

# Self Study Guide to A Step-by-Step Guide to a Winning Resume

## PRE-READING

Preparing your resume is a major step in the job search process. Resumes introduce you to the public, provide the basic screening tool for employers, and often guide the interview process. Your resume doesn't tell the whole story of who you are, but it does capture the highlights of your education, experience, skills, and activities as they relate to jobs that interest you. Use this guide to build a resume that will stand up to the task of demonstrating to employers that you are the best match for the job.

1. Paragraph 3 starts with the headline: "Tailor to Triumph." How does this phrase relate to writing resumes?
2. Why are employers so focused on "related" experience?
3. Your name, address, phone number and e-mail address are all expected at the top of your resume as part of the contact information. What new information is often added to the top of today's resumes?

## POST-READING

### Reflect

1. It is tempting to embellish the skills, tasks, and experiences you have to make your resume look more attractive to a potential employer. For example:
  - a. Instead of saying you assisted in setting up an event, you wish you could claim full credit for the outcome.
  - b. Rather than using the word "secretary" to describe your summer temp job, you write "administrative assistant."
  - c. Knowing the importance of Spanish in a possible job, you state on your resume that you are fluent when, in reality, you only know basic Spanish.Review your resume carefully to be sure that you haven't stretched the truth. If you have questions, discuss them with your career counselor.

### Apply

2. The Objective or Summary of Skills category that generally falls just below the contact information on the resume is considered optional; that is, there is no rule that says you must include either one in your resume. However, some employers like to see an Objective or Summary tailored to the job or company on applicants' resumes because they are able to get a clearer picture of the candidates' goals.

### Activity:

1. Write a short summary of your top qualifications for the type of job you have in mind.
  2. Now write an objective.
  3. Put together three resumes—one with an objective, one with a Summary of Skills, and one that omits these categories.
- Get some feedback from career counselors, employers, and internship supervisors as to which one they think would work best for you. Which version do you prefer?

### Extend and Build

3. In a recent survey, employers identified some top attributes and skills that are looked-for in new graduates' resumes:  
Ability to work in a team • Leadership • Written communication skills • Problem-solving • Strong work ethic  
Analytical/quantitative skills • Verbal communication skills • Initiative • Technical skills • Detail orientation • Flexibility  
Computer skills • Interpersonal skills • Organizational abilities.

Sometimes college students will include only an attribute on their resume without any context; that is, they will make the claim that they work well in a team setting, have problem-solving skills, or interpersonal skills without giving brief, specific examples to demonstrate. You may be well-organized, an excellent communicator, and very adaptable, but you need to "show not tell."

### Examples:

**Before:** Excellent oral communication skills **After:** Welcomed 600 students and their parents to campus during New Student Orientation.

**Before:** Ability to work in a team **After:** Member of varsity soccer team since sophomore year.

**Before:** Strong interpersonal skills **After:** Two years of volunteer work helping crime victims understand their rights.

Take a look at the list of top attributes and skills and write a statement that demonstrates that you have these qualities.

*Guide provided courtesy of the National Association of Colleges and Employers.*

