

BUILDING YOUR SKILLS-BASED RESUME

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A skills-based or functional resume format uses similar sections to a chronological format resume, but focuses more on your skills than work experience and other sections.

Skills resumes are excellent for when you

- are switching careers entirely to a field you have little experience in,
- are a recent high school or college graduate with little work history,
- have large gaps in your work history,
- have only held short-term jobs or internships, or
- have several past jobs with the same job description and field.

MAIN COMPONENTS OF A SKILLS-BASED RESUME

Name and Contact Information

- Put your full name in a clear font where it is easy to see. Don't use a nickname. Most resumes have the individual's name at the very top of the page in a larger font than any other information.
 - If you have a common name or know of others with the same name as you, putting a middle name or middle initial can minimize confusion.
- Put at least two reliable and up-to-date means of contact potential employers can reach you at. These can be any combination phone numbers (with the area code), email addresses and mailing addresses.
 - **Do not** put Facebook messenger, Discord, or other social media/messaging apps as a way to contact you. This is unprofessional.
 - If you list an email as a contact, make sure it looks and sounds professional. Silly email addresses might give the wrong impression to potential employers. You can create a new email to give to employers.
 - Only use a school-given or work-given email when appropriate. School emails are appropriate on resumes for internships for a college degree, for example.
- Double check all contact information for accuracy.

Job Objective (Required on a Skills Resume!)

- A job objective is where you summarize the key skills you have that support the position you're applying for to employers. This is also where you put what type(s) of position(s) you would like to apply for.
- Answer the following questions in 1 to 3 sentences when writing a job objective for a skills resume:
 - **What sort of position, title, or area of specialization are you looking for?** This can be incredibly specific (supervisor of X department) or very vague (office work). If you go with vague, make sure you specify what tasks you'd like the job to cover like "Office work position that utilizes word processing and spreadsheets, organizational skills, and office management."
 - **What level of responsibility are you going for?** In other words, how high up is the position? Mid-level? Upper-level?
 - **What are your most important skills?** List 2 to 4 of the most important skills needed in the job you're applying for.
 - **What other aspects do you need for your job?** Do you want to work in a small business or large? Do you want to be able to help the community? Do you want the business to be result-oriented? Things of this nature.
- A job objective should be brief but cover all areas you want to be considered for. For example, if you want a job as an administrative assistant and are open to any jobs that can fall under or around that category, you can put "*Seeking position requiring excellent business management skills in an office environment. Position should require a variety of tasks, including office management, word processing, and spreadsheet and database program use.*"
 - This leaves you open to other similar jobs they might have available in an administrative office setting. Perhaps you aren't clear exactly what positions are open or would like to work in any of several office jobs available at the business. A Job Objective section lets employers know what you're looking for so they can place you accordingly.
- See attached Job Objective Worksheet for help creating your job objective.

Example Job Objectives on a Skills Resume
Challenging position in programming or related areas that would best use expertise in business environment. Position should have opportunities for a dedicated individual with leadership abilities.
To make use of my interpersonal skills in a public relations position to achieve goals of a company that focuses on customer satisfaction and customer experience.
Seeking mid- to upper-level management position with responsibilities including problem solving, planning, organizing, and budget management.

Remember that fragments are okay on resumes!

Skills

- This is the most important section on a skills-based resume! That's why it's a skills-based resume! Don't skimp out here.
- This section can be called Skills, Areas of Accomplishment, Areas of Expertise, Summary of Qualifications, Professional Experience, and more.
- This is where you put 3 to 6 skills you have and want to use that are related to the position you're applying for like using Word, Excel, and PowerPoint or more specialized things like safety trainings, various machine use of any kind, writing/editing, design, customer service, welding, commercial fishing, and more.
- How you want to format this is up to you. See examples for possible formats to choose from.
- If you were granted certifications for any skills, put those in a "Certifications" section, too.
- Remember that these should be technical skills, not just personal traits. Don't just say you have good communication skills or a great work ethic here. Employers should be able to infer those traits from other places on your resume.

Put the remaining categories in order of relevance to the job you are applying for.

Education and Training

- Training refers to any technical or vocational diploma that is not a certification.
- Entries for education or training in a skills-based resume are less emphasized than on a chronological resume. Entries don't necessarily have to be in chronological order here. Start by listing the most relevant degree you have.
- Unlike on a chronological resume, you can put one education entry on one line in a general "Degree, School, Years" format. You can choose a longer format for these entries if necessary (like if you want to fill up space).

Examples for Education Entry Formats
Bachelor of Arts in English, Nicholls State University, 2017-2020
Bachelor of Arts in English Nicholls State University 2017-2020
Bachelor of Arts in English - Nicholls State University - 2017-2020
Bachelor's Degree in English, Literary Studies - Nicholls State University - 2017-2020

- Use the full name of any school or university added. Don't use initials.
- Only provide your high school information if you 1.) have no college education, 2.) are currently enrolled in college, or 3.) are young enough to have been a high school student within the past 5 or so years.
- You can list a GPA if it is one in good standing (3.5 or above) and it's appropriate for the job (such as a position in education or research).

- Do not put unfinished degrees **unless** you are currently enrolled and actively earning that degree. Don't call attention to dropping out of college. This can make the wrong impression.

Work Experience

- Format each work history entry with the job title you held and the business you worked at. Putting the years you were employed in the position is optional.
 - **Emphasize the skills that directly relate to the position you're applying for!** Even if it's a job in a completely different field from your work history, skills and tasks can correlate such as leadership, proficiency in certain programs, technical skills, etc.
 - Unlike on a chronological resume, you can put one work experience entry on one line in a general "Position, Business, Years" format. You can choose a longer format for these entries if necessary (like if you want to fill up space).
 - Use the same general format for entries in Education and Work History. For example, if you use commas in education, use commas here, too.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Outreach Volunteer | Community Education Fund | Mountain View, CA | 2016 – Present

Shift Supervisor | Cuppa Joe | Palo Alto, CA | 2013 – 2016

Marketing Intern | Banana Tree Designs | San Mateo, CA | Summer 2012

- Order work experience entries in order of most to least relevant to the job you're applying for. Remember that the dates you held these positions are not necessary in this type of resume, but you can put them if you want.
 - Don't put the dates you held any positions if you have large gaps or changed jobs often.
- If you have extensive work history entries that are all somewhat related, only put the most relevant positions in entries of their own. Any other work experience that can translate skills to the job you're applying for can be put into a category of "Prior to [Date]" or "Other".
- Military history can be placed in several places on a resume. If it's the only work history you have, it's best to place it under a work experience section.

Volunteer History / Community Work and Organizations (Optional)

- **Volunteer History and Organizations can be placed in different categories or the same one!** Depending on what you have for these, you might want to separate your volunteer/community work history from your experience with organization memberships or keep them in one section. For example, if you have a history of general volunteer work and a membership to an organization heavily based on volunteer work, you might as well group them as one.

- Group any organizational history NOT associated with volunteering in a separate Organizations section.
- **Label your sections accordingly!** If you don't have volunteer history but are/were a member of a non-volunteer organization, put an Organizations section, not a Volunteer History section. If you have no organization memberships but have volunteer history, put a Volunteer History section, not an Organizations Section.
- If you have both volunteer history and organization memberships, but only one entry for each, you can either lump the two sections together in a Volunteer History / Organizations section OR keep them to two separate sections.
- If you want, you can place volunteer history in with work experience. This is recommended if the volunteer work was ongoing at specific places or with specific volunteer organizations or if you have large gaps in employment that were filled with said volunteer work.
- Only put volunteer and organization history if it is relevant to the skills featured in the skills section.
- Formatting for these sections is up to you. If you had a title in your volunteer job and were at a business, you can format it the same as your work experience. Or use a bulleted list with a brief sentence. Just make sure to use the same format for all entries here.

Examples for Volunteer History Entry Formats	
Junior Volunteer - TGMC - 2020	• Junior Volunteer at TGMC in 2020 • Ongoing volunteer work at Jill's Daycare

- If you have either volunteer history or an organization membership, but do not want to put it on your resume, you don't have to.

Certifications

- You can put any certifications in your "Education" section instead of in a section of its own if you want, just separate certifications from degrees in a clear way.
- Format certifications in the same way you would education entries.

Examples for Certification Entry Formats
Certification in Mental First Aid, YaleX, 2021
Certification in Mental First Aid YaleX 2021
Certification in Mental First Aid - YaleX - 2021

Accomplishments / Awards

- Employee of the month, record breaking skills/tasks in previous positions, quick promotions, and other things of the like can be put here.
- Put any outside Recognition/Awards/What Have You not granted by an employer in a section separate from work experience. Choose whatever section name is most relevant to your entries.

Other (Optional, only used in some cases)

- This is a catch-all section that is hard to define. Most people do not use an “Other” section because they can categorize all their information into one of the above categories.
- Miscellaneous things go here. If you didn’t put military experience with your work history, it could go here, for example. If you have any non-volunteer extra curriculars (like sports teams) which relate to a position you’re applying for, you can place them here.

JOB OBJECTIVE WORKSHEET

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- 1. What sort of position, title, and area of specialization do you want?** Are you open to any other similar ones that might be open? Write the type of job you want the way you'd explain it to an employer.

- 2. Define your bracket of responsibility (entry level to upper level).**

- 3. Name 2-4 key skills or certifications that you have that are important to the job you are applying for.**

- 4. What else is important to you for this job?** Is there anything else you want to include in your job objective? This could be any values that are particularly important to you for your career like helping others, having room to move up, or working in a result-oriented environment. It can also be the size of the business you want to work for like local, small, mid-six/medium, or large business/corporation.

Now combine those answers in 1 to 3 sentences:

Figure 3-4: Peter Neely's Resume

Peter Neely 203 Evergreen Road Houston, Texas 39127 Messages: (237) 649-1234 Beeper: (237) 765-9876 (anywhere in the country)	
POSITION DESIRED: Short- or Long-Distance Truck Driver	
Summary of Work Experience:	Over 15 years of stable work history, including substantial experience with diesel engines, electrical systems, and driving all sorts of trucks and heavy equipment.
SKILLS	
Driving Record/Licenses:	Have current Commercial Driving License and Chauffeur's License and am qualified and able to drive anything that rolls. No traffic citations or accidents in more than 20 years.
Vehicle Maintenance:	I maintain correct maintenance schedules and avoid most breakdowns as a result. Substantial mechanical and electrical systems training and experience enable me to repair many breakdowns immediately and avoid towing.
Record Keeping:	Excellent attention to detail. Familiar with recording procedures and submit required records on a timely basis.
Routing:	Thorough knowledge of most major interstate routes, with good map-reading and route-planning skills. I get there on time and without incident.
Other:	Not afraid of hard work, flexible, get along well with others, meet deadlines, excellent attendance, responsible.
WORK EXPERIENCE	
2000–Present	CAPITAL TRUCK CENTER, Houston, Texas Pick up and deliver all types of commercial vehicles from across the United States. Am trusted with handling large sums of money and handling complex truck-purchasing transactions.
1992–2000	QUALITY PLATING CO., Houston, Texas Promoted from production to Quality Control. Developed numerous production improvements resulting in substantial cost savings.
1987–1992	BLUE CROSS MANUFACTURING, Houston, Texas Received several increases in salary and responsibility before leaving for a more challenging position.
Prior to 1987	Truck delivery of food products to destinations throughout the South. Also responsible for up to 12 drivers and equipment-maintenance personnel.
OTHER	
Four years of experience in the U.S. Air Force, driving and operating truck-mounted diesel power plants. Responsible for monitoring and maintenance on a rigid 24-hour schedule. Stationed in Alaska, California, Wyoming, and other states. Honorable discharge.	
High school graduate plus training in diesel engines and electrical systems. Excellent health, love the outdoors, stable family life, nonsmoker and nondrinker.	

TANIA BLACK

Office Support | Customer Service Specialist

(000) 123-4567 | tblack@123email.co | [linkedin.com/in/tblack](https://www.linkedin.com/in/tblack) | Santa Clara, CA

SUMMARY

Energetic and engaging administrative specialist with experience in reception, customer service, meeting coordination, scheduling, and file management. Eager to blend exceptional organizational skills with diverse marketing, retail, and outreach experience in an office support role.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Reception & Customer Service

- Greeted and interacted with an average of 100 customers a day
- Responded to client questions efficiently and proactively resolved concerns, leading to a net promoter score of 52
- Answered up to 50 incoming calls a day and directed callers to the appropriate departments
- Managed the public email account and handled over 75 new messages daily
- Cultivated relationships with donors and potential supporters via phone and community events

Scheduling & Meeting Coordination

- Created complex weekly schedules for a team of 10
- Coordinated weekly team meetings, reserved meeting locations, and ordered refreshments
- Prepared PowerPoint slides and presentations for team meetings and fundraising events
- Assisted in planning quarterly fundraising events for up to 300 attendees
- Interfaced with vendors, booked venues, and arranged catering and entertainment

Administrative Support

- Organized and maintained 500+ donor files and assisted in the transition to a paperless filing system
- Monitored employee records, including promotions, discipline, and PTO
- Drafted content and announcements for a biweekly newsletter
- Supported social media presence and posted news and event details across the organization's handles

WORK EXPERIENCE

Outreach Volunteer | Community Education Fund | Mountain View, CA | 2016 – Present

Shift Supervisor | Cuppa Joe | Palo Alto, CA | 2013 – 2016

Marketing Intern | Banana Tree Designs | San Mateo, CA | Summer 2012

EDUCATION

Associate of Arts in Business Administration | College of San Mateo | June 2012

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Fundraiser of the Year Award | Community Education Fund | 2017

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Microsoft Office Suite (Mac/PC), Salesforce, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter

Joe Jobscan

Seattle, WA | (206) 555-5555

joe-jobscan@example.com | linkedin.com/in/joe-jobscan-123

Skills Summary

A few sentences or bullet points listing off the most relevant hard skills and soft skills related to the position for which you're applying.

Professional Accomplishments

Major Skill 1 (Example: Management)

- More detail of the skill and how it relates to the job application
- Examples of projects or situations that utilized this skill
- Measureable results and accomplishments that back up your ability

Major Skill 2 (Example: Management)

- More detail of the skill and how it relates to the job application
- Examples of projects, measureable results, and accomplishments

Major Skill 3 (Example: Management)

- More detail of the skill and how it relates to the job application
 - Examples of projects, measureable results, and accomplishments
-

Work History

Position 1, Company, Date Started - Date Ended

Position 2, Company, Date Started - Date Ended

Position 3, Company, Date Started - Date Ended

Education

Degree, School, Years

BASIC RESUME ETIQUETTE

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No matter the content of your resume itself, these are simple things to keep in mind when writing your resume. Following these tips can be what makes your resume worth looking at.

1. Try to keep your resume to a single page. (References can go on a second sheet, though.)
2. Proofread! Read over your resume at least twice to make sure there are no spelling, grammar, formatting, or information issues. Handing in a resume riddled with errors makes the wrong impression. Proofreading includes making sure your name and contact information is correct!
3. Chose fonts and text colors that are easy to read.

Stay away from cursive, calligraphy, and handwritten-style fonts offered by word processors. These fonts can be hard to read and come across as unprofessional. Go for a clear serif font instead.

Here are some fonts that you **can** use on your resume:

- Times New Roman
- Calibri
- Helvetica
- Arial
- Book Antiqua
- Cambria
- Garamond
- Trebuchet MS
- Baskerville Old Face
- Century

Use a font size in the range of 10-12.

4. Keep the format of your resume consistent and visually appealing. If one title is bold, make sure the rest of the titles are bold.

Leaving white space and using bulleted lists are a good way to keep your resume looking organized and professional. Don't make your resume look busy and daunting to look at!

Additionally, don't use garish colors or pictures on your resume unless you are applying for a creative-type job.

5. Don't include a portrait of yourself on your resume. The only time this is appropriate or necessary is for a handful of jobs that require specific appearances.
6. Watch your language! Don't use slang, swear words, or common grammar slips. The way we speak as Southerners is often not grammatically correct, and this is not how you want to speak in your resume.

Additionally, using "I" and personal pronouns should be avoided. Fragment sentences are okay on a resume.

7. Any paragraphs you write on your resume should be between 3 and 4 sentences at most.
8. Tailor the resume you plan to hand into an employer to only show relevant information to the position you're applying for.
9. If you're sending a resume digitally, name the file with something identifying like FirstnameLastnameResume.
10. If you're applying to more than one position and your resume is tailored for each, make sure you give the correct resume to the correct place.