Resumes

A resume is about skills. Job descriptions typically list several skills and qualifications that are important for a person to have in order to succeed in the position, as determined by the employer. Your resume is a response to a job description. You can mimic the language by identifying keywords and skills in the job description to show that you are the right person for the job. Your resume should not highlight everything you have ever done but should highlight experience you have that relates to the skills required for the specific job.
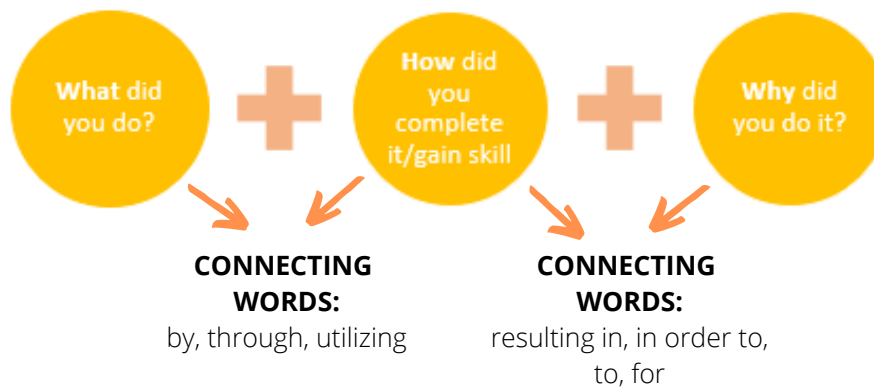
EDUCATION

Education should be at the top of your resume, as you are working on it right now and probably is your most relevant experience. Be sure to fully spell out everything including the name of the institution (Pacific Lutheran University), the name of your degree (Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, etc.), and your major(s) and minor(s). Including your GPA is optional, unless the job description mentions it as a requirement. If you do have a strong GPA, list it with your education.

EXPERIENCE BLOCKS

Each experience you have is one "experience block." Experience can be just about anything you have done, including volunteer experience, work experience, internships (paid or unpaid), undergraduate research, student organizations, study away, and even class or personal projects. Each experience block should be formatted the same way and include these five details: (1) organization name, (2) location, (3) your title, (4) dates you were there, and (5) accomplishment statements.

ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENTS

Accomplishment statements are the bullet points that describe the skills you used or gained in each experience block on your resume. You can also write about the results or outcome of a project or activity. Typically, each experience block will have two to four accomplishment statements. Here is a formula that can help make your statements strong and meaningful:

What did you do? + **How did you complete it/gain skill** + **Why did you do it?**

CONNECTING WORDS: by, through, utilizing

CONNECTING WORDS: resulting in, in order to, to, for

Instead of saying "improved recycling options on campus," think about the **WHAT, HOW** and **WHY.**

WHAT: Designed and implemented a recycling program at Pacific Lutheran University (PLU)
HOW: By partnering with campus organizations
WHY: To provide 65 additional recycling containers across campus

Putting all those pieces together, the accomplishment statement would look like this:
"Designed and implemented a recycling program at Pacific Lutheran University (PLU) by partnering with campus organizations to provide 65 recycling containers across campus."

Tips

- Provide context through examples and numbers to help give your statements more credibility.
- if you are currently doing the activity, use present tense. If you are no longer involved, use past tense.
- Each bullet point came be 2 to 3 lines; if it becomes 4, it might be too long.
- PROOFREAD! No spelling, grammar or punctuation mistakes.

Action Based Skill Verbs

Planning	Teamwork	Communication	Investigative/Research	Leadership
Arranged	Administered	Advertised	Analyzed	Assembled
Created	Advised	Articulated	Assessed	Communicated
Designed	Approved	Clarified	Calculated	Conducted
Developed	Collaborated	Contacted	Computed	Coordinated
Dispatched	Connected	Corresponded	Created	Counseled
Executed	Consolidated	Delivered	Critiqued	Developed
Facilitated	Co-produced	Encouraged	Diagnosed	Directed
Formulated	Delegated	Endorsed	Discovered	Evaluated
Implemented	Designated	Exchanged	Evaluated	Facilitated
Instituted	Directed	Informed	Experimented	Guided
Monitored	Encouraged	Interpreted	Extracted	Instructed
Operated	Integrated	Messaged	Investigated	Led
Organized	Led	Negotiated	Observed	Maintained
Prepared	Managed	Persuaded	Organized	Managed
Processed	Negotiated	Presented	Projected	Mentored
Reorganized	Networked	Produced	Proved	Organized
Scheduled	Resolved	Solicited	Researched	Oversaw
Solved	Set Goals	Transferred	Reviewed	Reorganized
Systemized	Supervised	Translated	Studied	Supervised
Transformed	Trained	Transmitted	Verified	Taught

Each bullet point should start with an action verb. Here is a list of possible verbs to use. Avoid using first-person words like "I" or "me."

Formatting Basics

- Length: one page (unless it looks better on two pages)
- Font size: 10.5-12 pt (using a font that is clear and easy to read)
- Margins 1/2" - 1" on all sides
- Each section should be in reverse chronological order (most recent listed first)

FAQs

Do I need an Objective/Qualifications section?
These are not recommended. You can highlight skills more effectively in experience blocks, or in a cover letter.

Do I need to list every single job or experience I've ever had?
No. Your resume should highlight those jobs and experiences that display the qualities the employer is looking for (which you will find in the job description). Even unrelated jobs can demonstrate the skills needed for the job you are applying to.

Should I use a template from Microsoft Word or another resource?
No. Editing a template is exceptionally difficult, which can make it hard to change/update your resume. Take the time to format your resume using spaces, tabs, bullet points and lines.

How much does my formatting matter?
Formatting is the most subjective part of a resume; make sure it is consistent, clear, and not too text-heavy. Once you have a clear and easy-to-read format, focus on specific, concise content.

How often should I update my resume?
You should be updating your resume frequently so it includes accurate information. However, remember it is very important to tailor your resume to each job for which you are applying. This means you will have different resumes for different jobs, each one tailored to the skills of that particular job.

Should I include my high-school education and high school jobs?
Only if you are in your first or second year at PLU. By the end of your sophomore year, list only PLU and any other post-secondary education institutions where you have studied or earned a degree. Jobs and experience from high school should be replaced by recent involvement in college. The exception to this is if you are applying to a job that is directly related to experience you gained in high school. For example, if you are applying for a job at the Red Cross or similar organization, and you volunteered there in high school, you should include that relevant information.

Do I need to list my references at the bottom of the page?
No. If your employer wants your references, they will ask you for them. If you are asked to provide references, they should be on a separate piece of paper from your resume. See our Guide to References handout for more information.

Need more assistance? Email your resume to cpe@plu.edu

Note: see samples on next pages.