

Why Customize?

- 1.) **The Rise of the Robots.** Otherwise known as algorithms, or Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS), there are over 200 different versions out there and the list just keeps growing. It's how employers are coping with the huge number of applications submitted online. ATS often sorts the resumes first, and then throws out over 70% of the applications before humans start reviewing them. And since robots don't read cover letters, you need to tailor your resume to make it through this system.
- 2.) **The first read-through of a resume by human eyes is often about 2-10 seconds.** Those humans are only looking for the directly relevant material. If they can't find it quickly (even if it's there), they will throw your resume out.

THE BASICS

Format

- 1.) **DO NOT USE ANY KIND OF RESUME TEMPLATE.** They contain hidden formatting that makes some ATS unable to read the content. They also make you look lazy to humans who read a lot of resumes. Resume samples are fine; just make your own new Word doc.
- 2.) Don't use headers or footers; no columns or italics; no lines, underlines or borders. Utilize the default settings in Word for margins and bullets, etc. Don't waste time trying to make our resume pretty or creative, that's not the point of this document.
- 3.) Your name should be at the top on a line by itself. No Jr., or Ph.D., or part of an address on the same line.
- 4.) Don't put dates to the left in the experience sections. Start the entry with either the title or the company.

Content

- 1.) **KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE. SPEAK TO YOUR AUDIENCE.** There is no such thing as a 'general resume.' There is a 'memory dump' resume that can be accessed remotely, that you can keep adding to so you don't have to remember the details anew each time.
- 2.) **Read the job ad** (internship ad, grant application, grad school website, etc.). **Read it again, in depth** (most people barely glance at it). Highlight keywords. Replace your own language with those keywords. Notice the order of requirements in the Qualifications section. The order of your resume headings should follow the order of their requirements (if they list education first, you put education at the top of your resume).

THAT'S THE BASICS. But that's a lot. It does take time, but not hearing back from employers gets old quickly.

Some Finer Points...

- All entries under a heading are in reverse-chronological order (most recent → older → oldest).
- Change the title of the headings to put the most audience-relevant skills, experiences, and credentials near the beginning (Relevant Experience, Teaching Experience, Research Experience, Restaurant Experience, etc.).
- Every entry in an experience section must have at least your job title, company, location and dates.
- Start descriptions with active verbs (use their verbs). Don't use pronouns (I, them, their, etc.) or articles (a, an, the) so you create a consistent language humans can read quickly.
- Use as many numbers as possible (Supervised group of 13 children, Managed budget of \$15,000).
- Verb tenses: if currently holding a position, use present tense (i.e. "collaborate," not "collaborating." Otherwise use past tense ("collaborated").
- UMass is a nickname; write out "University of Massachusetts Amherst" every time.
- Include GPA if 3.0 or higher; if the GPA is not on the resume, employers will assume it is below a 3.0.