

Writing Resumes: A Guide for Undergrads

What is a Resume?

A resume is a snapshot of the education, experience, and skills you have that are valuable to an employer. Its main purpose is to convince a potential employer to invite you for an interview – to make them want to learn more about you. Resumes are used to screen applicants and determine which candidates have the background most closely matching the employers' needs. It answers the questions: “have you”, “can you”, and “will you do the job”.



Before writing a resume, you should...

- Research the industry and the job so you fully understand what the employer is seeking.
- Identify core skills needed for the job so you can highlight and emphasize your relevant prior experiences and skills
- Learn to speak their language. Pay attention to vocabulary that is particular to the industry.
- Learn about the trends developing in the industry.



To craft a successful resume, you should...

- Quickly and succinctly capture an employer's interest. Most employers only spend 30 seconds reviewing a resume!
- Emphasize and quantify accomplishments rather than simply listing responsibilities in your past experiences. Be as specific as possible! For example: “designed and delivered 20 math tutoring lessons to a group of seven fifth and sixth graders”.
- Highlight transferable skills, which are skills you acquired in one context or situation that are valuable in another. Examples include: communication, teamwork, organizational, etc.
- Keep a master resume. When you submit your resume for opportunities, it should be limited to one page, but it's helpful to keep a “master resume” with all of your experiences so that you can be strategic and intentional when choosing the most relevant experiences and accomplishments that fit the opportunity.



Do's and Don'ts

- **Do** proofread your resume for grammar and spelling.
- **Do** quantify and be specific whenever possible For example: “Coordinated the planning of a 4-day student run conference for 100 participants, including accommodation and venues”.
- **Do** use clear and consistent formatting with your font, bullet points, alignment, and spacing.
- **Do** organize the information on your resume in reverse chronological order.
- **Do** pay close attention to verb tenses in your bullets.
- **Do** keep your resume to one page.
- **Do** be truthful about your accomplishments and skills without undervaluing your experiences.
- **Don't** list unrelated, minor duties such as “opened mail” or “filed documents”.
- **Don't** use phrases like “responsible for” and “was in charge of”. Instead, use more action-oriented language.
- **Don't** begin bullets with “I” or use complete sentences.
- **Don't** include personal information such as your social security number, age, or citizenship details



Undergrad Resume Guide



Resume Sections

- **Contact Information:** always put your current address, phone number, and UChicago email address at the top of the page. If you're applying to opportunities in your hometown, consider adding your home address as well.
- **Education:** starting with UChicago, list your degrees, major/minor, institution, expected date of graduation, study abroad experiences, and GPA (if above 3.00).
- **Honors:** in this section, include your academic honors such as Dean's List, scholarships, or honors societies. These can also be listed as a sub-section under education.
- **Experience:** include your employment, internships, significant campus leadership offices, volunteer work, and relevant class/research projects. Make sure to include your job title, the name of the organization, location, and dates worked. Do not worry about separating your paid and unpaid experiences, remember the focus should be on emphasizing accomplishments, responsibilities, and skills that are appropriate to the position you're applying for .
- **Leadership & Activities:** list college or high school activities including student government, fraternities/sororities, student clubs, and sports activities etc. that have not been mentioned elsewhere. These activities can also be included in Experience.
- **Skills & Interests:** some basic skills to include in this section are foreign language proficiencies, computer programs, and certifications. If you have space, consider including a list of 3-5 interests (cello, Indian cuisine, running half-marathons).



Below is a list of powerful action words to use on your resume:

Management: Administered, Analyzed, Assigned, Attained, Chaired, Consolidated, Contracted, Coordinated, Delegated, Developed, Directed, Evaluated, Executed, Improved, Increased, Organized, Oversaw, Planned, Prioritized, Produced, Recommended, Reviewed, Scheduled, Strengthened, Supervised

Communication: Addressed, Arbitrated, Arranged, Authored, Collaborated, Convinced, Corresponded, Developed, Directed, Drafted, Edited, Enlisted, Formulated, Influenced, Interpreted, Lectured, Mediated, Moderated, Negotiated, Persuaded, Promoted, Publicized, Reconciled, Recruited, Spoke, Translated, Wrote

Research: Clarified, Collected, Critiqued, Diagnosed, Evaluated, Examined, Extracted, Identified, Inspected, Interpreted, Interviewed, Investigated, Organized, Reviewed, Summarized, Surveyed, Systematized

Technical: Assembled, Built, Calculated, Computed, Designed, Devised, Engineered, Fabricated, Maintained, Operated, Overhauled, Programmed, Remodeled, Repaired, Solved, Upgraded

Teaching: Adapted, Advised, Clarified, Coached, Communicated, Coordinated, Demystified, Developed, Enabled, Encouraged, Evaluated, Explained, Facilitated, Guided, Informed, Instructed, Persuaded, Set Goals, Stimulated, Trained

Financial: Administered, Allocated, Analyzed, Appraised, Audited, Balanced, Budgeted, Calculated, Computed, Developed, Forecasted, Managed, Marketed, Planned, Projected, Researched

Creative: Acted, Conceptualized, Created, Customized, Designed, Developed, Directed, Established, Fashioned, Founded, Illustrated, Initiated, Instituted, Integrated, Introduced, Invented, Originated, Performed, Planned, Revitalized, Shaped

Helping: Assessed, Assisted, Clairified, Coached, Counseled, Demonstrated, Diagnosed, Educated, Expedited, Facilitated, Familiarized, Guided, Motivated, Referred, Rehabilitated, Represented

Clerical/Detail Oriented: Approved, Arranged, Catalogued, Classified, Collected, Compiled, Dispatched, Executed, Generated, Implemented, Inspected, Monitored, Operated, Organized, Prepared, Processed, Purchased, Recorded, Retrieved, Screened, Specified, Systematized, Tabulated, Validated

Resume Template

YOUR NAME
Street Address
City, State Zip Code
Telephone Number
youremail@uchicago.edu

EDUCATION

Institution, City, State

Degree, expected Month Year

GPA: X.XX/4.00

Relevant Courses: [**Note**: This is optional, however if you do choose to include courses, refrain from adding course numbers because it will not mean anything to an outside audience.]

Name of High School, City, State

Diploma, Month Year

[**Note**: Include GPA, class rank, or any other exceptional academic honor that might inform employers of your scholastic achievements. By the third year, most students should take their high school off their resume. Exceptions to this include if you want to establish a geographic tie to your hometown, or if your high school has strong name recognition or an alumni network.]

EXPERIENCE

Organization, City, State

Title, Month Year – Month Year [**Note**: you can bold your title or your organization – whichever is more relevant/important, but be consistent and keep the location with the organization]

- Describe your experience, skills, etc. in bullet form

[**Note**: How should you write a bullet point? Start with an action verb describing the skills involved, then the task or action that you completed, and conclude with the outcome or accomplishment. Your bullet points should highlight your accomplishments, skills, knowledge, personal characteristics, and experience level. Include quantifications, frequency, or impact of your work whenever possible. Think through the following questions when approaching writing bullet points for an experience:

- What did you do? What were the results of your work?
- What were your accomplishments?
- How did you help the organization? What impact did your tasks have on your colleagues, your department, or the organization as a whole?
- What did you learn? What skills/knowledge did you enhance?
- How does this experience relate to your internship/employment goal?]

ACTIVITIES, COMMUNITY SERVICE or LEADERSHIP [*Examples of descriptive headings*]

Title, Organization, City, State, Dates

[**Note**: This section can be formatted exactly like your experience section or you can omit bullet points. If this section's experience is more relevant to the type of work you're pursuing, consider putting it above experience. Your activities don't have to be separated into different categories; you can always include these activities in your Experience section.]

SKILLS

[**Note**: List computer, language, and any other skills relevant to the position you're applying for. Other types of skills (e.g., communication skills, organizational skills) should not be listed, but rather incorporated into your bullet points above.]

YOUR NAME

youremail@uchicago.edu | Phone Number | Address

EDUCATION

The University of Chicago, Chicago, IL

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, expected June 2028

Jones High School, Chicago, IL

Diploma, May 2024

GPA: 3.92/4.00

Honors: High Honor Roll (2020-2024), Outstanding Senior Award (2024), Valedictorian (2024)

EXPERIENCE

University of Chicago Department of Psychology, Chicago, IL

Research Assistant, October 2024-Present

- Virtually investigate and extract data from academic research to formulate and design experiments that explore career goals and outcomes in executive leadership roles
- Collect and examine data from various sources to gather meaningful and measurable evidence about human behavior and the motivation behind philanthropic giving

Boston Consulting Group, Chicago, IL

Job Shadow, September 2024

- Shadowed a Senior Consultant for 5 days to gain exposure to the consulting industry
- Attended Case Team Meetings and gained knowledge on the problem-solving and consulting process
- Assessed risk potential and summarized reports on upcoming and ongoing projects for job shadowing host

Private Family Client, Chicago, IL

Childcare Provider, January 2021-September 2024

- Supervised two children, ages 4 and 7, while parents were away at work during afternoons and evenings
- Created a child-friendly environment by monitoring children's activities, overseeing meals and naps, and organizing activities and games to enhance children's physical, emotional, and social well-being

LEADERSHIP & ACTIVITIES

University of Chicago Model United Nations Team, Chicago, IL

Delegate, September 2024-Present

- Represent UChicago at national Model UN Conferences as part of top-ranked competitive team
- Recognized as Best Delegation in GA First Committee at American Model United Nations (AMUN) 2020

Students Against Destructive Decisions, Chicago, IL

President, August 2022-May 2024

- Led executive board members in coordinating four large campaigns and raising more than \$3000
- Increased active membership by 30% through innovative membership drive efforts
- Served as spokesperson to local community, raising awareness of violence and injury prevention strategies

SKILLS

Computer: Proficient in Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and Java

Language: Proficient in reading and writing Spanish