

## Tips for Writing Effective Resumes

Your resume should succinctly – and neatly – summarize your education, experience, skills, and other important qualifications and achievements. It typically acts as an employer’s “first look” at you, so you must focus on crafting a professional piece that entices the employer to meet you in person via an interview. While there is no single correct way to create your individual resume, there are some best practices and standards to consider as detailed below.

### FORMATTING YOUR RESUME

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- Overall visual appeal is very important – your resume should be well organized, clean, and easy to read
- Use a combination of formatting features such as CAPITALIZATION, **boldface**, underlining, indents, and bullets to organize your information and create visual appeal, but be consistent and avoid overdoing it
- Length: one page is strongly encouraged | Margins: 0.5” to 1” | Font: common, legible font at 10- to 12-point size
- Use reverse chronological order with your current or most recent experiences listed first in each section

### WHAT TO AVOID

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- Resume templates
- Grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors
- Personal information like age or gender
- Standardized test scores from high school
- Text boxes and tables
- Special symbols and *italic*
- High school activities (*exceptions apply*)
- Writing in complete sentences
- Personal pronouns like I, he, her, and us
- Color and graphics/pictures (*exceptions apply*)

### KEY SECTIONS & INFORMATION TO INCLUDE

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#### Heading

- Name (use a slightly larger font size so it stands out), address, phone number, and professional email address
- Can include the URL to your LinkedIn profile or online portfolio, too, if such items exist

#### Education

- Institution’s full name, city, and state
- Expected graduation date (month and year)
- Full name of expected degree (i.e., “Bachelor of Arts in...”); also list any minors or concentrations
- GPA, if it is a 3.0 or higher; can include overall GPA and/or major GPA
- Study abroad, notable scholarships and academic awards, relevant coursework, and thesis or senior project details (if applicable) can be incorporated in this section, if desired, or as separate sections later in your resume

#### Professional Experience

- Include paid and unpaid professional experiences from the past four or five years: part-time jobs, summer jobs, internships, and work-study and other hired campus jobs (e.g., Academic Peer Mentor or Resident Assistant)
- Job title/position
- Business/organization name, city, and state
- Dates of employment (month year – month year); okay to use seasons in place of months (e.g., Summer 2018)
- Description of duties and accomplishments
  - Use clear, concise statements that begin with strong action verbs; avoid unnecessary introductory phrases like “Job duties were” or “Responsibilities included” and long descriptions that create dense areas of text
  - Convey what you did, how you did it, and any outcomes you achieved that illustrate your proficiency in duties and skills of interest to the prospective employer or your target field
  - Tailor your descriptions to suit the job opening; incorporate language from the job description for the position you are seeking to show how your experience is directly related to the skills required
  - Describe achievements in addition to listing relevant key responsibilities; quantify outcomes when possible
  - Use proper tense (present for current jobs, past for old ones) and consistent punctuation

## KEY SECTIONS & INFORMATION TO INCLUDE *(continued)*

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### ❑ **Additional Experience and Activities**

- Leadership experience as well as extracurricular, athletic, and/or volunteer and community service activities can be included in a single section or separate sections, depending on how many of each you have to highlight
- Should be formatted like previous experience section but may or may not include description of duties and accomplishments
- Avoid using acronyms that may not make sense to an employer outside of Hendrix (e.g., use Hendrix Experience Ambassador Team instead of HEAT, or Student Outreach Alternative Services instead of SOAR)
- Clarify program or organization names when needed (e.g., use Campus Kitty Student-Run Fundraising Organization instead of Campus Kitty, or Odyssey Engaged Learning Program instead of Odyssey Program)

## OPTIONAL SECTIONS

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### ❑ **Objective** – *typically included at the beginning of a resume*

- One's objective is typically understood (i.e., to get a job) and, therefore, this section is usually not necessary
- A short phrase that outlines your career goals as they relate to the specific position for which you are applying
- Must be tailored for each job
- An opening professional summary or profile may be more appropriate
- Do NOT include this if you are also submitting a cover letter

### ❑ **References** – *typically included at the end of a resume*

- Can be submitted as a separate document when requested instead of using up valuable space on a resume
- Do not use "References Available Upon Request" on resume; this is generally understood

Other optional sections will vary based on your background, experience, skills, and the industry in which you are pursuing a job. These may include:

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|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| ▪ <b>Awards and Honors</b>                          | ▪ <b>Skills or Certifications</b>              |
| ▪ <b>Research Experience or Special Projects</b>    | ▪ <b>International/Travel Experience</b>       |
| ▪ <b>Presentations, Published Work, or Exhibits</b> | ▪ <b>Professional Associations/Memberships</b> |

## SELECTING & USING REFERENCES

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- Select the top individuals (three is typically a good number) who know you best professionally; avoid relatives and close family friends as well as VIPs who didn't directly observe you just for the sake of "name dropping"
- Variety is best, if possible (e.g., choose a professor, summer job boss, and internship supervisor instead of three professors); when in doubt, go with those who know you best and will likely provide a positive reference
- Always ask your references for permission before using them, and try to notify them when you're applying or interviewing so they know they may be contacted
- Include your references' name, job title, company, phone number, and email address on your list of references
- Bring a copy of your list of references to all interviews

## ADDITIONAL TIPS

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- To highlight relevant experiences first, consider creating a "Related Experience" section followed by one for "Additional Professional Experience"
- Proof, proof, and proof your resume before submitting it
  - Don't rely on the "spell check" feature alone, and ask for help from others
  - Pay attention to grammar, punctuation, and spelling of proper nouns, and check for consistent formatting
- Submit your resume as a pdf when emailing. Submit it as a Word doc when uploading through a portal.
- Regularly update your resume to reflect your most recent experiences and accomplishments
- Have your resume reviewed to ensure it is compliant with current applicant tracking systems
- Visit the Hendrix College Office of Career Services for help getting started on your resume, or to have your resume reviewed. Appointments may be booked through our website: [www.hendrix.edu/career](http://www.hendrix.edu/career) or [HERE](#).