

A GUIDE TO WRITING A RESUME

Also known as a curriculum vitae or CV, a resume is an outline of your job and volunteer experience. This article aims to help you, the applicant, create a resume that frames your experience in a way that leaves a great impression on others.

There are three things that you should consider when building your resume:

- 1. Making a Good Impression**
- 2. Understanding your Audience**
- 3. Using the STAR Method**

Making a Good Impression

This one is easy. Avoid slang terms, use spell check, and format the document aesthetically. Aligning text correctly and using one professional font (Arial, Times New Roman, Calibri, etc.) are important. The time it takes to do the little things shows potential employers and scholarship entities that you are detail-oriented and will leave a positive first impression.

Understanding your Audience

At times you may need to pick and choose what to include in your resume. It is essential to include only the most relevant experience in your resume.

- For example, if you are applying for a marketing position, focus on any experience running social media pages and public speaking. Do not focus on your experience as an Uber driver if it does not apply to marketing.
- If you are applying for a scholarship, focus on your academic experiences, extracurricular activities such as volunteering, if you sit on school committees, and the sports you play. As a senior in college or a recent high school graduate, you may not have an extensive list of employment or experience. That is OK – we all start somewhere.

Using the STAR Method

If you struggle to create a resume that summarizes your experience, use the STAR method.

S: Situation

T: Task

A: Action

R: Result

The STAR method can help you create an impactful summary of your experience.

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S: Situation - What situation or challenge did you face?

T: Task - What task were you involved in? What were your responsibilities and goals?

A: Action - What actions did you specifically take to achieve the task? How did you contribute to your team's efforts?

R: Result - What was the outcome of your actions? How did it benefit your company/league/club? Can it be quantified?

See the example below.

Original

"Responsible for managing a big work budget and saved the company money."

This states a work responsibility but is vague. Was this a one-time thing? How big was the budget? There are many questions raised here, and few answered. By following the STAR method, this summary can be much more impactful.

OR

"Responsible for planning and hosting a fundraiser to attend the state championship game."

This states a soccer team member's responsibility but is vague. Was this a one-time thing? How much money was raised?

With the STAR Method:

"Led a cost reduction effort while managing a petty cash budget of \$5,000 annually in an office of 11 people; resulted in an 8% reduction in office supply costs from 2020 to 2021."

OR

"Responsible for developing and organizing a plan to host an auction to raise funds to attend the state championship game in soccer. Procured items from various businesses in the area and raised over \$3,000."

This is much more specific. It provides details and leaves little question on the extent of the person's responsibilities. The summary clearly shows that this person is good at managing and executing tasks.

Conclusion:

Employers, schools, and scholarship organizations use resumes to gauge your level and progression of experience. When used correctly, they can be extremely helpful in your professional career. By making a good impression, understanding your audience, and using the STAR method, a good resume can help you get into your dream school, dream job, or land a scholarship!