the résumé to adapt in applying for different positions. For example, a student majoring in electrical engineering who is applying for a position requiring strong communications skills can list communications courses in one version of the résumé and advanced electrical engineering courses in another version. As you compose the education section, emphasize those aspects of your background that meet the requirements for the particular job.

Employment History Present at least the basic information about each job you have held: the dates of employment, the organization's name and location, and your position or title. Then, add carefully selected details. Readers want to know what you did and accomplished. Provide at least a two- to three-line description for each position. For particularly important

or relevant jobs, write more, focusing on one or more of the following factors:

- **Skills.** What technical skills did you use on the job?
- **Equipment.** What equipment did you operate or oversee? In particular, mention computer equipment or software with which you are familiar.
- **Money.** How much money were you responsible for? Even if you considered your data-entry position fairly easy, the fact that the organization grossed, say, \$2 million a year shows that the position involved real responsibility.
- **Documents.** What important documents did you write or assist in writing, such as brochures, reports, manuals, proposals, or Web sites?
- **Personnel.** How many people did you supervise?
- **Clients.** What kinds of, and how many, clients did you do business with in representing your organization?

Whenever possible, emphasize *results*. If you reorganized the shifts of the weekend employees you supervised, state the results:

Reorganized the weekend shift, resulting in a cost savings of more than \$3,000 per year.

Wrote and produced (with Adobe FrameMaker) a 56-page parts catalog that is still used by the company and that increased our phone inquiries by more than 25 percent.

When you describe positions, functions, or responsibilities, use the active voice (“supervised three workers”) rather than the passive voice (“three workers were supervised by me”). The active voice highlights action. Note that writers often omit the *I* at the start of sentences: “Prepared bids,” rather than “I prepared bids.” Whichever style you use, be consistent. Figure 15.3 lists some strong verbs to use in describing your experience.

In This Book

For more about using strong verbs, see Ch. 10, p. 236.

administered	coordinated	evaluated	maintained	provided
advised	corresponded	examined	managed	purchased
analyzed	created	expanded	monitored	recorded
assembled	delivered	hired	obtained	reported
built	developed	identified	operated	researched
collected	devised	implemented	organized	solved
completed	directed	improved	performed	supervised
conducted	discovered	increased	prepared	trained
constructed	edited	instituted	produced	wrote

Figure 15.3 Strong Action Verbs Used in Résumés

Here is a sample listing of employment history:

June–September 2011: Student Dietitian
Millersville General Hospital, Millersville, TX

Gathered dietary histories and assisted in preparing menus for a 300-bed hospital. Received “excellent” on all seven items in evaluation by head dietitian.

In just a few lines, you can show that you sought and accepted responsibility and that you acted professionally. Do not write, “I accepted responsibility”; instead, present facts that lead the reader to that conclusion.

Naturally, not all jobs entail professional skills and responsibilities. Many students find summer work as laborers, sales clerks, and so forth. If you have not held a professional position, list the jobs you have held, even if they were unrelated to your career plans. If the job title is self-explanatory, such as waitperson or service-station attendant, don’t elaborate. If you can write that you contributed to your tuition or expenses, such as by earning 50 percent of your annual expenses through a job, employers will be impressed by your self-reliance.

One further suggestion: if you have held a number of nonprofessional as well as several professional positions, group the nonprofessional ones:

Other Employment: cashier (summer 2007), salesperson (part-time, 2008), clerk (summer 2009)

This strategy prevents the nonprofessional positions from drawing the reader’s attention away from the more important positions.

List jobs in reverse chronological order on the résumé to highlight the most recent employment.

Two common circumstances call for some subtlety:

- *You have gaps in your employment history.* If you were not employed for several months or years because you were raising children, attending school, recovering from an accident, or for other reasons, consider using a skills résumé, which focuses more on your skills and less on your job history. Also, you can explain the gaps in the cover letter. For instance, you could write, “I spent 2007 and part of 2009 caring for my elderly parent, but during that time I was able to do some substitute teaching and study at home to prepare for my A+ and Network+ certification, which I earned in late 2008.” Do not lie or mislead about your dates of employment.
- *You have had several positions with the same employer.* If you want to show that you have had several positions with the same employer, you can present one description that encompasses all the positions or present a separate description for each position.

Presenting One Description

Blue Cross of Iowa, Ames, Iowa (January 2003–present)

- *Internal Auditor II (2007–present)*
- *Member Service Representative/Claims Examiner II (2005–2007)*
- *Claims Examiner II (2003–2005)*

As Claims Examiner II, processed national account inquiries and claims in accordance with . . . After promotion to Member Service Representative/Claims Examiner II position, planned policies and procedures, . . . As Internal Auditor II, audit claims, enrollment, and inquiries; run dataset population and sample reports . . .

This format enables you to mention your promotions and to create a clear narrative that emphasizes your progress within the company.

Presenting Separate Descriptions

Blue Cross of Iowa, Ames, Iowa (January 2003–present)

- *Internal Auditor II (2007–present)*
Audit claims, enrollment, and inquiries . . .
- *Member Service Representative/Claims Examiner II (2003–2007)*
Planned policies and procedures . . .
- *Claims Examiner II (2003–2005)*

Processed national account inquiries and claims in accordance with . . .

This format, which enables you to create fuller descriptions of each position, is effective if you are trying to show that each position is distinct and you wish to describe the more-recent positions more fully.

Interests and Activities The interests-and-activities section of the résumé is the appropriate place for several kinds of information about you:

- participation in community-service organizations (such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters) or volunteer work in a hospital
- hobbies related to your career (for example, electronics for an engineer)
- sports, especially those that might be socially useful in your professional career, such as tennis, racquetball, and golf
- university-sanctioned activities, such as membership on a team, work on the college newspaper, or election to a responsible position in an academic organization or a residence hall

Do not include activities that might create a negative impression, such as gambling or performing in a rock band. And always omit such activities as meeting people and reading: everybody does these things.

References Potential employers will want to learn more about you from your professors and previous employers. These people who are willing to speak or write on your behalf are called *references*.

Choose your references carefully. Solicit references only from those who know your work best and for whom you have done your best work—for instance, a previous employer with whom you worked closely or a professor from whom you received A's. Don't ask prominent professors who do not know your work well; they will be unable to write informative letters.

Do not simply assume that someone is willing to serve as a reference for you. Give the potential referee an opportunity to decline gracefully. Sometimes the person has not been as impressed with your work as you think. If you simply ask the person to serve as a reference, he or she might accept and then write a lukewarm letter. It is better to ask, "Would you be able to write an enthusiastic letter for me?" or "Do you feel you know me well enough to write a strong recommendation?" If the person shows any signs of hesitation or reluctance, withdraw the request. It may be a little embarrassing, but it is better than receiving a weak recommendation.

Once you have secured your references' permission to list them, create a references page. This page begins with your name and contact information, just as you present this information at the top of the résumé itself. Some job applicants add, for each reference, a sentence or two describing their relationship with the reference, such as, "Dr. Willerton was my adviser and my instructor for two courses; one in technical editing and one in document design." Figure 15.4 on page 416 shows a references page.

Other Elements The sections discussed so far appear on almost everyone's résumé. Other sections are either optional or appropriate for only some job seekers.

- **Computer skills.** Classify your skills in categories such as hardware, software, languages, and operating systems. List any professional certifications you have earned.
- **Military experience.** If you are a veteran, describe your military service as if it were a job, citing dates, locations, positions, ranks, and tasks. List positive job-performance evaluations.
- **Language ability.** A working knowledge of another language can be very valuable, particularly if the potential employer has international interests and you could be useful in translation or foreign service. List your proficiency, using terms such as *beginner*, *intermediate*, and *advanced*. Some applicants distinguish among reading, writing, and speaking abilities.
- **Willingness to relocate.** If you are willing to relocate, say so. Many organizations will find you a more attractive candidate.

Samantha Breveux

5986 Center Street Boise, ID 83703
208.555.8693 sbreveux@gmail.com

Professional References

Dr. Dale Cletis
Professor of English
Boise State University
Boise, ID 83725
208.555.2637
dcletis@boisestate.edu

Dr. Cletis was my instructor in three literature courses, as well as my adviser.

Dr. Miriam Finkelstein
Professor of Economics
Boise State University
Boise, ID 83725
208.555.9375
mfinkel@boisestate.edu

Dr. Finkelstein encouraged me to study for a minor in economics, which I did. She was my instructor in two courses.

Dr. Charles Tristan
Professor of English
Boise State University
Boise, ID 83725
208.555.1355
ctristan@boisestate.edu

Dr. Tristan, my instructor in two courses, encouraged me to study abroad. I spent my junior year in Paris.

Personal References

Mr. Heiko Yamamoto
Yamamoto Paving
1450 Industrial Drive
Eagle, ID 83467
208.555.2387
heiko@yamamotopaving.com

For three summers, beginning after my high-school graduation, I worked in Mr. Yamamoto's office as a bookkeeper.

Mr. Paul Engels
Yellow House Literary Cabin
1877 Capitol Boulevard
Boise, ID 83703
208.555.3827
pengels@yellowhouse.org

I volunteered my services writing and distributing press releases and advertising for the Yellow House Literary Cabin.

Martha Cummings, RN
St. Luke's Regional Medical Center
322 Bannock Street
Boise, ID 83604
208.555.3489
mcummings@stlukesrhc.org

For many years, my family has trained service dogs for hospital visitations. I worked with Ms. Cummings during high school and my first two years in college in helping other service-dog trainers.

Less-advanced job applicants are more likely than more-advanced job applicants to list personal references.

Figure 15.4 References Page

Elements of the Skills Résumé

A skills résumé differs from a chronological résumé in that it includes a separate section, usually called “Skills” or “Skills and Abilities,” that emphasizes job skills and knowledge. In a skills résumé, the employment section becomes a brief list of information about your employment history: company, dates of employment, and position. Here is an example of a skills section.

Skills and Abilities

Management

Served as weekend manager of six employees in a retail clothing business. Also trained three summer interns at a health-maintenance organization.

Writing and Editing

Wrote status reports, edited performance appraisals, participated in assembling and producing an environmental impact statement using desktop publishing.

Teaching and Tutoring

Tutored in the University Writing Center. Taught a two-week course in electronics for teenagers. Coach youth basketball.

In a skills section, you choose the headings, the arrangement, and the level of detail. Your goal, of course, is to highlight the skills the employer is seeking.

Figures 15.5, 15.6, and 15.7 on pages 418–20 show three examples of effective résumés.

WRITING ELECTRONIC RÉSUMÉS

Although paper résumés continue to be popular, especially after a company has decided to interview you, electronic résumés are more popular, especially for organizations that receive many applications and especially for a candidate’s first contact with the organization. According to CareerBuilder.com, 94 percent of the 500 largest U.S. companies use software for the first look at résumés (“Résumés Redefined,” 2008). For this reason, you will need an electronic résumé in addition to your traditional formatted paper résumé.

Most companies use computerized *applicant-tracking systems* to evaluate the dozens, hundreds, or even thousands of job applications they receive every day. Companies store the information from these applications in databases, which they search electronically for desired keywords to generate a pool of applicants for specific positions.

An electronic résumé can take several forms:

- A *formatted résumé attached to an e-mail message*. You attach the word-processing file to an e-mail message. Or you save your résumé as a Portable Document Format (PDF) file and attach it. (A PDF of your résumé retains the formatting of your original and prevents others from modify-

The writer uses design to emphasize his name and provides his contact information, including his e-mail address.

The writer could modify his objective to name the company to which he is applying.

The writer chooses to emphasize his advanced engineering courses. For another position, he might emphasize other courses.

The writer wisely creates a category that calls attention to his academic awards and his membership in his field's major professional organization.

The writer lists his references on a separate page and includes this page in his application materials only if an employer requests it. For each reference, the writer provides complete contact information and a statement describing his relationship to the person, as shown in Fig. 15.4 on p. 416.

In This Book

Many of the job boards listed on page 403 include samples of résumés.

CARLOS RODRIGUEZ
3109 Vista Street Philadelphia, PA 19136 (215) 555-3880 crodrig@dragon.du.edu

Objective
Entry-level position in signal processing

Education
BS in Electrical Engineering
Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA
Anticipated 6/2012
Grade-Point Average: 3.67 (on a scale of 4.0)
Senior Design Project: “Enhanced Path-Planning Software for Robotics”

Advanced Engineering Courses

Digital Signal Processing	Computer Hardware
Introduction to Operating Systems I, II	Systems Design
Digital Filters	Computer Logic Circuits I, II

Employment

6/2009–1/2010 Electrical Engineering Intern II
RCA Advanced Technology Laboratory, Moorestown, NJ
Designed ultra-large-scale integrated circuits using VERILOG and VHDL hardware description languages. Assisted senior engineer in CMOS IC layout, modeling, parasitic capacitance extraction, and PSPICE simulation operations.

6/2008–1/2009 Electrical Engineering Intern I
RCA Advanced Technology Laboratory, Moorestown, NJ
Verified and documented several integrated circuit designs. Used CAD software and hardware to simulate, check, and evaluate these designs. Gained experience with Mathcad.

Honors and Organizations
Eta Kappa Nu (Electrical Engineering Honor Society)
Tau Beta Pi (General Engineering Honor Society)
IEEE

References
Available upon request

Figure 15.5 Chronological Résumé of a Traditional Student

Alice P. Linder	1781 Weber Road Warminster, PA 18974 (215) 555-3999 linderap423@aol.com											
Objective	An internship in molecular research that uses my computer skills	The writer uses a table format for her résumé. Notice that all her headings are contained within the left-hand column.										
Education	Harmon College, West Yardley, PA BS in Bioscience and Biotechnology Expected Graduation Date: 6/2012	The writer indicates that she is interested in an internship, not a continuing position.										
	<table border="0"> <tr> <td colspan="2"><i>Related Course Work</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>General Chemistry I, II, III</td> <td>Biology I, II, III</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Organic Chemistry I, II</td> <td>Statistical Methods for Research</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Physics I, II</td> <td>Technical Communication</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Calculus I, II</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	<i>Related Course Work</i>		General Chemistry I, II, III	Biology I, II, III	Organic Chemistry I, II	Statistical Methods for Research	Physics I, II	Technical Communication	Calculus I, II		The writer's list of courses includes several outside her technical subject area to emphasize the skills she has demonstrated in her career.
<i>Related Course Work</i>												
General Chemistry I, II, III	Biology I, II, III											
Organic Chemistry I, II	Statistical Methods for Research											
Physics I, II	Technical Communication											
Calculus I, II												
Employment Experience	6/2009–present (20 hours per week): Laboratory Assistant Grade 3 <i>GlaxoSmithKline, Upper Merion, PA</i> Analyze molecular data on E&S PS300, Macintosh, and IBM PCs. Write programs in C#, and wrote a user's guide for an instructional computing package. Train and consult with scientists and deliver in-house briefings.	All of the writer's positions show an interest in working with people.										
	8/2006–present: Volunteer, Physical Therapy Unit <i>Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA</i> Assist therapists and guide patients with their therapy. Use play therapy to enhance strengthening progress.	The volunteer position says something about the writer's character.										
	6/1998–1/2001: Office Manager <i>Anchor Products, Inc., Ambler, PA</i> Managed 12-person office in \$1.2 million company. Also performed general bookkeeping and payroll.	Before attending college, the writer worked as an office manager. Notice how the description of her position suggests that she is a skilled and responsible worker.										
Honors	Awarded three \$5,000 tuition scholarships (2008–2010) from the Gould Foundation.											
Additional Information	Member, Harmon Biology Club, Yearbook Staff Raising three school-age children Tuition 100% self-financed	The writer believes that the skills required in raising children are relevant in the workplace. Others might think that because a résumé describes job credentials, this information should be omitted.										
References	Available upon request											

Figure 15.6 Chronological Résumé of a Nontraditional Student

This is another version of the résumé in Fig. 15.6.

In a skills résumé, you present the skills section at the start. This organization lets you emphasize your professional attributes. Notice that the writer uses specific details—names of software, number of credits, types of documents, kinds of activities—to make her case.

The employment section now contains a list of positions rather than descriptions of what the writer did in each position.

Alice P. Linder	1781 Weber Road Warminster, PA 18974	(215) 555-3999 linderap423@aol.com								
Objective	An internship in molecular research that uses my computer skills									
Skills and Abilities	<p><i>Laboratory Skills</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze molecular data on E&S PS300, Macintosh, and IBM PCs. Write programs in C#. Have taken 12 credits in biology and chemistry labs. <p><i>Communication Skills</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wrote a user's guide for an instructional computing package. Train and consult with scientists and deliver in-house briefings. <p><i>Management Skills</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managed 12-person office in \$1.2 million company. 									
Education	<p>Harmon College, West Yardley, PA BS in Bioscience and Biotechnology Expected Graduation Date: 6/2012</p> <p><i>Related Course Work</i></p> <table> <tr> <td>General Chemistry I, II, III</td> <td>Biology I, II, III</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Organic Chemistry I, II</td> <td>Statistical Methods for Research</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Physics I, II</td> <td>Technical Communication</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Calculus I, II</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		General Chemistry I, II, III	Biology I, II, III	Organic Chemistry I, II	Statistical Methods for Research	Physics I, II	Technical Communication	Calculus I, II	
General Chemistry I, II, III	Biology I, II, III									
Organic Chemistry I, II	Statistical Methods for Research									
Physics I, II	Technical Communication									
Calculus I, II										
Employment Experience	<p>6/2009–present (20 hours per week) <i>GlaxoSmithKline, Upper Merion, PA</i> Laboratory Assistant Grade 3</p> <p>8/2006–present <i>Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA</i> Volunteer, Physical Therapy Unit</p> <p>6/1998–1/2001 <i>Anchor Products, Inc., Ambler, PA</i> Office Manager</p>									
Honors	Awarded three \$5,000 tuition scholarships (2008–2010) from the Gould Foundation.									
Additional Information	<p>Member, Harmon Biology Club, Yearbook Staff Raising three school-age children Tuition 100% self-financed</p>									
References	Available upon request									

Figure 15.7 Skills Résumé of a Nontraditional Student

ing it.) Or you save your file in Rich Text Format (RTF) with the file extension .rtf. An RTF file retains some formatting and makes the information compatible across platforms (Apple, IBM, and UNIX) and word-processing programs (Word, WordPerfect, and others). Attaching an RTF file is a good choice when you do not know which file format the employer prefers. Follow the instructions the company offers on which file type to use and how to submit your materials. If the job ad requests, for example, “a plain-text document sent in the body of the message,” do not attach a file.

- A *text résumé*. Also referred to as a *plain-text résumé* or an *ASCII résumé*, a text résumé uses the limited ASCII character set and is saved as a .txt file, which can be entered directly into the organization’s keyword-searchable database. You can also paste text résumés piece-by-piece into Web-based forms, which often do not allow you to paste your complete résumé all at once.
- A *scannable résumé* (one that will be scanned into an organization’s database). There are dozens of database programs for this purpose, such as ResTrac or Resumix. Because most employers now prefer electronic submissions, scannable résumés are less common. However, if you submit a printed résumé to a company, you should consider how well the document will scan electronically.
- A *Web-based résumé*. You can put your résumé on your own Web site and hope that employers will come to you, or you can post it to a job board on the Web. As with any information you post on the Internet, you should carefully consider which personal details you reveal on your Web-based résumé.

Ways of creating and sending résumés will undoubtedly change as the technology changes. For now, you need to know that the traditional printed résumé is only one of several ways to present your credentials, and you should keep abreast of new techniques for applying for positions. Which form should your résumé take? Whichever form the organization prefers. If you learn of a position from an ad on the organization’s own site, the notice will tell you how to apply.

Content of the Electronic Résumé

Most of the earlier discussion of the content of a printed résumé also applies to an electronic résumé. The résumé must be honest and free of errors, and it must provide clear, specific information.

However, if the résumé is to be entered into a database instead of read by a person, include industry-specific jargon: all the keywords an employment officer might use in searching for qualified candidates. If an employment officer is looking for someone with experience writing Web pages, be sure you include the terms “Web page,” “Internet,” “XHTML,” “Java,” “CSS,” and any other relevant keywords. If your current position requires an understanding

of programming languages, list the languages you know. Also use keywords that refer to your communication skills, such as “public speaking,” “oral communication,” and “communication skills.” In short, whereas a traditional printed résumé focuses on *verbs*—tasks you have done—an electronic résumé focuses on *nouns*.

One hiring consultant puts it this way: “The bottom line is that if you apply for a job with a company that searches databases for keywords, and your résumé doesn’t have the keywords the company seeks for the person who fills that job, you are pretty much dead in the water” (Hansen, 2008).

▶ On TechComm Web

For more information on formatting electronic résumés, see The Riley Guide: Résumés, Cover Letters. Click on Links Library for Ch. 15 on <bedfordstmartins.com/techcomm>.

Format of the Electronic Résumé

Because electronic résumés must be easy to read and scan, they require a very simple design. Consequently, they are not as attractive as paper-based résumés, and they are longer, because they use only a single narrow column of text.

Guidelines

Preparing a Plain-Text Résumé

Follow these three suggestions to ensure that your plain-text résumé is formatted correctly.

- ▶ **Use ASCII text only.** ASCII text includes the letters, numbers, and basic punctuation marks. Avoid boldface, italics, underlining, and special characters such as “smart quotation marks” or math symbols. Also avoid horizontal or vertical lines or graphics. To be sure you are using only ASCII characters, save your file as “plain text.” Then open it up using your software’s text editor, such as Notepad, and check to be sure it contains only ASCII characters: non-ASCII characters will appear as garbage text.
- ▶ **Left-align the information.** Do not try to duplicate the formatting of a traditional paper résumé. You can’t. Instead, left align each new item. For example, here is a sample listing from an employment-experience section:
 - 6/2009-present
 - (20 hours per week)
 - GlaxoSmithKline
 - Upper Merion, PA
 - Laboratory Assistant Grade 3
 - Analyze molecular data on E&S PS300, Macintosh, and IBM PCs. Write programs in C#, and wrote a user’s guide for an instructional computing package. Train and consult with scientists and deliver in-house briefings.
- ▶ **Send yourself a test version of the résumé.** When you finish writing and formatting the résumé, send yourself a copy, then open it in your text editor and see if it looks professional.

INTERACTIVE SAMPLE DOCUMENT

Preparing a Text Résumé

The following résumé was written by a graduating college senior who wanted to work for a wildland firefighting agency such as the U.S. Bureau of Land Management or U.S. Forest Service. The writer plans to save the résumé as a .txt file and enter it directly into these agencies' employment databases. The questions in the margin ask you to think about electronic résumés (as discussed on pages 417–24).

BURTON L. KREBS

34456 West Jewell St.
Boise, ID 83704

208-555-9627
burtonkrebs@mail.com

Objective

Lead crew position on rappel crew.

Career History

- Senior Firefighter, Moyer Rappel Crew, 05/11-present
- Senior Firefighter, Boise Helitack, 05/10-10/10
- Hotshot Crew Member, Boise Interagency Hotshot Crew, 07/09-09/09
- Helirappel Crew Member, Moyer Rappel Crew, 06/05-09/08

Fire and Aviation Qualifications

Crew Boss (T)
Helicopter Manager
Helicopter Rappeller
Helirappel Spotter
Helispot Manager
Type 2 Helibase Manager (T)
Incident Commander Type 4 (T)

Education

Bachelor of Arts in Communication Training and Development, Boise State University, Boise, Idaho, GPA 3.57, May 2012

Skills

- Excellent oral and written communication skills
- Proficient in Word, Excel, and PowerPoint
- Knowledgeable of helicopter contract administration
- Perform daily and cumulative flight invoice cost summaries

Awards

“Outstanding Performance” Recognition, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, 2010
“Outstanding Performance” Recognition, U.S. Forest Service, 2007, 2008, 2009

1. How effectively has the writer formatted this résumé?
2. What elements are likely to be problematic when the writer saves this résumé as a .txt file?
3. What is the function of the industry-specific jargon in this résumé?
4. Why does the writer place the education section below the sections on career history and fire and aviation qualifications?

On TechComm Web

To submit your responses to your instructor, click on Interactive Sample Documents for Ch. 15 on <befordstmartins.com/techcomm>.

If you are mailing a paper résumé that will be scanned, follow the seven additional guidelines outlined in the box “Preparing a Scannable Résumé.” Figure 15.8 is an example of a scannable résumé.

Figure 15.8 Scannable Résumé

This is an electronic version of the résumé in Fig. 15.7. Notice that the writer uses ASCII text and left justification.

Throughout, the writer includes keywords such as C#, IBM, PC, Macintosh, bioscience, biotechnology, molecular research, laboratory assistant, management, volunteer, and physical therapy.

Alice P. Linder
1781 Weber Road
Warminster, PA 18974
(215) 555-3999
linderap423@aol.com

Objective: An internship in molecular research that uses my computer skills

Skills and Abilities:

Laboratory Skills. Analyze molecular data on E&S PS300, Macintosh, and IBM PCs. Write programs in C#. Have taken 12 credits in biology and chemistry labs.

Communication Skills. Wrote a user's guide for an instructional computing package. Train and consult with scientists and deliver in-house briefings.

Management Skills. Managed 12-person office in \$1.2 million company.

Education:

Harmon College, West Yardley, PA
BS in Bioscience and Biotechnology
Expected Graduation Date: June 2012

Related Course Work:

General Chemistry I, II, III
Organic Chemistry I, II
Physics I, II
Calculus I, II
Biology I, II, III
Statistical Methods for Research
Technical Communication

Employment Experience:

June 2009-present (20 hours per week)
GlaxoSmithKline, Upper Merion, PA
Laboratory Assistant Grade 3

August 2006-present

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA
Volunteer, Physical Therapy Unit

June 1998-January 2001

Anchor Products, Inc., Ambler, PA
Office Manager

Honors:

Awarded three \$5,000 tuition scholarships (2008-2010) from the Gould Foundation.

Additional Information:

Member, Harmon Biology Club, Yearbook Staff
Raising three school-age children
Tuition 100% self-financed

References:

Available upon request

Guidelines

Preparing a Scannable Résumé

Follow these seven suggestions to make sure your résumé will scan correctly.

- ▶ **Use a good-quality laser printer.** The better the resolution, the better the scanner will work.
- ▶ **Use white paper.** Even a slight tint to the paper can increase the chances that the scanner will misinterpret a character.
- ▶ **Do not fold the résumé.** The fold line can confuse the scanner.
- ▶ **Use a simple sans-serif typeface.** Scanners can easily interpret large, open typefaces such as Arial.
- ▶ **Use a single-column format.** A double-column text will scan inaccurately. Left-align everything.
- ▶ **Use wide margins.** Instead of an 80-character width, set your software for 65. This way, regardless of the equipment the reader is using, the lines will break as you intend them.
- ▶ **Use the space bar instead of the tab key.** Tabs will be displayed according to the settings on the reader's equipment, not the settings on yours. Therefore, use the space bar to move text horizontally.

WRITING JOB-APPLICATION LETTERS

Whether you send a formal letter in the mail or upload a statement to a Web site, you will need to write a job-application letter. The letter is crucial not only because it enables you to argue that you should be considered for a position but also because it shows your writing skills. Make your letter appeal as directly and specifically as possible to a particular person, and make sure it shows your best writing.

Selectivity and Development

The keys to a good letter are selectivity and development. *Select* two or three points of greatest interest to the potential employer and *develop* them into paragraphs. Emphasize results, such as improved productivity or quality or decreased costs. If one of your previous part-time positions called for skills that the employer is looking for, write a substantial paragraph about that position, even though the résumé devotes only a few lines to it.