

# RESUME WRITING HANDBOOK

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## Resume 101

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A resume is an individually designed summary of personal, educational and experience qualifications intended to demonstrate fitness for a particular position or type of position. It focuses attention on an individual's strongest qualifications and develops them to fit the specific job opening. The beauty of a resume is that since it is short you can tailor it to fit the specific jobs you apply for.

### Types of Resumes

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There are several ways to organize your resume. Choose the one that will present your qualifications in the best light.

The *chronological* style is basically a list of where you've worked and what you've accomplished in each position, listed in reverse chronological order—put the most recent first and work backward from there. It is the style most commonly used. (Sample page 15)

The *functional/skills resume* places the emphasis on what major skills you possess and de-emphasizes where you worked. This allows the candidate to organize experiences, gathered from a variety of arenas, according to specific functions or skills. Past employers are listed on the resume, but near the bottom, indicating only the employers name, the candidate's position title and the dates of employment. This style is most commonly used by career changers who are trying to demonstrate the transferability of their skills from one setting to another or by someone who is re-entering the work force after a period of absence. (Sample page 16)

Resumes can also be a *combination* of the above types or they can target a specific job. You must put your resume together to market your education, skills, abilities, and experiences. It should be easy to read and contain the high points; you can go into detail at the interview. It is best to always write your own resume, but do seek sources for ideas on putting it together and always ask others to proof it for you.

## GENERAL GUIDELINES

- *Be honest!*
- *Make your resume look professional and attractive.*
- *Build on your strengths and accomplishments.*
- *Be concise!* Say what needs to be said and avoid explaining all the details. Select work or activities directly related to the job you want.
- *Use phrases rather than complete sentences.*
- *Do not use personal pronouns.*
- *Use action words to describe what you did in your experiences (See Action Words, Pages 13-14).*
- *Put the most important items first in each section.* This makes it easy to read and allows someone to skim quickly to pick up the most important facts.
- *Organize your resume so that spacing, capital letters and other organizational techniques lead a reader's eye to the most important information.*
- *Keep your language positive!*
- *Do not include personal information such as height, weight, age, marital status, religion, citizenship, political affiliation, hobbies or activities unless they are related to the job.*
- *Use quality paper!* Use neutral colors only. Use matching stationery for cover letters and envelopes. Use a laser or high quality printer.
- *Use correct spelling and grammar! Your resume must be flawless.*
- *Write your own resume!* Don't hire someone else to write it for you. You know yourself and the resume should be a reflection of who you are. Also, don't just copy a sample from a book or this material. Evaluate all possible options, and then choose a style that best reflects you.
- *Always have several others proofread your resume before you use it.*
- *Keep your resume to one page if possible.* However, do not crowd your information. If you have a 2-page resume, be sure that your name appears on the second page and that you fill at least half of the page.
- *Do not list references on your resume (unless requested).* Do have a separate sheet of references available. (See Page 18)
- *Always ask permission before using someone as a reference.*
- *Use 10-12 point fonts.* Use commonly used fonts such as Ariel or Times New Roman.
- *Use one-inch to 1 1/2 inch margins.*
- *Proof your resume and ask others to proofread.* Spell Check does not recognize all errors.

**If you wish to have your resume critiqued, please make an appointment and bring in a written or typed rough draft to the Career and Employment Services Office.**

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## Resume Contents

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Your resume is important because in many cases it is your first contact with an employer and the first impression the employer has of you. Your resume will not get you the job, but it can get you an interview—and it's the interview that gets you the job.

### HEADING/CONTACT INFORMATION

- ALWAYS place your name at the top of the page—never type "RESUME". You want them to remember who you are.
- Include a PERMANENT address. Especially if you are going to be moving, it is important that you give an address where you are certain to get any important information. You may list a PRESENT and a PERMANENT address.
- Be sure to include a phone number where you can be reached, especially during the day. (CAUTION! If you have an answering machine, keep your message direct and simple. Do not use a "cute" message; this may be the employer's second impression of you—be sure it's a good one.)
- You may also include your e-mail address if you check your messages frequently. If you have an offbeat e-mail name, consider changing it or opening another account with a more professional name before putting it on your resume. An employer may wonder about someone with an e-mail name of "chattykathy" or "dizzyliz". Don't eliminate yourself from consideration because of a catchy e-mail name.
- Avoid abbreviations.
- Your name should be at least as large as the largest font used on your resume and could be larger. Example 12 inch font used for body of resume, 12 - 16 point font could be used for your name.

### EMPLOYMENT OBJECTIVE

- An objective is optional. If included, it should always be placed first after your heading.
- If you include an objective, avoid being so vague that it really doesn't tell the employer anything. Example: "A challenging position where I can utilize my education and skills."
- A still somewhat vague but acceptable objective for someone just starting out might be "An entry-level position in the paralegal field, providing the opportunity to utilize my related education."
- The objective should include the specific job or work you want to do, the industry in which you want to do it, and the benefit you bring to the employer. Example: "A position as a paralegal in a Trust Department of a financial institution where legal experience and education will be an asset."
- Use an objective if applying for a specific position.
- Do not use an objective if there are many positions for which you are qualified or if using the same resume for a number of positions.

## EDUCATION

- List information in the order of importance
  1. Name of the Degree earned (spell out) Example: Associate of Applied Science in Business Administration
  2. College name
  3. College city and state
  4. Graduation year
  5. Other (Optional)
    - a. GPA - List if 3.0 or higher
    - b. Honors (may be listed under Education or may be put under separate heading)
    - c. Relevant or Related Courses (may be listed under Education or may be put under separate heading). Don't list all courses and list only if lacking in experience.
- Do not list high school (unless requested)
- Do not give college graduation date if more that 10 years ago
- List Education before Experience when recent graduate or when lacking experience
- List present or most recent first - reverse chronological order.
- Before you complete your award, use "Anticipated Graduation Date" or "Candidate for . . ."

## QUALIFICATIONS

Most current resumes include either a bulleted or paragraph summary of the job candidate's key selling points. It is accomplishment oriented and includes many key words in the target job category. A typical group of highlights includes:

- How much relevant experience you have in the target field
- What your formal training and credentials are, if relevant
- One significant accomplishment, very broadly stated
- One or two outstanding skills or abilities relevant to the field
- A reference to your values, commitment, or philosophy if appropriate

*Example of a Qualifications Summary:*

- *Internship experience using newest accounting computer programs*
- *A.A.S. degree with honors in accounting*
- *President of student accounting club—initiated speakers program*
- *Demonstrated ability in organizing, follow-through to the last detail*
- *Committed to producing results above and beyond what is expected*

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## EXPERIENCE

- List in order of importance
  1. Job title/position
  2. Company name
  3. Company city and state
  4. Dates of employment (include month and year)
- Do not include addresses, phone numbers and supervisors' name
- Do not include very short term jobs (1 day, 1 week, and perhaps 1 month)
- Include full time, part-time, seasonal, volunteer, internship and practicum experiences
- Leave out experience that is old (15 years or more) unless it relates to the job you seek
- Organized with the most recent positions listed first
- Chronological Resumes will also include the following:
  - o Accomplishments at each company written in concise *phrases* (do not use complete sentences)
  - o Be specific using numbers when appropriate. Example: "Supervised 6 staff members" "Increased sales by 15 percent."
  - o Avoid using terms such as "Responsible for" "Responsibilities included" "Duties included" "worked with"
  - o Description of each position, stressing the major accomplishments and responsibilities that demonstrate your competency.
  - o Use phrases starting with an action verb rather than sentences
  - o Descriptions tailored to your job target.
  - o Do not repeat skills that are common to several positions

## SPECIAL SKILLS

If you think there could add to your qualifications, identify computer skills, technical skills, knowledge of foreign languages, and special training.

## OTHER HEADINGS

- ACTIVITIES, COMMUNITY SERVICE, VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES
  - Do not include activities of a personal nature that may be a basis for discrimination such as religious or political affiliation, unless it applies to the position you are applying for.
  - Employers, especially in some fields such as human services, like to see that the applicant is involved in community activity and volunteer services.
- HONORS AND AWARDS
- HOBBIES AND INTERESTS
  - Include only if they apply to the position you are applying for
- PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
- LICENSES AND CERTIFICATIONS

## THINGS NOT TO PUT ON YOUR RESUME

1. Company or college street addresses or zip codes (city and state only)
2. Supervisor's name
3. References – names and contact information
4. "Reference Available Upon Request"
5. Terms such as "Job duties included" and "Responsible for"
6. Personal information such as age, religion, ethnic background, marital status, height, and weight
7. Personal interests, hobbies, etc. UNLESS they relate to the job
8. E-mail address with inappropriate or unprofessional names
9. Very short-term jobs (1 day, 1 week)
10. Wages earned
11. Personal pronouns
12. Lengthy paragraphs or sentences—always use phrases rather than complete sentences.
13. The word, "Resume"
14. Anything negative
15. Reason for leaving a job

## Action Verbs

### Creative

- Acted
- Composed
- Conceived
- Conceptualized
- Conducted
- Created
- Designed
- Established
- Fashioned
- Founded
- Illustrated
- Improved
- Instituted
- Integrated
- Introduced
- Invented
- Originated
- Performed
- Planned
- Revitalized
- Shaped

### Financial

- Accounted for
- Adjusted
- Administered
- Allocated
- Analyzed
- Appraised
- Audited
- Balanced
- Budgeted
- Calculated
- Computed
- Controlled
- Developed
- Financed
- Forecasted

- Managed
- Forecasted
- Marketed
- Monitored
- Planned
- Procured
- Projected
- Purchased
- Reconciled
- Researched

### Communicative

- Addressed
- Arbitrated
- Arranged
- Authored
- Briefed
- Communicated
- Composed
- Contracted
- Convinced
- Described
- Developed
- Directed
- Documented
- Drafted
- Edited
- Enlisted
- Formulated
- Influenced
- Informed
- Interpreted
- Interviewed
- Lectured
- Marketed
- Mediated
- Moderated
- Motivated
- Negotiated

- Persuaded
- Presented
- Promoted
- Publicized
- Published
- Reconciled
- Recruited
- Reported
- Spoke
- Summarized
- Translated
- Wrote

### Helping

- Advised
- Advocated
- Assessed
- Assisted
- Clarified
- Coached
- Counseled
- Demonstrated
- Diagnosed
- Educated
- Ensured
- Evaluated
- Expedited
- Facilitated
- Familiarized
- Fostered
- Guided
- Observed
- Provided
- Referred
- Rehabilitated
- Represented
- Supported

### Management

- Administered
- Analyzed
- Appointed
- Approved
- Assigned
- Assumed
- Attained
- Chaired
- Contracted
- Consolidated
- Consulted
- Delegated
- Designated
- Determined
- Developed
- Directed
- Evaluated
- Executed
- Formulated
- Managed
- Organized
- Oversaw
- Planned
- Prioritized
- Produced
- Recommended
- Recruited
- Reviewed
- Scheduled
- Supervised

### Organized

- Approved
- Arranged
- Catalogued
- Classified
- Collected
- Compiled



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- Consolidated
- Dispatched
- Distributed
- Enlisted
- Executed
- Expedited
- Generated
- Implemented
- Inspected
- Monitored
- Operated
- Organized
- Prepared
- Processed
- Purchased
- Recorded
- Revamped
- Revised
- Retrieved
- Scheduled
- Screened
- Specific
- Systematized
- Tabulated
- Updated
- Validated

**Research**

- Acquired
- Analyzed
- Calculated
- Clarified
- Collected
- Compared
- Conducted
- Critiqued
- Diagnosed
- Designed
- Determined
- Evaluated
- Examined
- Extracted
- Formulated
- Identified
- Inspected
- Interpreted
- Interviewed

- Investigated
- Located
- Modified
- Organized
- Processed
- Reviewed
- Researched
- Summarized
- Surveyed
- Systematized

**Results**

- Achieved
- Accelerated
- Accomplished
- Attained
- Awarded
- Completed
- Contributed
- Decreased
- Eliminated
- Enlarged
- Established
- Expanded
- Improved
- Increased
- Initiated
- Introduced
- Launched
- Pioneered
- Recognized as
- Reduced
- Resolved
- Selected as
- Succeeded

**Teaching**

- Adapted
- Advised
- Applied
- Clarified
- Coached
- Communicated
- Coordinated
- Developed
- Enabled
- Encouraged

- Encouraged
- Evaluated
- Explained
- Facilitated
- Guided
- Implemented
- Incorporated
- Informed
- Initiated
- Instructed
- Integrated
- Modified
- Motivated
- Persuaded
- Reinforced
- Set goals
- Stimulated
- Taught
- Trained
- Tutored

**Technical**

- Assembled
- Built
- Calculated
- Computed
- Designed
- Devised
- Engineered
- Fabricated
- Maintained
- Operated
- Overhauled
- Programmed
- Remodeled
- Repaired
- Solved
- Trained
- Upgraded

## Chronological Resume

MARY JANE HARRIS  
1987 West 19<sup>th</sup> Street  
Grand Island, NE 68801  
308 398-1212  
Email: [mjharris2@aol.com](mailto:mjharris2@aol.com)

- EDUCATION:** Associate of Applied Science Degree in  
Health Information Management Services May 2006  
Central Community College, Grand Island, NE
- HONORS:** Dean's List – 4 semesters  
Phi Theta Kappa – Alpha Tau Tau Chapter
- COMPUTER SKILLS:** Meditech & Medisoft Microsoft Works  
Microsoft Office Excel & Lotus 1-2-3
- RELATED EXPERIENCE:**  
Health Information Intern Sept 2005 – May 2006  
Good Samaritan Hospital, Kearney, NE  
Saint Francis Medical Center, Grand Island, NE  
Reviewed policies and procedures for the health information department  
Assembled, analyzed, and filed medical records  
Transcribed medical reports  
Abstracted and coded medical records  
Participated in Medical Record Reviews  
Created performance reports
- OTHER EXPERIENCE:**  
Customer Service Representative June 2001 – Present  
Acme Communications, Grand Island, NE  
Answer customer inquiries regarding product lines  
Processed customer orders for more than 15 different products  
  
Front Desk Clerk April 1999 – May 2001  
The Jackson Inn, Grand Island, NE  
Operated hotel computer system  
Balanced cash drawer  
Set up reservations for guests on the phone  
Dealt effectively with customer complaints.  
  
Hostess/Waitress  
Denby's Restaurant, Grand Island, NE Jan 1997 – March 1999  
Provided friendly service  
Served customers efficiently
- COMMUNITY SERVICE:**  
Crisis Center Volunteer  
PTA – Howard Elementary School

## Functional Resume

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### James M. Dalton

234 Harrison Street  
Grand Island, NE 68802  
308 392-1234

#### OBJECTIVE

A paralegal position with a law firm specializing in criminal law.

#### EDUCATION

Associate of Applied Science Degree in Paralegal Studies, May 2006  
Central Community College, Grand Island  
CGPA: 3.7

#### HONORS

Dean's List - 4 semesters  
Phi Theta Kappa

#### AREAS OF EFFECTIVENESS

##### Criminal Law

Completed 21 semester hours of criminal justice courses with special emphasis on criminal law. Served as an intern with a law firm specializing in criminal law. Interviewed clients, drafted documents, conducted legal research, and assisted lawyers in preparing law briefs.

##### Research

Conducted research on several criminal cases. Experienced in examining court cases and observing court proceedings. Proficient in using computerized databases for conducting legal research.

##### Communication

Prepared research papers, legal summaries and memos, used telephone extensively for interviewing clients and conducting legal research.

#### EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

##### Paralegal Intern

Smith Brown and Jones, Grand Island, NE, 2005 - 2006

##### Work Study in Paralegal Studies Lab

Central Community College, Grand Island, NE, 2004 - 2005

##### Waiter

Harrington's Café, Grand Island, NE, 2003 - 2005

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## References and Reference Page

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In your job search you will be asked for references. You should select your references carefully. They need to be someone who can tell a prospective employer about your skills, work habits, and other qualifications.

Generally you will be asked for three references, but you should always be prepared with a list of five references. Good choices are employers and faculty; at least one of the faculty should be from your major. Others you could use would be co-workers, people you have worked with on community or school projects, and family friends who have known you for a long time.

**Before putting your references' names, addresses, and phone numbers on an application form or a reference sheet, ask each person if he/she is willing to be a reference and if they will give you a good recommendation.** If there is any hesitation or reluctance or they have trouble remembering who you are, thank them and choose another person. It is a good idea to let them know what type of position you are looking for and give them a copy of your resume. If a reference has trouble recalling who you are or is surprised to be getting a call from an employer, it will reflect poorly on you.

Do not add "Reference Available Upon Request" at the bottom of your resume as it is a given that you will provide references. Unless requested, never list your references on your resume.

A **Reference Page** is a page that lists your references names, job titles, work addresses, and work phone numbers. Personal references may want their home address and phone listed. To set up this page, use the same heading as well as the same paper as your resume.

## Reference Page

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James M. Dalton  
234 Harrison Street  
Grand Island, NE 68802  
308 392-1234

### REFERENCES

Linda Wilke-Heil  
Paralegal Studies Instructor  
Central Community College  
PO Box 4903  
Grand Island, NE 68802  
308 398-4222

John D. Smith  
Attorney at Law  
Smith Brown and Jones Law Firm  
3821 S. Locust Street  
Grand Island, NE 68801  
308 387-3321

Lauri Shultis  
Criminal Justice Instructor  
Central Community College  
PO Box 4903  
Grand Island, NE 68802  
308 398-4222

Mayor Arthur T. Hunt  
City of Grand Island  
100 East 1<sup>st</sup> Street  
Grand Island, NE 68

## Job Seekers

Getting started on the CCC Career & Employment Services web site is quick and easy. Here's how:

- Log on to: <http://www.cccneb.edu/ces>
- Click on "Register Now" under the "Find a Job" section on the home page
- Complete the on-line registration form and submit
- Once you submit your information, the CCC Career & Employment Services staff will review your application to confirm your eligibility (this may take 24 to 48 hours)
- Once you're approved, you will receive a confirmation e-mail from CCC Career & Employment Services
- Upon approval, you can log onto the site to search for jobs, create and post your resume and set up your personal account

Whether you're a current CCC student, a recent graduate – or even if you're a CCC alum who has been out in the job market for a while – the Career & Employment Services web site can work for you. There is simply no better place to find the best match between your skills and interests – and the career opportunities that are available.

All it takes to get started is one quick visit to the site to register.

Log on today. And you could be on your way to a better tomorrow.

[www.cccneb.edu/ces](http://www.cccneb.edu/ces)