



Effective Resume Writing

westmont.edu/COVE (Kerr Student Center)

Your résumé should show a potential employer how you are qualified for an internship or job by highlighting your relevant experiences, training, skills, and accomplishments. Be sure to check out our [instructional video](#) (a companion to this guide) at on the Tell Your Story page at westmont.edu/cove. *There are two key numbers to always keep in mind when crafting your resume:*

6

Six Seconds: Some employers spend as little as six second reviewing a resume, so be concise, accurate, error free (spell check and proofread for typos, misplaced words, etc.), and make it easy for them to quickly get a sense of what you bring to the table. Following this framework will likely increase the odds that the employer will want to read more.

1

One Page: With very rare exceptions, at this point in your life you must submit resumes no more than one page in length. If you have content for more pages, do the work and build a “library” of your experiences that you can pick and choose from when you’re crafting a one page resume to submit for an internship or job.

About Resume Design

Just about everyone has an idea for what makes a compelling resume design (and everyone, including us, thinks they’re right!). There is more than one way to create a compelling resume and we fully acknowledge that a good resume (regardless of format) is one that lands you an internship or job.

That said, keeping the above two numbers in mind as you craft your resume is vital because they compel you to a) give the read a “snapshot” (within those six seconds) of your qualifications, and b) force you to succinctly and compellingly draft your bullet points and experiences within the constraints of a single page.

More important than design is doing the work to nail your bullet points. Go beyond simply reciting tasks and state those experiences in terms of more detailed “transferable skills” (more on this later).

About Resume Templates

Resume templates are everywhere on the web and while many of them look visually intriguing, the graphic elements can be distracting to the read (wasting some of your six seconds) and reduce the amount of available space (which could be better used to expand your bullet points).

You’ll see two recommended sample formats at the end of this guide.

Things to Include (and not include) in Your Resume

Your resume should contain the following content blocks. See the recommended sample formats at the end of this guide:

Contact Information: Name, Phone, Email, Current address or permanent address if you might move before the employer can contact you. Your name should be in a large font in the upper left corner, and you contact information should be placed on the upper right side or on the bottom of your resume. You want the contact information to be visible but not a distraction).

Education: Major and degree are usually all that is necessary although you may include GPA only if it is mentioned in the job description. You can also highlight related research or class projects, educational honors or special courses (only if applicable to the internship/job description). Education should be the first section below your name.

Professional and Related Experience: Use relevant categorical titles where possible. Describe duties with skill/action words and highlight accomplishments in the context of a transferable skill, populations, numbers, etc.

Consider additional relevant categories on your resume: Remember to tailor all of your bullet point descriptions to the job description!

- **Special Qualifications:** Emphasize experiences, certifications, activities or interests that might appeal to your targeted employers
- **Other Experiences:** Professional Development, Community Service, Memberships, International Travel, etc.
- **Activities:** Highlight honors, leadership, school activities, volunteer, service, and relevant hobbies, etc.

References: Prepare a separate document with reference information. Only provide references if asked. Use the same header as your resume and cover letter. Always bring copies of your references (and resume, too!) just in case. Include at least 3: List name, job title, employer, address, phone number, and email. *Always seek proposed reference permission first.*

Skills: Stating a list of skills such as “Detail Oriented”, “People Person”, or “Leader” tend to make employers “glaze over.” You’re better served to demonstrate how you lived out these skills by incorporating them in your bullet points.

Check out our Resume video for more information on these topics
<https://www.westmont.edu/cove-career-center/tell-your-story>

TIP: Consider taking one of the assessments through the COVE Career Center, and use the words and descriptions from your results in your resume and cover letter!

Your skills + interests= individualized career possibilities!

Use Action Verbs to Start All Your Bullet Points

As you craft your bullet points, focus on creating a strategy for each one (ie: know exactly what you want this bullet point to communicate). Then, based on the strategy and experiences you want to communicate, begin each bullet point with an “action verb” that complements the skills/experiences you want to highlight.

Financial Skills

administered
allocated
analyzed
appraised
audited
balanced

Creative Skills

acted
authored
conceived
conceptualized
created
demonstrated

Helping Skills

advised
assisted
coached
consulted
counseled
demonstrated

Technical Skills

assembled
computed
designed
engineered
experimented
investigated

Research Skills

clarified
collected
critiqued
diagnosed
evaluated
examined

Communication skills

addressed
arranged
authored
communicated
clarified
edited

Teaching Skills

adapted
advised
clarified
communicated
coordinated
developed

Clerical Skills

approved
catalogued
classified
compiled
correlated
dispatched

Management skills

achieved
acted as liaison
administered
analyzed
assigned
contracted

A note about listing self-descriptive skills: While phrases such as “hard working”, “people person”, “self-motivated” may accurately describe you, most employers dismiss these self-proclaimed attributes. You’re much better served to use your resume and cover letter to show an employer how you manifested these attributes through your jobs, education, and other relevant experiences.

Transferable Skills

Why do transferable skills matter? Because they help you to frame tasks and skills in your bullet points in ways that can matter to a prospective employer. As an example:

Only stating your tasks/duties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Made coffee drinks for customers
Using transferable skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilized attention to detail to quickly and accurately complete orders to ensure customer satisfaction

The following can be helpful as you develop your transferable skills.

Act as a Liaison- Represent, serve as a link between individuals/ groups.
Adapt to Change- Easily and quickly respond to changing assignments, work settings, and priorities.
Analyze- Break down and figure out problems logically.
Budget- Economize, save, stretch money or other resources.
Classify- Group, categorize, systemize data, people or things.
Computer Literate- Develop, organize, and complete tasks and projects using software.
Conceptualize- Conceive and internally develop concepts and ideas.
Counsel- Facilitate insight and personal growth, guide, advise, coach others.
Customer Service- Effectively solve problems and challenges that satisfy customers.
Deal with Ambiguity- Be comfortable and effective with issues that lack clarity, structure, or certainty.
Deal with Feelings- Draw out, listen, accept, empathize, express sensitivity, diffuse anger, calm, inject humor.
Delegate- Achieve effective results by assigning tasks to others.
Design- Structure new or innovative practices, programs, products, or environments.
Entertain/Perform- Amuse, sing, dance, play music for, give a demonstration to, speak to an audience.
Estimate- Appraise value or cost.
Evaluate- Assess, review, critique feasibility or quality.
Expedite- Speed up production or services, trouble-shoot problems, streamline procedures.
Generate Ideas- Reflect upon, conceive of, dream up, brainstorm ideas.
Implement- Provide detailed follow-through of policies and plans.
Improvise- To effectively think, speak, and act without preparation.
Initiate Change- Exert influence on changing the status quo, exercising leadership.
Innovate/Invent- Create unique ideas or combine existing ideas to obtain a new or unique result.
Interview for Information- Draw out information through incisive questioning.
Maintain Records- Keep accurate and up-to-date records, log, and tabulate data.
Make Arrangements- Coordinate events and handle logistics.
Make Decisions- Make major, complex or frequent decisions.
Manage Time- Ability to prioritize, structure and schedule tasks to maximize effort and meet deadlines.
Mediate- Manage conflict, reconcile differences.
Mentor- Educate, guide, coach or counsel others.
Monitor- Keep track of the movement of data, people, or things.
Motivate- Recruit involvement, mobilize energy, stimulate peak performance.
Multi-task- Effectively manage a variety of tasks and projects simultaneously.
Negotiate - Bargain for rights or advantages.
Observe- Study, scrutinize, examine data, people or things scientifically.
Perceive Intuitively- Sense/show insight and foresight.
Plan, Organize- Define goals and objectives, schedule and develop projects or programs.
Portray Images- Sketch, draw, illustrate, paint or photograph.
Proofread, Edit- Check writings for proper usage and stylistic flair and make improvements.
Read for Information- Research written resources efficiently and exhaustively.
Research Online- Able to use online resources to gather and organize information and data.
Sell - promote a person, company, goods or services, convince of merits, raise money.
Strategize- Effectively plan and develop long-range strategies that successfully accomplish objectives.
Supervise- Oversee, direct the work of others.
Synthesize- Integrate ideas and information, combine diverse elements into a coherent whole.
Teach, Train- Inform, explain, and give instruction to students, employees or customers.
Team Work- Easily and effectively work with others to obtain results.
Test- Measure proficiency, quality, or validity, check and double check.
Use Mechanical Abilities- Assemble, tune, repair or operate engines or other machinery.
Visualize- Imagine possibilities, see in mind's eye.
Work with Numbers- Easily calculate, compute, and solve numerical and quantitative problems.
Write- Compose reports, letters, articles, ads, stories, or educational materials.

Marisol Matthews

Objective

To obtain an internship in Events Planning

Only use an objective if your education or experiences are an exact match for the job you are applying to.

Education

Bachelor of Arts, Communication Studies
Westmont College | Santa Barbara, CA

May 2019

You can order your experiences by a) relevance to the job, or b) chronologically.

Related Experience

Sales and Catering Intern

Fess Parker's Doubletree Resort | Santa Barbara, CA

January 2017 - Present

- Initiate projects with the Sales, Catering, and Convention Services departments
- Participate in client meetings, Pre-Convention meetings and site tours
- Gain a working knowledge of the hotel computer system (Delphi and Word) through creating letters and mail merges
- Liaison with vendors and guests over the phone to remedy potential complications
- Assist in servicing and programming a convention

Start each bullet point with an "action" verb. Use present tense for your current job/experience (if applicable), and past tense for prior job/experience.

Administrative Assistant

Alpha Property Management | Downey, CA

- Completed various computer related tasks in Excel and Windows programs, including data entry, word processing, and chart making
- Compiled quarterly reports of financial records for the U.S. Department of Housing
- Transcribed minutes at the Property Supervisors' weekly meetings
- Worked flexibly with schedules of multiple Property Supervisors to assist in various capacities

Director of Service Organization

May 2016 - May 2016

Westmont College | Santa Barbara, CA

- Successfully acted as liaison between students and administration
- Presented updates to the college's Parents Council, Alumni Council and Board of Trustees
- Wrote informative letters to prospective students and faculty members
- Worked closely with a co-director and faculty advisor to assist a staff in decision making and troubleshooting
- Supervised more than 30 service groups which attended the needs of students on campus, members of the local community, and people around the world
- Interviewed and selected staff members

Child Care Program Coordinator

May, 2014 - May 2015

Anaheim Hilton and Towers, "Vacation Station" | Anaheim, CA

- Assisted Public Relations Director in organizing informational packets and publicity for summer "Vacation Station" program
- Wrote informative memorandums to various departments within the hotel
- Trained and supervise child care staff and enforced the Hilton Corporations service standards

SPECIAL HONORS AND AWARDS

- Dean's List
- Westmont Presidential Scholarship
- Omicron Delta Kappa Society Member
- Leadership Scholarship

Jane Smithⁱ

123 Main Street
Valencia, CA 91381
Cell: (555) 555--1212
studentname@westmont.edu

Educationⁱⁱ

Bachelor of Arts, Theater Arts
Westmont College, Santa Barbara, CA

May 2018ⁱⁱⁱ

Professional and Related Experience

Writing Tutor^{iv}

Aug 2017 – Nov 2017

Westmont College, Santa Barbara, CA

- Utilized my writing competencies to assist fellow students. Focused on building student competencies rather than just editing individual papers
- Completed related job training class and applied strategies during in-person student appointments
- Worked in concert with Supervisor to review and edit handouts on best practices
- Outcome: Demonstrated consistency in work ethic and the application of writing principles to actual student work

Job/Experience #2

Dates Worked

Employer Name, Employer City State

- Describe how your work helped you understand and interact with customers or the public^v
- Describe how your work helped you work well with others in the company
- Describe how your work helped you understand organization and business practices and processes
- Outcome: This is a roll-up sentence of either A) what skills you developed or other things learned, or B) what your employer gained from your work

Job/Experience #3

Dates Worked

Employer Name, Employer City State

- Describe how your work helped you understand and interact with customers or the public
- Describe how your work helped you work well with others in the company
- Describe how your work helped you understand organization and business practices and processes
- Outcome: This is a roll-up sentence of either A) what skills you developed or other things learned, or B) what your employer gained from your work

Awards and Recognitions^{vi}

- Award or recognition here (ideally do not include high school awards/recognitions)

Volunteer and Other

- List things that speak to your character and community involvement

References Available Upon Request

RESUME DESIGN NOTES (stick to one page):

ⁱ **Anchor the Eye:** The eye wants to start at the top left of the page. Help the reader “anchor” the eye (make it easy to see your name). Then, get everything else (address, objectives, etc.) out of the way to allow the reader to quickly flow to the things you bring to the table.

ⁱⁱ **Lead with Your Degree:** At this stage in your career, your degree is the first thing you should highlight. Unless you have a near perfect GPA don't list it. Most employers aren't interested in high school graduation information, so don't waste space on that.

ⁱⁱⁱ **Right Justify Using Tab Function:** Use Word (or other software) to create “Tabs” so that your dates are crisply lined up and justified on the right border.

^{iv} **Job Title First:** State the job title first and place the employer underneath. Jobs should be listed chronologically starting with the most current job.

^v **Strategic Bullet Points:** Don't just list the tasks you performed. Have a strategic objective with each bullet point and state the bullet point content in the context of a transferrable skill.

^{vi} **Awards, Recognitions, Volunteer and Other:** Use these sections to list other items. Section header titles can be edited to suit your need.

Cover Letters

TIPS:

- In almost every case, you should submit a cover letter with your resume.
- Cover letter should include the date, an address “block” with the name/organization/address/City State Zip of the person you’re writing to.
- Include a “subject” line to clearly state why you’re writing (ie: the job/internship title you’re apply for).
- Include a professional greeting (ie: Dear Ms. Smith).
- **BEFORE SUBMITTING YOUR COVER LETTER OR RESUME:** A) use spellcheck to catch obvious errors, B) have someone other than you proofread your cover letter and resume, and C) convert documents to a PDF file (use your word processor’s “save as” function).

Types of Cover Letters:

- a “cold-call” letter
- letters resulting from a referral or other contact
- letters responding to a job posting

Purpose of a Cover Letter:

- to sell your qualifications to the reader
- introduce yourself to an organization
- create the **first impression** of your ability to communicate
- motivate the employer to review your resume

Important facts:

- Cover letters are brief yet informative; **no more than one page.**
- 3 parts: **1) opening** explains who you are and why you’re writing **2) main body** lists two to three relevant major accomplishments, experiences, skills, etc. that gives the reader good reason to interview you **3) closing** expresses a desire for future communication
- Reflect **some evidence of your knowledge regarding the business or organization;** research, informational interviews, LinkedIn....
- Address the letter **to a person** (double check spelling and title), unless absolutely impossible. Try calling Human Resources or receptionist for information, too.
- **Highlight about yourself and your achievements.** You can be confident when sharing your qualifications, skills, interests, and personal attributes.
 - The job description and website will let you know what skills and key words they are looking for, so use them!
- Demonstrate **writing ability** and **communication skills**
- In most cases, let the employer know you **will contact them** (unless otherwise specified)

Cover Letter Example

Two key points: 1) As with your resume, you must ALWAYS spell check and proofread your cover letter prior to sending. Simple (and easily avoidable) mistakes can cause employers to lose interest in you, and 2) always convert your cover letter and resume into a PDF prior to sending (avoid formatting issues).

August 6, 2021

Ms. Jane Smith, VP of Operations
Patagonia, Inc.
123 Main Street
Ventura, CA 99999

Subject: Program Development Specialist

Dear Ms. Smith:

Always insert the current date

If available, address the letter to the decision maker. Otherwise use phrases such as "Human Resources Department"

Add a subject line to let the reader know why you're writing.

Use a professional greeting (use "To whom it may concern" if you don't have a specific name)

I am enthusiastic about applying for the Program Development Specialist position with Patagonia. I hold a Bachelor's degree in Economics and Business from Westmont College, which complements my personal and professional experience with organizational development, innovative resourcefulness, and partner collaboration **(use keywords from job description)*. I believe that I am an exceptional candidate to contribute to Patagonia's dedication to improving and developing each created product by finding and utilizing all resources available **(include/integrate their mission, values, etc., with your experience and values)*.

As a Relations Specialist **(list work position/title)* at Montecito Bank **(company name)*, I build rapport with clients and colleagues that fosters trustworthy relationships. Cultivating and implementing critical thinking allows me to continually improve projects and our district's initiatives. While maintaining client affiliate channels, I utilize resources and strategy to develop the affiliate channel long term. I am constantly expanding my role and daily tasks with a growth mindset **(use keywords from job description)* and proactive research by gathering data, developing presentations, and creating timelines. By leveraging cooperative and collaborative communication, I have obtained additional placements, volume, and approvals that have developed the affiliate network, as well as target a new audience. Furthermore, my professional experience enables me to utilize data analysis and diverse relationships to enhance growth, which will directly contribute to this position.

As an innovative, eager learner, and team player, I hope to contribute to Patagonia and learn from the Learning and Development team, as well. I would appreciate the opportunity to further discuss my interests and qualifications for this position, can be contacted at **(email)* and **(#)*. Thank you for your time and consideration, and I look forward to future correspondence.

Best, **(sincerely, gratefully...choose your signature)*

Layla

Layla L. Jackson
456 State Street
Anywhere, CA 99999
(805) 888-1111
name@westmont.edu

Provide your contact information

References

A list of references is a list of the people whom the employer might contact to learn more information about you. These people should be able to speak to your qualifications for a job. Sometimes an employer will contact only one person on the list, and other times an employer will contact everyone. A list of strong references can be a great way to demonstrate your qualifications for a position.

Creating your list of References:

- Your name and contact information should be listed at the top of your reference sheet in the same header as your resume.
- Include 3 references, listed in the order you would like them to be contacted.
- Ask for permission; it's important that you let references/ recommendations know that an employer may be contacting the.
- Ask for the appropriate contact information. Be sure to provide them your cover letter, resume and any other information so they can represent you in the best way possible when speaking with a potential employer.
- Be sure to list names in **BOLD** font, including the following:
 - Position title (e.g. Director of Human Resources, Public Relations Manager, etc.)
 - The name of the company/organization at which they are employed.
 - The company address (or at least city and state)
 - Work phone number, or one's preferred phone number
 - Preferred email address

Example:

William Warrior 955 Rocky Road, Santa Barbara, CA 93110 805.565.6031 william@yourschool.edu	
REFERENCES	
Name Job Title Company Phone Address Email	
Name Job Title Company Phone Address Email	

Preparing a Curriculum Vitae

Though a curriculum vitae, or CV, is a type of resume typically used by professionals in the fields of academia, medicine, teaching, and research, it can also be asked for when applying to graduate programs. We strongly encourage you to have your major advisor review your CV as it pertains to graduate school.

Differences between a resume and a CV

- Education is always listed first. Most candidates who use a CV have an educational background directly related to the positions they seek.
- CV's almost never list an objective and seldom have a long narrative profile. If you want to make a more elaborate argument for your application, do it in a cover letter.
- CV's should be understated. Self-congratulation is likely to backfire on the author so keep your CV looking simple.
- Name-dropping is more common in CV's than resumes. For example, if you performed research under a certain professor, you would probably include her name and title. Science and academia are small worlds, and it is likely that a prospective employer will have heard of a given specialist in her own field.
- CV's can run on for pages and pages. This is different from resumes, which need to be one to two pages, maximum. CV's should, however, be very neatly organized with clear headings and distinct conceptual divisions.
- CV's often contain many more categories of information than resumes. Experience may be divided between headings for TEACHING and RESEARCH; education may be divided between DEGREES and CONTINUING EDUCATION or ADVANCED TRAINING. How you organize this material determines its impact on your reader.

Information to include on a CV

The organization and presentation of your CV is extremely important. It will be judged largely on the number and nature of listings. Review your material before deciding what to include, what to feature, and what to omit. Review all potential data in the following categories:

Degrees/Continuing Education
Licenses/Credentials
Sports
Technical/Laboratory Skills
Workshops/Symposia/Seminars

Expertise
Study Abroad/Internship
Awards/Grants/Scholarships

*After compiling this information, organize it on your CV in accordance with your desired impact on the reader. All information should be listed in reverse chronological order.