

# WRITING A CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME

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Presented by  
Counseling & Career Services  
Howard Community College

Thank you to Marcene Trump for creating this presentation

Welcome to "Writing a Chronological Resume" prepared and presented by Counseling and Career Services at Howard Community College.

Whether you are crafting your very first resume, or looking for ways to improve your existing resume, we hope this presentation will be of assistance to you.

## Why write a resume?

- Describe your experience, skills, and accomplishments
- To get invited for an interview!

Your resume is one of the most important professional documents that you will ever write. It should describe your experience, skills, and accomplishments to employers, and inspire them to invite you to interview. If you aren't getting interviews, your resume isn't doing its job!

This presentation will describe, in detail, what should be included in a chronological resume, and give examples of how to write each section.

# Common Resume Formats

- Chronological
- Functional
- Combination

The three most common resume formats are **chronological, functional, and combination**. This presentation will focus on chronological resumes. It is called a chronological resume because your experience and education are listed in reverse chronological order. Your most recent experience and education are what the employer will see first when looking at your resume.

## Chronological Resume Benefits

- Easy to read, preferred by most employers
- Emphasizes career growth
- Highlights relevant education and special skills

Chronological resumes are preferred by most employers. A well-written chronological resume is easy to read, emphasizes growth in your career, and highlights the education and special skills that make you a great candidate for the position for which you are applying.

## 4 C's of Chronological Resume Writing

- **CLEAN** - formatting is important
- **CLEAR** - who you are and what you have accomplished
- **CONCISE** - generally 1 - 2 pages in length
- **COMPELLING** - capture interest and initiate an interview

**CLEAN.** The formatting of your resume is very important. Margins should appear even, and can be adjusted to help fit your resume on 1 or 2 pages. The font you choose should be clean and simple. Arial, Calibri, and Times New Roman are good examples of clean, simple fonts. Font size should generally be between 10 and 12 point.

**CLEAR.** It should leave the reader with a clear picture of what you have accomplished professionally, and how that can translate into the position for which you are applying. This should be accomplished without ever using first-person pronouns – no “I, me, or my” should be used. This is a professional document, and as such, personal information such as age, gender, marital status, political affiliation, and religion should not be included.

**CONCISE.** Generally speaking, entry level resumes should be kept to one page, and candidates with more experience should try to limit theirs to two pages. There are exceptions to this rule, and your career counselor can help you determine if your resume is an appropriate length. Nursing, Education, and Government are examples of industries that may warrant a longer resume.

**COMPELLING.** It should be powerful and interesting enough to capture the readers' interest, and inspire them to invite you to interview.

## Before you begin...

- Brainstorm list of every academic and professional experience you've had
- For each employment experience, include
  - ❖ Position title
  - ❖ Company name
  - ❖ Company City & State
  - ❖ Month/Year of Start/Finish

Resume writing is a process, and it is a good idea to begin with a brainstorming session. Get down on paper every academic and professional experience that you have had. You may not end up including all of these experiences on your resume, but keeping a comprehensive list of experiences can help you tailor your resume to specific positions for which you are applying.

Be sure to include any leadership positions, volunteer experiences, student or professional organizations, languages you speak, and other special skills, such as computer skills.

Once you have your list, each employment experience should include:

Your position title

The company name

The company city and state

and

The Month and Year of your start date and end date

Listing each of these areas for each position will make it easier to keep the formatting of your resume consistent.

# Chronological Resume Contents

- Heading
- Objective
- Qualifications Summary
- Experience
- Education
- Optional Sections
  - Licenses & Certifications
  - Languages Spoken
  - Special Skills
  - Professional Affiliations
  - Leadership Experience
  - Student Organizations
  - Volunteer Service
  - Honors & Awards

A chronological resume should include a heading, an objective or qualifications summary, your experience, and your education. Optional sections that can be included are licenses and certifications, languages spoken, special skills, professional affiliations, leadership experience, student organization affiliations, volunteer service, and honors and awards. While you will likely not include all of these optional sections, aim to include one or two that will allow you to showcase additional activities or skills that are relevant to your desired field of work.

# HEADING

Should include:

**YOUR NAME (in BOLD)**

Address

Phone Number

E-mail address

LinkedIn URL

The heading section of your resume should include your name, in bold, your address, your phone number, your email address, and your personalized LinkedIn URL if you have one.



# HEADING EXAMPLE

**JOHN C. DOE**

123 Reindeer Drive

Antelope, MD 99999

717-555-6327

[johndoe@mail.com](mailto:johndoe@mail.com)

[www.linkedin.com/in/johndoe](http://www.linkedin.com/in/johndoe)

Your heading can be centered at the top of your resume.

# HEADING EXAMPLE

**JOHN C. DOE**  
(777)555-6327

123 Reindeer Drive  
                  johndoe@mail.com  
Antelope, MD 99999  
linkedin.com/in/johndoe

Or your name and phone number can be centered, and the rest of the heading contents can justified to the left and right side of the page as they are in this example. While these two examples are not the only correct ways to format your Heading, they both include the necessary components of a heading and allow the reader to find the information easily. As with each section of your resume, the cleaner and easier it is to read, the more likely it is that the employer will read it.

## OBJECTIVE

- Optional
- User-centered if possible
  - written specifically for each position - include company name and position title and state how you will benefit the company

The Objective section of your resume is optional. If you choose to include an objective, it should be tailored specifically to the position for which you are applying. The objective should name the Company and Position that you are applying for, and state how you will be of benefit to the company in that specific role.

## OBJECTIVE EXAMPLES

1. Utilize excellent analytical and technical skills to improve profitability at 123 Accounting
1. Assist ABC Education in their mission to foster the overall development of each child by creating an intellectually stimulating classroom environment

Here are two examples of strong objectives that name the company and position, and include skills that the applicant possesses that will benefit the company should they choose to hire them.

## QUALIFICATIONS SUMMARY

- Ask yourself, “What do I want to convey as the essence of what I have to offer?” OR “What mental picture do I want to paint in the mind of the reader?”
- 3-4 bulleted statements or a short paragraph of your highest qualifications most relevant to your target job.
- If you summarize your experience and strengths in a paragraph, consider adding “AREAS OF EXPERTISE” in which you list your specializations in bullet form.

More experienced candidates will often use a Qualifications Summary, also called a Professional Summary, in place of an objective. The qualifications summary allows the applicant to highlight their most important accomplishments and skills at the top of their resume. Before writing your Qualifications Summary, think about the mental picture you would like for the reader to see. You can begin the Qualifications Summary with a short paragraph or 3-4 bulleted points highlighting your highest qualifications that are most relevant to your target job. You can also choose to summarize your experience and strengths in a short paragraph, and then add a few bulleted points with your areas of expertise or exceptional accomplishments.

## QUALIFICATIONS SUMMARY EXAMPLE

- Corporate communications internship experience with Hewlett-Packard.
- Experience in newspaper reporting and editing.
- Proficient with HTML, MS Office, Windows XP and the Internet.

Here is an example of a Qualifications Summary that includes a few brief bullet points designed to quickly introduce the reader to the experience and skills of the applicant.

## QUALIFICATIONS SUMMARY EXAMPLE

Human Resources professional with business management experience. Demonstrated strengths in improving and streamlining HR policies and procedures toward efficiency and employee satisfaction. Excellent interpersonal skills and strong attention to detail. Proficient with MS Office and QuickBooks. Areas of expertise: Recruiting, Benefits Administration and Staff Development/Training.

This Qualifications Summary is written by a more experienced professional, and is designed to show the reader an overview of the candidates experience, strengths, skills, and areas of expertise.

## EXPERIENCE

- Start with your current or most recent title (in bold), employer name and city/state location, dates of employment (month and year or just years).
- Summary of overall job responsibilities in italics, followed by bulleted list of duties and accomplishments.
- Duties are the specific tasks performed as part of your job; accomplishments are the results of performing your duties.

As you begin to create the Experience section of your resume, take a look at the list of employment experiences that you came up with during your brainstorming session. Once you have organized your work experiences into chronological order, make sure that you have included your position title, the company name, the company city and state, and the month and year of your start date and end date for each position. Include an italicized summary of your overall job responsibilities, followed by a bulleted list of duties and accomplishments. Your duties show the specific tasks that you were responsible for performing, while the accomplishments highlight the results that you achieved while performing those duties. This is where you will have to work to craft strong bullet points that are concise and to the point, and show what you have accomplished.



# EXPERIENCE EXAMPLE

**Assistant Editor/Reporter**, Student News, Howard Community College, Columbia, MD, 2006-2007

*Researched and wrote news articles on all campus social activities.*

- Interviewed campus administrators, faculty, staff and students.
- Developed weekly stories without missing a single deadline.
- Consistently complimented on concise and clear writing style.

**Corporate Communications Internship**, Hewlett-Packard, Baltimore, MD, Summer 2006

*Assisted the Communications Manager with generating ideas for and writing an employee newsletter.*

- Worked with senior staff members to launch the first Intranet newsletter, allowing for more efficient and cost-effective delivery of corporate news.
- Developed HTML template to allow newsletter contributors to develop and deliver articles with little or no format editing.

Here are two examples of well-written experiences. Both examples let the employer know what they were hired to do, and what they accomplished in that role.

# EDUCATION

Title of degree bolded (ex: **Bachelor of Arts, History**), name and city/state of school, year of completion (do not list year of completion if you believe it may result in age discrimination).

- Begin with highest level of formal education or specialized training OR the degree most relevant for your job target if you have more than one degree
- Listing a high school diploma is optional if you have or are seeking a college degree or if your work experience exceeds 10 years.
- Education may be listed before experience if it is your strongest qualification.

The Education section of your resume is important for several reasons. Many positions indicate the minimum educational level acceptable for applicants, and you should be sure to show both how and when you attained the education or degree(s) required for the position. Each degree that you have earned, or are in the process of earning, should be listed in this section. At a minimum, you should include the Title of the degree, the name of the school, and the city and state of the school. You may also choose to include the Month and Year that you completed the degree. If you are currently in the process of earning the degree, but have not yet completed it, you should include the anticipated date of completion. If you have more than one degree, the most advanced degree earned is usually listed first. In entry level resumes, education is often listed before experience, especially if the candidate has not yet gained employment experience in their target field of work.

## EDUCATION EXAMPLE

Currently pursuing **Associate of Arts degree in Communications**, Howard Community College, Columbia, MD. Anticipated graduation May 2015, with plans to pursue **Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications**. Courses taken thus far include:

- Communication Strategies
- Intro to Public Relations
- Corporate Communications
- Intercultural Communications

If you are currently pursuing a degree, you may choose to include that with specific information including anticipated graduation date and relevant courses that you have already completed.

# EDUCATION EXAMPLE

## **Education**

Towson University, Towson, MD                      May 2013

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration

Minor: Economics

## **EDUCATION**

**Howard Community College, Columbia, MD**

*Major Gpa: 3.8/4*

Associate of Arts, Nursing                                      *May 2012*

As with the other sections of your resume, you may choose to format the education section as you please. Be sure that you are consistent with your formatting throughout the entire document.

## OPTIONAL SECTIONS

- Licenses & Certifications
- Languages Spoken
- Special Skills
- Professional Affiliations
- Leadership Experience
- Student Organizations
- Volunteer Service
- Honors & Awards

Additional sections can be added to your resume to showcase what makes you such a fantastic candidate. Do you speak additional languages? Have you given your time to volunteer? Do you have any licenses, certifications, or special skills? Have you been affiliated with professional organizations or student organizations? Have you received any honors or awards? These are areas that can make you stand out, so be sure to include them when possible and relevant.

## ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE

Counseling and Career Services offers walk-in resume review sessions, as well as the opportunity to schedule a one-on-one appointment with a Career Counselor. Call 443-518-1340 to make an appointment, or visit [www.howardcc.edu/career](http://www.howardcc.edu/career) for additional information about programs and events.

Counseling and Career Services at Howard Community College offers resume assistance in the form of walk-in resume review sessions, and individual appointments with Career Counselors. Call 443-518-1340 to make an appointment, or visit us on the web at [www.howardcc.edu/career](http://www.howardcc.edu/career) to learn more about the services and programs available.