



II – Formats

With so many different employment experiences possible, there is no single resume template that works for everyone. There are, however, generally accepted ways to arrange the information on your resume to present it in the best light.

The two styles that are discussed most often are the chronological format and the functional format. Both have their own advantages and disadvantages when it comes to presenting your information. A third style, the combination, is a compromise between the two and has become more popular in recent years. CareerBuilder gives you an overview of each format to help you decide which is best for you.

Chronological

This is the most common resume style, and the one that employers prefer. In the chronological format, the emphasis is placed on employment experience. The applicant's job history is presented in reverse chronological order, with the most recent jobs placed at the top of the list.

The chronological resume is good if your recent job experience is relevant to the job you are applying for, and you want to stay on a similar career path. Potential employers can easily see what you have done, and

how you have progressed and garnered experience.

Despite its popularity, there are some reasons why the chronological format may not be right for you. If you are just entering the workforce from school, a resume like this may actually highlight your lack of experience. You may have held jobs recently that have no relevance to the position you're applying for. If you are re-entering the workforce after a substantial absence, this resume will highlight your recent inactivity. Any large gaps in your recent employment history will be evident, and you may be asked about them.

Likewise, a job history full of briefly held jobs might lead a potential employer to question your ability to remain employed. A long employment history at a single company will reveal your age to some extent, something you may not feel comfortable doing.

Functional

In this non-linear format, your skills and achievements are emphasized. Your employment history is summarized or avoided all together. Your skills and previous relevant experience (including educational experience) are presented at the beginning

of your resume. They are organized so the employer can see how your skills relate to the job position you are applying for. (In a chronological resume, employers may simply be looking at the jobs you have held previously to see if you have the experience they are looking for.) It may take more effort to write a functional resume, but you are free to highlight your talents instead of your recent job experience. The functional resume can be particularly effective if you've held a number of similar positions; it will allow you to highlight your skills rather than itemize what might be a redundant looking job history.

But the functional resume may also raise concerns in some employers' minds as to whether you are withholding information. This doesn't mean that functional resumes are ignored or that they can't be effective. But an employer looking for a clear job history may be put off by the functional format, especially if you've used a functional resume to hide your inexperience or a long gap in your employment history.

If you don't have any problems with the reverse chronological format, use it instead. If you still like the idea of the Functional format, you may want to make it more acceptable by combining it with the chronological format



Resume Handbook

Handbook courtesy of the CareerBuilder Network

II – Formats, continued

and creating a combination resume.

Combination

The combination resume is simply a functional resume with a brief employment history added. Skills

and accomplishments are still listed first; the employment history follows. You need to reveal where you worked, when you worked, and what your job position was. This will allay an employer's worries about your experience, and it still allows

you to emphasize your talents and how you would use them for the job you are applying for. While most employers might still prefer a chronological resume, this is a good alternative to the functional resume.

II – Activity

1. If you are preparing a resume to send to potential employers, decide which format (chronological, functional or combination) you want to use. If you would like to include a resume of your accomplishments when applying to college, decide what is most impressive about your background – work or volunteer experiences, academic achievements, awards/honors or extra-curricular activities. Then, arrange your categories from strongest to weakest.

2. Now, it's time to get an idea of what a resume should look like.

Your counselor or teacher might have examples of strong resumes. Or, you can search under "sample resumes" on the Internet. Note: Some sample resumes may begin with "objective" statements; many experts agree, however, that these are unnecessary. Any objective you have should be stated in a cover letter, not on your resume.

3. Write a sentence or two about each of the activities/honors/etc. that you have listed under your headings. Remember that the purpose of each sentence is to advertise your strengths and selling points,

and to tell readers how your experiences have helped you develop character and hone valuable skills. Don't use the first person ("I"). Do begin each sentence with an action verb or adverb, e.g. "spearheaded" or "effectively solved."

4. The first draft of your resume is done. Now, it's time to fine-tune it. Please continue on to the next activity.