



The Gamecock's Guide to RESUMES & COVER LETTERS

An effective resume should do two things:

- 1** Describe where you've been
- 2** Foretell where you're going

Rather than an exhaustive list of every job you've ever held or award you've ever won, your resume should be a carefully crafted document that helps employers clearly see the value you will bring to their organization. This can generally be done in a one page document that clearly illuminates the specific, tangible and transferable skills and attributes that you have to offer.

BUILD THE RESUME EMPLOYERS WANT

CONNECT WHAT YOU HAVE TO WHAT THE EMPLOYER NEEDS

It's critical to understand up front that, in your resume, interviews, and all interactions with employers, the responsibility rests with you to make the match between what you have to offer and what the employer needs.

With your resume, it's up to you to convince the employer that you are worth an interview. Through your resume, you want to demonstrate how your academic, extracurricular, and work experiences connect to the job and offer the employer some evidence that you have the potential to be a good fit for the job and organization.

To achieve this, you must research the organization and position so that you'll have a clear idea of what to showcase as you tailor your resume to the specific job. Find the similarities between the job and your experience and qualifications.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS MATTER

What does your resume say about you? Ideally, it says you warrant a closer look and an interview. But your resume can also say negative, unintended things about you that may lose you the interview.

- Your resume can say you don't pay attention, don't care about details, and/or aren't interested in the company or job.

ADDITIONAL TIPS

- Use 10- to 12-point type font
- Focus on information that is relevant to the employer and job
- Keep your resume short
- Include key words taken directly from the job description
- Quantify your results, when possible

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WHAT MATTERS?

When examining resumes, employers say they look for evidence of:

- Ability to work in a team
- Leadership skills/experience
- Written communication skills
- Strong work ethic
- Analytical skills
- Verbal communication skills
- Initiative
- Technical skills
- Detail-Orientation
- Flexibility/adaptability
- Interpersonal skills
- Organizational abilities



Career Center

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

SUGGESTED RESUME FORM

SECTION	BASICS	SUGGESTIONS
CONTACT INFORMATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name, address, phone number and email address should always be at the top of the page. Always include area code/zip code. For current students, list both college and home address. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be sure your voicemail and email address are business-appropriate! Your name should always be at least a 16 pt. font.
EDUCATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin with your most recent educational experience. Include the university, the degree you expect to earn or have earned (Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Arts), your major/minor, and GPA. List study abroad or other colleges attended for a significant amount of time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The emphasis on your GPA will vary by employer. If your GPA is a 3.0 or higher, we recommend that you include it on your resume. If lower than a 3.0, you may consider omitting it. Some students may only list their major GPA if it is higher, rather than their overall GPA.
HONORS <i>(OPTIONAL)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include academic honors such as Dean's List, scholarships, and honor societies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Honors may be listed under a separate heading or as a subsection under Education.
RELEVANT COURSEWORK <i>(OPTIONAL)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may want to list courses you have taken that are relevant to the internship or job. List the name of the course (Organizational Psychology). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant courses can be helpful if you do not necessarily have a lot of hands-on experiences. Talk with your Career Coach about which courses to highlight for each position.
EXPERIENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include any employment, internships, significant campus leadership roles, volunteer work, research, and relevant class projects. Include your title, name of organization, location (city, state), and range of dates for each position (Aug 20xx-May 20xx). Emphasize accomplishments, skills, abilities, duties, and responsibilities appropriate to the position for which you are applying. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refrain from using passive language when describing your accomplishments. Instead, use phrases beginning with action verbs. Do not use pronouns in your bullet points. You do not need to restrict this category to paid experience. You may wish to separate this section into "Related Experience" and "Additional Experience."
ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List college-related activities including student government, fraternities/sororities, student clubs, sports activities, etc. that are not mentioned elsewhere. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be sure to note offices held and committee involvement.
SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foreign languages, computer skills, and other relevant skills should be included. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List level of fluency/proficiency with languages/computer skills. (Do not overstate your competence.)

PROOFREADING

Reviewers spend less than 60 seconds on your resume. First impressions? Instant. Don't proof it alone. Fresh eyes catch what you won't — and what hiring managers will. **Ask:**

- A Career Center professional
- Someone who knows you well (*to spot what's missing*)
- Someone who doesn't (*to read like a real employer*)
- A hiring manager you trust

More clarity. Fewer blind spots. Stronger first impression.

RONALD RESUME

Current Address:
**1111 Columbia Road
Columbia, SC, 29208**

Rresume@email.sc.edu | (803) 555-5555

Permanent Address:
**2222 Brown Road
Charlotte, NC 28226**

EDUCATION

University of South Carolina; Columbia, SC
Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, Minor in Political Science; May 20xx
Overall GPA: 3.25, Dean's List: 2 Semesters

Study Abroad: Universidad Veritas; San Jose, Costa Rica; Spring 20xx

RELEVANT COURSEWORK

Juvenile Delinquency	Social Welfare Policy
Information Technology and the Human Services	Diversity in the Workplace
Legal Aspects of Social Welfare	State and Local Government
Children and Family Services	

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Boys and Girls Club of the Midlands, Columbia, SC
Teen Counselor, May 20xx-Present

- Develop activity programming and supervise 20+ preteens
- Assist children with homework and provide tutoring to students in variety of subjects
- Organize educational programs such as "Passport to Manhood™" and "CareerLaunch™"

Three Rivers Behavioral Health, Columbia, SC
Volunteer, May-August 20xx

- Shadowed KEYS (Knowledge and Excellence for Your Success) Counselor during outpatient sessions
- Gained a better understanding of working with troubled teens in a mental health facility

YMCA, Columbia, SC
Childcare Coordinator/Volunteer Counselor, summers, 20xx, 20xx

- Facilitated bi-weekly meetings with four other counselors to plan week-long summer camps for community children
- Provided educational activities for approximately sixty fifth-grade students to increase skills in reading and math
- Supported childcare function for families in need of daycare assistance
- Identified caretakers and matched them with families
- Successfully coordinated over 75 placements for the summer program

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Development Office, University of South Carolina-Columbia
Office Assistant, August 20xx-Present

- Demonstrated attention to detail while completing clerical tasks including filing, mass mailing, photocopying, faxing, and data entry

O' Charley's, Columbia, SC
Server, August 20xx-August 20xx

- Assisted with training of 10 new employees

ACTIVITIES

Active Minds, Member

- De-stigmatize mental illness and promote mental health awareness through peer contact

SKILLS

Basic Spanish
Proficient in SPSS; Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Outlook; Adobe Photoshop

ACTION VERBS

Utilize this list of action verbs when structuring your bullet points on your resume. These words are especially helpful when pointing out accomplishments on your resume. This list of transferable skills will also be helpful as you format your cover letters and in talking about your experiences during an interview.

ANALYTICAL

- analyzed
- assessed
- compared
- critiqued
- devised
- diagnosed
- estimated
- evaluated
- identified
- interpreted data
- investigated
- made decisions
- observed
- predicted
- projected
- proved
- researched
- reviewed
- screened
- solved problems
- studied
- surveyed
- tested
- thought critically
- validated

COMMUNICATION

- communicated
- conveyed
- debated
- defined
- described
- drafted
- edited
- explained
- influenced
- interacted
- interviewed
- listened
- persuaded
- presented
- promoted
- published
- read
- reflected
- reported
- responded
- spoke in public
- summarized
- translated
- wrote

CREATIVE

- acted
- advertised
- authored
- conceptualized
- created
- designed
- developed
- displayed
- entertained
- fashioned
- founded
- instituted
- illustrated
- improvised
- innovated
- performed
- produced
- promoted
- shaped

FINANCIAL

- allocated
- appraised
- audited
- balanced
- budgeted
- calculated
- earned
- forecasted
- invested
- merchandised
- raised funds
- projected
- purchased

HELPING

- adapted
- advised
- assisted
- coached
- collaborated
- counseled
- demonstrated
- educated
- enabled
- encouraged
- facilitated
- familiarized
- fostered
- guided
- informed
- mentored
- served
- supported
- taught
- tutored
- trained
- volunteered

LEADERSHIP

- assigned
- approved
- authorized
- chaired
- directed
- delegated
- enforced
- evaluated
- executed
- facilitated
- founded
- handled a crisis
- hired
- implemented
- initiated
- managed change
- presided
- recommended
- recruited
- strengthened
- supervised

ORGANIZATIONAL

- administered
- categorized
- collected
- compiled
- consolidated
- coordinated
- entered data
- generated
- implemented
- increased
- maintained
- managed time
- monitored
- organized
- planned
- prioritized
- processed
- recorded
- retrieved
- scheduled
- validated

PERSUASION

- encouraged
- influenced
- mediated
- motivated
- persuaded
- negotiated
- recruited
- sold

TECHNICAL

- assembled
- calculated
- computed
- constructed
- compiled
- devised
- engineered
- installed
- inspected
- integrated
- operated
- overhauled
- measured
- programmed
- remodeled
- repaired
- retrieved
- screened
- upgraded

ADDED VALUE

- adapted
- enhanced
- improved
- maximized
- minimized
- shaped
- streamlined
- strengthened
- supplemented
- updated

RESEARCH

- clarified
- collected
- critiqued
- diagnosed
- evaluated
- examined
- extracted
- identified
- inspected
- interpreted
- interviewed
- investigated
- organized
- reviewed
- submitted
- summarized
- surveyed
- systematized

DEVELOPING A BULLET POINT

When writing a bullet point on a resume, think of it like a snapshot. It's one crisp line that shows what you did and why it mattered. It's not a sentence about your job description ("Responsible for filing paperwork"), but a short highlight reel moment ("Streamlined filing system, cutting retrieval time by 30%").

Break your bullet point into four easy parts: action verb, skill, task and quantify.

EXAMPLES

ACTION VERB

Tutored

SKILL

Leadership

TASK

Math homework help

QUANTIFY

8-10 students

PUT IT TOGETHER: *Tutored 8-10 high school students on math assignments in weekly appointments, demonstrating leadership.*

SKILL AS THE ACTION VERB

Led (leadership)

TASK

Math homework help

QUANTIFY

8-10 students

PUT IT TOGETHER: *Led math tutoring sessions weekly for 8-10 high school students.*

USE YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE AND TRY FOR YOURSELF

ACTION VERB

SKILL

TASK

QUANTIFY

PUT IT TOGETHER: _____

SKILL AS THE ACTION VERB

TASK

QUANTIFY

PUT IT TOGETHER: _____

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

Think that your job as a part-time cashier or server has nothing to do with your aspiring career out of college? Think again! When incorporating these experiences on your resume, it is important to highlight the transferable skills you gained. So, what are transferable skills? Transferable skills are skills that you can take from one position to the next. They are very versatile. Transferable skills allow you to be a more marketable candidate when applying for jobs and internships. If you have questions on how to market your transferable skills or need help identifying how to gain these skills, make an appointment with your career development coach.

This exercise is designed to help you identify skills you possess. This task will be particularly useful for marketing yourself to employers in interviews and cover letters.

1. Place a check mark next to each skill you feel you possess. Be sure to consider all settings in which you might have demonstrated each skill, including your college curriculum, extra-curricular activities, organizations/clubs, volunteer work and internship/work experience.
2. Review the items you have checked and circle your 10 strongest skills.
3. For each of the 10 skills selected, complete the reserve side of this sheet describing specific examples of how you have demonstrated this skill in the past.

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ADDITIONAL RESUME STYLES

You may be considering an internship or employment setting where a traditional resume (like the example in this packet) is not the only appropriate type of resume. Talk to a [Career Development Coach](#) to determine if one of these additional resume styles is appropriate for your career goals.

FEDERAL RESUME

- A Federal resume provides your qualifications for a position in great detail.
- Federal resumes are generally 2-5 pages in length and include similar language as the vacancy announcement.
- A Federal resume includes additional information not typically requested in the private sector, including:
 - Job Information (announcement number, title, series, and grade of the job you're applying for)
 - Personal Information (including SSN, country of citizenship, and reinstatement eligibility)

Check out our [tip sheet](#) for more information.

CURRICULUM VITAE (CV)

- A CV or Curriculum Vitae (meaning one's life in Latin) is generally preferred in these specific industries:
 - Academic, Scientific, Research, Teaching, Medical, Graduate program application, Grant & Fellowship application and International applications.
- It is generally 2 or more pages in length and emphasizes an individual's qualifications and activities.
- There is no standard formatting for a CV.

CREATIVE RESUMES/ONLINE PORTFOLIOS

- You may be considering an industry where creativity is encouraged. A creative resume is one way to showcase your creativity and experience to a potential employer.
- Consider your audience when creating a resume that is not designed in the traditional format.
- Include the same information you would on a traditional resume, just in a different format.
 - Name and Contact information
 - Education
 - Experience
 - Activities/ Interests
 - Skills/Programs/Software

FUNCTIONAL/COMBINATION RESUME

- A functional resume allows you to group your work history by skills rather than in chronological order, for example:
 - Sales and New Account Development
 - Customer Relations
- A functional resume may be helpful for those who are in career transition, have employment gaps, or have too little experience when applying for jobs.
- A combination resume lists your skills and experience at the top of your resume, followed by your employment history.
 - This can be used to highlight skills you have that are relevant for the job you are applying too, while also providing a chronological work history.

COVER LETTERS

A cover letter is an opportunity to demonstrate to an employer that you have researched their company and have relevant experiences that would benefit their company mission and the position they are hiring for. The purpose of the cover letter is to arouse the employer’s interest and gain his/her attention to your application for employment.

When possible, a cover letter should always accompany your resume when applying for a position.

TIPS FOR WRITING AN EFFECTIVE COVER LETTER

- Research the company and related positions to find the important skills needed for their industry.
 - Your goal is to match your skills, knowledge and traits with the position, company, and industry in your cover letter. To do this, you must have a strong understanding of what the company is looking for in an ideal candidate.
 - Research facts about the company, their mission, vision, values, and current news and trends in their industry.
- Always address the letter to the appropriate individual by name and professional title. This may involve calling HR to obtain a specific name.
 - If you are not able to obtain a name, address it to the apparent job title of the individual receiving your application, “Dear Hiring Manager” or “Dear Human Resources Director”.
- Attract the employer’s attention by beginning your cover letter with a strong statement.
 - Many employers receive hundreds of applications and you want yours to be the one that is remembered.
 - Develop a bridge or common bond between you and the employer. Tell how you learned of the organization and/or vacancy.
- Tell why you’re interested in the employer. Indicate what you can do for the employer rather than what the employer can do for you.
 - You can combine this with your first paragraph when you are gaining their attention, or this can be a separate paragraph all on its own.
- Always thank the employer for their time and consideration.
 - If sending electronically, make sure you type “Sincerely” and print your name. An electronic signature is not expected.

CONNECT COMPANY RESEARCH WITH YOUR EXPERIENCES

	Keywords from My Research	My Life Experience
SKILLS		
KNOWLEDGE		
TRAITS		

COVER LETTER GUIDELINES

Your Present Address
City, State, Zip Code
Date of Letter

Individual's Name
Title
Employer
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Dr./Ms./Mr. _____: or:
Dear Recruiting Manager:

First Paragraph: ATTENTION

In your Initial paragraph, indicate the reason for writing, the specific position or type of work for which you are applying, and how you learned of the opening. (Include prior contact with an employer or employees of the organization you are applying to, newspaper advertisements, Handshake, a job fair, etc.). **Remember: This is the paragraph where you initially hook them, so make it exciting!**

Second Paragraph: INTEREST

Mention why you are interested in the position, the organization, its products or services. This is the number one item that most students leave out of the cover letter. Show the reader that you have done your research and know what makes them unique and/or stand out from their competitors. Make it clear that you are interested in the position for more than just a J-O-B. You can combine this paragraph with the first paragraph if you prefer.

Third Paragraph: FIT

If you are a recent graduate, explain how your academic background and experiences make you a qualified candidate for the position. If you have related work or internship experience, point this out by mentioning specific achievements or unique qualifications gained through this experience. It can be helpful to choose 2-3 specific experiences from your resume that demonstrate your fit with the company. Do not repeat information word for word as it appears on your resume. **Make sure that you are not beginning each sentence with the word "I".** Above all, indicate the skills that you have gained and what you can do for the employer.

Fourth Paragraph: FOLLOW-UP

In the closing paragraph, indicate that you are very interested in an interview. You may suggest a time frame for when you will be available or will follow-up. Make some final connection between the available position and your qualifications. Finally, thank the employer for his/her time and consideration.

Sincerely,

(Your Handwritten Signature) – if sending a paper copy
(Your Typed Name)

Enclosures (denotes resume, applications, other media, etc. that are enclosed)

CREATING A SEPARATE REFERENCE PAGE

CHOOSING YOUR REFERENCES

- You should be able to provide a minimum of three professional references, but no more than five.
- A professional reference might be a former supervisor, team leader, manager, or even co-worker.
- Brainstorm a list of people who can speak highly of your past work performance (job, class-work, or research related).

ASK YOUR REFERENCES

- Contact those designated and ask if they will give you a positive reference.
- Never provide anyone's name to a potential employer as a reference without first asking if you may list them.

GATHER CONTACT INFORMATION

- Make sure you have the proper spelling of:
 - Your reference's name
 - Company name
 - Official job title
 - Address and phone number
- For your own use, you may also get an email address.

PREPARE REFERENCES

- To help your references speak intelligently about your background and strengths, you should provide them with a copy of your resume.
- They should also know what your goals are and the types of positions you are seeking.
- Notify your references of each position you apply for, and if possible include a copy of the job description.
- Some positions you are applying to may require a written reference in addition to a verbal reference. Make sure you let your references know if this is the case.

KEEP REFERENCES INFORMED

- Notify your references about each position for which you are applying so they might anticipate a call and prepare to “sell” you based on the specifics of each position.
- You may provide them a copy of the job description.

THANK YOUR REFERENCES

- Notify references when you accept a position and send a thank-you letter.

SUSIE STUDENT

SS1111@email.sc.edu

Current Address:

**USC P.O. Box 1234
Columbia, SC, 29208
(803) 777-0000**

Permanent Address:

**9274 Whisper Lane
Charlotte, NC 28226
(704) 222-0000**

REFERENCES

Mr. Thomas (Tom) Smith

Director
Citizens Against Sexual Assault (C.A.S.A.)
8981 Harden Street
Columbia, SC 29205
(803) 555-5555

Mrs. Susan Brown

Director of Residence Life
University of South Carolina
Columbia, SC 29208
(803) 777-7777
sbrown@csd.sc.edu

Dr. Phillip A. Jones

Associate Professor
Department of Psychology
University of South Carolina
Columbia, SC 29208
(803) 777-0000
pajnes@sc.edu

Ms. Francis Patterson

Summer Staff Coordinator
Camp Wildwood
P.O. Box 590
Kings Mountain, NC 28746
(803) 333-3333

MAJOR-SPECIFIC RESUME & COVER LETTER SAMPLES

We offer sample resumes and cover letters on our Career Center Student Toolbox tailored to the majors and fields listed here. Click or scan the QR code to get started.



RESUMES

- [Arts](#)
- [Business](#)
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- [Computing](#)
- [Education](#)
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CURRICULUM VITAE (CV)

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COVER LETTERS

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA



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career@sc.edu
[@UofSCcareers](https://twitter.com/UofSCcareers)
803.777.7280

OR VISIT ONE OF OUR LOCATIONS

Thomas Cooper Library
Molinaroli College of Engineering & Computing
Pre-Professional & Graduate School Advising
Graduate Student Career Services