

**BUILD A**

**RESUME**



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## Tailor Your Resume for a Specific Job

Excited about a job opening? Before you apply, we'll help you tailor your resume to showcase the skills they're searching for.

## Resume Overview

Let's get started on your resume! If you're here, we're assuming that you're either starting from scratch on a resume or seriously overhauling your old one. If you're looking for the section on tailoring your existing resume for a specific job, move ahead to page 7.



## What a Resume Is and Isn't

Your resume's most important job is to get you in the door for an interview. That means it should give employers an overview of your work history and make it very clear how to contact you if they want to. Your resume is NOT responsible for listing all of your experience ever. Ideally, you'll tailor your resume for every job you apply for ([more on that here](#)), which means you'll swap content in and out depending on the needs of the job. You don't need to go back more than 10-15 years on your resume. If you have work experience before that, it's probably okay to leave it off.

## We're going to make a resume in three steps:



### PART 1: DRAFT IT

Making a rough draft "bank" of all the information you might ever need on your resume.



### PART 2: FORMAT IT

Making a formatted version of your resume that you'll eventually send to employers. Depending on the job you're applying for, you'll swap bullet points in and out from your bank.



### PART 3: TAILOR IT

We'll walk you through tailoring your resume for a specific job you want to apply to. Skip to this section if you already have a resume you are happy with.



## PART 1: Drafting Your Resume Bank

We're going to start by drafting a resume bank. This means that your job for this section is to write down as much information as possible. We'll be selective later about what actually goes into the final resume, and it will depend on the job you're applying for. Start thinking about, and writing down, your...





# The Header

Let's start with the easy stuff. At the top of your resume, like a headline, you need to tell employers who you are and how to get in touch with you. Don't worry about formatting for now, we'll do that next. For now, you're in draft mode. Your only job at this point is to get words on the page— no need to make it sound fancy or look pretty.

## STEP 1: Open up a blank document and copy and paste the following bullet points:

- Your name:
- Your phone number:
- Your email address\*:
- Your LinkedIn URL, if you have one (if not, no worries):

\*Word to the Wise: make sure your email address sounds relatively professional and is one you check often. This is probably how a hiring manager will get in touch with you first. If you need to create a new email address just for the job search, go for it!

# Education

## STEP 2: Copy and paste the following bullet points into your document:

- Where was the last place you went to school?
- Did you earn a degree?
  - If yes, what kind of degree?
  - What was your major and minor?
  - If not, don't worry! You can just list the name of the school. If you know how many credit hours you had, list those too.

Again, don't worry about making it sound fancy! And don't stress about where this should go on your actual resume (at the bottom, at the top, etc). Formatting comes later!

You'll want to answer those questions for every place you went to school after high school. You likely don't need to include high school, unless you don't have any education after high school, which is also ok!

You may notice that we didn't ask you when you went to school. You're welcome to include that if you want to, but you don't have to. Hiring managers won't require it, and some people think that including these dates promotes age discrimination.

## My Resume Bank

### Header

My Name  
123-456-6789  
[Myemail@gmail.com](mailto:Myemail@gmail.com)  
[linkedin.com/myname](https://www.linkedin.com/myname)

### Education

My College  
My Degree  
My Major  
My Minor

### Work Experience

- *Company A*
- May 2023
- My Job Title at Company A
- Sentences about tasks I did at Company A
- More tasks I did at Company A
- Even more tasks I did at Company A
  
- *Company B*
- January 2020
- My Job Title at Company B
- Sentences about the tasks I did at Company B
- Even more tasks I did at Company B
  
- *Company C*
- September 2017
- My Job Title at Company C
- Sentences about the tasks I did at Company C
- Even more tasks I did at Company C

### My Achievements

- *Achievement 1*
- May 2022
- Sentences about this achievement

## Work Experience

Okay, this is the tricky part. Once again, let us remind you that **you are writing a draft**. Does this need to sound fancy or use big buzzwords? Eventually, maybe! But right now, definitely not. Your only job is to write down exactly what you did at every job you can think of, as concretely as possible. If it helps, imagine that you're describing the job to a friend. We'll go back in and make it sound fancy later. Write down **as much information as possible**. Remember, this isn't your final resume! You'll pull content from this bank for your final formatted resume. If you write down ten bullet points for each job in this bank, that's great! When you apply for a job, you might go down the list and pull the five most relevant. But for now, you just want to get them all on the page so you have options to choose from.

### **STEP 3: Copy and paste the following bullet points into your document:**

- Where was the last place you worked?
- When did you work there?
- What was your job title?
- What did you do there on an average day? List them in bullet points!
  - Examples: "Helped customers," "kept track of inventory," "met with other small businesses to plan events." Remember, your job at this point is to get it alllllll written down, not to make it sound cool.
- Are there any parts of your job that you can quantify? List them in bullet points!
  - Examples: if you managed people, how many people did you manage? If your work led to an increase in sales, how much of an increase?
  - These numbers aren't necessary, but they're cool if you can think of any! And they help employers get a sense of scale for your job.
- Are there any special achievements that you want to highlight? List them in bullet points!
  - Examples: Did you design a system that's still in use? Did you build a partnership that went on to really help your old workplace? Anything you're especially proud of, throw it in there!

Go through those same bullet points for each job. This can be an incredibly time-consuming and difficult process! Please don't try to do it all in one sitting, and if you do, bring snacks. This might be a great time to phone a friend and have them help you. Sometimes it's a lot easier to talk out loud to a friend about what you did at a job and have them write it down for you than it is to write it down yourself.

## Work Experience: Revamped and Reloaded

The moment you've all been waiting for! It's time for some **BUZZWORDS**, my friend! Now is the time to go back and edit those bullet points that you so diligently drafted in the last step. Get ready: you're about to make your work experience sound amazing. But before we begin, let's get some common misconceptions out of the way.



### **What if my work experience wasn't that amazing? I don't want to oversell myself!**

I guarantee you that your work experience is cooler than you think it is. And we're going to let you in on a secret: pretty much everyone feels like they're overselling themselves when it comes to applying for jobs. It's called imposter syndrome, and it sucks. The good news is that you're not alone! The bad news is that, for now at least, this is probably something you're going to push through rather than fix.

### **Do I need to use super fancy words like "utilize" and "stakeholders"?**

Yes and no. On the one hand— yeah, you should use strong verbs to start each bullet point on your resume. But if you don't know what a word means, or it just really doesn't feel like you, don't use it. Your resume's main job is to be clear about what you've done. If you read a sentence and don't know what the heck it means, chances are a hiring manager won't either.

### **What about Applicant Tracking Systems?**

If you haven't already heard of them, Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) are software programs that screen resumes for certain qualifications and buzzwords. Only resumes that meet the ATS requirements make it through to an actual human. If you're applying through the Career Connector, you don't have to worry about those. If you're applying more generally, you might— and that's where tailoring your resume comes in. More on that later!



## Down to Business

### STEP 4: Go through each bullet point you drafted. Rewrite it a little so that it:

- Starts with a verb and says clearly and specifically what you did.
  - Here is a link with some [example verbs](#), but you can use ones that aren't on this list!
- Includes one or two of the following specific details: Who did you do it with? What kind of stuff were you taking into consideration while you were doing it? Why did you do it? What was the result?
  - For example, if you've worked as a teacher, maybe your bullet points were: lesson planning, taught stuff, evaluated students. You might revise it to:
    - Designed lesson plans based on state standards and student learning needs
    - Delivered content via lecture, labs, and written materials to cater to different learning styles
    - Assessed student comprehension after each lesson and evaluated assessment data to plan future lessons

In all of the above examples, we see what specifically you did in green and then a specific detail about who/what/when/where/why you did it in blue.

Again, this process is hard and takes time! If you're struggling with a specific bullet point, leave it and come back to it. You may revise these slightly anyway when you're tailoring your resume for a job, so they don't have to be perfect!

## Heck Yeah! You Did It!

Congratulations! You have a resume bank. This was the hardest part— now you're basically copying and pasting from this into your formatted resume.

Proceed to the next section to begin formatting your resume. Don't worry, it's all smooth sailing from here. We just need to organize your information!

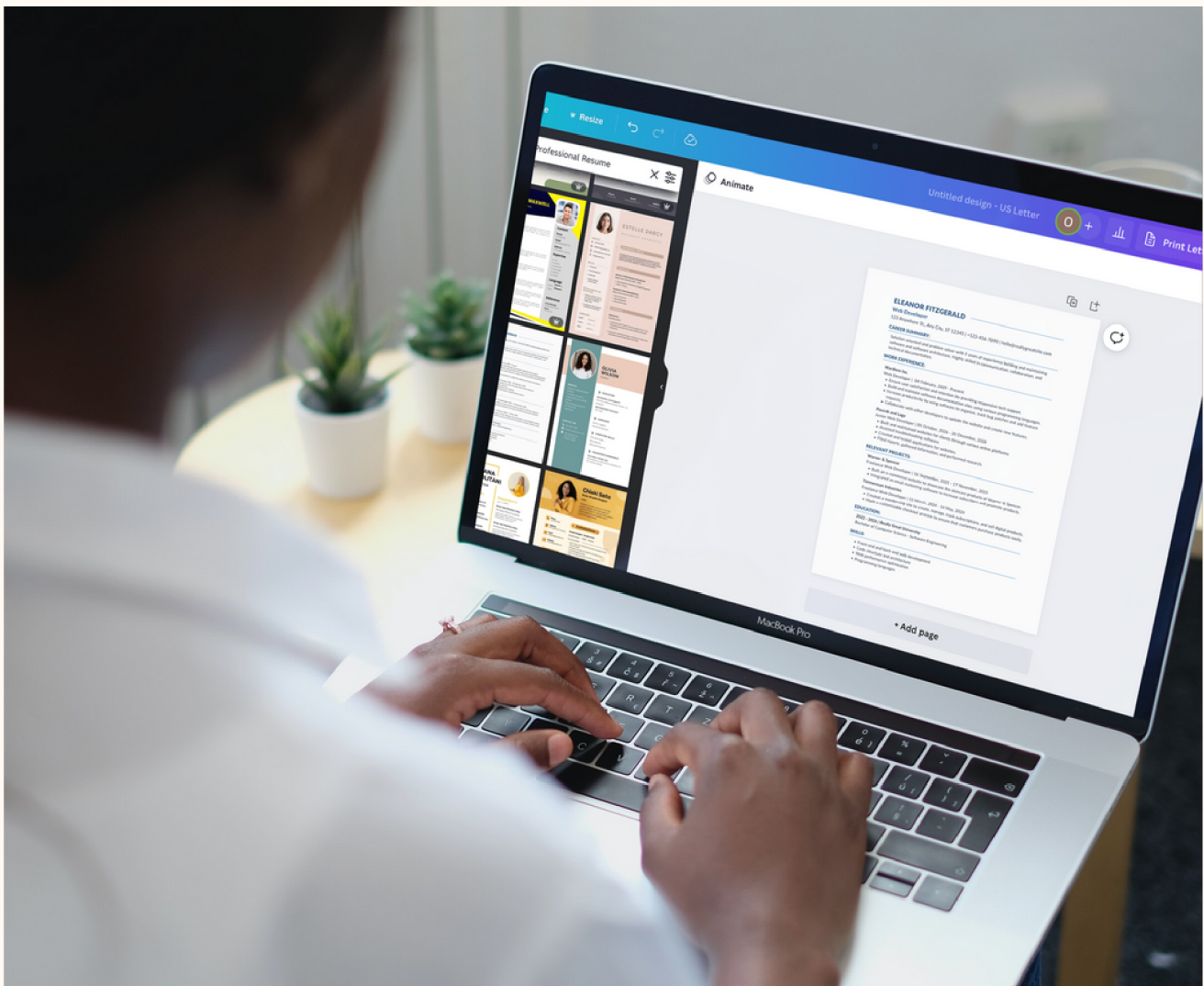


## PART 2: Formatting Your Resume

**STEP 1: Decide how and where to format your resume. We recommend a free online graphic design program called Canva.**

[Click here](#) to watch a brief video tutorial on how to use Canva.

1. Make a free account on canva
2. On the side bar, click “templates”
3. Under category, click “business”
4. Click “Resume” to view resume templates
5. Choose a template. Remember that simple is better, and you can modify it however you want. We like simple templates like [this one](#), [this one](#), or [this one](#)



# Customizing Your Template

## STEP 2: Start copying and pasting information from the resume bank into your template.

As a rule of thumb, use the following order:

1. Name and contact info at the top.
2. Work experience should be listed in chronological order, from most recent to least recent
  - a. Each job should probably have no more than five or six bullet points, unless you worked there for a long time. For now, just pick the four to six most important bullet points. You'll swap them out later when you tailor your resume for whatever job you're applying for.
3. Education should probably be at the bottom of your resume or on a sidebar, unless you're a recent graduate and you don't have much work experience yet.

Keep in mind:

- If you're using a template with a big header, you can almost always make the header smaller to give yourself more room.
- A lot of these resume templates include headshots. **Remove the headshot!** You don't need it— your experience will speak for itself! (And lots of applicant tracking systems will actually automatically reject resumes with headshots to prevent hiring bias.)
- Similarly, a lot of these resumes include sections like “skills” and “personal profile.” If you really like these sections, keep them! But for most folks, we'd recommend losing them. You'll represent your skills in your work experience – no need to take up the extra space and list them twice.
- Go to two pages, but only if you absolutely need to. If you can get your resume onto one page, that's ideal! If you feel like you're seriously short changing yourself on one page, two is totally fine. Any more than two is probably too much.

## STEP 3: Once you've got a version you're happy with in Canva, save and bookmark it!

You don't need to download it right now – you'll modify it before you apply for a job anyway.





## PART 3: Tailor Your Resume



In our experience, this is the number one thing you can do to increase your chances of getting an interview. Even if you're applying for similar jobs within the same industry, every job is a little different and will require different skills and experience. Your resume's job is to show a hiring manager why you'd be great for their specific job. Not why you're great in general, or why you're a great fit for a generic job in your field – they want to know why you'd be the right fit for them.

That means that, ideally, you should never submit the same resume twice. We get it: you're busy. This takes time. Jobs don't stay open forever. Sometimes you just have to submit a generic resume and move on. But if you're excited about a job, and if you have the time, this step can drastically increase your chances of hearing back.

### **STEP 1: Follow the instructions listed below:**

1. Copy and paste job description into a document.
2. Read through the entire job description and highlight anything that you've done before
3. Go back through the bullet points you highlighted and underline any keywords (i.e, specific tools or methods, specific verbs, etc.).

**STEP 2: If you have a resume you made yourself, proceed to [Page 12](#). If you made a resume with us using the resume bank and Canva, jump to [Page 13](#).**

### **STEP 3: If you have a resume that you made yourself, use the instructions below to finish tailoring your resume.**

This section is relevant to you if you've made your own resume and just need to tailor it to a specific job. If you're reading this section, we're assuming that you have a resume that you're pretty happy with. If not, check out our "how to write a resume" section!

1. Go through that resume and make sure that it reflects the things you highlighted in the job description.
2. Modify the relevant bullet points slightly, using similar language/key words from the job description so that the connection is clear.
  - a. Note: Don't copy and paste exact language from the job description!
3. Look back at what you highlighted on the job description. If your relevant experience isn't on your resume, add it!
4. If you run out of space on your resume, or if you're over five bullets, delete some of the bullet points that are less relevant.
5. When you're done, save the file as a PDF titled "Your Name Company Name Resume." You're all done!

**GREAT JOB, YOUR TAILORED RESUME IS COMPLETE!**



**STEP 3: If you made a resume with us using the resume bank and Canva, use the instructions below to finish tailoring your resume:**

This section assumes that you've gone through our "how to write a resume" section.

1. Open your Canva resume.
2. Click FILE, scroll down and click MAKE A COPY.
3. Rename the copy of your resume to read "Your Name Company Name Resume". For example: Mia Spurlock The Pawffice of Barkington Resume
4. Once you've created a new copy of your resume, close the original resume so you don't accidentally edit that one.
5. Go through your resume bank and look for bullet points that match the things you've highlighted from the job description. Copy them into Canva and modify them, using similar language/key words from the job description so that the connection is clear. Note: Don't copy and paste exact language from the job description!
6. If you don't have enough space on your resume, or if you're over five bullets, look for bullet points that aren't as relevant and delete them for this application.
7. Once you're done, download it as a PDF! You're ready to submit!

**GREAT JOB, YOUR TAILORED RESUME IS COMPLETE!**