

# The Brutal Art of Résumé

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Last Tuesday Career Services spent the lunch hour in the Library helping students build effective résumés. Résumés are the way to score yourself and interview. They won't win you the job, but by submitting an effective résumé you will catch your potential employer's attention and get your foot in the door.

Weaver presented a very concise, helpful power point on the parts of a résumé and how to make each section of your résumé work for you. She also presented a few helpful tips in addition to a basic tutorial. Learning to create a successful résumé is perhaps your biggest chance of landing the job you want. Students learned that each time you apply for a new job you should re-write your résumé to emphasize only the important and relevant information so that you don't waste your prospective employer's time (which will reserve you a spot in the "no" pile), but effectively flaunt your qualifications.

The first part of a résumé is the heading. Weaver advised students that it's wise to keep the header for each page of your application (résumé and cover letter), using a simple graphic to separate your basic information (name, number, current and permanent addresses, e-mail).

Below the heading should be your objective statement. This statement should be specific to the job for which you are applying. It's even advised to use the name of the business. For example, a good objective statement might be something like "To obtain an Internship at Harvard University where I can help students learn basic physics concepts."

The next part of a résumé is only for some people. A summary or profile can either help or hinder the effectiveness of your résumé depending on your experience and skills. If you have a few positives about yourself that relate to the job you're applying for, it's a good idea to include a summary. For example, if you continue using the example from above, it would be good to include things like "obtained a major GPA of 3.99" and "volunteered 12 hours of tutoring for the Sault High Science Department". However, adding cliché statements like "hard worker" and "self-motivated" will only make your résumé look crowded and take away from your other achievements. Remember you only have one page and about 20 seconds of attention from your prospective employer; don't waste on bragging about your awesomeness unless you have evidence to back it up. The space is much more useful to you in other ways that will catch an employer's eye.

Next is either education or experience. While you're in college (and even right after you graduate) your education is going to be your most relevant tool. In the education category, include your school and expected graduation (not when you started attending), also your GPA. Adding things like courses or awards that help prove you're ready for this opportunity are a great way to prove your achievements. In the experiences category, don't list every job you've ever had. Unless you can word your responsibilities at McDonald's to sound like they've helped prepare you for your new job, don't include it. Also, list jobs in reverse chronological order (most recent job first). One of the biggest mistakes you can make in preparing your résumé is over-looking relevant material. Experience also includes things like volunteer work, internships, big class projects, and other things you do that prove you're ready to take on the responsibilities associated with the position you're applying for. Lastly, make sure that you're using action words (stop by the career center for a list of these) instead of saying things like "responsibilities included".

The end of your résumé has a lot to do with what kind of student you are. If you participated in a lot of volunteer activities, you'll want a box for that. If you lead a group or organization, it's important to make that known by adding a list of clubs/organizations and listing the title you help. Any additional skills (like foreign languages) are also important to mention.

References should not be provided unless asked for, but it's nice to have those typed up and ready to go. However, you should have a cover letter to submit with every résumé. A cover letter is your chance to communicate with the employer before he/she meets you. Use the first paragraph to explain why you're interested in the position, the second paragraph as a way to expand on your qualifications, and the third as a thank you for consideration. Offer to take other steps to complete your application and include an easy way to reach you.

A few quick tips for résumés include being honest (bragging about qualifications that you don't have won't get you anywhere, lying will only make you look bad), keeping to a page limit (resumes over one page avoid the essential points and ramble on about nothing important. Employers won't read garbage; they want to know immediately what makes you a good candidate for the job), proofreading, and remembering that a lot of how successful a résumé is depends on the employer's preference (using templates makes for a lot of controversy).

For help with your résumé, stop by the Career Services Center between 8 am and 5 pm Monday through Friday or call (906)635-2733 to make an appointment.