

Different employers, and even different managers in the same company, want different things.
This is from the point of a recruiter (initials SP) for an R&D science & engineering company.

Resume Structure

Good

- Put the most important things first: your name and contact information (phone and email)
 - Physical address is optional. Don't label contact info, except e.g. phone numbers (H, W, C)
 - A website, LinkedIn profile, or GitHub address is fine, but don't go overboard
- Optional (but recommended): an objective or summary.
 - An objective should be concise and list specifics of who you are and what kind of employment you're seeking.
 - Bad example: "Objective: Work in a good environment. Doing what I love."
 - Good example: "Chemical engineering junior looking to apply strong analytical and interpersonal skills during an internship in nuclear or process engineering."
 - You can also list a specific skill or two (antenna design, fluid simulations, etc.), but don't go overboard. See discussion in "Experience" section regarding measurable attributes.
 - This is a good place to list the name of the company you've personalized your resume for (hint, hint). Note: make sure you spell it correctly!
 - A detailed summary probably isn't necessary unless you have many years of experience in different jobs, or a long resume/CV (perhaps a PhD). If your career path has bounced around or away from your degree, a summary is a good place to give a quick portrait of who you are and what you can do.
 - Good example: "As an R&D engineering technician I designed, fabricated, and prepared automotive suspension components for mass production. This required me to communicate effectively with customers, fellow engineers, and factory floor workers. I worked with a CNC tube bender, press brakes, and MIG welders to fabricate sway bars and test fixtures."
- Next should be your education, again, with the most important things first: degree (BS, MS, PhD), major, GPA, expected graduation date, school
 - If you have multiple degrees, put the most recent one first. For advanced degrees, you may list thesis subject or area of emphasis.
 - It's traditional to list the location of your school. City and state is fine; don't put a full address. The name of the University is sufficient; the name of your college is irrelevant.
 - Some companies don't want to see GPAs, but some have GPA requirements. List all post-high school GPAs; look up and use official numbers. There's no real difference between 3.5 and 3.51 or 3.512, except that I'm more confident that the latter is correct and not a guess.
- You may list scholarships, awards, etc., and should describe why they're significant. But don't go overboard.
 - Bad: "Burger King Scholar"
 - Good: ___ Scholarship (full tuition). ___ Scholarship (top 1% of juniors)
 - Too much detail: "Earned \$19,732 in scholarships, grants, and awards."

- Better: “Over \$19,000 in scholarships, grants, and awards, including”
- A list of coursework is fine if you have a good reason to include it:
 - List advanced (graduate) or elective classes that are relevant to the job you’re looking for
 - Don’t list classes that it’s assumed that every student in your major will take (e.g., introduction to circuit design). Possible exception: if you’re fairly early in school (freshman or sophomore) and want to explicitly show that you’ve taken courses that are relevant to a specific job.
- Fill your resume with the following relevant items (order may vary): work experience, publications and presentations, awards and scholarships, skills, interests, etc. If you happen to have patents, list them, too! (More discussion on these items below.)

Bad

- Make it quick and easy for the recruiter to find what they’re probably looking at first – your major (and then your year in school). Don’t bury it at the end of a paragraph or the middle of the page.
 - “University of Utah: Salt Lake City, UT: 2012-present
Will graduate in Class of 2016. Studying for a BS in ...”.
(Your graduation date only matters if you’re in a major they’re recruiting for.)
 - One resume had a long introduction that started, “I’m the son of a mechanical engineer...”. Nowhere on the resume did it actually say what the student was majoring in.
 - Another long introduction said,
“Driven by curiosity and restless creativity, I am a sophomore majoring in Chemical Engineering, with a focus in biological systems.... This is my junior year as a University of Utah student, and I am ecstatic to be in class feeding my curiosities. I currently have a cumulative 3.xxx GPA after completing my sophomore year.”
(It’s too long, it’s hard to find the key information, and it’s not consistent).
- If you list a graduation month, know when it actually is. A bunch of resumes from the same school should not show dates ranging from April through June.
- Your educational summary should not look like this:

○ Enrolled currently in ...	Enrolled currently in ...
○ Completed successfully ...	Completed successfully ...
○ Completed successfully ...	Completed successfully ...
- Don’t list your ACT score and high school after your sophomore year (at the latest).
- Don’t include your transcript, copies of training certificates, etc.
- Your resume should not include your photograph, unless you’re looking for a job in something like modeling or acting. In which case, you’re looking at the wrong company.
 - If you feel compelled to include a photograph, it should be professional-quality. A selfie against a cinder-block wall doesn’t qualify.
- Do not include your birthdate, marital status, or other irrelevant (illegal for me to ask) personal details.

General Details

For some of these rules, it's easier to show examples of what is good and what is bad, rather than explaining how to make them so. Whatever you do, be sure to have friends or (better yet) the career center review what you've done.

Good

- In general, don't use complete sentences, or your resume will be covered with "I". In work experience and other areas, use bulleted lists.
- Use white space, columns, headings (bold, underline, etc.) to create a hierarchy with clear sections.
- In general, avoid hyphenations to wrap words.
- Make sure your spelling is correct.
- Don't use acronyms unless you're completely certain that somebody in the field will know what it is (e.g., VHDL, ASIC, IEEE). But acronyms are about the only good reason to CAPITALIZE EVERYTHING
- How many pages? Only one page might be right for BS students, but at least two pages are better from MS students or from BS students who were smart enough to get lots of relevant work or research experience. PhD students really ought to be building a full CV with many pages of publications and experience. In short, it's okay for your resume to be multiple pages – as long as you are filling it with things that are relevant!
 - If you have an extra page that's mostly empty, or not quite full, it's okay to tweak font sizes, spacing, etc. to give pages that are full – within reason. Do it tastefully and consistent.
 - It's usually better not to print on both sides of the paper, as this makes it harder to scan.
 - Staple the pages of your resume together.
- Fancy resume paper is optional; some companies discourage it, as it can be harder to scan.
 - Don't use large watermarks, monograms, other decorative features that don't serve a purpose
- Make sure the print quality is good – no bleeding colors, fuzzy fonts, cut-off lines.
- When you update your resume, make sure you update everything and are consistent.

Experience, projects etc.

Good

- Everything job should be relevant to the job you're applying for. Again, put the most important things first – job title, project name, etc.
 - Bad: 2014 June-December, Company Name, Location, Job Title"
- List specific, measurable accomplishments, but be concise

- “Developed plan to retrofit existing equipment to save customer \$400,000 compared to purchasing a replacement system.”
 - “Developed software to reduce CAD development time by over 50%.”
- On projects, don’t just give a description of the project. Be specific about what *you* did.
 - Bad: “Surveillance Drone – Fixed wing plane with 20+ square mile scanning range.”
 - Good: “Surveillance Drone – Assembled, calibrated, and field tested a hex-copter for use in tracking applications.”
- Non-measurable skills should not be listed unless you received specific recognition for them.
 - Bad example: “Excellent communication with a variety of individuals.”
 - Good example: “Received award for best customer service, based on feedback from customers and peers.”
- If you don’t have sufficient relevant experience, then list non-relevant experience. Add a description or specific accomplishments that show why the recruiter should care and how this experience can apply (perhaps indirectly) to the job you’re applying for.
- Bad examples: “Worked part time as a pasta chef.” “Self-checkout operator.” “Cleaned and maintained facilities.”
 - Getting better: “Proved I am a hard worker by pulling down trees, putting up fences, and pumping out pond sludge.” (I would argue that you can’t prove that you’re a hard worker, but the specific tasks are good.)
 - Good example: “Farm Hand – Sustained a herd of 550 sheep and 70 cows, by feeding, doctoring, and herding.”
 - “Wrestling referee – attention to detail in a stressful environment.”
 - “Managed a team of six employees. Created a process flow that increased productivity by 30%.”
- It’s unusual to find photographs of projects in a resume. It’s extremely rare to find photographs that *improve* a resume.

Bad

- One resume for a PhD candidate (who already had a BS and an MS) didn’t list *any* work or research experience or publications. What have you been doing all of these years?
- Non-measurable, “fuzzy” details like these (unless you received specific recognition):
 - “Achieved customer service experience.”
 - “Offered fabulous customer service to each customer.”
 - “Computer literate.”
 - “Self-starting, careful and reliable. Friendly and supportive.”
 - “Professional, hard working, analytical, and resourceful.”
 - “Demonstrated excellent daily planning skills.”
- Language:

	HTML	CSS	C++	Java	Python	Spanish	Portuguese	German
Skill (10 highest):	9	9	8	6	3	10	6	3

 - How did you objectively rate these? Why even list your 3s?
- Too much detail.
 - For every job, listing exact dates (month and year is fine) and reason for leaving.

- How much you earned per hour in a job 3 years ago.
- An MS student with a LOT of relevant experience listing a job at Jimmy John's 8 years ago.
- Listing the (very distinctive) name and personal details of somebody you mentored.
- Photographs. Here are some of the many problems seen in photographs in resumes:
 - The photograph is unfocused, poorly lit, or otherwise unattractive
 - The background is distracting or unappealing – a messy lab, a cluttered wall, etc. Use a light box or proper backdrop.
 - The importance of the photograph is unclear – include a caption that briefly describes what is shown and how you were involved.
 - Bad: “Handheld game device.”
 - Good: “Multi-rotor research fleet – Designed and fabricated all structural elements, and installed motors and wiring.”
 - The exact same photograph shows up on multiple resumes.

Interests, hobbies, and skills

Have you ever seen the movie “Despicable Me”? Do you remember the scene where Gru goes to the orphanage to adopt the girls (<https://youtu.be/DDLBrv934pY>)? Don't go there.

Only list things that show relevant skills, leadership, service, or are genuinely impressive. Otherwise, it only shows a lack of better things to put on your resume. Here are a few reasonable examples:

- Tau Beta Pi Honor Society – Secretary (2012-13), Vice President (2013-14)
- Lego League – Mentored groups of 5 students in designing and building robots for competitions

LDS activities (missions, callings, etc.)

Some guidelines discourage being explicit about religious affiliation for anti-discrimination reasons. However, talking around it can be inefficient and distracting, so I have mixed feelings. Choose one approach (direct or indirect) and be consistent with it.

- Don't assume that “Zone Leader”, “Ward Clerk”, “Executive Secretary”, or “Relief Society President” mean anything to the person reading your resume – explain (briefly what it means).
- As with experience and projects, be explicit about why the recruiter should care.
 - “I gained leadership experience and learned how to effectively communicate with others in a number of different settings. I learned invaluable lessons about hard work, goal setting, planning, and perseverance. I also became fluent in Spanish.”