

BLAIRSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

Resume Writing

What is a Resume?

A resume can be an important communication tool in the college application process. Often times, there is little space provided to state your experience and accomplishments. When using a resume, you may write on your application "Please see enclosure".

A resume is a concisely written summary of your personal, educational, activities, and work experience intended to:

- Introduce yourself to a school.
- Organize the relevant facts about you in a written, logical, easy to read, easy to understand, and visually pleasing presentation.
- Focus attention on your qualifications and accomplishments and demonstrate why you are an attractive candidate.

There are a number of ways you might write your resume, all depending upon who you are, what you have to offer, and what kind of school you are seeking. The three types of resume formats most frequently used are:

- Chronological resume - lists your qualifications (education and experience) and other relevant information in reverse chronological order.
- Functional resume - focuses on a summary of the functions you have performed and plays down dates of work history. the functional resume is often used by people without experience directly related to their current objectives.
- Combination resume - uses elements of both the chronological and functional resumes.

Resumes may vary in content as well as form, appearance, style, and layout. It is important to remember that a resume is a personally written document that allows for individual creativity. It should present a positive image to the potential school. It is important to keep the college admissions officer in mind, as he or she may be the sole reader. By positioning the most important information about your experiences and qualifications first and devoting the most space to them, you highlight your strengths.

Basic Resume Principles

All resumes should follow the same basic principles to be of interest to and optimally read.

1. Before developing your resume, begin with a thorough self-assessment. What do you want to do? What skills and abilities do you need and do you possess? How can you demonstrate what you know and can do?
2. Place your name, in all capital letters and bold, and address on different lines at the top of the resume. Include your telephone number, e-mail address, and home page address. If your resume is two pages (which rarely occurs), your name should be the first line on the second page.
3. Length depends upon your experience and qualifications. Generally, resumes do not exceed two pages. For most recent high school students, a one-page resume is all that is necessary and expected.
4. Your resume should be on 8 1/2" x 11" paper, printed on one side. Use a computer with a high quality printer and only black ink. You may reproduce your resume using a high-quality photocopier.
5. Present your resume on quality bond paper of at least 20-pound weight. Knowing your audience is your best guide to the selection of paper and color - white, off-white, ivory, light tan, or light gray paper. If you prefer to use colored paper, select a lightly tinted color that will make clear copies.
6. Be honest. Emphasize your strengths, experience, and capabilities. Provide accurate dates and list only months and years, or just years.
7. Avoid writing anything negative.
8. Identify your skills by using nouns. Use industry jargon and buzzwords. Example: AP (Advanced Placement)
9. Put the most important information first working keywords into the body of the resume.
10. Use "action" verbs to communicate accomplishments and results. Use present tense in referring to activities in which you are currently engaged. Describe previous activities in the past tense.
11. Make your resume easy to look at and follow. It should read more like an outline than narrative. Do not use first person pronouns. The "I" is implied as the subject when you are writing about yourself. Use incomplete sentences or phrases and maintain a consistent format.
12. Use plenty of white space. Computers like white space and so does the human eye. One-inch margins (top, bottom, left, and right) are optimal for viewing. Some recent word processing programs have the default margins set

higher. Change the margins to one-inch to take advantage of the best use of space.

13. Use one font size of 10 to 12 points. Some say point sizes up to 14 are acceptable but, to the human reader, anything over 12 may appear as if you are just taking-up space. Use one popular, non-decorative typeface throughout. A few excellent fonts include Times, Arial, Palatino, and Helvetica.

14. Avoid using italic, script, and underlined text. The letters sometimes touch and computers may have difficulty recognizing the individual characters and will be unable to read the information. Avoid graphics and shading. Scanning equipment is generally set to read only text, not graphics.

15. CAPITAL LETTERS are acceptable, however, use them sparingly for effect and attention grabbing for the human reader, it doesn't matter to computers. Boldface may be acceptable and should be used sparingly as well.

16. You may use bullets but make sure they are solid, not hollow, symbols and that at least one blank space, up to two blank spaces, are inserted between the bullet and the text. Using more than two blank spaces defeats the purpose of the bullet by placing the text too far from it. You may have to adjust the automatic spacing for bullets with some word processing programs.

17. Omit irrelevant and personal information such as height, weight, age, sex, unless it is for a visual / performing arts school.

18. Do not use staples. Pages may stick together after a staple is removed.

19. Draft and redraft your resume until it will capture a school's interest and show that you have the qualifications to be admissible.

20. Always proofread your resume for visual quality, content, and typographical, and spelling errors. Have several other people proofread your resume as well.

21. Plan ahead. Do not anticipate writing your best resume overnight.

22. Update your resume regularly

What information should be included on my Resume?

The following suggestions are provided to assist you in drafting your resume. There are several acceptable styles for organizing material in your resume. Although the names of the categories may vary, the following information should be included as appropriate:

- **Personal Identification:** Name, present and permanent addresses, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, and home page address if you have one and want a school to view it.
- **Objective:** A brief statement indicating what your goals are. It is a critical part of your resume; everything that follows should support the objective. If you have more than one objective, you may want to tailor separate resumes to fit each one. Some schools won't place importance on having an objective other than admission. An objective indicates that you've thought about what you want to do, and that you have some direction or goal.
- **Education:** List your high school, projected date of graduation, AP or Enriched courses, and outside enrichment coursework, including summer classes or study abroad. (Your transcript lists all your course work, so you will only need to highlight your most rigorous classes.) List your class rank and grade point average if it is 3.0, or higher, on a 4.0 scale – 9.0 on a 12.0 scale. If you list your grade point average, list the scale, too. Include test scores, including AP, PSAT (if appropriate), SAT, SAT II, ACT.
- **Academic Awards and Honors:** List items of importance.
- **Extra-curricular activities:** Athletic and non-athletic, both school related and otherwise. Include leadership positions, awards, years involved.
- **Volunteer and/or Work Experience:** List and briefly describe, in reverse chronological order, your experience. Experience may include paid and volunteer positions, full- and part-time work, and internships and should emphasize skills, accomplishments, and knowledge, using action verbs. Indicate your job title, name of organization with city and state, and dates of the experience.
- **Special Talents:** Areas that demonstrate great time and passion that may help you stand out (i.e., figure skating, equestrian, extensive theatre work, published article, computer experience, extensive travel).

- Leadership Opportunities: This may include conferences or groups you have been invited to participate in. If you are a leader within a group, be sure to list that under the appropriate category.
- References: Indicate that references are "available upon request" or list the two or three references (usually two teachers and a counselor) as a means of bringing closure, even if you are including your letters of recommendation with your resume and application. Referring to your references indicates that your resume has come to an end and lets the reader know there is not a missing page. The people you ask to be your references should be familiar with your academic and/or experience capabilities. Be sure to obtain permission from the people whose names you intend to offer as references.