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

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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.]

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Coursework is very important when trying to demonstrate a familiarity with a particular topic that may not come out in your job experience. If you choose to include coursework, choose at least 3 and no more than 5. Include your BA thesis if it is relevant to the job you are applying to.

EDUCATION

The University of Chicago — Chicago, IL
Bachelor of Arts in Political Science — Expected, June 2022
Cumulative GPA: 3.62/4.00
Honors Included: The Dean's List (2017-2019), Maroon Key Society (2019)

The default GPA is cumulative. If a GPA isn't marked, one will assume it is your cumulative GPA. If you are also giving a major GPA, mark it as such. Provide GPA to two decimal places.

EXPERIENCE

DonorsChoose.org — New York, NY
Jeff Metcalf Logistics & Business Relations Intern — June 2020-September 2020

- Analyzed special request items and technological demand to account for applications and devices requested
- Created vendor stories, snapshots of vendor-specific classroom materials, to present at client meetings
- Formulated vendor performance reports with spend charts and sales trends for client presentations

LuminAID — Chicago, IL
Jeff Metcalf Advertising and Public Relations Intern — June 2019-September 2019

- Synthesized marketing research and company goals to create and carry out a summer advertising and PR campaign, including applying Adobe Photoshop/InDesign skills to create marketing materials
- Facilitated the evolution of an enriched company brand though ongoing marketing and client relations efforts

Campus Catalyst Consulting — Chicago, IL
Community Analyst — January 2019-March 2019

- Analyzed a teacher training program's application materials to evaluate effectiveness of teacher selection
- Collaborate with a team to improve the application, to develop methods of tracking teacher success, and to provide deliverables to our nonprofit client

"Experience" does not just mean paid experience, but includes volunteer experience, RSOs, community-based work, etc.

Chicago Policy Research Team — Chicago, IL
Student Consultant for the Woodlawn Public Safety Alliance — Feb. 2018

- Conducted interviews with residents of Woodlawn to identify perceptions of public safety
- Analyzed qualitative data from the interviews to write a report with recommendations to the client about how to effectively use online media to promote public safety in the community
- Drafted applications for two private foundation grants to allow the client to build program capacity

LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES

"Leadership" means being an active participant, i.e. coordinating an event.

Varsity Basketball, University of Chicago — Chicago, IL
Captain — September 2019-present

- Balance 20+ hour weekly commitment to basketball with full course load
- Manage and organize team offseason workouts, team activities, and participation
- Received NCAA Division II tournament bids, 2018 and 2019

Student Government, University of Chicago — Chicago, IL
Class Representative — September 2017 – June 2018

- Organized more than 20 campus activities and functions for the student body
- Oversee the proper and fair execution of the Spring General Election, the Campus Dining Advisory Board

SKILLS

Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign
Fluent in German

Mark your knowledge of language as "conversant", "proficient", and "fluent". If it is a dead language, then instead of "conversant" write "beginner".

Computer skills: usually use terms like 'knowledge'.

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Chicago, IL 60637
(773) 555-7864

Permanent Address:
123 Main Street
Stevens Point, WI 54481
(715) 456-2222

Once you determine your major, state "BA in__" and DROP the high school listing unless it will help your job search.

EDUCATION

The University of Chicago, Chicago, IL
Bachelor of Arts, expected June 2024
Enrolled in core liberal arts courses with plans to pursue pre-med curriculum. GPA: 3.45/4.00

It is best to include a GPA if it is a 3.00 or higher.

SPASH High School, Stevens Point, WI
Diploma, June 2020
Honors Included: President's Education Award for Outstanding Academic Achievement (2020) and National Council of Teachers of English Nomination for Excellence in Writing (2020)

EXPERIENCE

The Boston Consulting Group (BCG), Chicago, IL, *Job Shadow*, December 2019

- Attended Case Team Meetings and gained knowledge on the problem-solving and consulting process
- Analyzed opportunities for client to increase revenue and compile findings into executive summary
- Assessed risk potential and summarized reports on upcoming and ongoing projects for externship host

LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES

Model United Nations Team, University of Ch2icago, *Delegate*, November 2019 - present

- Represent university at national Model United Nations Conferences as part of top ranked competitive team
- Recognized as Best Delegation in GA First Committee at American Model United Nations (AMUN) 2019

Student Alumni Committee, University of Chicago, *Social Event Coordinator,* October 2019 - present

- Secure alumni donations for the Dean's Fund for Student Life
- Attend weekly general business meetings to plan philanthropy and committee development events

Women in Public Service Project, Institute of Politics, University of Chicago, *Member*, October 2019-present

- Develop weekly seminars on a variety of public policy topics led by field experts
- Identified and recruited 5 potential speakers for WPSP events

Students against Destructive Decisions, SPASH High School*, President*, September 2018 - June 2019

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

Student Council, SPASH High School, *Vice President,* September 2018 - June 2019

- Planned and facilitated weekly student council meetings
- Represented 1500 students in meetings with administrators; lobbied for and implemented spirit week

Volunteer and student activities can be just as impressive to an employer as work experience.

SKILLS

Computer: Proficient in Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Java and FileMaker
Language: Proficient in reading and writing Spanish
Certifications: Adult CPR

INTERESTS

Competitive fencing, marathon training, southern cuisine

Your interests aren't qualifications for a job necessarily, but they provide employers with topics about which they can inquire at the beginning of an interview. This often helps you relax and leads to a better interview but can easily be dropped is space is an issue.