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UNITE THE WORLD WITH AFRICA FOUNDATION, INC.

RESUME WRITING

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HOW TO CREATE A RESUME AND COVER LETTER



RESUMES

- A resume is a brief, informative summary of your abilities, education and experience. It should highlight your strongest assets and skills relevant to the job for which you are applying, and differentiate you from other candidates seeking similar positions. Although it alone will not get you a job or internship, a good resume is an important element toward obtaining an interview.

- Tailor your resume to the type of position you are seeking. This does not mean that all of your experience must relate directly, but your resume should reflect the kind of skills the employer would value.

RESUME LANGUAGE TIPS

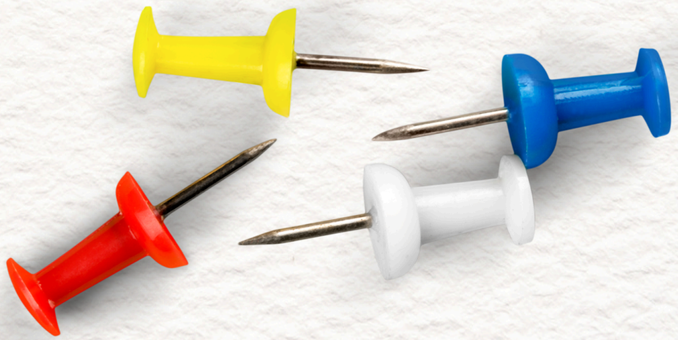
A resume language should be:

- Specific rather than general.
- Active rather than passive
- Expressive not impressive
- Focused on quality and quantifying results. Forgo flowery language as resume readers will be people who scan quickly looking for key words and points.





THE DOS AND DONTS OF RESUME WRITING







WHAT TO DO

PERSONALIZE YOUR RESUME FOR EACH POSITION YOU APPLY FOR.

Your resume should demonstrate you have the specific set of skills, experience, and accomplishments necessary to do the specific job you are applying for. Make it easy for the hiring manager to see why you're the right fit.

INCLUDE CONTACT INFO.

Include your name, email address, phone number, address (or just city), LinkedIn URL and personal website, if you have one.

INCLUDE SOFT SKILLS.

Make sure each bullet point describes a skill the employer is looking for, then use facts and figures to show(not tell) just what a "team leader" or " effective communicator" you are. (E.g. "Developed and independently initiated new mentorship program to alleviate high turnover of new staff members, resulting in the matching of 23 mentor- mentee pairs and a significant reduction in staff turnover.")

WHAT TO DO

USE PROPER ENGLISH.

Using unnecessarily big words doesn't make you sound more intelligent and capable. Not only are employers totally aware of what you are trying (and failing) to do but resume speak can obscure your real experience.

So instead of writing "utilized innovative social media technique to boost readership and engagement among core demographic." write "posted on Twitter three times a day and brought in more than 1,000 new followers in three month."

INCLUDE PERSONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

If you have done something cool in your personal life that either shows off your soft skills or engages your technical skills in a new way, include it. E.g. Maybe you have run marathons. That demonstrates an adventurous spirit, a strong work ethic, and a desire to challenge yourself. Or perhaps you have won some tournaments. This shows you're a quick thinker and good with numbers.



WHAT NOT TO DO

DON’T PANIC IF YOU HAVE NO RELEVANT EXPERIENCE.

Whether you’re fresh out of school or college or switching to a brand-new industry, you can help make up for any lack of relevant work experience by listing your transferable skills, related side projects, and relevant coursework.



DON’T INCLUDE OBVIOUS SKILLS.

Because everyone assumes you know how to use Microsoft Word and the Internet. Use your valuable resume space to highlight skills that actually make you stand out.

DON’T USE CLICHÉS OR JARGON.

Employers are really, really tired of seeing descriptions like hard worker or team player on resumes. Also be careful about any industry or role-specific jargon.

WHAT NOT TO DO

DON’T SEND YOUR RESUME AS A WORD DOCUMENT.

Sending your resume off as a .doc file will most likely result in all of this careful formatting getting messed up when the recruiter opens the file. Save your final version as a PDF to make sure everything stays just as it is. Also make sure to proofread before sending as PDF.

DON’T USE MORE THAN 2 FONTS.

It is best to stick to one basic font. Unless you are a designer, it’s easy to choose fonts that clash or a re distracting.

DON’T SPEND ALL YOUR TIME ON THE DESIGN.

While your resume look nice is important, employers say that job seekers spend far too much time worrying about it (that is, unless you’re working in a design field). Focus on the content, make sure the right information is highlighted, and just make sure it looks nice enough to make the information easy to digest.



COVER LETTERS

Your cover letter is a writing sample and an important part of the screening process. By putting your best foot forward, you can increase your chances of securing the opportunity to interview.

A response-producing cover letter must highlight your skills or experiences that are most applicable to the job or industry and be tailored to the specific organization to which you are applying.



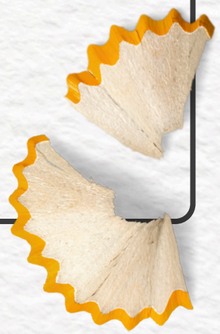
GENERAL RULES ON COVER LETTERS

- Address your letters to a specific person if you can.
- Tailor your letters to specific situations or organizations by doing research.
- Keep letters concise and factual and no more than a single page. Avoid flowery language.
- Give examples that support your skills and qualifications.
- Put yourself in the reader's shoes. What can you write that will convince the reader that you are ready and able to do the job?
- Don't overuse the pronoun "I".
- Remember that this is a marketing tool. Use lots of action words.
- Have an advisor or mentor provide edits and feedback whenever possible.
- When converting the file to a .pdf, check that your formatting translates correctly.
- Reference skills or experiences from the job description and draw connections to your credentials.
- Make sure your resume and cover letter are prepared with the same font type and size.

ACTION VERBS FOR YOUR RESUME

To demonstrate leadership . . .

- Accomplished
- Achieved
- Administered
- Analysed
- Assigned
- Contracted
- Coordinated
- Developed
- Delegated
- Directed
- Planned
- Predicted
- Produced
- Proved
- Recomended
- Reorganized
- Reviewed
- Scheduled
- Spearhead
- Stengthenged
- Executed
- Handled
- Headed
- Impacted
- Improved
- Led
- Mastered
- Organized
- Oversaw
- Evaluated



ACTION VERBS FOR YOUR RESUME

To demonstrate communication . . .

- Addressed
- Directed
- Lectured
- Promoted
- Spoke
- Arbitrated
- Documented
- Mediated
- Publicized
- Rewrote
- Suggested
- Arranged
- Edited
- Moderated
- Reconciled
- Synthesized
- Collaborated
- Formulated
- Negotiated
- Wrote
- Recruited
- Translated
- Convinced
- Influenced
- Persuaded
- Reported
- Verbalized
- Developed
- Interpreted
- Presented

ACTION VERBS FOR YOUR RESUME

To demonstrate technical . . .

- Assembled
- Engineered
- Overhauled
- Built
- Fabricated
- Optimized
- Programmed
- Calculated
- Installed
- Remodeled
- Computed
- Upgraded
- Maintained
- Repaired
- Designed
- Operated
- Solved
- Devised

ACTION VERBS FOR YOUR RESUME

To demonstrate creativity . . .

- Acted
- Customized
- Founded
- Invented
- Revised
- Composed
- Designed
- Illustrated
- Redesigned
- Originated
- Revitalized
- Conceived
- Developed
- Initiated
- Performed
- Shaped
- Conceptualized
- Introduced
- Directed
- Instituted
- Planned
- Visualized
- Created
- Established
- Integrated
- Published
- Customized
- Fashioned

ACTION VERBS FOR YOUR RESUME

To demonstrate assistance/participation . . .

- Assessed
- Diagnosed
- Guided
- Rehabilitated
- Assisted
- Educated
- Motivated
- Enhanced
- Participated
- Served
- Coached
- Expedited
- Proposed
- Supported
- Counseled
- Facilitated
- Provided
- Demonstrated
- Familiarized
- Referred
- Represented
- Clarified

SCENARIOS







SCENARIO #1

Sarah is a recent college graduate with a degree in Business Administration. She is applying for a marketing associate position at a well-known company. While she has some internship experience in social media management, she worries that her resume lacks strong industry experience. Sarah has also participated in a leadership program, managed a personal blog with a growing audience, and volunteered as an event organizer for a nonprofit.
Sarah has drafted a resume, but it contains general descriptions, lacks quantifiable achievements, and is not tailored to the specific job description. She also wrote a cover letter, but she is unsure if it effectively highlights her skills and experience.





DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How can Sarah tailor her resume to the marketing associate position?

2. What specific action verbs should Sarah use to make her resume more compelling?

3. How can Sarah quantify her achievements from her internship and personal blog?

4. What are common resume mistakes Sarah should avoid?

5. Should Sarah include her volunteer experience, and if so, how should she frame it?

SCENARIO #2

Emily is a college student studying Computer Science. She wants to secure a summer internship at a tech company but has limited professional experience. She has completed some personal coding projects and is an active member of the university's coding club.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How should Emily format her resume given her limited work experience?
- Should she include personal projects, and how should she present them?
- What are the best ways to highlight technical skills in a resume?
- How can she effectively describe her extracurricular activities to align with employer interests?
- What should Emily prioritize in her cover letter?
- How can Emily make her resume stand out among other student applicants?





SCENARIO #3

Juma Mwanga is a seasoned marketing professional based in Dar es Salaam who has chosen to use a third-person narrative style on his resume. Although most resumes in Tanzania are written in an implied first-person voice, John believes that a third-person approach can lend his document a formal, objective tone—especially useful when applying to senior roles or consulting positions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why do you think Juma chose a third-person narrative for his resume instead of the more common first-person style?
- How can Juma ensure that his resume remains personable and relatable even when written in the third person?
- Is it right to use third party language in creating resume?

SCENARIO #4

Nia is an ambitious job seeker in Tanzania trying to differentiate herself within a competitive job market. She wants to ensure her resume stands out by highlighting her achievements, using strong action verbs, and tailoring it for each job application. Although she has some work experience, Nia is uncertain about how to structure her resume. She is wondering whether she should include details about her volunteer work and personal projects? How much should she quantify her achievements? Should she mention her hobbies to show her personality?



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How important is it to get external feedback (from peers or career advisors) on your resume? Why?
- How do you think Mia can ensure her resume effectively represents her skills and experiences?
- Why is it important to tailor your resume for each job application?

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THANK YOU

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