**Writing Your First Resume**

By Louise Fletcher

**Creating Your First Resume**

If you are worried about writing a resume, or struggling with the task, you're not alone! But creating your first resume doesn't have to be an intimidating task if you understand the goal of your resume - to generate interest and interviews. It doesn’t have to get you a job and it doesn’t need to cover your life history. It simply has to pique the interest of the reader and answer the only question he cares about: will this candidate add value to my company?

If your resume answers this question effectively - by clearly communicating your strengths - employers will want to meet with you. It really is that simple.

**Research Job Postings**

Of course, in order to demonstrate your value, you need to know what potential employers are looking for. Start by researching job postings that interest you. Look for frequently-mentioned requirements. Ask experienced professionals what they consider important when they make hiring decisions. Read professional publications and websites related to your target industry. Immerse yourself in your chosen field and learn as much as you can. Once you know what is important to employers you can target your resume to address those issues.

**What to Include on Your First Resume**

Many students and recent graduates worry that they don’t have enough experience to create a compelling resume. Don’t be concerned. Once you start to really think about your background, you’ll be surprised at what you have to boast about. The content of your resume will be determined by your own unique experiences, skills and background but ­ as a general guideline ­ you should include:

* Positive personal characteristics
* Technical and computer skills
* Coursework relevant to your desired profession
* Educational accomplishments (include your GPA if it’s 3.0 or higher)
* Skills and experience gained during internships or summer jobs
* Other related accomplishments (design awards, recognition, winning competitions etc.)
* Work History (include unpaid work if it relates to your target positions)

The key is to emphasize those things that demonstrate your value and to leave out those things that don’t. For example, if you are looking to work in Information Systems, your ability to program in C++ will be important - but the fact that you have won awards for water skiing won't! Don't include hobbies unless they directly relate to your goal.

**Resume Design**

Many people are surprised to learn that resume design is just as important as content, but it’s absolutely true. Research suggests that your resume has less than 20 seconds to make the right impression, so it must be eye-catching and easy to read. To get ideas for layout and structure, search through different resume templates found on the internet. All contain examples of professionally-written resumes and will help you decide on the best approach.

As you work on your resume, keep your reader in mind and remember his/her basic concern: will this candidate add value? If you answer effectively by highlighting relevant skills, personal characteristics and accomplishments, your resume will open the right doors and generate interviews.

**Resume Writing Tips and Advice**

* [Resume Tips for High School Students](http://jobsearch.about.com/od/college/a/high-school-resume-examples.htm)
* [Resume Examples for Teens](http://jobsearch.about.com/od/sampleresume1/a/high-school-resume-examples.htm)