



Resume Writing Tips

- ✦ Use plain language. Write professionally and concisely.
- ✦ Eliminate acronyms whenever possible. When you must use them, spell them out the first time used and separate with parentheses, commas, or dashes.
- ✦ Since your space is limited, drop words that do not add value such as “responsible for,” “very” and “duties include.” Also, see how many times you can delete “the” without changing the meaning.
- ✦ Avoid using the same descriptor twice in the same paragraph, such as “manage,” “develop,” or “coordinate” and minimize repeating words. Use a thesaurus to maximize descriptors that will bring out skills.
- ✦ Start each sentence with an action verb, and not “I.” Use the personal pronoun “I” two times per page, to remind the reader that it is YOUR resume.
- ✦ Active voice is more powerful than passive voice.
- ✦ Use present tense for present work experience, past tense for previous work experience or for projects in the present work experience that have ended. Do not add “s” to your verbs, i.e. plans, manages, and leads, as this is writing in the third person. Write in the first person, without the use of “I.”
- ✦ Use ALL CAPS for official position titles. Also, this holds true for titles of roles in jobs, or unofficial, working job titles, such as PROJECT MANAGER, SENIOR STAFF ADVISOR, RECEPTIONIST, when you are describing these in your work experience summary.
- ✦ All caps can be used to identify major functional areas of work. Keep your paragraph length to eight to ten lines.
- ✦ Use more nouns. Nouns are searchable terms in most databases. If you can use “editor” rather than “responsible for compiling documents and preparing a publication,” you will be more successful.
- ✦ Include the proper names and generic descriptions of products, software, and equipment. It is difficult to know which words will be in a database. Write both to be sure.

KSAs in the resume? You will read some vacancy announcements that say you should include the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities in the resume. Use the OUTLINE FORMAT to cover your KSAs, using the keywords from the KSAs in the Outline headlines to bring attention to your KSAs.

Creating Your Basic Resume

You will need to create both an electronic and paper resume if you are applying for federal jobs. The content in each of these is the same, though the electronic version may be shorter in length than the paper version. To get started, we recommend that you first create a “basic resume” that you will tailor to develop your paper and electronic resumes for different vacancy announcements.

Complete these resume sections in the following order:

1. Format your name and address
2. Write your work experience
 - Create your Outline Format with Headlines
 - Fill in your duties, responsibilities, and projects
 - Highlight skills that support the announcement
 - Include recognition
3. Add your education and training
4. Include Additional Information
5. Write a profile or summary of skills statement in the Additional Information field

More information about each section is provided below.

Job Information and Personal Data

If you are writing a USAJOBS federal resume, your job information and personal data will be added into your Profile Statement. If you are writing a paper federal resume, put your personal compliance information for federal positions at the top of your resume.

Federal Job “Compliance” Information

Much of your compliance information is included in the USAJOBS profile set-up. Here are the typical personal compliance details that civil service human resources offices require:

- ★ Full name, mailing address (with ZIP Code), and day and evening phone numbers (with area code)
- ★ Social Security Number
- ★ Country of citizenship
- ★ Veterans’ preference
- ★ Reinstatement eligibility (If you have been laid off from a federal job, there could be special rules for reinstatement; you will need proof of your status.)
- ★ Geographic preferences
- ★ If you will accept positions that are Term, Temp, Part-time, or Full-time
- ★ Announcement number, title, and grade(s) of the job for which you are applying
- ★ Highest civilian grade held, job series, and dates