

RESUME REVIEW CHECKLIST

In this economy, a “less-than-perfect” resume will not land one the interview. Employers are in the position of enjoying the opportunity of being “picky”. This is not only the case for entry-level positions but also for co-ops, internships, and student employment positions. The boom from the middle of the decade is long since gone.

The resume is a basic tool in the job search process. It needs to be carefully crafted to highlight one’s KSAs (knowledge, skills and abilities). In addition to the resume, there are cover letters, networking, job searching in the “hidden job market” and, if an interview is landed, excelling in the behavior-based interview. The research and effort that goes into the resume will be built upon in the latter stages of job searching and interviewing. Unlike spandex, one size does not fit all when it comes to resumes.

Have you reviewed the [CDC Resume Guide](#) online? It is 13 pages of dos and don’ts, pointers, and guidelines, plus another 10 pages of resume examples. The Resume Checklist below will also help you to avoid the [Most Common Resume Mistakes by MTSU Students](#).

- <http://career.web.mtsu.edu/ResumeGuide.pdf>
- Need more? Check out these resources: <http://career.web.mtsu.edu/resources.htm#Resume>

DOES YOUR RESUME MAKE THE GRADE?

- A-resume** – Resume is letter-perfect; it effectively communicates a career vision and highlights the KSAs. It is clear what type of position they are looking for and how they can contribute to the organization. These are the candidates employers want to explore further, perhaps invite in for an interview or conduct a phone screen before narrowing the candidate pool.
- B-resume** – Nothing is technically “wrong”; these resumes just don’t articulate a vision. They may be general or vague. Employers aren’t really interested in bringing them in. Some of these could serve as “back-ups.”
- C-resume**– Resume needs considerable changes. These resumes are easy for an employer discard and move on.

USE THE FOLLOWING RESUME CHECKLIST TO DECIDE:

RESUME REVIEW CHECKLIST

General Resume Guidelines:

- Templates** – It looks like you have used a template in Microsoft Word or Publisher. Any HR manager can pick these out instantly and will know it is a template. You will also have many other resumes that look identical to yours. If you like this style, just type it directly in Word as the tables and lines within the template do not lend themselves well to making changes or uploading the resume on the web or in an email.
- First Person** – Do not use personal pronouns such as “me” or “I”
- Single page** – Your resume should be one to two full pages in length, but preferably only one full page.
- Limit Information** –A resume is a marketing tool, not a complete job history. Include only the items that will help you get the job you want. Leave off anything that won't. Try to target your resume to a specific position or industry.
- Readable** – Your document should look balanced, be pleasing to the eye, and be easy to read.
- Consistency** –Your resume format (bolding, italics, etc.) must be consistent throughout your document.
- Font Size** –The body text should not be too small (no less than 10 pt.) or too large (no more than 12 pt.).
- Omit References** –Do not include a list of professional references on your resume. This should be a separate document in the same format as your resume. Read [advice from the pros on references](#).

Contact Information:

- Name** – Use a font size larger than the largest font in the resume so it stands out. The rest of your contact information can be in the smaller font size.
- Address** – Include a current mailing address; you may also include a permanent mailing address if you need.
- E-mail and phone number** – Be sure to include your email address and phone number; avoid using “cute” or inappropriate e-mail usernames.

Objective:

- Adding an Objective is optional, but can help employers understand what type of position you're seeking as well as highlight your skills.
- Eliminate personal pronouns such as “I” and “my” from your objective.

Education:

- List degrees in reverse chronological order (most recent listed first).
- High school information should be removed from the resume by the time you are near graduation.
- Spell out degrees (i.e. “Bachelor of Science in [your major]”, not “BS”).
- Know the difference between your major, minor, and concentration and include this information on the resume.
- Include the city and state after the institution name (there is no need to include the zip code).
- List the month and year of your graduation, even if it's in the future rather than a date range. Do not put “expected” or “projected” graduation (i.e. if you are graduating in May 2010, put “May 2010”).
- Include a GPA if it is a 3.0 or above, and use “GPA” (not “G.P.A.”). Round the number off (i.e. 3.25, not 3.249). Include the grading scale in relation to your GPA (3.1/4.0)
- You might consider adding Relevant Coursework, listing courses that are most impressive to the employer. This is particularly useful when applying for internships or cooperative education positions.
- If you have attended institutions from which you did not receive a degree, you may leave them off

Experience:

- List your experience, starting with the most recent position (reverse chronological order).
- List your job title and company/organization name in bold.
- Include city and state only for employer location, not the complete address.
- When listing dates, include the month and year, or semester and year. You do not need to include exact dates.
- Do not include unnecessary information such as supervisor's name, salary, type of job, etc.
- List job descriptions/duties with bullets instead of writing them in paragraph form.
- Use action skill statements to describe what you did in your past job (avoid passive phrases such as "responsible for" and "duties included").
- Eliminate personal pronouns from your descriptions.
- Use appropriate verb tense. Use present tense action words to describe present employment experience and past tense action words to describe past employment experience.
- Include numbers to quantify experience where possible. For example, # of employees supervised, \$ amount of budget managed, # of workshops taught or projects coordinated, \$ amount saved by your ingenuity.
- Focus on what you accomplished/your results and how you were valuable to past employers, not on your responsibilities. For example, instead of "Responsibilities included excellent customer service and communication with coworkers," try "Consistently met sales goals and provided training in open/closing procedures to new employees."
- You may want to split Experience into two sections to highlight particular types of jobs, for example you may have a Relevant Experience or Internship Experience section with jobs and duties most impressive to the employer, and then Additional Experience lower on the page with less detail.

Skills:

- Include computer skills and name the software programs in which you are proficient. Rather than including Microsoft Office, write out each specific program.
- Include transferable skills such as communication skills, problem-solving/analytical skills, etc.
- Include language skills if applicable. (Non-native English speakers should not include English since this is assumed.)
- Quantify skills by including how well you know each. For example, "Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint; familiar with Microsoft Access and FrontPage."

Activities and/or Honors:

- If you only have one entry, combine that section with another section, i.e. Honors & Activities
- For Activities, include any professional or student organizations, volunteer work, or extracurricular activities, include dates of membership, and avoid saying, "Member of..."
- If you hold leadership positions or have additional duties, you may even add action skills statements to give details
- For Honors, you may include any scholarships or awards you have received, give dates, and any details if you know them, i.e. "Chosen as recipient from over 130 applicants"

Additional Categories:

You can include some of the following categories as applicable experience in addition to those listed above:

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| Honors or Awards | Certifications or Licenses | Publications |
| Activities | Course Projects | Presentations |
| Volunteer Work or Community Service | Research | Relevant and/or Additional Experience |