



Canada Revenue
Agency

Agence du revenu
du Canada

Writing Your Résumé

Reference Guide

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Introduction

This reference guide contains recommendations and guidelines on how to prepare a résumé that would capture all your skills and accomplishments, would highlight relevant experience and be expressed in plain language. A well-structured and polished résumé will give you better chances to be noticed by a potential employer.

Résumé and cover letter checklists

General guidelines



- Limit résumé to 2 pages
- Stick to one sans-serif font type (for example, Arial, Verdana, Century Gothic) which is considered accessible and easier to read
- Use 1" margins (don't use narrow margins, trying to get it all to fit on two pages, instead, rework your content)
- Use bold sparingly (for example, for headings)
- Do not punctuate bullet point items
- Avoid overusing capitalization (when in doubt, refer to the [CRA's Writing Guidelines](#))
- Add a touch of colour for dynamic impact, all the while maintaining a professional look and feel
- Ask someone to review your résumé and cover letter for typos and grammar errors
- Ask yourself "would I interview me"?

Contact information



- Ensure contact information is up to date
- Include your CRA email address and phone number where you can be easily reached
- Consider adding a home or personal mobile number as a back-up
- Omit home or mailing address (wastes space and not necessary)

Work experience



- Include a maximum of 10 years' worth of positions (the 3 most recent are the most important and should occupy the most space)
- Use a variety of [action verbs](#) and be consistent with your verb tense throughout (usually present tense for current job and past tense for previous ones)
- Target the transferable skills for the position for which you are applying

- Use the transferable skills and your work experience to craft compelling accomplishment statements (don't forget the "What" and the "So What?")
- Use a maximum of 6 lines per each work experience for your accomplishment statements
- Begin with the most impressive/relevant statement to maximize the reader's interest
- Minimize acronyms
- Avoid jargon
- Include any awards/recognition with the actual position where you achieved them
- Is there a clear path of development and/or progress through your work experience? If not, find a way to explain any interruptions in your journey (for example, due to a career change or return to school)

Education



- If you have a degree or specialized training that will impress your reader, then feature your education in your résumé. If you do not have a post-secondary diploma/degree or special training, you may leave it off completely
- List your highest level completed (If you have college or university education, do not include your high school, it is implicit)
- Include training or certification relevant to the position

Additional



- Only include items that add value – for example, volunteer leadership positions, hobby writing/blog (communications), community building, research, exceptional skills. Do not include high school activities such as sports, music, honour roll, etc.

References



- Generally preferable to list references apart and upon request but if you choose to list them, make sure their contact information is up to date
- Make your references aware of a potential call or email, so they are ready to talk about you and your performance

Cover letter



- Use your cover letter to highlight competencies, special training and relevant experience supported by examples
- Stand out in your cover letter by explaining why you are an ideal candidate for the job
- Limit your cover letter to **one** page
- Address any specific requirements of the position

Accomplishment statements



Make each action statement clear, pack it with compelling evidence of your relevant skills, and keep it brief.

Remember to avoid vague claims. Use brief, specific examples to demonstrate—rather than merely claim—skills. For example, instead of claiming **excellent communication skills**, think about an experience or two that demonstrate these skills, such as:

- presented a plan to 12 groups of 15 to 100 participants, in English and French or
- trained 30 new hires on customer service protocols or
- wrote plain language user guide for 11,000 users

The following statements are some examples taken from “The Elements of Résumé Style – Essential Rules for Writing Résumés and Cover Letters That Work” book.

- Achieved \$X in weekly sales
- Achieved sixfold sales increase—from \$120K to \$840K/year
- Co-developed system to streamline O and P
- Collaborated with materials vendors to cut lead times in half
- Completed M ahead of deadline and under budget
- Cut average accounts receivable from 62 to 38 days
- Cut monthly expenses X% to \$X
- Defined and implemented procedures to serve E, F, and G
- Designed recruitment literature and managed its production and distribution
- Doubled monthly sales to \$X
- Evaluated and recommended J
- Managed \$X annual budget
- Managed high volume of I
- Managed relationships with D, E, and F
- Managed X staff
- Met complex local, provincial, and federal requirements
- Participated in development of A
- Performed outreach to J and K
- Recruited, extensively trained, and remotely supervised X
- Reduced expenses \$X/year
- Served as liaison among V, W, and Y to develop Z

- Synthesized survey results from multiple sources to develop clear system requirements
- Trained X staff on service protocols and quality measurement
- While continuing to serve as X, also managed A, B, and C

Action verbs

Use action verbs (please refer to the table below) to describe your skills and abilities, as well as your accomplishments. Being specific in your resume, increases your chances to be noticed by a potential employer.

Communication	Creativity	Management	Technology	Finance	Research
animated	assembled	administered	adapted	accounted	assessed
clarified	built	advised	advised	allowed	catalogued
contacted	composed	coordinated	communicated	analysed	classified
corresponded	conceived	decided	configured	balanced	collected
coached	conceptualized	delegated	developed	budgeted	evaluated
discussed	constructed	facilitated	diagnosed	calculated	examined
edited	created	formed	evaluated	compiled	explored
exchanged	developed	hired	explained	compromised	extracted
explained	drew up	influenced	guided	conciliated	gathered
formulated	elaborated	managed	informed	conducted	hired
informed	experimented	motivated	inspected	consolidated	identified
interpreted	formulated	organized	installed	detailed	inventoried
interviewed	illustrated	oriented	operated	dressed	investigated
justified	initiated	organised	programmed	estimated	interpreted
negotiated	innovated	planned	resolved	evaluated	interviewed
persuaded	inspired	prepared	used	financed	organized
presented	invented	prioritized	trained	granted	reassembled
promoted	made	resolved	tried	managed	researched
raised	started	stimulated	validated	updated	
recommended	shaped	supervised	verified	verified	
showed	visualized				
solicited					

Communication	Creativity	Management	Technology	Finance	Research
suggested					
trained					
warranted					
wrote					

Plain language

Remember that the hiring manager will have limited time to go through your résumé. Make sure to use concise words, where ones exist, and remember to use plain language!

Note: Consider taking this short CSPS course on [Clarity and Conciseness in Business Writing](#).

The following table provides some simple word equivalents that will make your résumé easier to understand.

Instead of	Use	Instead of	Use
a majority of	most	for the purpose of	for
a number of	some	fortify	strengthen
abolish	end	instruct	train
as a means of	to	numerous	many
at all times	always	following	after
at the present time	now	for the purpose of	for
based on the fact that	because	fortify	strengthen
by 50%	in half (quicker to read)	instruct	train
by means of	by, through, using, or with	numerous	many
by the time	when	objective	goal
concerning	on / about	peruse	review
constitute	form	preplan	plan
deliver improvements	improve	preventative	preventive
despite the fact that	although	reduce/decrease	cut
detailed information	details	scrutinize	examine
endeavour	try	until such time as	until
enumerate	count	utilize	use
exceeding	over		

Instead of	Use	Instead of	Use
following	after		

Resources

- [Job Information Site](#)
- [The 30-Second Resume: 5 Tips To Get Noticed](#)
- [What Is a Résumé? Meaning, Definition & Use](#)
- [CV examples, HEC Montréal](#)
- [Exemple de CV pour un emploi en vente](#)
- [Best Resume Formats With Examples and Formatting Tips](#)
- [How to Write a Resume](#)
- [What is a cover letter?](#)
- [Employability Skills, The Conference Board of Canada](#)
- [39 Resume Accomplishments Examples to Demonstrate Your Value](#)

Additional information:

- [How to write a good resume, Government of Canada](#)
- [3 templates to land your dream job in the public service](#)
- [Action Verb List | Career Center](#)