



## Writing Resumes to Get Results ... and Playing Up Your JET Experience

(Resume writing portions adapted from NYU School of Law's Career Development Resources)

A resume serves many functions. In the most basic sense, a resume is a chronological record of the important educational and professional benchmarks in your adult life. It provides a snapshot of who you are, where you've been, and what you've accomplished along the way. If thoughtfully crafted, a resume is an effective marketing tool—offering insight into the relevant skills and knowledge you bring to a particular position, as well as demonstrating a lifetime pursuit of excellence and accomplishment. Most importantly, a resume must stimulate the interest of a prospective employer and motivate that employer to invite you for a face-to-face meeting.

### Self Assessment

The first step in creating an effective resume, then, is to determine what qualities employers are seeking in prospective employees. The key is to **identify the transferable skills** from your prior positions and experiences that will be of interest to a prospective employer, such as: communication skills, attention to detail, community organizing, and adaptability.

Take a moment to consider this list of qualities valued by many employers:

Ability to build networks	Leadership skills
Ability to get along with colleagues	Research, writing and analytical abilities
Ability to get along with and impress clients	Communication skills
Ability to manage complex tasks	Outgoing personality/professional appearance
Ability to solve problems creatively	Productivity/Ability to use organization's time and resources efficiently
Ability to work well under pressure	Willingness to put in long hours
Ability to deal with and manage people	Teamwork
Ability to inspire confidence	Determination/Commitment/Drive
Achievement in a related field	Public service/Community involvement
Good judgment and common sense	Agreement with the organization's lifestyle and philosophy

Or, make up your own list of qualities that are most relevant to the job you are seeking. For each of these qualities, note what specific experiences in your background have enabled you to develop and demonstrate these characteristics. Review your academic, professional, and extracurricular experiences very thoroughly, from your undergraduate years to the present. When evaluating your past experiences, ask yourself:

- What special skills or knowledge did you need to perform this task?
- What has been your biggest achievement in this area?
- What comments were made about your contributions in this area, by peers or managers?
- What different levels of people did you have to interact with to achieve your job tasks? How did you get the best out of your superiors? Co-workers? Subordinates?
- What aspects of your personality were brought into play when executing this duty?

For example, your strong leadership skills may have resulted from your tenure as president of a student group or from serving as captain of a sports team. Your ability to interact effectively with clients could result from meetings with parents or other teachers while on JET. Your discipline and endurance could be a result of your long-distance running, not to mention those 70-hour weeks as a line-cook at a busy restaurant. Draft your job descriptions such that you highlight these qualities. You may want to consider creating a few different versions of your resume, changing the language slightly to highlight specific skills targeting different employers.

## Wording Your Job Descriptions

Make every word count! Be specific with regard to your duties and tasks. Quantify experiences if possible. Focus on tasks that are most relevant/transferable to your target employers. Describe accomplishments, problems solved, and challenges overcome in addition to your basic functions. Begin your sentences with active verbs and focus on the specifics. Resist the temptation to fall into jargon and “filler” expressions that don’t add value to your job descriptions. Use action verbs and sentence fragments: “Developed strategy for... Analyzed... Independently organized... Conducted individual tutoring... Avoid using “Responsibilities included...” Only use “Assisted” when you actually assisted in something, if you had your own responsibilities, list them directly. To spark your creativity, consider the following action words:

Accomplished	Accounted for	Achieved	Acquired
Acted	Addressed	Administered	Advised
Advocated	Aided	Allocated	Analyzed
Applied	Ascertained	Appointed	Assessed
Assisted	Attained	Audited	Authored
Awarded	Briefed	Built	Calculated
Carried out	Chaired	Classified	Coached
Collaborated	Communicated	Competed	Compiled
Completed	Composed	Computed	Conceived
Concluded	Conducted	Constructed	Construed
Consulted	Contacted	Contributed	Convened
Coordinated	Corresponded	Counseled	Crafted
Created	Critiqued	Dealt with	Deciphered
Deduced	Defined	Delegated	Delivered
Demonstrated	Designed	Determined	Developed
Devised	Directed	Discerned	Discovered
Dispensed	Displayed	Distributed	Documented
Drafted	Edited	Educated	Encouraged
Established	Examined	Executed	Expanded
Generated	Formulated	Identified	Implemented
Initiated	Instigated	Interpreted	Intervened
Interviewed	Introduced	Investigated	Involved in
Joined	Judged	Launched	Learned
Lectured	Led	Located	Maintained
Managed	Marketed	Maximized	Mediated
Mentored	Monitored	Motivated	Negotiated
Observed	Operated	Organized	Oversaw
Participated	Performed	Persuaded	Planned
Prepared	Presented	Produced	Programmed
Probed	Promoted	Provided	Publicized
Published	Received	Recognized	Recommended
Reconciled	Recruited	Rectified	Reduced
Regulated	Rendered	Renovated	Reorganized
Reported	Represented	Researched	Resolved
Responded	Restored	Reviewed	Revised
Scheduled	Screened	Selected	Served
Shaped	Solicited	Solved	Sought
Spearheaded	Specified	Stimulated	Structured
Studied	Submitted	Succeeded	Supervised
Supported	Surveyed	Synthesized	Systematized
Targeted	Taught	Tested	Trained
Translated	Treated	Tutored	Undertook
Utilized	Verified	Volunteered	Wrote

### **Formatting Your Resume:**

Employers look for a clean resume that is well laid out and easy to read. Unless you have many years of professional experience, your resume **should fit to one page**. When evaluating the layout of your resume, make sure it looks balanced, without too much white space in any one area. Also be sure that it doesn't look too cramped. You should use a minimum font size of 10.5 (this handout is 11).

Things to include in a resume:

1. **Contact Information**  
Be sure to include an updated cell phone number and email address. Always use a professional email address (i.e. [yourname@yahoo.com](mailto:yourname@yahoo.com)) and make sure that your voicemail message is also professional.
2. **Objective & Summary of Qualifications (Optional)**  
What you are looking for? Why are you right for this position?
3. **Education**  
List your academic credentials in chronological order. Include honors and activities under each educational institution.
4. **Experience**  
Main Work, Other Work, International, Volunteer
5. **Skills/Technical Skills**  
Specialized computer skills, Language Skills
6. **Honors/Activities**  
Anything that sets you apart and shows a well-rounded candidate

### **Common Resume Formats:**

1) **Chronological: (Recommended)** The most traditional resume format, and still the standard in most industries. This resume presents your academic and professional experiences in chronological order with your most recent experiences first. If you have recently graduated from undergraduate or graduate school, the education section should be listed first to highlight your academic qualifications. Otherwise, list your professional experiences at the top of the resume, followed by education, skills, and activities. See attached sample for formatting.

2) **Functional:** Focuses more on your skills and less on particular experiences. Highlights accomplishments independently of employers.

3) **Combination:** Combines the two formats to highlight specific skills across a career, while also listing employment history.

### **The 30 Second Scan**

After your resume is drafted and formatted, give it a 30 second scan. Many employers won't spend more than 30 seconds reviewing your resume. Ask yourself:

- Does this look professional? Do my eyes flow from entry to entry easily?
- Are my most important experiences and attributed highlighted?
- Do my job descriptions "pop" with specific information about my skills and experiences?
- Have I listed all of my educational, professional, and community service experiences?
- Have I included all of my specialized skills?
- Are there any typos or grammatical errors?

## **Ideas for Describing JET Experience in Particular:**

(Thanks to JET Alum Victor Cabilla for compiling this list)

- English Teaching
  - Organized and implemented daily lessons for over 4,000 elementary and junior high school students.
  - Improved English Language proficiency of Japanese Junior High students by providing instruction as a native speaker, and developing curriculum for language lessons.
  - Provided independent classroom instruction, evaluated teaching materials, and monitored students' aptitude, ensuring the progress of each student.
  - Overcame linguistic and cultural barriers to quickly become an effective and productive member of the teaching staff at a Japanese High School.
  - Developed and implemented curriculum and teaching materials in conjunction with local Japanese English teachers for city's elementary and junior high schools.
  - Taught English to junior-high and high school students; conceived lesson plans, graded tests; organized and led field trips.
  - Responsible for the English language education of over 1000 junior high school students including classroom guidance and after-school tutoring, conducted training seminars for Japanese teachers, and led community-based English-speaking club.
  - Taught English conversation and writing to over 600 Japanese high school students.
  - Exhibited extreme flexibility and adaptability: over the course of one year, taught over 2500 students with 26 different teachers at 9 schools.
  - Over the duration of three years I instructed approximately 5,600 students ranging in age from 5 to 17 years old. Evaluated students' speaking, reading, writing, and listening abilities. Designed, planned, and implemented lesson plans and supported over 60 teachers from 10 schools. Motivated students to diligently study the English language and encouraged their interest in foreign cultures.
  - Expanded English education, arranged charities and coordinated international relations.
  - Organized and implemented daily lessons for over 4,000 elementary and junior high school students.
  - Taught English language and American culture at 7 different middle schools. Worked with over 40 teachers in promoting better educational experience for middle school students.
  - Coordinate school activities; Plan daily lessons; Direct oral communications program; Review lessons.
  - Selected by Japanese Ministry of Education and Ministry of Foreign Affairs to help promote foreign language education and grassroots internationalization in Japan; coordinated with Japanese teachers to plan, prepare and conduct 17 classes a week at 2 high schools.
  - Launched English Curriculum for Japanese high school students. Taught fourteen classes a week. Collaborated with Japanese English language teachers to develop lesson plans and organize school and local community events.
- Conference/Workshop
  - Led workshops for Japanese teachers on creating interactive, student-centered activities in order to accelerate students' English language acquisition.
  - Served as a moderator at the prefecture's Mid-Year Teaching Seminar workshop series in which Japanese teachers of English and native English speakers discussed ways to improve team-teaching.
  - Organized and developed presentations and workshops with international team of instructors for professional conventions on improving English oral communication.
  - Coordinated Midyear Conference for three prefectures by organizing seminars, guest speakers and entertainment; also developed and produced conference information guidebooks for participants.
  - Developed and taught seminar on cross-cultural communication for over 300 JET teachers.

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- Coordinated Midyear Conference for three prefectures by organizing seminars, guest speakers and entertainment; also developed and produced conference information guidebooks for participants.
- Other Activities/Achievements
  - Planned and conducted bilingual meetings to network with nine independent supervisors and 23 team members, requiring problem-solving, keen verbal and written communication skills, and cultural familiarity.
  - Interpreted for various organizations; assisted the Board of Education supervisor in the bilingual revision of JET contract; represented town in welcoming foreign visitors.
  - Selected by Board of Education to act as a judge for the annual province-wide English speech contest.
  - Was given spotlight article in local newspaper for my efforts at improving language education in the city.
  - Assisted in translating city hall materials, including travel brochures and letters, from Japanese to English.
  - Acted as a “cultural ambassador” which involved making presentations and serving as a general resource of English and American culture.
  - Solidified ability to work with others while gaining valuable insight into Japanese culture and language.
  - Wrote policy manual/city guidebook for foreign residents and successor.
  - Developed student-centered lessons and produced classroom materials; evaluated and tested 350 students per term.
  - Coordinated Midyear Conference for three prefectures by organizing seminars, guest speakers and entertainment; also developed and produced conference information guidebooks for participants.
  - Trained incoming English teachers on working within Japanese offices and classrooms.
  - Creating, designing and editing the bi-monthly school newsletter.
  - Organized social, sporting, and community-oriented events, volunteer activities, and fundraisers as president of prefecture’s AJET chapter.

## JANE JET ALUM

Address  
City, State Zip  
Phone  
email

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### EDUCATION

A GOOD UNIVERSITY, New York, NY May, 20\*\*

B.A. in XYZ, *magna cum laude*

**Honors:** List honors and scholarships here

**Activities:** List only the most relevant/prestigious activities here. List any leadership positions

### EXPERIENCE

NAME OF EMPLOYER, City, State, Country (if not US) August, 20\*\* - July, 20\*\*

*Title*

- List your job description in two or more bullet points. Focus on transferable skills and accomplishments.
- Start your job description with the most relevant aspects of your prior job.
- Quantify with numbers when possible; Be as specific with regard to your actual duties, skills, etc. as possible.
- Mention on-the-job awards or commendations, special training, etc.

NAME OF EMPLOYER, City, State, Country (if not US) August, 20\*\* - July, 20\*\*

*Title*

- List your job description in two or more bullet points. Focus on transferable skills and accomplishments.
- Start your job description with the most relevant aspects of your prior job.

NAME OF EMPLOYER, City, State, Country (if not US) August, 20\*\* - July, 20\*\*

*Title*

- List your job description in two or more bullet points. Focus on transferable skills and accomplishments.
- Start your job description with the most relevant aspects of your prior job.

### COMMUNITY SERVICE

NAME OF ORGANIZATION, City, State, Country (if not US) August, 20\*\* - July, 20\*\*

*Title* (if applicable)

- Description of service & leadership experience.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**Languages:** List languages you speak and level of proficiency

**Skills:** List any specialized skills and/or training here. Computer skills should only be listed if they are not common (use of Microsoft programs is assumed!). Mention any skills that are required by the position

**Interests:** You may wish to include unique hobbies and interests, which can be talking points in an interview.

# RESUME CHECKLIST

## **Overall Appearance:** Neat, consistent, perfect?

- \_\_\_ Limit resume to one page (unless you have significant experience).
- \_\_\_ Use consistent formatting and punctuation.
- \_\_\_ Proofread carefully. Correct spelling and typographical errors.
- \_\_\_ Margins: Margins should be the same on top, bottom, right, and left whenever possible.
- \_\_\_ Font: Use a professional font, such as **Times New Roman**. Avoid using **Courier**.
- \_\_\_ Typeface: Avoid using too much bold or too many italics; it is difficult to read and nothing stands out.

## **Marketing:** Do key qualifications stand out?

- \_\_\_ Education: If you are a recent graduate (either undergraduate or graduate level education) list your education first to highlight it. If you have significant work experience, list your experience first to demonstrate your transferrable skills.

**BEST UNIVERSITY**, Mytown, NY

B.A. in English, *magna cum laude*, May 20\*\*

**Honors**: Phi Beta Kappa, English Honors Society

**Activities**: President, Hayden Hall Residents' Association

- \_\_\_ Experience: Suggested format:

**NICHINAN TOWN OFFICE, JET PROGRAM**, Nichinan-cho, Tottori Prefecture, Japan

*Coordinator for International Relations*, August 20\*\* – July 20\*\*

Job description...

## **Relevance:** Has out-of-date and extraneous material been eliminated?

- \_\_\_ Place the most relevant information first. In your job descriptions, focus first on those substantive tasks requiring skills that the employer will most value. When listing Honors and Activities under each school, list first those that will be of most significance to the employer, such as scholarships, awards in your practice area or legal writing or moot court awards. If you have significant work experience, you may choose to cut your Honors and Activities completely.
- \_\_\_ Only list your GPA if it is exceptional and if you are a relatively recent graduate. For those with significant work experience, GPA may be less relevant.
- \_\_\_ Include CPA, Bar Admission, or other professional credentials that would be important to your target employers.
- \_\_\_ If your experience includes several positions that are not directly relevant, you may want to combine them in a more general fashion under the category of Additional Information. Example: Worked during the summers and the academic year while in college; positions included lifeguard, bartender, and office worker.

## **Specificity:** Do you avoid generalities? Do you emphasize specific skills and accomplishments?

- \_\_\_ Start each sentence in your job descriptions with a strong skill verb in the past tense. Use verbs that precisely describe what you did. Avoid vague verbs, such as handled, dealt with, worked on, and interacted.
- \_\_\_ Focus on specific information about your experience. Be specific about what you did with respect to projects or products. Quantify with numbers or percentages, where possible.
- \_\_\_ In describing all positions, focus on skills and accomplishments that the employers you are targeting will most value.
- \_\_\_ Use "assisted" only where it best describes what you did. Avoid "assisted" when you actually performed the task. For example, if you actually conducted research, there is no need to say that you assisted professors in research simply because professor was supervising your work product.