CREATING THE EFFECTIVE RESUME

What is a Resume? A resume is a one page summary of your skills, education, and experience. The resume acts much like an advertisement for a company trying to sell something. The resume is your advertisement. Just as a sneaker company spends countless hours (and millions of dollars) designing their latest advertising campaign, you too must spend a good deal of time creating, proofreading, editing, and **perfecting** your resume. A resume is one of the most important pieces of writing you will ever create. A solid resume is the key that will open the door to good jobs. Don't cheat yourself...work hard on it.

How long do employers typically look at a resume?   A. Less than 30 seconds
B. 3 Minutes
C. 1 Minute

If you answered "A", you are correct. Employers often receive hundreds of resumes for a single position. They do not have time to pour over every word on each one. This increases the importance of the smallest details.

What should be included in a resume? Not all resumes are the same, but there are some common elements that they all should include. The necessary elements are:

Heading - Your heading should include the essential personal information. Your formal name (not nickname) should appear at the top and it should stand out above all else on the paper. You want them to remember who you are in less than 30 seconds. Also include your address, phone number, and email address.

Objective - Employers often say this is the most important part of a resume. It is generally a one sentence explanation of the type of job you are seeking. Your objective should be fairly specific. If you are applying for different types of jobs, change your objective to match each type of job. If you are uncertain about the specific positions available, note your areas of interest.

Education - As students, this should be your next section of information. Be sure to list your attendance at the Eaton RESA Career Preparation Center. You do not need not to include information from junior high/middle school. You should specify the dates of attendance or graduation (or expected graduation). Some people include education-related honors in this section. If your education is particularly relevant to a job, you may want to include a section titled "Relevant Courses." In this category, you can list classes that might contribute to your employability.

Work Experience - In this section, you should include previous employers, their locations, your dates of employment, and your job title. You may have to create a job title if you did not have one. You should include at least two one-line descriptions of what your job duties and responsibilities were. You can not assume that the job title explains what you did to all readers. Use action verbs to start each of these descriptions. Do not use "I" in descriptions. Unpaid work experiences and regular volunteer work could also be listed in this section if you do not have any paid work experience.

Skills - Some people use this section to include special skills or talents that are not included elsewhere on your resume. Some possibilities include: specific computer skills, foreign language skills, career specific skills, machines/equipment that you can operate.

Activities and Accomplishments- Employers like to see people who have been involved in school or community activities. In this section, list special activities you participated in (prom committee) and organizations you joined (drama club, sports teams, Skills USA, BPA, NTHS, etc.). Include the years in which you participated. Also be sure to include any awards (attendance, academic, leadership, etc) or certifications (CPR/first aid, A+ certification, etc) that you have earned.

References – You should have at least 3 people who have observed your work habits and can speak about your character (employers, teachers, coaches, club leaders, etc.) Make sure you have asked their permission to include them as references. Only ask people who will speak well of you. Create a separate list of references including their names, addresses, employers, job titles, phone numbers, and email addresses. It is best to list work numbers since some people don't appreciate calls at home. Be sure to put the same header (containing your personal data) at the top of your reference page that you used at the top of your resume. Your resume and reference page are part of the same package of job pursuit materials that you will submit to an employer, so it is important that the formatting of these documents is consistent.

RESUME FORMATTING

How do I set up a resume? Your resume should be divided into distinct sections. The italicized words above are typical section headings. Do not label the heading section. Headings should stand out as boldfaced, larger text. Employers tend to have certain headings that interest them most. Make it easy for them to find them. Here are some suggested headers: Objective, Education, Work Experience, Skills, Activites and Accomplishments

Should items be arranged in any particular order? Yes! You want your resume to be coherently organized. There are two distinct types of resumes. Most young people utilize a Chronological Format. The chronological style is exactly what it sounds like: It follows your work history backward from your current job, listing employers, dates, and job responsibilities. This is the format that you would most likely use if you are new to the workforce and have limited experience. Frequent job changes and work instability show up dramatically with this format. For someone who has held many jobs, the Functional Format is more useful. A functional resume is created without employment dates or company names. This format concentrates on skills and responsibilities and is more likely to be used after you have developed your career skills and have accomplishments to your credit.

Should I place Education above Experience or vice versa? Most high school and college students include the Education section directly after the objective. However, if you have experience that relates directly to the job you are applying for, you could place the Experience section above Education.

How important is the format? The importance of the format lies in its consistency. There is no one best resume format. Remember to stick to one format. It shows off your organizational abilities.

Should I use complete sentences when describing jobs? Not usually. Use action phrases instead. Leave out unnecessary words. Try to match your skills and experience with the employer's needs

Do the looks of a resume matter? Absolutely! When sending a resume to an employer or college, don't skimp. Use white or off-white professional weight paper and black ink. Avoid using colored paper or fancy graphics in your resume unless the job you are applying for is in a career area that might stress this type of formatting (art, graphic design, advertising, etc.) Always print resumes using a quality laser printer.