

Manor College Counseling Department
700 Fox Chase Rd, Jenkintown, PA 19046
215-885-6299

Resume Writing Basics

A resume is a marketing presentation and YOU are the product!

It must make you stand out from the stack of resumes on the employer's desk and convince them that it is worth their time to interview you.

Your resume must be:

Easy and inviting to read

Free of misspelled words –have 2 or 3 friends (good spellers please!) proof read it for you

Positively worded to showcase strengths and skills

Parts of a resume

Contact Information:

- Your full name

- Mailing address: include important details such as apartment or unit number and always, zip code. If you are in a temporary living situation, such as a residence hall, include both your: "Current Address" and your "Permanent Address"

- Telephone number: include area code. List your cell phone number as well. Make sure you have a professional-sounding telephone message. If children will be answering your home phone, make sure they know how to answer the phone politely and take accurate messages.

- Other contact numbers: if you have them, include e-mail address and fax number. Make it easy for them to get in touch with you. Rather than playing "phone tag", they may go on to the next candidate!

*Note: when posting your resume on-line, think carefully about whether you want to post your mailing address or your phone number. You do not know who will be reading your listing. For safety reasons you might want to list only your email address.

Objective:

Use this when responding to an advertisement so that the reader will be sure you are interested in a particular job opening. One effective use of the "Objective" section is to show how the job description matches your skills, i.e., how you fit the bill. You can leave it out if you don't have something specific to say or if you don't have time to customize each resume you send out. Instead, your cover letter can fulfill the function of matching your skills to the job description.

Education:

List your highest degree first. Include your major, name of college and date degree was awarded. If not yet graduated, you can say "Anticipated date of graduation: ____" List specific courses if pertinent to the job you are seeking, especially if job experience is sparse. Only include courses, awards or other highlights from high school if you don't have enough college information to include. Be very selective with this. Include any course work, seminars or workshops taken outside of college related to your field.

Experience:

Beginning with the current or most recent job first and working backward, list the titles of all jobs you have held. Include dates of employment, employer name and address. If you are currently working, indicate the date you started, followed by a dash and then the word "present", for example "2005 – present". Briefly describe the tasks and skills acquired or used in each of your positions. Wherever possible, identify results and achievements for which you were responsible. Use present tense verbs in this section, such as "manage accounts", or "answer several

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telephone lines”. Draw attention to any change in job responsibilities and titles within one company. This shows your motivation to take on new responsibilities. You can also identify related volunteer experience in this section.

Skills:

Examine the jobs you’ve done, and make a list of all the different kinds of skills involved. List those individually. For example: Proficient in Excel, Word, Printshop; proofreading, report writing, analyzing data; interviewing and web searching, etc. Remember: Being dependable, persistent, having a strong work ethic, and having good written communication or telephone skills, are also skills. For athletes, you can point out commitment to long hours of hard practice toward a goal.

Licenses/Certifications/Professional Credentials:

Include these where applicable.

Interests/Activities:

Leave these out unless they somehow highlight your job-related skills or qualities.

Associations/Organizations:

List professional or community affiliations, including all offices (and dates) held. If possible, indicate very briefly how these make you a stronger candidate. Do not include religious or political memberships unless they relate to the job you seek.

Honors/Awards: Include these only if they in some way enhance your qualification for the job.

Do NOT include “References available on request.” However, be sure to have the names and phone numbers of your references (typed on the same paper as your resume) handy at an interview in case you are asked for them. Always notify people whom you plan to use as references before you go on an interview, so they know to expect a call.

Do NOT include personal information such as marital status or age. Exception: “Willing to relocate/travel.”

Note: You may wish to downplay special circumstances, such as long gaps in work history.

Writing the resume

Your resume should look pleasing to the eye and be easy to read.

Use smooth white, pale gray or cream-colored bond paper and matching envelopes. Print on one side of the paper.

Left justify your margins.

Use only laser or ink-jet printer for a sharp look.

Try to keep it to one page, but do not cram. White space makes your resume easier to read.

Do not staple the pages or use any type of folder. If you have to go to 2 pages, put your name at the top of each page and page numbers on the bottom right hand corners in case the pages get separated.

Use a professional-looking font such as Times New Roman or New Century Schoolbook You may want to use a sans-serif font such as Helvetica, Futura, or Letter Gothic for headings, or emphasize them by making them bold or slightly larger font.

Your resume should be tight and focused with no excess verbiage.

Always use active verbs. Eliminate first person pronouns.

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Eliminate articles where possible. Be brief. No complex sentences.

Do not use abbreviations unless they are specific to the targeted job field. Leave out anything that doesn't highlight you as the best candidate for the job.

Never include salary requests. If demanded in an advertisement, state in your cover letter that they are "negotiable".

If responding to an advertisement that lists specific skills or educational requirements, your resume must show that you have those qualifications.

Don't lie or embellish. Remember: 1) If caught, that is grounds for dismissal (and lots of embarrassment) and 2) You've got to be able to back up the resume with performance, or again, you'll soon be out of the job you just got.