

How to Write a Resume

Christi Nicholls, 4-H Program Coordinator

August 9, 2023

In the past few years 4-H has converted our previous program of youth writing Portfolios to a Resume and a Cover Letter. I know what you are thinking a little young, right?! Wrong. It's never too early or too late. We have loved this change and believe it will be something that will prepare our youth for college applications and well as later on in their careers.

I'm sure almost every adult at one point or another has had to write a resume. What you may not know is a few things have changed from when you learned about them.

So, let's talk about resumes. First up, what is a resume? A resume is a document that describes and summarizes your skills, work experience, extra-curricular activities, awards, education, and training. While there are different types of resumes, most resumes have the same major sections. When designing your resume, be prepared to provide information in the following sections:

- Personal Information/ name, current address and basic contact information
- Education and training
- Work experience (both paid and non-paid)
- Skills
- Extracurricular activities and awards

After listing your personal information, the next most important section in your resume is your personal statement. What is a personal statement? A Personal Statement summarizes your strengths, relevant skills, and experience.

For example: Self-motivated and reliable person with a passion for working with children. Experienced in working with children 3 to 10 years old, recognized for having great organizational skills and ability to develop a safe and fun environment. Interested in a part-time, summer camp position in a recreational setting.

Then list your skills. When listing your skills make sure to include at least three "soft" skills and three "hard" skills. Soft skills are things that are not taught, usually a personality trait or your attitude, like motivated, hardworking, team player, kind, respectful, etc. Hard skills are something that is learned or taught like math, computer skills, special talents, languages, etc.

Next list work and volunteer experience: List most recent employment first and follow in chronological order. If you have never had a paid position, chances are you have had some volunteer or relevant experiences to use. Don't discount them. Have you ever volunteered at a local hospital, had a church calling, helped a neighbor, or mentored a peer? These are all experiences and can and should be included in this section.

After that comes education: This includes the name of high school attended, graduation date or expected graduation date, honors and awards. Also, don't forget relevant classes that highlight your skills.

Lastly, references. This is where things changed for me. In the past you would have listed three personal references, and their contact information. Now you will only type one sentence here: References available upon request. Of course, you want to have this information ready to go when they ask. It is also very important to contact these people and ask their permission to list them as a reference. You want these references to be ready, and to be able to provide positive feedback about your work ethic.

Remember when writing a resume, keep it simple. I have included some Do's and Don'ts to keep in mind.

Do's:

- Keep it to one, easy to read page
- Use a standard font like Times New Roman or Arial
- Type all text in the same size font usually 10-12 except for your name bold it and type it slightly larger usually 14-18
- Make all margins and bullets the same, keep it uniform
- Proofread carefully, look for typos, misspelled words and definitely ask someone else to look at it as well. Four eyes are better than two.
- Print extra copies to take with you to your interview, save a copy on your computer just in case you need it later or have to apply online
- Keep it up to date so it's ready when you are

Don'ts:

- Make it more than one page
- Use a pre-formatted template, it's way more difficult to correct than start fresh
- Don't include a paragraph of yourself unless you are applying for an acting or modeling agency
- Include your height, weight, birth, race, religion, or any information that could be considered controversial
- Use "I" or "Me"
- Provide false information
- List your references right on the resume (create a separate reference page)
- Print your resume on colored paper; use white, off-white, ivory or cream-colored paper

Hopefully by using these little pointers you will be able to score an interview and land that perfect job. As always if you need some help, reach out to our local extension office. We would love to help.

Information for this article was taken from Career Edge, University of Nevada Reno, College of Agriculture, Biotechnology, and Natural Resources.