



## Constructing the Resume

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### RESUME & COVER LETTER RESOURCE

## WHAT IS A RESUME?

A resume is a formal document that details your relevant skills and qualifications, which typically include your academic credentials, as well as work, volunteer, and extra-curricular experiences (amongst others). This document communicates your candidacy to potential employers, who use this information to determine whether to invite you to an interview. Because resumes are subject to the reader's personal preferences, there are various ways to approach it. As a general rule, any format that clearly outlines the different sections of a resume and highlights your skills and accomplishments in detail is well-received.

## What might I include in my resume?

This section focuses on how you might structure a Hybrid Resume. For more on Functional Resumes, please see "[Functional Examples](#)". Creative resumes vary widely, but you are welcome to adapt aspects of a Hybrid resume to get started.

### Contact Information

- Your name should be easy to locate - you can accomplish this by enlarging it, changing the font colour, etc.
- E-mail should be aligned with your name (or initials) - aim to have one as close to your own name so it's easily remembered
- Street address is optional, but city, province is recommended
- Links are encouraged! Include your LinkedIn URL or portfolio website if applicable

### Summary of Skills and Qualifications

This section provides the reader with the highlights of your skills and qualifications for the role. The intent of this section is to capture the reader's attention and encourage them to review the rest of your resume in order to learn more about your candidacy.

- Bullet points are a useful way of communicating information quickly, similar to the rest of your resume, leverage bullet points for this section as well. We recommend 3-5 skill summary bullet points. Usually tailored to the job qualifications outlined in the posting
- Tailor your summary statements by using keywords specific to the job posting and/or industry more broadly.



## Education

- Include credentials, program name, academic institution and your (anticipated) graduation year
- Relevant courses can sometimes be useful to demonstrate your subject matter knowledge with the industry and/or role; this can be especially helpful if you have limited or no industry experience
- While you may have high school experiences or awards that you could include on your resume if relevant, you typically wouldn't need to include the name of your high school once you've enrolled in post-secondary education
- Any relevant programs that you didn't complete can still be listed. It is recommended that it is included as a sub-section under "Additional Certificates and Training." You may include relevant courses you took in order to highlight the value of the coursework.
- Sometimes certifications, training, scholarships, and awards are included in the Education section, and you might retitle the Education section to account for this (e.g., Education, Training and Awards). These areas may also have their own dedicated sections. Deciding whether to combine or separate these areas depends on what you feel might present the strongest argument to a prospective employer about your candidacy.
- Include the official name your certificate, training, or award, along with the issuing organization, and the date received. In specific cases (e.g. First Aid Training), you may need to include the date a certification expires.

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## Experience

There are different approaches to organizing your experiences on your resume. Two key approaches are to organize by experience type (e.g., work, volunteer, co-curricular), or to organize by skill set (e.g., leadership experience, administrative experience). When organizing by skill set, you can also use broader categories if it is difficult to group your experiences under one or two main skills (e.g., relevant experience and additional experience).

- Regardless of how you organize your experience sections, when describing each role, you should include your position title, name of the organization, location (if needed), start and end dates, followed by skill-based statements describing what you achieved in the role.
- Aim to have 3-5 skill-based statements per role, formatted as a bullet-point per statement. You may have more or less statements based on the length or depth of the role, and what you are hoping to highlight to an employer about your experience.



- Skill-based statements are not meant to be a comprehensive description of the duties of a particular role. Instead, you should focus on key skills that you want to highlight within a specific experience and provide evidence that you excelled at applying that skill. For example, to demonstrate your sales skills, you can highlight how you met or exceeded monthly targets for products sold.
  - learn more in [“Writing Resume Statements using SAR method”](#)

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## Volunteer Experience (Optional)

You aren't expected to list every experience that you've had; focus on prioritizing relevant experiences. However, if you find it helpful, you can consider maintaining a primary resume that outlines all of your experiences and refer to this document when creating tailored resumes for specific roles.

## ARE THERE DIFFERENT TYPES OF RESUMES?

While there's no “right way” to write a resume, there are different techniques to organize and tailor the information on a resume to your advantage. Career histories can be complex and common resume formats should shift accordingly to present your skills and experience effectively. There are three main types of resumes:

### Hybrid

This type of resume is the most common and most widely received by employers from applicants with experience in any industry. A hybrid resume will include a summary of skills section that uses each point to highlight a specific skill. Experiences may also be separated into relevant and additional experience sections rather than falling under one, cohesive “work experience” section. Your relevant and additional experience sections can include volunteer, work, and co-curricular experiences. When using this format, it is helpful to organize the experience section that groups similar type of positions together. For example, you could group together roles that involve client-focused experiences (e.g., retail employee and peer mentor).

### Functional

This type of resume can be useful for individuals with a diverse and varied work history; this approach is not focused on listing dates and can therefore help to deemphasize any significant gaps in your employment history. A functional resume is also organized by skill. However, a functional resume is unique in that role and organization titles do not determine how the information is presented. Instead, relevant bullet points from across your various roles can exist under a skill section. For example, a section may be “Research and Analysis”, where experiences relating to that skill are listed, such as a field work from a course and business analysis conducted at an organization.



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## Creative

This type of resume is only recommended for individuals pursuing creative positions in any industry. The resume design can serve dual functions, which includes showcasing an individual's relevant experience, along with demonstrating their skills in design work. A creative resume will contain design elements that other resume types normally wouldn't - including a logo, iconography and atypical structures. It's important to note that even with this resume type, content still takes precedence over resume presentation. It is recommended to research industry standards to understand whether this resume format would be ideal for an application.

## WHAT ARE THE GENERAL FORMATTING STANDARDS?

While there are different types of resumes, within Canada there are typically some formatting elements that remain the same. Creative resumes are the most likely to deviate from these formatting elements. Some general formatting tips to keep in mind:

- Some commonly used resume fonts include; common examples include; Times New Roman, Cambria, Arial, Calibri
- While this can depend on the specific font, aim to ensure that the font size is large enough to be readable. This is typically 11-12 point font. You can make section headings and your name stand out by using a larger font size for these areas.
- Keep page margins between 0.5 - 1 inches.
- Using colours within a resume can be a personal choice, but keep in mind that the most critical function of a resume is ensuring that the information is well-organized and easy to read. While creative resumes may sometimes use multiple colours, remember to ensure that written content is legible and clearly laid out.
- Resumes can be 1 or 2 full pages in length. Sometimes you may need to adjust your formatting or bullet points to ensure that you fill a full 1 page or a full 2 pages.



## WHAT SHOULD I KEEP OFF MY RESUME?

Different organizations can have their own standards for how a resume is formatted and organized. However, there are some elements that are not required or relevant to include in a resume in Canada. In fact, even certain companies may be specific in what they're looking for in a resume. Here are some elements that are universally considered unacceptable or unadvised on a resume:

- Any personal information, including government-issued ID (e.g. Social Insurance Number (SIN), Passport, Birth Certificate), and aspects of your identity. In Ontario, this can include your age, citizenship, disability, marital status, race, and sexual orientation amongst others. For this reason, photos are not typically required or recommended to include in job applications unless it is directly relevant to the role (e.g. actors may need to provide photos of themselves as part of their portfolio), birthdate, age, race, gender or photos
- Availability and references are not necessary to include on your resume. You can share your availability on your cover letter (if that information is being requested as part of the application), or during an interview. While it was common to include References available upon request in the past, it is now assumed that if you apply for a role and are asked for references, you would provide that information. Therefore, you don't need to specifically state this.
- Personal pronouns are not recommended when writing skill-based statements, as the statements should lead with the specific skill (e.g. Prepared reports vs. I prepared reports).