



RESUME WRITING

Career Services Center – Coastal Carolina University

WHAT IS A RESUME?

A resume is a brief highlight of your work or activity experiences, educational background and skills. It summarizes your qualifications and experience as they relate to the type of job you are seeking. Your goal is to market yourself effectively on paper to a specific audience – your reader! It should be constructed to gain attention, arouse interest and generate action (an interview!) so that you can sell your strengths in person. Keep in mind that there is no one way to write a resume - only guidelines.

HOW IS A RESUME USED?

A resume is most often used when applying for employment. It can also be used to apply for a co-op or internship, a summer position, graduate or professional school, or may be required when applying for leadership positions in particular organizations.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A RESUME & A CURRICULUM VITA?

A curriculum vita is a *comprehensive* biographical statement usually three or more pages in length. Curriculum vitas are frequently used in the field of higher education and concentrate on academic pursuits, research and teaching or presentation skills. A resume is simply a *summary* of an individual's educational, personal and work experiences as they relate to careers in a particular area and is typically one or two pages in length. The Career Center has a handout on curriculum vitas for more information.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF RESUME FORMATS?

Chronological: A chronological resume emphasizes your work or experience history around dates. Jobs or other related experiences are listed in reverse chronological order with a primary focus on work or activity accomplishments or specific job titles. A chronological format highlights career progression and growth through job titles or the names of employers and is easy to follow. The disadvantages of this format are that non-impressive job titles and changes in career path are clearly visible. You should consider using a chronological format when your work, education or activity experience is strong and relevant to your objective, when previous job titles or company names sound impressive, when your job history shows growth, or to emphasize specific career-related accomplishments.

Functional or Skills-based: A functional or skills-based resume organizes information around functional headings that highlight *demonstrated* skills and abilities. It highlights your major areas of accomplishment in ways that best support your job objective and is not bound by dates. You may draw on all sources of experience (employment, volunteer work, college activities and coursework) to describe your skills. You should consider using a functional or skills-based resume when job titles and work history are not relevant and you wish to de-emphasize them in order to draw attention to your transferable skills. A functional or skills-based resume is also effective for those who have little work experience at all.

Combination: The combination resume includes aspects of both the chronological and functional formats. Work history and skills or accomplishments are emphasized equally. This format allows you to include sections on both prior work or activity experiences, as well as a section on your main functional skills.

RESUME CONTENT

There are many different opinions about resume content and organization. The key to writing a strong resume is to highlight those areas of your background that best demonstrate your skills and abilities as they relate to the position for which you are applying. Following is a list of categories most often used in resumes. The types of categories you list on your resume and their order depend upon which parts of your background and qualifications you want to emphasize, as there is no prescribed or standard resume format. Typically however, the first place a reader's eyes fall when looking at a document is the second quarter of the page, so the most relevant information should be placed here.

1. Identifying Information / Heading:

Cap the top of your resume with:

- Full name (can put nickname or what you go by in parenthesis if you wish)
- Complete address (include both permanent and present addresses and phone numbers if still in college)
- Home phone number (can list work phone number as well - designate each with an "H" and "W")
- E-mail address
- Personal website (if appropriate)

2. Objective:

(May also be called job target, job objective, professional objective or career objective)

The career objective sets the tone for your resume and indicates the type of work you are seeking. It also tells employers how you might fit into their organizations. It forces you to focus on your primary area of interest and unifies the rest of your resume. Essentially your objective says "this is what I want to do," and the rest of the resume says "and this is *why* I am qualified to do it." The body of the resume should support your objective at all times. The objective may include any combination of the following types of information:

- The level of position, job title or industry area (i.e. entry level, sales trainee, social worker, computer programmer, financial industry, educational arena)
- The type of organization or environment that interests you (i.e. forward-moving, competitive, growing, stable)
- Special interest area within the organization or world of work (i.e. marketing department, change management group, international news, event coordination, purchasing division)
- A description of job activities you wish to perform or skills you wish to gain
- Interests, knowledge or skills you wish to contribute to the organization
- Long and short term goals

Examples:

- An entry level position in human resources management with particular interest in wage and salary administration
- A position in a cutting-edge technological company applying my knowledge of software development and modification using Windows based products
- A consulting position in the financial industry utilizing my strong analytical and communication skills with the opportunity for advancement in financial services management

3. Qualifications / Summary:

This section is a good way to sum up in 4-6 statements the main points you want employers to know about you. It is particularly beneficial for those that have several years professional experience, as well as graduate assistantships. This bulleted layout of key information may also be used effectively in a cover letter.

Example:

- 4 years combined experience including 2 years co-teaching at the college level, 1 year research for a major medical laboratory, 1 year pharmaceutical sales
- Appropriate educational credentials including a Master of Public Health and a Bachelor of Science in Medical Technology
- Demonstrated skills in giving oral presentations, producing written reports, providing quality customer service, and using a variety of technical equipment and computer programs
- Possess strong work ethic, high levels of initiative, critical thinking and problem solving skills

4. Education: (List each educational experience in reverse chronological order)

This section may include:

- Names and locations of schools or programs
- Dates of attendance or graduation date
- Degrees, certificates or licenses
- Major, minor and / or cognate
- Grade point average (if 3.0 or above)
- Awards / Honors / Scholarships

Example:

Coastal Carolina University, Conway, SC

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, May 2008

Major: Finance *Minor:* Accounting

- *Major GPA:* 3.4 *Overall GPA:* 3.2
- Dean's List, President's List, National Dean's List
- Financed 60% of education
-

5. Related Coursework:

This category is optional and can also be part of the Education section. It is mainly used when you are lacking related experience but want to demonstrate relevant academic training and knowledge by listing the titles of specific courses.

6. Experience:

Include all types of experience (if relevant) including full-time, part-time, summer, volunteer work, military service, internships, self-employment, research projects, and even activities if the skills that were developed in those activities are directly related to the position at hand. In some cases you may wish to divide this category into two sections: one called Related Experience and one called Other Experience. Whether you choose to list your job title or your employer name first depends on which sounds more impressive, but the order you choose should be consistent throughout the resume. Whether you use periods at the end of your statements or not is up to you, but again should be consistent throughout. **Include:**

- Your title ▪ Dates of employment ▪ Bulleted *active* descriptions of your responsibilities
- Employer name ▪ City / State of the employer ▪ Major accomplishments and contributions

7. Honors, Activities, Research or Professional Affiliations:

You may specifically want to mention:

- Activities that demonstrate job related skills, leadership or membership in career related organizations (Some of these experiences may be significant enough to have bullet statements explaining them in detail.)
- Honors or awards (Scholarships may or may not be relevant depending on their selection criteria.)

8. Skills:

As technology skills become increasingly valuable to employers it may be beneficial to have a separate section to list computer skills. Be specific, listing product names and version numbers if possible. Indicate your level of knowledge using such terms as "working knowledge of" or "proficient in." Students seeking positions specifically in technology should break this list down into subcategories such as programming languages, hardware, software, operating systems, databases, peripherals, etc. If you have minimal computer skills, you may wish to combine this section with one of the above categories or demonstrate it through bullet statements in the experience category. If you speak more than one language, you should also list them here, indicating your level of written, reading and oral proficiency in each.

9. Other:

There is certainly the option to add additional categories that reflect your uniqueness, such as interests or volunteer work, but again, consider the relevance that the category and its contents have to your objective and / or the position at hand.

10. References:

Indicate that references are available upon request, and list them on a separate page that matches your resume paper. (See the last page of this packet for more information.) Include your references:

- Complete name (using Mr., Miss, Mrs., Ms. or Dr.) ▪ Work address (home address if no work address)
- Job title ▪ Phone number (ask if they prefer work or home)
- Name of the organization where they work ▪ E-mail address if appropriate

RESUME WRITING

- **Your resume may take you hours to prepare.** Writing an effective resume is an investment which takes dedication and time. Having someone else write your resume means that you may not know it by heart and will not be able to talk about it in an interview. No one knows you better than you!
- **Be prepared to write and rewrite.** Have your resume critiqued by a career counselor not just once, but several times until no more corrections are needed. Professors (especially of English) can also be good proofreaders of both resumes and cover letters, but may not always know the latest trends in resume writing. Remember that suggestions will help improve your resume; they are not criticisms.
- **A one-page resume is sufficient for most students.** Your resume doesn't have to list every position you've ever held or every activity or club you've been involved with - only relevant experience. The exception is if you have significant co-op experience, meaty part-time jobs, professional summer jobs, internships or extracurricular activities in which you held leadership positions. Go to two pages only if absolutely necessary. Employers look for your ability to use industry terminology and be concise.
- **Custom design your resume for each opening / environment.** You should change your objective with each position for which you apply, and if necessary, change the content and / or the format so that it best supports that objective. You want to send the message that the organization should hire you because they need what you have to offer, not that you need them because you need a job.
- **Catch your reader's eye.** Most readers will only spend 20-30 seconds on the initial scan of your resume. Readers prefer statements that begin with bullets, **bold print** and indentions to guide their eyes quickly to the main points. You may also use all CAPITAL LETTERS, *italics* or underlining to highlight key areas, but do not mix font styles. It can make your resume look cluttered. Stick to one font. Organize the information such that the resume is visually appealing to the eye and easy to follow.
- **Accentuate the positive.** Your resume is the first impression most employers will have of you and how well you write it is an indication of what type of employee you might be. Be results-oriented and highlight accomplishments, not mere duties. Don't just list what you did; show how it contributed to or impacted the organization. Quantify your statements by using numbers, statistics and percentages.
- **Use action oriented verbs** (created, delegated) as opposed to passive verbs (took, had) to help the reader identify transferable skills that could be applied to their organization. Keep the verb tense consistent with the dates you list. For past activities, use past tense verbs (supervised, developed). For activities you're currently engaged in, use present tense verbs (supervise, developing).
- **Do not include on a resume:** religion, race, gender, high school information (unless applying for an internship and it is relevant), marital status, height / weight, birthplace, birthdate or a photograph.

RESUME APPEARANCE

- Use light colored resume paper (white, ivory or beige) that will copy cleanly and not come out gray.
- Use the same style paper for both your resume and cover letter.
- You may use simple graphics such as lines to create a border, but don't overdo it. *Exception:* If you are a graphic or interior design major, you may want to use your resume to display your design skills.
- Maintain reasonable margins. (In general, 1 inch margins are preferable) Apply to cover letters also.

RESUME MAILING

- Use large manila envelopes rather than folding resumes into standard business envelopes.
- Always send a cover letter with your resume, placing it on top of the resume.
- Do not staple pages. If you need to combine or separate pages, use paperclips instead.

COVER LETTER (Guidelines)

CCU P.O. Box 261954
Conway, South Carolina 29528
March 9, 2008

Mr. U.R. Employer
Director, Personnel Department
C & C Creations, Inc.
Conway, South Carolina 29526

Dear Mr. Employer:

Introductory Paragraph: This paragraph should include information on who you are, why you are writing and specifically where you learned of this position or organization. You might make reference to a previous conversation or correspondence, giving specific dates if possible. If you learned of the position through another person, be sure to mention his or her name as personal referrals often attract more attention. For example, you might open by saying: "I am writing to apply for the Community Relations Coordinator position advertised in the March 5th issue of *The State*." or "I am writing to express my interest in positions in retail marketing at C & C Creations, Incorporated."

Body: The next one or two paragraphs contain your "sales pitch", and should convince the employer that you have what it takes to do the job. The idea here is to "tease" the reader and make them want to look further at your resume. You can do this by saying "As you will note in my enclosed resume, I have.....". You should also emphasize particular skills or duties that are a part of this job description. If a recent graduate, you may wish to dedicate one paragraph to addressing academic qualifications, while dedicating the other paragraph to experience and skills. Your letter will be most effective if you incorporate specific knowledge of the organization and the position for which you are applying. It shows that you have done your homework and are truly interested in the position.

Follow-up Paragraph: This paragraph should be short and to the point. Indicate what steps you would like to happen next. (If you want an interview, ask for it!) There are two different approaches you might take. The PASSIVE approach puts responsibility on the employer to make the next move and you would wait for the employer to contact you. With the ACTIVE approach, you would offer to initiate further contact with the employer. You may indicate that you will call the employer on a specific date or in the near future in order to verify receipt of your letter and / or to arrange an appointment. Finally, remember to thank the employer for his time and considering you.

Sincerely,

Ima Chanticleer

Enclosure: resume

COVER LETTER (Sample)

CCU P.O. Box 261954
Conway, South Carolina 29528
March 9, 2008

Mr. U.R. Employer
Director, Personnel Department
C & C Creations, Incorporated
Conway, South Carolina 29526

Dear Mr. Employer:

I am writing to express my sincere interest in entry-level management opportunities at C & C Creations, Incorporated. Currently, I am a senior at Coastal Carolina University and will graduate in May of 2008 with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree.

As you will note in my resume, I have double-majored in both management and marketing and have developed strong skills in both areas over the past 4 years. I currently work for ABC Corporation as a co-op student and assist both the Regional Marketing Director, as well as the Branch Manager of the XYZ area store in Myrtle Beach, SC. In the 3 years prior to this position, I also held several part time positions in customer service and sales. Finally, I have been actively involved on the CCU campus by holding leadership positions in several organizations and contributing to the marketing efforts of numerous campus activities. My combined academic, extracurricular and work experiences have each enabled me to develop outstanding analytical, interpersonal, financial and leadership skills, which I am certain would be an asset to C & C Creations, Incorporated.

I plan to contact you in the next two weeks to confirm receipt of my resume and to discuss the possibility of meeting. I am excited about the opportunities that C & C Creations, Incorporated provides and feel confident that both my skills and personal traits will allow me to make an immediate and positive impact on your organization. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Ima Chanticleer

Enclosure: resume

CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME (Sample)

CARMEN CHRONOLOGICAL

Current Address:
CCU P.O. Box 0000
Conway, SC 29528
(843) 544-0000

carmen@juno.com

Permanent Address:
9274 Whisper Lane
Greenville, SC 29301
(864) 574-4970

OBJECTIVE An entry-level position in the human services field with a particular interest in working with children and women or Hispanic populations

EDUCATION **Coastal Carolina University, Conway, SC**
Bachelor of Arts in Psychology May 2008
Minor: Spanish, GPA 3.2

Universidad de las Americas, Puebla, Mexico Fall 2005

- Resided with a Spanish speaking family for 4 months

SKILLS **Languages:** Fluent in Spanish & English, working knowledge of French
Computer: Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint), SAS, SPSS

RELATED EXPERIENCE **Crisis Intervention and Victim Advocate** May 2005 - Present
Citizens Against Sexual Assault (C.A.S.A.) Myrtle Beach, SC

- Provide hotline advocacy services to clients.
- Participate in community outreach and education programs.
- Completed 30 hour victim advocate volunteer training.

Peer Assistant August 2004 - Present
International Programs for Students, CCU Conway, SC

- Serve as a mentor and resource for international students..

Resident Advisor August 2003 - Present
Department of Residence Life, CCU Conway, SC

- Organize social and educational programs for hall of 22 women.
- Explain and enforce residence hall and university policies.

Camp Counselor Summers 2003
Camp Wildwood Kings Mountain, NC

- Supervised and disciplined girls ages 8-14 in daily recreation, educational and social events to groups with an average size of 30.
- Received certification in CPR and first aid techniques.

RESEARCH **Research Assistant** August - Dec. 2003
Coastal Carolina University Conway, SC

- Collaborated with a professor in research on the interpersonal development of children of single parent families.
- Presented findings at annual Carolina's Psychology Conference.

HONORS Dean's List, National Dean's List, LIFE Scholarship recipient

Willing to travel or relocate as required by the position.

FUNCTIONAL / SKILLS-BASED RESUME (Sample)

Frederick (Fred) A. Functional

309 Church Road ~ Myrtle Beach, SC 29577 ~ (843) 448 - 8712 ~ fred@aol.com

OBJECTIVE Internship or co-op position in marketing or management utilizing leadership, creativity, financial and interpersonal skills

EDUCATION **Coastal Carolina University** Conway, SC
E. Craig Wall Sr. College of Business
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, May 2008
Majors: Marketing and Management

SKILLS

LEADERSHIP

- Supervised 3 assistants in carrying out lawn care duties for self-owned and operated landscaping company
- Delegated various tasks to 5 member social activities committee
- Coordinated community service project for 50 member group

CREATIVITY

- Created and distributed custom logo and promotional materials
- Designed weekly flyers to advertise fraternity social functions
- Designed flower beds, rock gardens and shrubbery groupings

FINANCIAL

- Allocated annual budget of \$7,000 for social functions
- Reconciled store cash register nightly
- Assisted office manager with producing revenue reports following major athletic events

INTERPERSONAL

- Demonstrated quality customer service and problem solving abilities to restaurant and store patrons
- Exercised professional phone etiquette and relationship building skills through telemarketing to key university donors
- Responded to phone and walk-in inquiries about athletic events

SKILLS MS Word, MS Access, MS PowerPoint, Windows 95/98, Quicken

EXPERIENCE ROADHOUSE, Myrtle Beach, SC *Server* (8/05 - Present)
BO'S HARDWARE, INC., Myrtle Beach, SC *Sales Clerk* (12/03 - 5/04)
LAWNS UNLIMITED, Surfside, SC *Owner* (Summers 2003)
CCU ADVANCEMENT OFFICE, Conway, SC *Work-study* (8/02 - 5/03)

ACTIVITIES AMA (American Marketing Association), Member (8/04 - Present)
Phi Upsilon Nu fraternity, Social Chair, Member (1/03- Present)
CCU Alumni Phone-a-thon, Fundraiser (3/02)
Habitat for Humanity (12/01)

REFERENCES Available upon request

COMBINATION RESUME (Sample)

Connie O. Combo

504 Greene Street ▪ Conway, SC 29526 ▪ (843) 248 - 2284 ▪ connieo@aol.com

Objective Position as a middle or high school English teacher

Education **Bachelor of Arts in English, Minor in Education,** May 2008
Coastal Carolina University Conway, SC

- Honors Program
- Overall GPA: 3.79
- Dean's List, Alpha Lambda Delta, Kappa Delta Epsilon

Teaching Experience **Carolina Forest High School** Myrtle Beach, SC
Student Teacher - 9th Grade Language Arts Jan 2004 - May 2004

- Developed lesson plans including in-class and take home activities
- Led class of 27 students in various discussions about literary topics such as research process, themes, symbolism, metaphors, and poetry
- Instructed unit on grammar, including sentence conjugation
- Assisted teacher with grading of class writing assignments

Horry County School District Conway, SC
Substitute Teacher - Middle / High School level Jan 2003 - May 200

- Substitute taught English, Social Science, Health and Math classes
- Maintained control of restless students, disciplining as needed

Skills **Public Speaking & Instruction**

- Served as keynote student speaker to approximately 300 incoming honors students at a recognition banquet
- Conducted campus tours to prospective students and their families as a University Ambassador
- Planned and taught weekly Sunday school class to fifteen 6th graders
- Led 2 small group Bible studies weekly for college aged women
- Tutored two 10th grade students in English and grammar

Writing

- Produced 43-page senior thesis titled "Adaptive Techniques of Male Students in Women's Literature Classes"
- Wrote 4 short stories and 2 poems that were published in *The Garnet and Black* literary magazine
- Served as guest columnist for *The Gamecock* student newspaper

Technical

- Created documents using Microsoft Word and Excel
- Utilized PowerPoint and LCD panels in classroom presentations
- Developed and displayed a slide show presentation for class project
- Analyzed statistical data with the use of SPSS

References Available upon request

REFERENCE PAGE (Sample)

IMA CHANTICLEER
CCU P.O. Box 261954
Conway, South Carolina 29528
(843) 248 - 0000

REFERENCES

Mr. John Smith
Associate Vice President
Conway National Bank
8981 Main Street
Conway, South Carolina 29526
(843) 248- 2222

Mrs. Jackie Brown
Director of Residence Life
Coastal Carolina University
Conway, South Carolina 29528
(843) 347 - 2406
E-mail: sbrown@coastal.edu

Dr. Robert Nale
Associate Professor
Department of Business Administration
Coastal Carolina University
Conway, South Carolina 29528
(843) 349-2464
E-mail: nale@coastal.edu

Mr. Frank Johnson
Summer Staff Coordinator
Camp Wakahatchie
P.O. Box 590
Cullowhee, NC 28746
(910) 367 - 9862

REFERENCES

Choosing your references is an integral part of the job search process and can significantly affect your success in securing a job. There are many steps to making the most of your references:

- **Choose references** - Brainstorm a list of people who can speak highly of your past work performance, (job, classwork or research related). Ideally, your references should be those who were in a position to supervise you or rate your performance, such as a previous boss or professor who knows you and your work very well. In some cases a colleague can also provide a strong reference of your work performance, particularly if you worked on a team project together. Character references should be provided only if requested, or if you are limited in your choices. In general, you should provide the names of a minimum of 3 references, but no more than 5.
- **Ask references** - Contact those designated and ask if they will give you a positive reference. Never provide anyone's name to a potential employer as a reference without first doing so.
- **Gather contact information** - Once given permission, you need to make sure you have the proper spelling of their name, their company name, their official job title and the address and phone number at which they wish to be contacted. For your own use, you may also get their e-mail address.
- **Prepare references** - To help your references speak intelligently about your background and strengths you should provide them with a copy of your resume. They should also know what your goals are and the types of positions you are seeking. Finally, you may wish to coach them as to which skills you would most like them to emphasize so each can call attention to a different strength.
- **Keep references informed** - Notify your references about *each* position for which you apply so they might anticipate a call and prepare to "sell" you based on the specifics of each position.
- **Thank references** - Notify references when you accept a position and send a thank-you letter.