

# resume content & resume design

## BASIC CONTENT CATEGORIES

**note: you might not include all these categories, and you might also condense some of them (e.g., “Activities and Awards”); note also that you might not include the categories in this particular order**

- name, address, phone number(s), email address, web address/URL
- career objectives—short-term and long-term
- competencies and skills—carefully categorized: for example, communication, hardware/software, programming languages/code, management, research, writing, etc.
- education—names of colleges/universities attended, dates of graduation, relevant and related courses (if applicable), academic honors (e.g., deans list, scholarships)
- experience—all relevant and related jobs and duties; tasks performed and work produced in crisp, bulleted list with items prefaced by action verbs
- activities—volunteer work, membership in professional organizations or societies, participation on panels or presentation at workshops
- honors and awards—nonacademic, including sports-related, organizational, as a volunteer, etc.
- references—include if required; if not required, note “available upon request”
- x never include personal information—for example, age, race, etc.
- x never include organizational affiliation—for example, social group, church affiliation, fraternity or sorority affiliation—*unless* you hold or have held a leadership or volunteer position in the organization
- x most resumes today do *not* include hobbies

## KEY CONTENT CONSIDERATIONS

- use strong verbs—use present-tense verbs for work and activities that are still ongoing (i.e., that you are still doing); use past-tense verbs for work and activities that have an end date (i.e., that you are done with); a few good example active verbs

accomplished achieved acted advised aided arranged assisted  clarified collaborated communicated coordinated  decided delivered demonstrated determined developed documented drafted	earned established evaluated examined explained  facilitated finalized formed  guided handled helped  identified illustrated implemented improved increased integrated	launched learned located  maintained managed monitored  observed obtained opened operated organized  participated performed planned prepared presented produced	recommended reorganized reported represented researched  scheduled searched simplified strengthened  tested trained tutored  updated used volunteered worked wrote
---	---	--	---

- use parallel structure throughout

NOT PARALLEL	PARALLEL
<p><b>DEP Solutions, Okemos, MI</b> 01/2006–Present <i>User Experience Intern</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>coordinate</b> team responsible for conducting user tests</li> <li>• <b>developed</b> documentation for interactive components for two software products</li> <li>• <b>implementing</b> design standards and best practices (both company-focused and industry-standard)</li> </ul>	<p><b>DEP Solutions, Okemos, MI</b> 01/2006–Present <i>User Experience Intern</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>coordinate</b> team responsible for conducting user tests</li> <li>• <b>develop</b> documentation for interactive components for two software products</li> <li>• <b>implement</b> design standards and best practices (both company-focused and industry-standard)</li> </ul>

NOT PARALLEL	PARALLEL
<p><b>ACTIVITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writers' Bloc at MSU, Communities and Cultures Representative (Spring 2006–Spring 2007)</li> <li>• August 2005–Present, Member of KidLit, the Children's Literature Club of MSU</li> <li>• Volunteered at the Reach High! Youth Camp, Summers 2002, 2003, 2004</li> </ul>	<p><b>ACTIVITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Member</b>, KidLit, the Children's Literature Club of MSU (Summer 2005–Present)</li> <li>• <b>Representative</b>, Communities and Cultures, Writers' Bloc at MSU (Spring 2006–Spring 2007)</li> <li>• <b>Volunteer</b>, Reach High! Youth Camp (Summers 2002, 2003, 2004)</li> </ul>

- use consistent and correct punctuation

INCONSISTENT	CONSISTENT
<p><b>Michigan State University Press Journals Division</b> <i>Editorial Intern, Editing and Publishing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• performed tasks across publication processes</li> <li>• <b>F</b>ormatted original manuscripts, prepared author queries, copyedited and proofread manuscripts.</li> <li>• researched and selected cover art for the journal <i>Obscure Academic Stuff</i>, Volumes 12–13</li> <li>• authored documents including contracts, memos, and faxes</li> </ul>	<p><b>Michigan State University Press Journals Division</b> <i>Editorial Intern, Editing and Publishing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• performed tasks across publication processes</li> <li>• formatted original manuscripts, prepared author queries, copyedited, and proofread manuscripts</li> <li>• researched and selected cover art for the journal <i>Obscure Academic Stuff</i>, Volumes 12–13</li> <li>• authored documents including contracts, memos, and faxes</li> </ul>

- order your content REVERSE CHRONOLOGICAL (from your most current position or activity to your oldest activity)
- order your bullet points for individual entries from the MOST IMPORTANT task, skill, etc. (the first bullet in the list) to the least important or less obviously relevant task, skill, etc. (the last bullet in the list)

## GENERAL DESIGN/FORMAT CONSIDERATIONS

- keep structure consistent and logical throughout (e.g., chronology, emphasis, format)
- aim for one page or no more than two pages; include a header including with your last name if your resume is more than one page
- x don't overuse formatting or special options (e.g., use stylized bullets sparingly)
- x ALL UPPER CASE is difficult to read, *italics in long chunks of text* is also difficult to read—use these sparingly
- x underlining obscures the letters of text that descend (e.g., g, p, y) and should not be used
- to highlight important information, *italicize it*, **boldface it**, or increase its font size
- use appropriate fonts and font sizes (10 point is the most commonly used because it is easy to read, but doesn't take up too much space; know, though, that 10 point Times New Roman is smaller and a bit harder to read, especially onscreen, than 10 point Arial)
- in print documents, serif fonts (e.g., Times) are typically easier to read than sans serif fonts (e.g., Arial); use no more than two font faces in one document (it's preferable to blend a serif with a sans serif font, as opposed to blending two of the same type)
- laser print on quality bond paper; use a heavy weight paper