



Student Counseling and Career Services

Guide to Writing an Effective Resume

WHAT IS IT?

A resume is a professional document outlining your education, skills, and experience to contacts and potential employers.

WHAT IS IT FOR?

The objective of the resume is to secure an interview. The more interviews you have, the greater your chances of landing a position. The resume and cover letter are often the *first impression* you will give to employers. Spelling, grammar, and formatting could be the difference between a place in the “NO” pile, and one in the “Let’s talk to them!” pile. Employers generally spend less than a minute – maybe even a few seconds, looking at your resume, so make them count!

The resume has several standard formatting rules, and three main types: chronological, functional, and combination.

Begin by choosing the most appropriate format from these three resume types:

The Chronological Resume

Typically the chronological resume is the most familiar type of resume. As the name implies, this format presents a history of your work/education accomplishments in *reverse* chronological order (latest first).

Consider using this format if:

- You have particularly strong and relevant work history.
- You are pursuing a career that is directly related to your major.
- You have been working for some time, and are seeking a job in the same or similar field.

The Functional Resume

Instead of stressing the employment record, this resume describes the functional skills you have developed. It underscores these skills rather than your experience timeline, and allows you to focus on your “transferable skills,” or talents which you can apply in a variety of employment situations, without regard to when those skills were accomplished.

Consider using this format if:

- You are changing from one career area into another.
- You are seeking a position in a field that is not directly related to your educational background or your past and current paid experiences.

The Combination Resume

This type of resume combines features from the chronological and functional formats and allows you to expand on related work/internship experiences and/or course projects, while also emphasizing your transferable skills from any unrelated experience.

REMEMBER TO PROOFREAD, EDIT AND CONSTANTLY UPDATE YOUR RESUME!

This is not a one-and-done task. You will need to write and submit many resumes throughout your career as you gain new positions, training, skills, and experience.

Chronological

The most often used, a chronological resume details your history by time. Sections are placed in reverse-chronological order, meaning the most recent items are first. This is determined by the end date of the activity/position. Like every resume, put the most relevant sections/headings on top so that they will be seen first. If you'd like to highlight something that is not your most recent activity, you can use a heading like "Relevant Experience", "Field Experience" or specific experience – "Marketing Experience", "Teaching Experience", etc.

Heading: Name is larger, both LinkedIn link and email are professional

JESSIE DUKOBOWSKY
 5480 N. St. Louis Avenue, Apt. R2-D2
 Chicago, IL 60625
www.linkedin.com/in/jdukobowsky
 (773) 442-4680
jdukowski23@yahoo.com

You can also include an optional 'Profile' or 'Professional Summary' beneath the heading

Most relevant information first: For education, NEIU is spelled out, degree listed and expected date; relevant coursework, class projects and GPA are optional

Education: Northeastern Illinois University Chicago, IL
Bachelor of Arts: Justice Studies; minor: Psychology Expected December 2016
 Major GPA: 3.42/4.0

<p><u>Justice Studies Coursework</u> Theories of Criminal Behavior Prisons and Jails Law and Racism in America Juvenile Justice System Women, Justice, & the Law</p>	<p><u>Psychology Coursework</u> Psychoanalytic Theories of Personality Psychology of Personality Adolescent Psychology Abnormal Psychology Emotional Disturbances of Adolescence</p>
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Experiences – describe with headings like relevant experience, internship, study abroad, projects, whatever is most applicable to the job you're applying for.

Basic bullet points are short statements and start with an action verb and **describe specific activities and results**, and include details like numbers involved: people, projects, revenue, etc.

Internship: Safe House Youth Network Skokie, IL
Caseworker Aide January 2015 to June 2015

- Assisted case managers with intake interviewing and making client assessments
- Researched housing, rehabilitation and medical referrals for homeless youth
- Provided referral information to clients and follow-up to determine outcomes
- Counseled participants concerning available options, choices and making decisions

Study Abroad: University of Central England Birmingham, England
Exchange Student June 2014 to August 2014

- Completed several social science courses, including **Justice Administration in the U.K. and European Justice History**. Engaged in both on-campus and off-campus activities, including travel/study in the United Kingdom, France and Spain.

Work Experience: Crenshaw Neighborhood Community Center Evanston, IL
After School Tutor & Care Provider October 2012 to present

- Oversee daily homework completion and provide tutoring in math, science, English, and computer competency
- Coordinate after school age-appropriate activities, including field trips

Skills:

- Proficient with SPSS, Microsoft Office 2010, QuickBooks, Adobe Photoshop CS5
- Bilingual ability in Russian and English

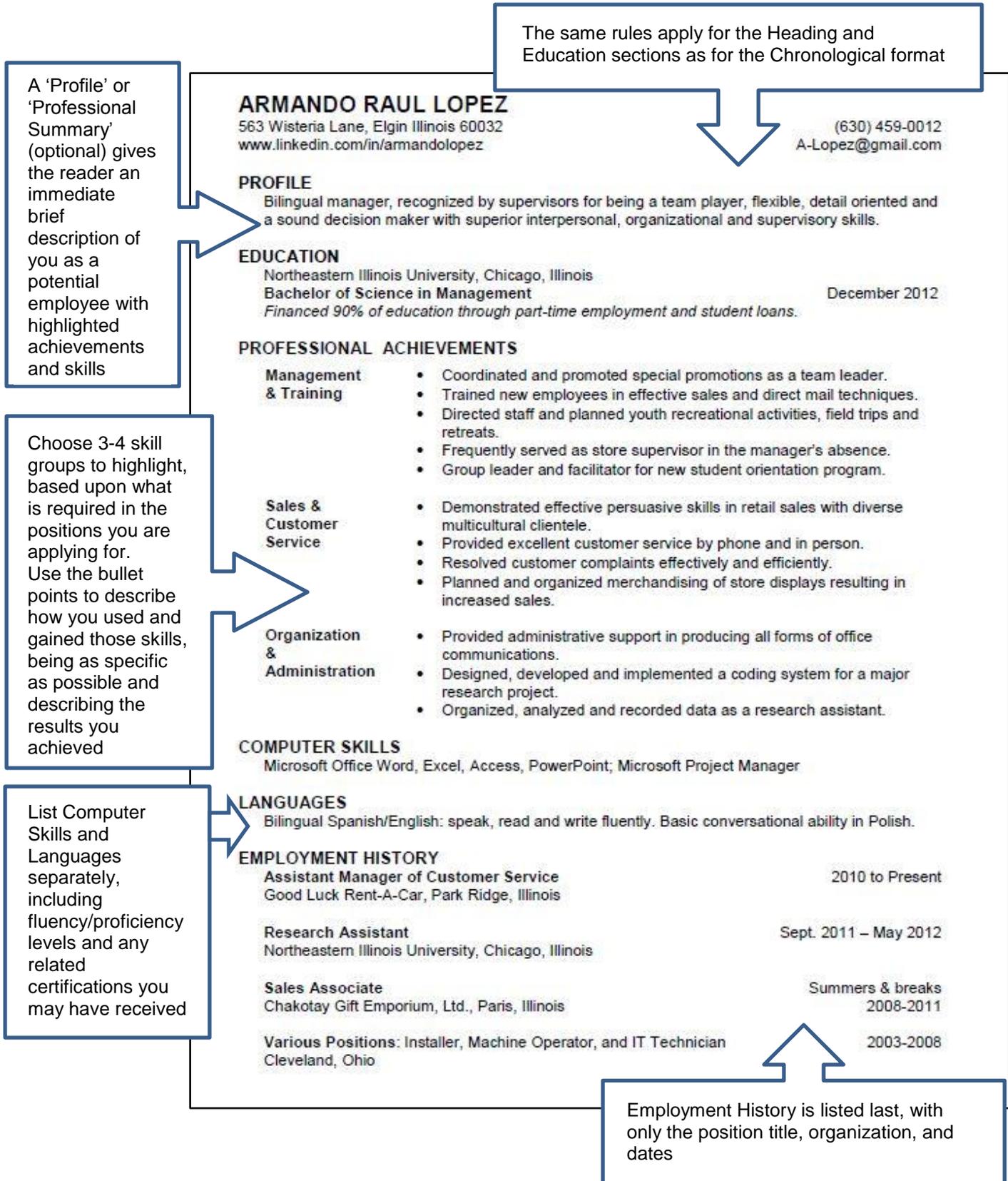
Optional skills section includes computer programs, certifications, and foreign languages. Do not use descriptive skills like hard worker, results-driven, etc.

ENTIRE DOCUMENT:

- Consistently formatted (same font, correct spelling and grammar)
- At least 11pt font, basic bullet points (no fancy graphics) ¾-1" margins
- White or ivory paper if printed

Functional/Combination

This format is most often used to highlight skills when an applicant has a limited activity history, is changing career fields, or has had several gaps in their employment history.



The Professional Summary

Brief story elements like a professional summary and context statements create a personal brand and differentiate you from other job candidates. In describing your work experiences, mention more than tasks and duties. Express how the job environment manifested your skills and motivations.

A summary (also called a Professional Profile or Professional Highlights) labels the themes within your resume and communicates the keywords expected by an employer and scanned for by applicant tracking systems. These items are:

- Buzzwords or jargon that shows a familiarity with the industry's knowledge-base. (But stay away from clichés! If you're not going to back up an assertion like "strong communication skills" with at least one detailed example later in your resume, don't use it.)
- Skills, strengths and transferable experiences.
- Reflection of the advertised job description.
- An opportunity to describe yourself with a title or as a professional (just make sure it's realistic).

A resume's summary statement should be changed with each submittal of a resume.

Examples of Summary Statements

Financial Analyst with experience in banks and lending offices with the ability to:

- Design/implement financial models using MS Excel.
- Analyze annual budgets, quarterly financial data, cash flow forecasts, as well as analyze bank financial statements, determine bank risks, and detail conclusions for periodic reports.
- Perform due diligence for mergers/acquisitions
- Familiar with Sarbanes-Oxley (SOX) compliance regulations.

Retail Manager experienced in all aspects of mid-sized store management. Accomplished in same-store sales increases, employee training and retention, inventory control, promotional marketing, and loss prevention. Thorough understanding of POS, logistics, food supply handling, and P & L.

Customer Service professional with three years' experience in merchandise returns, customer complaint resolution and training new employees. Recognized for providing quick and pleasant service while maintaining store return standards. Contributed to departmental performance improvements that were instituted corporate-wide.

Using Context Statements

Context statements describe an aspect of your experience that is transferable to the job targeted with your resume. Write about something that made your experience distinct or special. For example, the scale of the company's operations, the company's market share/industry ranking or market niche served; their competitive advantage, your individual promotions, performance awards, accomplishments, etc. Sometimes, the organization's mission can provide content. A context statement does not replace a bullet-pointed list of tasks. Examples:

Manager (2005-present)

Target

Promoted through five levels to current position as manager at the highest volume store unit in the Chicago region. Recognized for abilities in training and motivating staff, demonstrating initiative and responsibility.

Case Worker (2009-2010)

Youth Outreach Services

A Chicago area non-profit focusing on severely at-risk youth, providing foster-care support, counseling, and transitional living services.

Bullet Points

- **Short statements** – start with an active verb, no period, and no “I” or “we”, or -ing. Verbs are in present tense for current positions, past tense for previous positions
- **Show, Don’t Tell** – describe your activities and accomplishments so that the reader can envision you doing them. Make sure you include numbers whenever possible (how many people, how much money, etc.) **INCLUDE RESULTS.** Talk about your accomplishments whether it be improving customer service, increasing sales (by x%), or organizing an event. What wouldn’t have happened if you hadn’t been there and done those things?
- **‘Responsible for’, ‘Helped’, ‘Assisted’** – these three are often used by students writing their first draft of their resume. In almost all cases, there is a better word to describe what you did. How did you help? What did you actually do, even if others were doing it as well? How did you maintain responsibility – with what actions? Use the verbs below or a Thesaurus for ideas.

Action Verbs

Adjusted	Debated	Hired	Monitored	Researched
Administered	Debugged	Hosted	Motivated	Resolved
Advertised	Decided	Illustrated	Navigated	Responded
Advised	Delegated	Improved	Negotiated	Reviewed
Advocated	Demonstrated	Incorporated	Observed	Revised
Allocated	Designed	Increased	Obtained	Scheduled
Analyzed	Detected	Individualized	Operated	Secured
Applied	Determined	Influenced	Ordered	Selected
Arbitrated	Distributed	Informed	Organized	Shaped
Arranged	Drafted	Initiated	Outlined	Simplified
Articulated	Edited	Inspected	Overhauled	Simulated
Assembled	Educated	Installed	Oversaw	Solicited
Assigned	Eliminated	Instituted	Performed	Solved
Authorized	Emphasized	Instructed	Persuaded	Specialized
Balanced	Enabled	Integrated	Planned	Standardized
Budgeted	Encouraged	Interpreted	Prepared	Streamlined
Built	Enforced	Interviewed	Presented	Strengthened
Calculated	Engineered	Invented	Prevented	Submitted
Catalogued	Entertained	Investigated	Printed	Summarized
Categorized	Established	Judged	Prioritized	Supervised
Chaired	Estimated	Lectured	Processed	Supplied
Coached	Evaluated	Led	Produced	Systematized
Coded	Examined	Listened	Promoted	Taught
Compiled	Experimented	Located	Proposed	Tested
Condensed	Explained	Logged	Purchased	Trained
Consolidated	Explored	Maintained	Qualified	Translated
Constructed	Extracted	Managed	Recommended	Transmitted
Consulted	Fabricated	Marketed	Reconciled	Tutored
Controlled	Facilitated	Measured	Recruited	Updated
Converted	Formulated	Mediated	Referred	Upgraded
Coordinated	Fortified	Merged	Registered	Utilized
Counseled	Founded	Modeled	Reinforced	Validated
Created	Guided	Moderated	Remodeled	Verified
Customized	Headed	Modified	Represented	Wrote

Bullet Point Examples

Most resume writers have difficulty describing their accomplishments when adding experiences to their resumes. It is important to convey to the reader the value you added, and not simply list your duties and responsibilities.

Below are some examples showing how to revise common skills and activities for more impact.

BUSINESS WORK EXPERIENCE DESCRIPTIONS

Student wrote:	Planned and implemented marketing projects.
REVISION:	Planned and implemented marketing projects for Fortune 100 companies. One high profile project involved developing marketing strategies for hybrid automobiles to mid-income consumers for a major automobile company.
Student wrote:	Prepared all legal documents for the attorney.
REVISION:	Drafted and revised many legal documents for the attorney including wills, estate plans, power of attorney documents, legal motions, and lawsuits. Set up real estate closings making sure that all details were accurate with appropriate back-up documentation.
Student wrote:	Arrange appointments between clients, contractors and locations.
REVISION:	Facilitate negotiations and resolve conflicts between clients, contractors and site locations in four states.

EDUCATION & TEACHING WORK EXPERIENCE DESCRIPTIONS

Student wrote:	Served as Assistant Cheerleading Coach.
REVISION:	Coordinated and organized practice sessions and made logistical arrangements for game days. Worked with Cheerleaders to develop new routines. Assisted in conducting tryouts, evaluating candidates and motivating unsuccessful candidates for future consideration.
Student wrote:	Substitute teacher in district #219.
REVISION:	Provided substitute teacher duties in a wide range of subjects including math, chemistry, English, history and ESL. Followed provided lesson plans and implemented plans when none were available. Demonstrated flexibility, creativity and professionalism to students.
Student wrote:	Responsible for assisting and tutoring children.
REVISION:	Tutor 5th–7th grade students in math, science and computer usage in an after school program.
Student wrote:	Teach differentiated lessons to meet individual students' needs.
REVISION:	Design, develop and teach unique unit lessons to address the individual learning styles of 6th – 8th grade students. Taught English, math and basic science while increasing standardized test scores over 2 year period.

SOCIAL / COMMUNITY SERVICES WORK EXPERIENCE DESCRIPTIONS

Student wrote:	Worked in a homeless shelter.
REVISION:	Distributed food and clothing to homeless families once a month based on need.
Student wrote:	Assist in after-school program for elementary children.
REVISION:	Engage elementary school age children participating in after school programming in age-appropriate activities and crafts, including learning projects, art work and interactive games.

CUSTOMER SERVICE WORK EXPERIENCE DESCRIPTIONS

Student wrote:	Fielded customer calls and provided customer service.
REVISION:	Responded to customer calls, investigated discrepancies and errors, resolved problems and reported back to customer. Kept track of problems by category and compiled reports and recommendations for management team.
Student wrote:	Conducted surveys over the phone.
REVISION:	Conducted follow-up customer satisfaction surveys by phone. Compiled results and issued reports to the Customer Service Manager. Outcomes used to improve service orders.
Student wrote:	Bartender.
REVISION:	Acquired and maintained an extensive knowledge of complex product line. Interacted with a wide range of individuals from different cultures and countries from around the world. Developed excellent socialization, presentation and etiquette skills while providing outstanding customer service to upscale as well as casual clients.
Student wrote:	Provide excellent service to customers.
REVISION:	Provide excellent service to customers by double checking their orders, making frequent visits to their table and referring to them by name where possible.

OFFICE & ADMINISTRATIVE WORK EXPERIENCE DESCRIPTIONS

Student wrote:	Modify and supervise comprehensive file & record systems which may include confidential materials.
REVISION:	Modify and supervise comprehensive file & record system using Excel, Access, and Banner software. Records maintained include confidential materials such as evaluations, grades, and personal identification information.
Student wrote:	Filing, answering phones and solving student problems, typing, photocopying and data entry.
REVISION:	Solved client problems such as locating missing documents, determining loan re-payment terms and payment schedules. Also, performed routine office duties including answering client questions, data entry and copying.
Student wrote:	Record keeping and bookkeeping.
REVISION:	Maintain and update stockholder files and confidential records using Excel and Access software programs.

RESTAURANT & FOOD SERVICE WORK EXPERIENCE DESCRIPTION

Student wrote:	Performed various duties in the food service industry. The benefits of working at Navy Pier are that I develop my communication skills, I meet people from all over the world and I learn about different cultures.
REVISION:	Assisted in maintaining systems and procedures for ordering, receiving, storing, preparing and serving food to customers at a major tourist attraction. Communicated with customers from many different ethnic groups and cultures from around the world. Learned basic vocabulary and greetings in five different languages.

TRANSPORTATION WORK EXPERIENCE DESCRIPTION

Student wrote:	Taxi cab driver.
REVISION:	Maintained a detailed geographic knowledge of Cook County roads, streets and highways. Communicated with a wide array of customers from around the world. Developed the ability to engage in basic conversation in six different languages.

Extra Tips and Tricks

FOR THE ENTIRE DOCUMENT:

- **Use consistent formatting** – make sure that your dates are lined up (either with the Right Tab function, or listed immediately after the city and state of your position or education.)
- **Use at least 11 point font** – anything less will be difficult to read, and most employers won't bother to put in the extra effort – you're straight in the "No" pile. Use the same font throughout the document – and definitely do not mix serif and sans serif fonts. No images or color fonts either. It may look less interesting, but it *will* look more professional. Margins should be $\frac{3}{4}$ -1 inch.
- **The 'Paper'** – if sending electronically, saving your document as a PDF will preserve all the formatting you just did above, and ensure it will be the professional resume you created. That is not a guarantee with Word documents. If sending a hard copy via snail mail or in person, use only white or ivory paper (no wild colors or photos).
- **Reverse Chronological Order** – this is determined by the end date. If you want to highlight something that is not the most recent, break up the positions into sections (see below). Reverse chronological order then still applies within each section.
- **PROOFREAD.** Seriously, we're not kidding. If you have an error, chances are your reader will find it. They may or may not care, but it's the fastest way to the "No" pile. A resume is a writing sample, and you want it to show your skills (all of them), as well as your effort to apply as a solid candidate.

ADDITIONAL POSSIBLE SECTIONS:

- **Volunteering/Community Service** – THIS IS STILL WORK – even if you weren't paid for it. Describe the skills you've gained, results you've achieved, and the length of the commitment – include anything longer than one month
- **Leadership Experience** – this is especially useful for extracurricular, on-campus experiences (but not limited to them). If you held a role as President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, Board Member or something similar, this is good to include. Show what you did to organize events, lead meetings, coordinate with different departments or organizations, etc.
- **Study Abroad** – either as a sub-heading of Education, or its own section, you can describe where you went, what you learned, or a specific program
- **Professional Development/Memberships** – any additional trainings you've done, conferences you've attended, presentations you've given, memberships to professional organizations you hold
- **Certifications** – this is most often used for computer programs and industry-specific trainings.
 - **Teachers** should call out their state certifications and endorsements, as well as including their proficiency with classroom-specific technology and programs
- **Relevant Experience vs. Additional Experience** – used in the Chronological format, this is the trick where you are able to bring forward and highlight what is most applicable to the position you are applying for, rather than listing all experiences in reverse chronological order, applicable or not

REMEMBER: The resume should show your skills, training, and experience *that relates* to the position you are trying to get. The page (or 2 if you can fill at least half of the 2nd) is valuable real estate. You don't need to list everything you've ever done – just what you think the employer most wants to see.