The College Admissions Resume

Like most resume writing, writing a college resume can seem much harder than it really is. The most important and most difficult part of writing a resume is getting started. Yes, overcoming procrastination when writing a resume is really the hardest part. Since a resume is not only used for applying for internships and jobs, it is imperative to get one going because you will most likely need it when applying to colleges as well.

**Sections to Include in a College Application Résumé:**

* Heading (includes personal information – name, address, phone number, & email address)
* Academic Profile (high school and dates attended)
* Summer Programs Attended
* Honors / Awards / AP / IB courses
* SAT/ACT scores / class ranking
* Co-Curricular Activities (school clubs, music, sports, etc.)
* Extracurricular Activities (out-of-school groups)
* Work and Volunteer Experience
* Hobbies / Interests / Travel
* Skills (Language/Computer/etc.)

**College Application Résumé Tips:**

1. Each experience should be included in reverse chronological order beginning with the most recent.
2. It’s important to mention any unique experiences that will help you stand apart from other candidates.
3. Be consistent when writing your resume – abbreviations, periods, capitalization, dates.
4. Provide any individuals who have agreed to write a recommendation with a copy of your resume.
5. Have one or more people look over your resume prior to sending it out.
6. Use action verbs whenever possible.
7. Last but not least - Proofread, proofread, proofread!

**What does the Admissions Department look for in a college resume?**

1. Although you may not have worked many jobs, the college resume speaks volumes about who you are by making you put together something that shows your personal skills, interests, and values and forces you to put into words what you have done so far.
2. You may include coursework that you think is noteworthy that would be a good addition to the overall document. If you participated in any college level courses, this is a good thing to include as well.
3. What about activities? Say that you are an athlete or possess music or art capabilities, the college wants to know that too. Maybe you did a lot of volunteer work or fundraising during high school which may also be noteworthy for them to understand your personal values and what kinds of things are important to you.
4. When applying to college a one page resume should suffice. If you have an enormous amount of writing or lab experience, put that on there too. If it does go to two pages, make sure the experiences are worth including and try to make the second page as complete as possible as well. Also, be sure to include your name and page 2 at the top of the second page. That way if the pages should get separated the admissions department won’t face the frustration of reviewing an incomplete resume in the process.
5. In addition to having a lot of important information to include on your resume, it’s essential that you make sure that it is well-written. A resume that is written poorly may be rejected no matter how accomplished you have been so far.
6. The best scenario is to have a well-written resume that shows accomplishments and involvement in a number of activities.

**Tips for writing an effective resume:**

**Include any and all information that would make you stand out in the college admissions process.**

1. On your resume it’s important to include whatever information you have that would be valuable for the Admissions Department to know. If you have received any awards or graduated #3 in your class, be sure to include that information on your resume. Now this may seem like a no-brainer, but I can’t tell you how many resumes where this has been left out. Modesty on a resume can be a killer. In real life it may suit you well but when trying to earn the respect and attention in the college admissions process, it’s essential that this information be included.
2. Although it’s important to include your accomplishments it’s just as important not to embellish on them to a point where they are unbelievable and not totally true. Embellishing on your resume can be just as damaging as not including important information that makes you stand out.

**Use bullet points to describe your experiences:**

* When describing your experiences on your resume, it’s most effective to include them using bullet points. This makes it easy for the committee to review and makes it more effective to make your experiences stand out.

*Important tips for using bullet points:*

* Begin each bullet point with an action verb.

 Write each bullet point using specific concise language omitting articles such as an, and, and the whenever possible.

 Include your skills and accomplishments in your bullet points rather than focusing on your responsibilities.

**Example:**

* Researched, wrote, and presented laboratory findings of water quality using samples from Hovey Pond in Chelsea, Massachusetts.

**Include essential information that will make a positive impression on the committee:**

Since you only have one page (two at the most) to write down all of your experiences, it is crucial that you include information that shows excellent grades, awards, leadership activities, presentation skills, as well as individual creative capabilities such as music, art, writing, and/or excellent communication and interpersonal skills. It is these types of attributes that will make you stand out from the other candidates.

**Examples:**

**Education:**

GPA: 96/100  
Graduate third in class of 425 students  
Attended Harvard University ‘s Summer Pre-Law Program

**Experiences:**

The experiences below provide information that highlights writing, leadership, and research experiences that could be very useful in college.

* Wrote 5 page essay to be published in high school art magazine.
* Led 45 students in high school’s weekend leadership development program.
* Participated in scientific laboratory study to establish the survival instincts of rats.

**Co-Curricular Activities:**

* Treasurer, Student Government Association, Grades 9-12
* Flute Player, St. Georges High School, Laramie, WY, Grades 9 - 12
* Captain, Soccer Team, St. George’s High School, Laramie, WY, Fall 20XX – Spring 20XX
* Player, Soccer Team, St. George’s High School, Laramie, WY, Fall 20XX – Present
* Organizer, St. George’s Marathan Dance, Laramie, WY, Spring 20XX
* Helped raise over $20,000 for scholarships to be given to underprivileged children in the school

**Volunteer:**

Fundraiser, Make A Wish Foundation, 20XX  
Volunteer, Domestic Violence Shelter , 20XX