

# Writing Your Résumé

## First Impressions

A potential employer's first impression of you is your cover letter, also known as a letter of introduction or letter of interest. Your letter introduces you and your résumé. The stark reality is that your résumé may never be read without its being accompanied by a professional cover letter. If the administrator does not feel you are a good fit after reading your cover letter, your résumé likely will not get a first look. Without a stellar cover letter (letter of introduction), you might never receive a call or email. Just remember:

- The purpose of a cover letter is to get your résumé read.
- The purpose of a résumé is to get an interview.
- The purpose of an interview is to sell yourself and your qualifications and show that you are a good fit for the job.

A quick look at your résumé should answer: Do you enjoy students? Can you teach so that students learn? How will you relate to students, parents, and other teachers? Can you implement new standards? How will you score and improve on evaluation frameworks? How well do you understand the educational process? Before you can write your letter, you need a top-notch résumé.

## Basic Components of a Résumé

The Basic Components of Every Résumé

- **Professional Profile:** 1-3 sentences telling how you can use your experience and training in *their* setting
- **Experience and Accomplishments:** employers, dates of employment, job titles, what you accomplished, including exact numbers if available – language can be found in the InTASC standards; also list extracurricular activities and accomplishments like heading up a *Literacy Alive!* project or being an officer for your KDP chapter or tutoring
- **Skills and Capabilities:** your learned skills and natural capabilities – see list
- **Education:** schools, degrees with dates, honors, majors, certifications as they appear on your certificate with dates, dissertation topic

Some of the elements of a résumé that will help you get an interview include:

- A professional profile that matches you to their school or district and highlights your abilities and desires;
- Action verbs and phrases that make you sound like a doer and an achiever;
- Specific numbers and details that add credibility to your accomplishments;

- Bullets to help the reader see your most outstanding achievements immediately;
- White space to focus the reader’s attention; and
- Various situations or jobs involving children the age you want to teach.

Three things résumés need are **keywords** in the first 1/3 of the page, a clear **professional profile**, and power-packed, meaningful **action words**. Use the Questionnaire for Preparing a Résumé to start gathering the needed information if you don’t already have it written down. Answer each of the questions specifically! Action words, lists of skills, and help in creating a personal professional profile can be found in the Questionnaire for Preparing a Résumé.

### Choose—and Repeat—Your Keywords

The keywords are the exact words in the description of the job or the ad. They are also the words that will be searched when you upload your résumé in a computer search. Today most positions are applied for through the internet, and the information from your résumé will be captured by the company’s software or in Monster.com or Careerbuilder.com. Then employers, or their Human Resources staff, will type keywords into the software to find “matches.” If they type “Pre-K Teacher,” but your résumé says “Preschool Teacher,” your résumé will not appear for them. Therefore, if there is more than one way to say something, use all words or phrases in different areas of the résumé. Keywords are pulled from your address (city), personal profile, and experience and accomplishments.

### Formats for Résumés

There are three major formats for a résumé. The **CHRONOLOGICAL** format lists every job you have held with the present or most recent at the top and then the next most recent and so forth with the last one being the longest ago. List only those that impact the position for which you are applying, but do not leave gaps in your employment history. This format should include (in this order): Professional Profile, Experience and Accomplishments, Skills, and Education. If you’ve recently completed a degree, move Education before Experience and Accomplishments. If you’ve recently completed training or a job that gives you special skills you want to use in the new job, move it before the Experience and Accomplishments. This is the best format if your experience and education have proceeded in a steady, straight-line progression—always moving to more of the same type of education and/or to a better job in the same line of work—and for new college graduates. This format is not good for people with gaps in their employment (like staying home to raise children) or for career changers. It also may not be the best if you are applying for an administrative position or college faculty position.

The **FUNCTIONAL** format is best for those who are changing careers, re-entering the job market after not being employed for a while, or jumping to a different industry or back into teaching. It also works well for someone whose skills and accomplishments are more important than his or her career history. It may be the best for someone applying for an administrator position like

vice principal who needs to showcase training taken at different times or a variety of leadership positions over time. It can work for someone applying for a college faculty position. In the FUNCTIONAL format, you emphasize the ways your skills, capabilities, and experiences will apply to your new job. The parts of this résumé are (in order): Professional Profile, Skills/Capabilities, Experience and Accomplishments, and Education.

The **PERFORMANCE** format is a pumped up version of the Functional résumé format. It's designed for someone with an extensive list of skills, qualifications, and accomplishments or whose career may not have proceeded in a linear fashion. (This person might have had an odd setback or worked in more than one industry or be less specialized.) This is often the best one for a person applying for an administrator position or a college faculty position. The parts of this format are (in order): Professional Profile, Education, Qualifications, Skills, Accomplishments, Employment History, and Optional Sections. This type of résumé will often be 2-3 pages. The Optional Sections can be many pages since more than one optional section may be included and some can be lengthy, like a portfolio of his or her work or a Curriculum Vitae listing all published works and presentations.

### **What Not to Do on Your Résumé**

Never use more than two (2) fonts on a résumé. Use sans serif (like Arial or Verdana) only for headings. Use serif (like Times New Roman or Courier or Cambria) for the body. The point size should be 11 or 12. A Chronological or Functional résumé should not be more than one page front and back. If printed and mailed, always print your résumé on high quality résumé paper and mail it in the envelope that is designed to go with such paper.

Things you should NEVER put on your résumé (or talk about at your interview):

- Salary expectations or salary history;
- Personal data like age, marital status, health, number of children, or social security number
- Hobbies or personal interests unless they apply to the job in some way (like for sponsoring a club or coaching a sport) or if the position description for which you are applying calls for a well-rounded person;
- Cutesy gimmicks such as graphics or colored font;
- Your picture – unless it is requested; or
- Reasons for leaving any previous job or position.