

Resume 101 Guide

A strong resume is the first step to landing an interview. Consider these questions as you get started:

What types of positions am I targeting? Who is my audience?

What skills and experience do I need to highlight that reflects the needs of the organization?

What experiences can I quantify that showcase my work results and accomplishments?

You may find it helpful to write down a list of all your experiences (paid, unpaid, volunteer and other leadership activities), and include details about your responsibilities and work results. From there, you can select the most appropriate content to include in your resume draft.

Click the links below to get started.

Each section below contains specific guidance for setting up a resume.

[FORMATTING](#)

[STRUCTURE](#)

[CONTENT](#)

Most undergraduate resumes are organized by specific sections, making important information easier to find.

[RESUME SECTIONS](#)

[FINALIZE YOUR RESUME](#)

Here are a few resources to help you create your own personalized document.

[ACTION VERBS](#)

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FORMATTING

Keep it Concise

- Most undergraduate resumes should be limited to 1 page
- Page margins can be adjusted but should not be smaller than .5

Keep it Simple

- Use standard fonts that are easy to read (i.e. Times, Verdana and Arial)
- Avoid using photographs, certain graphics and other images
- Font size should be between 10pt and 12pt.

Keep it Consistent

- Use consistent formatting with your sections, dates, and locations throughout your entire resume
- If you use bullets, use them consistently

STRUCTURE

Keep it Focused

- Target your resume for the position you are interested in and use similar words from the description
- Consider what the employer is looking for and how you fit their requirements

Use Bullets to Draw more Attention

- Do not write in sentence or paragraph format, which is harder to read
- Make sure all bullets are lined up properly

Your Order should be Reverse-Chronological

- List most recent education and experience first, and most dated last
- If multiple activities have the same date, place the most relevant first

The Reader's Eye will Automatically Drift to the Left of the Page

- Put the most important information here (i.e. organization and position)
- Dates and locations are less important and can be placed on the right

CONTENT

Use Action Verbs to Detail your Experiences
(see list of included verbs)

- Strong verbs produce more excitement and gain more attention
- Avoid overusing the same verb so as not to sound repetitive
- Avoid using weaker verbs (i.e. assist, support, help, etc.)
- Do not start bullets with “responsibilities include” or “duties include”

Keep the Language Active and Concise

- Minimize articles and conjunctions – “fluff” words (i.e. the, and, etc.)

Use Accomplishments or Work Results, Not just Job Duties and Descriptions

- Use active verbs to describe your role and contributions rather than listing tasks
- Ask yourself, “What was the result of the work I did?” or “If I had not done this, what could have happened?”
- Use STAR method to write your bullets (situation, tasks, actions, result)
- Show, don’t tell your soft skills

Quantify your Experience

- When possible, quantify experiences to help the reader understand the magnitude of your position and impact
- Example: Managed a team of 30 employees tasked with servicing 150+ customers per day.
- Example: Developed an inventory tracking system in Excel, reducing costs by 30% and increasing revenue by \$50K

RESUME SECTIONS

Your Name and Contact Information

- Use bold font with your name and place at the top of your resume (center works best)
- Include your email address and phone number (be sure that you're able to receive messages)
- A mailing address is not required but a local address may be helpful if applying out of state.

Profile vs. Objective (optional)

- Profile:
 - An introductory section used to briefly highlight your qualifications
 - Bullet point 3-5 short action statements
 - Example: "Enthusiastic self-starter with experience in student leadership"
- Objective:
 - A short statement identifying your objective as an applicant
 - Example: "To support management in an administrative role where my clerical, customer service and organizational skills will be of value."

Education

- List your most recent educational experience first
- Include University name, location, dates, degree, and major
- If you have a minor, emphasis, thesis or area of focus, list that as well
- If space allows, list coursework relevant to the position of interest
- If your GPA is above a 3.2, include this (optional, unless requested)
- Include academic awards, scholarships, or honors
- Study abroad should be listed as a separate educational experience
- High school is not necessary (especially for upperclassmen)

Experience

- List your most recent work or volunteer experience first
- Include the name of the organization, location, dates and your position title
- Include your accomplishments and activities related to each position written as bullet points

Skills

- List computer skills, technical skills, language skills or other skills as they relate to your position of interest

Leadership/Community Involvement

- Include leadership roles with organizations on/off campus, volunteer experience, or other types of service opportunities
- List the most recent activities first with position title, organization name and dates or participation

FINALIZE YOUR RESUME

- Have another person read over your resume – a friend, faculty member, TA or the Career Center
- Make sure to proofread several times, continually editing to avoid errors or misspelled words
- Recruiters spend about 10-15 seconds per resume – consider what your resume says at a glance
- Create your account with [VMock](#) using your Pepperdine email
- Upload your resume to VMock to receive instant feedback about how to improve your document
- Review and implement targeted suggestions to improve your resume score
- A score of 85 will automatically get approved for Handshake

PEPPERDINE | SEAVER COLLEGE
Career Center

Administrative/ Organizational	Creative	Communication	Teaching	Technical	Helping	Management	Research	Financial	More Verbs
addressed	acted	aided	adapted	analyzed	advised	achieved	calculated	adjusted	augmented
arranged	abstracted	addressed	advised	assembled	aided	administered	cataloged	administered	adopted
assembled	adapted	advised	clarified	built	arbitrated	allocated	clarified	aided	affirmed
cataloged	applied	answered	coached	calculated	assessed	analyzed	collected	allocated	aligned
centralized	authored	appraised	communicated	coded	assisted	applied	computed	analyzed	amended
classified	Composed	arbitrated	coordinated	computed	attended	approved	conceived	appraised	assured
collaborated	conceived	arranged	defined	constructed	brought	assessed	correlated	audited	attached
collected	conceptualized	authored	developed	designed	cared	assigned	critiqued	balanced	authorized
collated	created	briefed	enabled	devised	carried out	anticipated	delivered	budgeted	awarded
compiled	customized	clarified	encouraged	disassembled	clarified	attained	detected	calculated	batched
dispatched	designed	communicated	evaluated	engineered	coached	chaired	diagnosed	compared	boosted
distributed	developed	conducted	explained	fabricated	coordinated	conceived	discovered	computed	broadened
documented	devised	consulted	facilitated	inspected	counseled	consolidated	evaluated	developed	cancelled
entered	directed	contributed	guided	installed	delivered	consulted	examined	estimated	catered
executed	Established	conveyed	incorporated	made	demonstrated	contracted	experimented	figured	charted
filed	evaluated	cooperated	informed	maintained	diagnosed	coordinated	extracted	financed	circulated
generated	fashioned	coordinated	initiated	measured	educated	delegated	extrapolated	forecasted	cleared
implemented	founded	corresponded	inspired	multiplied	emphasized	determined	gathered	itemized	closed
input	formed	counseled	instructed	operated	encouraged	developed	identified	maintained	controlled
inspected	formulated	debated	lectured	overhauled	enlisted	directed	inspected	managed	corrected
inventoried	generated	defined	mentored	programmed	ensured	enforced	interpreted	marketed	decreased
memorized	illustrated	demonstrated	motivated	reconstructed	expedited	established	interviewed	planned	divided
monitored	imagined	developed	observed	remodeled	facilitated	evaluated	investigated	prepared	earned
operated	improvised	directed	persuaded	repaired	familiarized	executed	monitored	projected	eliminated
organized	innovated	discussed	presented	solved	fostered	expanded	observed	reconciled	exceeded
prepared	instituted	disseminated	set goals	trained	furnished	expedited	organized	researched	excelled
prioritized	integrated	drafted	stimulated	troubleshooter	guided	formed	proved	tracked	exercised
processed	initiated	edited	taught	upgraded	helped	governed	researched		expanded
purchased	introduced	educated	trained		inspired	hired	reported		flagged
recorded	invented	enlisted	tutored		instilled	implemented	reviewed		followed up
resolved	marketed	explained	updated		maintained	improved	searched		gained
restored	originated	expressed			mentored	incorporated	studied		increased
retrieved	painted	formulated			modified	initiated	summarized		issued
requisitioned	performed	influenced			referred	instituted	surveyed		located
scanned	planned	informed			related	launched	systemized		mastered
screened	presented	inspired			performed	lead	tested		modernized
spearheaded	problem	interpreted			provided	managed			notified
specified	produced	interviewed			referred	motivated			obtained
submitted	refined	lectured			rehabilitated	negotiated			performed
supported	rewrote	mediated			represented	organized			proposed
systematized	revitalized	merged			routed	outlined			raised
tabulated	shaped	moderated			secured	oversaw			rated
transcribed	sketched	motivated			served	perceived			received
transformed	synthesized	negotiated			supported	planned			rectified
utilized	updated	participated			upheld	prioritized			requested
validated	visualized	persuaded				produced			reduced
		promoted				recommended			revamped
		publicized				reconciled			saved
		published				recruited			sourced
		recruited				reported			
		reported				represented			
		researched				resolved			
		revised				reviewed			
		summarized				scheduled			
		suggested				screened			
		translated				selected			
		verbalized				spearheaded			
		wrote				sponsored			
						staged			
						strengthened			
						supervised			

STAR METHOD: For Behavioral Interview Questions

The best approach to writing your resume is to apply the STAR method to construct bullet points. This method allows you to think about the various aspects of each experience and write an action-oriented statement to help you describe your experiences and accomplishments. An accomplishment-based resume, on the other hand, gives an employer more accurate information by describing how you made a difference in that role, as opposed to anyone else who might have held that position. Moreover, it tells an employer that you are somebody who gets things done and therefore, would potentially bring value to the job or internship.

One of the most effective ways for you to communicate your accomplishments is by using a brief narrative structure that includes a targeted beginning, a short explanatory middle, and a strong ending that illustrates clearly what you can do for an employer.

Situation

- Write about a specific situation in your work that presented a challenge to you.
- Provide precise details including who you were working with, what the challenge was, and where you were working so the hiring manager has a complete picture.
- You should also include information about your roles and responsibilities.
- Be careful not to overwhelm the reader with details – you don't want them to get lost or lose interest in your story.

Tasks you were given

- Explain your role in the situation.
- What goal were you working toward? What were your duties?
- This part of the STAR method helps the hiring manager understand your specific role in the challenge.

Action

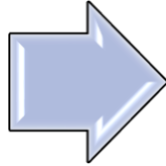
- Explain the actions you took to solve the problem.
- What special skills or knowledge did you bring to the situation? How did you use them?
- Remember, your resume should describe the actions you took, not the actions of your supervisor or your team.

Result

- Include a description of the direct results of your actions.
- How did your actions help to resolve the situation? Did you save the organization money? Did you improve a process? How many clients or customers benefited from what you did?
- Use numbers whenever possible to quantify your results and make your impact clearer to hiring managers.

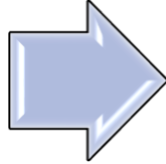
Examples:

“Increased client base and advised clients on mergers.”



“Advised clients on mergers and acquisitions of business segments ranging from \$500K to \$1.2M resulting in 95% customer satisfaction and 9 new client referrals.”

“Developed a marketing plan that redesigned a corporate concept, adding 5 new stores nationwide.”



“Developed a corporate strategy, reformulating the business concept of a one-dimensional specialist to a provider of full customer service, growing from three to eight stores in 18 months.”

Develop 3-4 STAR examples for a position you’ve held. These statements can also add value to your elevator pitch, cover letter, and interviews. Depending on your targeted position during your career search, you may want to revise these statements to make them more relevant.

SITUATION: (General context, where, when, who was involved, problem, etc.)

TASK: (One specific issue that was addressed)

ACTION: (What steps did you take to solve the problem?)

RESULT: (What was your end result?)

MEMORY JOGGERS

If you have trouble developing content for your bullet points, use the following memory jobbers to help you recall your accomplishments.

- Did you identify any problems or challenges?
- Did you resolve or minimize any problems?
- Did you introduce a technical innovation that was adopted?
- Did you create any original works: reports, brochures, newsletters, guides, manuals, proposals, contracts, etc.?
- Did you target a need for a product, service, plan, program, system, method, procedure, technique, etc.?
- Did you produce results or reports whose recommendations were well received by your team and whose suggestions were incorporated into their future planning?
- Did you reduce the liability for an organization by suggesting safety improvement, improved security, etc.?
- Did you develop or design a new program, plan, service, product, process, project, system method, strategy, etc.?
- Did you improve (redesign, streamline or reorganize), administer or implement any projects, plans, programs, processes, services, products, etc.?
- Did you improve employee relations or boost morale?
- Did you facilitate or improve communication among employees, with clients, or with the community?
- Did you train, present, or impart knowledge to management, staff, mentees, undergrads, or postbacs?
- Did you reduce costs, waste, time or effort?
- Did you collaborate/liaise with others?
- Were you a contributing team member?
- Did you formulate or participate in formulating any management decisions, policies, goals, etc.?
- Did you make any recommendations that saved money, made money, increased efficiency or productivity?
- Did you open or establish a new office, department branch, or facility?
- Did you improve quality or standards for hiring, products, or services?
- Did you utilize your communication skills with various audiences during poster presentations?
- Did you successfully collaborate on a group project?
- What did you do that was above and beyond my normal job duties?
- How did you stand out among other employees?
- Were you ever recognized by a supervisor for a job well done?
- Did you win any awards or accolades?
- Did you ever consistently meet or exceed goals or quotas?
- What made you really great at your job?
- What made you better than you peers?

FIRST YEAR RESUME SAMPLE

Michael Pepperdine

24255 Pacific Coast Highway #1000 | Malibu, CA 90263
(310) 506-4000 | Michael.pepperdine@pepperdine.edu

EDUCATION

Pepperdine University Malibu, CA August 2019 – Present
Major: Business Administration Expected April 2023

- **Activities:** Step Forward Day, Colleges Against Cancer

Santa Monica High School Santa Monica, CA August 2015 – May 2019

- **GPA** 3.8/4.0
- **Honors & Awards:** National Honor Society, AP Scholar Award, Scholar-Athlete Award
- **Activities:** Senior Class Ambassador (2013-2014), Tennis Team (2012-2014)

EXPERIENCE

Riviera Country Club Pacific Palisades, CA June – August 2019
Office Intern

- Managed member contact information on Excel spreadsheet to facilitate data retrieval
- Organized historical documents to improve organization's archival process
- Helped train new staff members and provided exceptional customer service to all patrons

YMCA Summer Camp Santa Monica, CA June – August 2018
Camp Counselor

- Prepared and led educational activities for group of 15 children, ages 8-12
- Collaborated with a team of 8 counselors to coordinate group activities
- Obtained certification in First Aid and CPR to provide support in emergency situations

Santa Monica Middle School Santa Monica, CA September 2017 – June 2018
Tutor

- Provided individual and group instruction to students in math, science, and writing
- Met weekly with teachers to define learning objectives and assess progress for each student
- Created original teaching strategies to improve students' performance

LEADERSHIP & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Member, Rotaract Club, Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA January 2019 – Present
Lead Coordinator, Meals on Wheels, Los Angeles, CA October 2017 – Present
Volunteer, Santa Monica Adult Day Center, Santa Monica, CA November 2015 – May 2019

SKILLS

Computer: Proficient in Mac/PC and Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint
Language: Spanish (Basic in reading, writing, and speaking)

TRADITIONAL RESUME SAMPLES

Roger Eager

24255 Pacific Coast Highway #1234 ♦ Malibu, CA 90263
(310) 506-4000 ♦ Roger.Eager@pepperdine.edu

EDUCATION

Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA

August 2016 – Present

B.A. in Communication, Minor in Spanish

Expected April 2020

- **Honors:** Dean's List (2017-Present), Golden Key Honor Society (2018-Present)
- **Activities:** New Student Orientation Leader (2017, 2019), Step Forward Volunteer Day (2016)
- **Relevant Coursework:** Public Speaking and Rhetorical Analysis, Communication Theory, Communication Ethics, Rhetorical Theory

Pepperdine University, Buenos Aires, Argentina

September 2019 – April 2020

- Will study language, history and culture and travel extensively throughout South America

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Pepperdine University Athletics Department, Malibu, CA

March 2019 – Present

Student Assistant

- Develop and implement a new procedure to compile and store faculty records
- Catalog over 400 student grades and transcripts in university archive
- Manage student grievances, coordinate travel managements, schedule staff meetings, and draft memos

Housing and Residence Life, Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA

August 2018 – June 2019

Resident Advisor

- Served as a student leader and mentor to 50 men in a residence hall
- Provided academic and social support to residents, demonstrating advanced skills in conflict resolution, mentoring, and peer counseling
- Organized group events to foster peer relationships and assist with successful college transition

Education Center, Malibu, CA

June 2017 – August 2018

Tutor

- Provided advanced academic support to 5 high school students studying intermediate Spanish
- Created innovative teaching strategies to facilitate students' motivation and academic performance
- Communicated regularly with students' parents and teachers to assess progress

Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf, Calabasas, CA

September 2016 – May 2017

Barista

- Provided high-quality service to over 200 customers daily in a fast-paced environment
- Trained and supervised employees on company policies and procedures
- Prepared beverages and maintained highest standards for safe and sanitary work environment

SKILLS

Computer: Thorough knowledge of Microsoft Word, Excel, Access, and PowerPoint

Language: Spanish (Fluent: reading, writing, speaking)

VMOCK SMART RESUME PLATFORM



As a Seaver College undergraduate student, you have access to [VMock](#), an artificial intelligence career prep platform. You can upload your resume, receive a score, and get instant feedback about how to improve your document.

Follow the steps below to get started with VMock!

1. Sign up for VMock using your Pepperdine email.
2. Upload your resume in PDF format. Get your score & instant feedback. Your resume will be scored on 3 principles: Impact, Presentation, and Competencies.
3. After your resume has been scored, click on the blue "Get Started Now" button.
4. Incorporate the feedback and re-upload. You may make changes and upload your resume up to 10 times in an effort to improve your score and refine your resume.
5. See your resume improve! Once your resume has scored at least 85, upload it to Handshake in order to apply for internships and job opportunities.

NOTE: You may re-upload your resume up to 10 times for further feedback. Remember that VMock does not replace coming into the Career Center for a resume review, but it does help you edit your resume to the point where it makes appointments more productive and meaningful.