

# Topic: Resume Writing

# Instructor Lesson Plan

Time Required: 2 hours

Instructors are encouraged to provide VR&E Service with appropriate comments on this lesson plan and the other training materials via the VR&E Comments Webform so that we can continually refine and improve our training.

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## ADVANCE PREPARATION

### Check Training Materials

**Instructor's Lesson Plan** (this document)—includes:

- Guide to presenting the topic (this comes in the form of an outline as well as script for you to read).
- Additional references on subject matter for you to review, as needed.

### Make Arrangements and Duplicate Materials

- Coordinate with the training site to duplicate the Trainee Handouts.
- Reserve the training room.
- Arrange for equipment such as flip charts, an overhead projector, and any other equipment (**as needed**).

## INSTRUCTOR'S PREPARATION

### Review Content and References

- Become familiar with all instructor and trainee training materials. It is recommended that you read this Instructor Lesson Plan and the corresponding PowerPoint slides at the same time so you can see how they fit together. Also at least glance over the Trainee Handouts just to become familiar with what type of content is contained therein.

### Review Types of Resumes

#### Chronological Resume

The chronological is the most common resume format. It lists your most recent job at the top of the page, then continues down to your earliest job. Chronological resumes can range from a simple career summary to a more elaborate description of work responsibilities. This format is effective when you have a continuous employment history and your past experience related directly to the positions for which you are applying.

Chronological is a good choice when:

- You've worked a while in your chosen field, and you want to call attention to your very stable work history.
- You want to call attention to consistent upward mobility and promotions in your career.
- You are applying for a job in a conservative field where a traditional format is expected.

- You think your next employer would be more comfortable with a traditional-looking resume.

If you choose a chronological resume, be sure you don't load it down with boring job duties starting off with a "responsibilities included"! Make sure, instead, that you show what you accomplished on each job and how your actions benefited your company. Focus particularly on activities that are similar to what you want to do in your new job, things you can get jazzed about when you discuss them in the job interview.

### **Functional Resume**

The functional resume highlights your skills and accomplishments rather than your work history. It lists things you're good at and things you've accomplished at the top of the page, then summarizes the jobs you've held at the end. The functional format is effective when you are switching fields or industries.

Functional is a good choice when:

- You have little or no paid work experience.
- You are making a significant career change.
- Your job titles don't do justice to your abilities, accomplishments and responsibilities.
- You want to draw attention to your skills that apply to your future job goals, and play down your past job content.
- Your best accomplishments and most impressive work experiences were not very recent, but are drawn from jobs you held farther back in time.
- You have limited experience or have gaps in your employment history.

If you choose a functional resume, be sure to focus on the skills that support your new job goal.

### **Combination Resume**

The combination resume uses aspects of both the chronological and functional formats. It lists your jobs from most recent to earliest, then highlights responsibilities and accomplishments within each job listed. This combined approach is effective when you have held several jobs with significant responsibilities and accomplishments.

## Customize Training

You may make appropriate adjustments in order to accommodate the experience level and the size of your audience; however, care must be taken so as **not to reduce the instructional effectiveness of the training**.

- Note on the training outline in the next sections of this document where you might interject your personal experience regarding this topic.
- Make a list of the people in your office who are most familiar with this topic and how you might call on them to share their experiences during the presentation. Note this on your outline.
- Highlight headings and key phrases and add any guidance notes to yourself in the margins to personalize this Lesson Plan.
- Throughout the remainder of this Lesson Plan specific recommendations for items to say to the class are included in this type of font—as long as you do not change the meaning or take away from the lesson, do not feel that you have to say each of the items word for word. More experienced instructors may feel more comfortable changing the wording, while newer instructors may want to follow the wording more closely. For all other material in outline format, feel free to paraphrase the information to suit your teaching style.
- Items you should say to the class are also included—these are noted with the word *Say* in front of them.

## Rehearse the Presentation

Practice is the best guarantee of providing a quality presentation. At a minimum, do a complete walkthrough of the presentation to practice coordination between this Instructor Lesson Plan, the Trainee Handouts, and the PowerPoint slides. This Lesson Plan contains icons as references (see page v below).

## Check Arrangements

- Ensure completion of arrangements (room, equipment, duplication of materials, etc.).
- Ensure you have enough copies of the Trainee Handout packets.



## DAY OF CLASS PREPARATION

Before trainees arrive

- Establish a “Parking Lot Area”

**Note:** The Parking Lot Area can be a whiteboard, a paper tablet, notepad, or a flipchart attached to a wall near the front of the class, etc. This area is where issues or questions are “parked” that cannot be readily addressed during the presentation.

Please forward these issues to the developer and other designated officials in order to develop a response for the trainee before the end of training and, if necessary, so that they can be incorporated into the materials and addressed in future presentations.

- Check that you have in the classroom all the instructor materials and copies of the trainee handouts.
- Test the computer and LCD projector to ensure they are working properly (in order for the PowerPoint to be presented). If using a flipchart, make sure that you have markers with plenty of ink left in them.
- Pull up the first slide of the PowerPoint, in preparation for the training.

### At the Beginning of Class

Make sure each trainee has:

- A set of Trainee Handouts.
- Signed the class roster.

## Conventions Used in This Lesson Plan

**Slide #**

This convention is used to show you on which slide of the corresponding PowerPoint presentation the information can be found. Use these notes to help guide your presentation.



Individual Activity



Small Group Activity



Large Group Activity



Handouts

**Note:** Instructor "Notes" contain direction for your presentation of the material.

The Instructor's Notes will appear in a box such as this to provide an easy differentiation between Instructor's Notes and script.

**Slide 1****INTRODUCTION (10 minutes)****Slide 2**

- Introduce yourself.
- Ask trainees to make sure they have signed the class roster.
- Tell trainees they should all have a Trainee Handout packet and to let you know now if they do not have one.

**Note:** Orient trainees to the facilities. Point out such things as where the restrooms and breakroom are located.

- Inform trainees that:
  - They are going to learn how to write a skills-based, targeted resume that will get them the job interview for the job that they want.
  - By learning about resumes, identifying their own skills and what skills their target employer is seeking, and writing skills statements they will be able to write a draft resume that (with the aid of the EC) they can turn into a resume that will get them the job interview.

**Prerequisite Training**

Before beginning this lesson on Resume Writing, trainees should have an:

- Employment Objective in your Rehabilitation Plan, or
- Employment Plan and an employment goal.

**Note:** If the trainee does not have an employment goal do not worry. Later in this training, when they are drafting their resumes, have them focus on expanding their personal skill sets, rather than targeting what skills their desired job is seeking.

## Attention Getter/Motivator

**Note:** If you have an applicable real-life *Resume Writing* experience that will motivate trainees and help them understand the importance of this topic you may include it in this section, instead of using the below example.

One of the biggest reasons why people applying for jobs don't get called in for an interview is because their resume is not written to target the job for which they are applying.

Take a veteran who went through this training in one of the previous classes. He had been trying to get a job for *months* without success. Following this class he wrote a targeted, skills-based resume that got him a job soon after. This class will help you gain an advantage over others by informing you about resume writing.

### Slide 3

## Topic Objectives

**Say:** At the end of this topic, with the aid of your handouts, you will be able to:

1. Describe the importance and purpose of a resume.
2. Recall the information that is common to all resumes (the anatomy).
3. Differentiate between the three different types of resumes.
4. Select the resume that is most appropriate for your work history so that your job skills can best be presented.
5. Identify skill sets and write skills statements.
6. Draft a functional (skills-based) resume targeted to the job you are seeking.

## CORE PRESENTATION (95 minutes)

**Note:** This time includes four topics and one Practice Exercise. Each of the following sections will list the the recommended amount of time for you to spend on each topic.

Let trainees know the following:

- They should have already looked for jobs they are interested in and, therefore, should have an idea of the types of skills that are required for the job that they are seeking.
- Today they are going to:
  - Learn about the three different types of resumes
  - Identify the skills that they have that match those skills of the job for which they are applying (start working with skills builder), and
  - Create a draft resume.
- Over the next few weeks they will continue to work with an EC to develop a *final* resume.

**Slide 4****Describe the Resume (20 minutes)**

- Tell trainees that you will first go over the purpose and importance of the resume.
- Then you will review the anatomy of the resume, or what types of information are common to all resumes.

**A. Purpose and Importance**

- Let trainees know that a resume that is targeted to the job that they are seeking will result in interviews which will, in turn, lead to employment. It is when their resume catches their potential employer's attention that they are invited to interview for the job they want.
  1. The resume is the first contact that you have with your potential employers
    - a) Tells them who you are, what you know, and what you have done
  2. The first impression is important. Following are some common ways to ensure your resume makes a good first impression:
    - a) Well written
      - (1) No spelling/grammatical errors—use spell check and a thesaurus
      - (2) Have someone proofread your resume
      - (3) Write in third person (do not use "I")
      - (4) Clear/concise
      - (5) No more than 2 pages
      - (6) Use strong action verbs



Handouts

**Note:** Have trainees turn to page 9 (*Action Verbs*) of their handout packets to see good examples of actions verbs. Let them know that this is not an exhaustive list but it should be enough to prompt them to use concrete verbs to get their point across.

- b) Written in commonly used language
  - (1) Avoid acronyms and military terms
  - (2) Use technical terms only if they are required to explain your work
- c) Attractive
  - (1) Typed/professional appearance

- (2) Have main points stand out to potential employer
- (3) Use plenty of white space (avoid too much text on a page)
- (4) Use underlining and bulleted statements sparingly
- (5) Use full capitalization for headings and company names only

d) Relevant

- (1) Highlighted skills relevant to the position to which you are applying
- (2) Eliminate information that does not act in your favor
- (3) Ask yourself, "Will this information get me the interview?"

e) Targeted

- (1) Tailor your resume to each job position for which you apply

**Say:** It may take some hard work to target your resume for every job position to which you apply, but doing hard work up front will be the most sure-fire way that you will get called in to interview. Take the following real-life story, as told by an EC, as an example:

A veteran who had an engineering degree and experience in the field had also completed his MBA two years prior to taking this course. He had not been employed for five years and he had been unsuccessful in obtaining employment for one year. When the EC came on board and reviewed the veteran's resume, it was deemed inappropriate because it was not targeted to his program goal. The veteran angrily stated, "I don't know what you think you can do that I haven't already done for the last year - you are wasting my time." The EC told the veteran, "I will help you develop a targeted resume and you will have a job within the next 6 months."

Six months later the veteran called the EC to say "you were right." He had obtained a job as a college instructor at a technical college. He emailed the EC six months after that to say that he had been promoted to the Department head position. He was overjoyed. What a difference a "targeted" resume makes!

## **B. Anatomy**

- Tell trainees that, although there are three types of resumes, there are two important things that they should remember no matter what type they choose to use: it should be concise and it should be targeted.

**Say:** We have just discussed how to make a good first impression, now we will discuss what kind information should be included in all resumes.

### 1. Contact information

- a) Name
- b) Mailing address
- c) Phone number

(1) Where you can be reached during business hours

(2) Double check your out-going message/music to make sure it is professional

### d) Email address

(1) Make sure you have an appropriate email address (i.e. it should not be something like CallingInSick@hotmail.com or LoveMuffinSweetie@yahoo.com)

(2) Create an email account just for job search use (i.e. use a different screen name on an existing account, or create a new free account through Yahoo, Hotmail, or Google)

### 2. Career Summary or Job Objective

#### a) Career Summary

(1) Summarizes relevant work experiences related to the position to which you are applying

## b) Job Objective

- (1) Briefly indicates the type of job you are seeking
- (2) You do not have to be so specific that you would not be considered for a broader range of positions

## 3. Education and Training

## a) Education

- (1) List your most recent degree first
- (2) Include GPA if 3.0 or higher
- (3) If you have graduated from college you do not have to include your high school education

## b) Training

- (1) Include military training or other workplace training **ONLY** if it is relevant to the position to which you are applying

## 4. Work Experience

- a) Include all work experiences (full or part-time, paid or volunteer, internships or externships)
  - b) List in reverse chronological order (i.e. list your most recent experience first)
  - c) General rule of thumb is to only list 10-15 years of experience
  - d) For a functional resume only, list (in the following order):
    - (1) Dates of employment
    - (2) Job Title
    - (3) Company Name
    - (4) City, State
- Let trainees know that you will talk more about the functional (or skills-based) resume in the next part of this training class...and that they will get some hands-on practice, too.

### 5. Skill Statements

- Let trainees know that you will also discuss these in the next part of this training class.

6. Organize your resume with most “sellable” points first (i.e. if you have a recent degree or extensive work experience, put this toward the top of your resume).

**Say:** Before we go over the different types of resumes, are there any questions about the purpose, importance, or anatomy of a resume?

**Slide 5****II. Different Types of Resumes (15 minutes)**

- Let trainees know that they should try their hardest to select the type of resume that will best present their skills to match the job for which they are applying. Their choice of resume should be based on their work history, but should be targeted to their job goal.
- Tell trainees that you will now differentiate between the three types of resumes in order to understand what they are, their distinctive features, and when to use them.

**Slide 6****A. Chronological**

## 1. About

a) Most common resume format. It lists your most recent job at the top of the page, then continues down to your earliest job

b) Range from a simple career summary to a more elaborate description of work responsibilities

## 2. Purpose/when to use

a) When you have a continuous employment history and your past experience related directly to the positions for which you are applying

b) When you've worked a while in your chosen field, and you want to call attention to your very stable work history.

c) When you want to call attention to consistent upward mobility and promotions in your career

d) When you are applying for a job in a conservative field where a traditional format is expected.

e) When you think your next employer would be more comfortable with a traditional-looking resume

## 3. Reminders

a) Don't load it down with boring job duties starting off with a "responsibilities included"

b) Show what you accomplished on each job and how your actions benefited your company

c) Focus particularly on activities that are similar to what you want to do in your new job, things you can get jazzed about when you discuss them in the job interview

**Slide 7****B. Functional (skills-based)**

1. About
  - a) Highlights your skills and accomplishments rather than your work history
  - b) Lists things you're good at and things you've accomplished at the top of the page, then summarizes the jobs you've held at the end
2. Purpose/when to use
  - a) Effective when you are switching fields or industries
  - b) You have little or no paid work experience
  - c) You are making a significant career change
  - d) Your job titles don't do justice to your abilities, accomplishments and responsibilities
  - e) You want to draw attention to your skills that apply to your future job goals, and play down your past job content
  - f) Your best accomplishments and most impressive work experiences were not very recent, but are drawn from jobs you held farther back in time
  - g) You have limited experience or have gaps in your employment history
3. Reminder: be sure to focus on the skills that support your new job goal

**Slide 8****C. Combination**

1. About
    - a) Uses aspects of both the chronological and functional formats
    - b) Lists your jobs from most recent to earliest, then highlights responsibilities and accomplishments within each job listed
  2. Purpose/when to use: effective when you have held several jobs with significant responsibilities and accomplishments
- Let trainees know the following:
    - Since it is usually most effective to use a functional (skills-based) resume the focus for the rest of this session will be to draft one of these resumes.

- Although there will be some exceptions, sometimes it *is* best to use a chronological or combination resume, the functional (skills-based) generally tells hiring managers everything they need *and* want to know at a glance.

**Say:** Take the following real-life story, as told by an EC, as an example:

The EC was watching a hiring manager sort through a large stack of veterans' resumes, pull out certain resumes, and place them aside. The EC asked the hiring manager why she was only pulling those resumes out of the big stack. She stated that those resumes told her everything they needed to know and they planned to hire those veterans. The EC snuck a peek and noticed that all of the resumes were functional (skills-based) resumes!

**Slide 9****III. Identifying Skills (20 minutes)**

- Let trainees know that, since the functional resume is generally the most effective, they will concentrate on drafting this type of resume today.
- As they now know, the functional resume is also referred to as the 'skills-based' resume; therefore their focus will be on how to target their skills to the job that they are seeking.

**A. Identify skills required by job**

1. Use word of mouth
2. Research the company to find out which skills they most highly value
3. Use the job announcement as your guide



**Note:** Have trainees turn to page 8 (*Functional Skill Headings*) of their handout packets to see some examples of functional skill headings.

- Ask trainees to take out a piece of paper and use this page to write a list of any skill headings that are applicable to the job.

**B. Identify your skills**

**Note:** Have trainees continue to work from page 8 (*Functional Skill Headings*) of their handout packets. Have them use this page as a guide to identifying functional skill headings that describe their skills.

- Ask trainees to list every single skill that they possess. Remind them that, when writing their final resume, they should ask friends and family to help them brainstorm.
- Remind trainees to think about the following:
  - Past jobs or internships that they have held
  - Their military experience
  - Experience they gained while volunteering
  - Skills that they learned and used in college
- Tell trainees to look at the two lists that they just created: one identifies skills required by the job; the other identifies the skills that they possess. Ask them to make a third list of all of

the skills that appear in both lists. They will use this list to write their skills statements.

### C. Write skills statements

**Tell trainees that,** now that they have identified skills that they possess that they share with what the job announcement is seeking, the next step is to fill out a skill sets worksheet.

**Note:** Have trainees turn to the following pages of their handout packets:

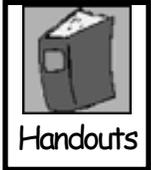
- Page 4 (*Skill Sets Worksheet*) will give them an idea of how they should organize these skills.
- Page 2 (*Sample Skills Statements*) will provide them with some examples of how to write their skills statements.
- Page 9 (*Action Verbs*) should be used as a guide to writing specific, outcome based performances that prove that they have the skills that they list.



### Transition to Practice Exercise

- Let trainees know that they will now take what they have learned about identifying different skills and writing skills statements and apply it on a brief Practice Exercise.

**Say:** Before we begin, are there any questions?

**Slide 10****Practice Exercise: Sample Job Description (15 minutes)****Small and Large Group Activity**

**Note:** Have trainees turn to the following pages of their handout packets:

- Pg. 2 (*Sample Skills Statements*),
- Pg. 8 (*Functional Skill Headings*)
- Pg. 9 (*Action Verbs*)

- In this exercise let trainees know that they will apply the information that was just covered.
- Have them break into small groups, of no more than three or four people and then distribute a job announcement to each group.
- As a group, have them identify the skills that the announcement is looking for. Tell them to use page 8 (*Functional Skill Headings*) of their handouts as a guide.
- Then, using pages 2 (*Sample Skills Statements*) and 9 (*Action Verbs*) of their handouts as an example, have them write four skill headings and one sentence under each.
- Inform trainees that they will have 15 minutes to finish the exercise. At the end of this time, you will go through the items together as a group to discuss some of their answers and offer input.

**Note:** If, at any point in this exercise, the trainees have any questions that can not be answered record them in the Parking Lot Area.

**Say:** Before we move on are there any questions regarding anything we have gone over so far?

**Slide 11**

Individual  
Activity

**IV. Draft Your Own Functional Resume (25 minutes)**

- Tell trainees that, since they have now learned about the functional resume and have practiced identifying and writing skills, they are going to take the next 20 minutes to work on their own resumes.
- Tell them not to worry about leaving class with a completely polished version of their resume: they should focus on identifying key skills that they possess and that the job that they are seeking requires.
- Let them know that after this class is over you will continue to work with them until they have completed a final, targeted resume that is ready for them to post on VetSuccess and for them to submit to the company of their choice.



Handouts

**Note:** Have trainees turn to page 6 (*Functional Format Sample Class*) of their handout packets to see where their skills sets worksheet should be placed in their resume.

**A. ID skills required by job**

1. Use the job announcement as your guide
2. Use page 8 of your handouts (*Functional Skill Headings*) to see some examples of functional skill headings.
3. Write a list of any skill headings that are applicable to the job.

**B. ID your skills**

1. Use page 8 of your handouts (*Functional Skill Headings*) as a guide to identify functional skill headings that describe your skills.
2. List every single skill that you possess; think about the following:
  - a) Past jobs or internships that you have held
  - b) Your military experience
  - c) Experience you gained while volunteering
  - d) Skills that you learned and used in college
3. Look at the two lists that you just created: and make a third list of all of the skills that appear in both lists.

**C. Write skills statements**

1. Use page 4 (*Skill Sets Worksheet*) of your handouts as a guide to create and fill out your own skill sets worksheet.
2. Use page 2 of your handouts (*Sample Skills Statements*) to guide you when you write your own skills statements.
3. Page 9 (*Action Verbs*) of your handouts will guide you in writing specific, outcome based performances that prove that you have the skills that you list.

## CLOSING (5 minutes)

**Note:** This should only be a very brief summary of all the material that was just covered. Ask review questions if time permits.

### Slide 12

#### Summary

Remind trainees that, today they have learned about all aspects of writing an effective resume. They learned about the purpose, importance, and anatomy of resumes and the three different types of resumes. They also learned how to identify skills and write skills statements and drafted their own functional (skills-based) resumes.

**Say:** Now that you have completed this lesson on Resume Writing, you should be able to:

- Describe the importance and purpose of a resume.
- Recall the information that is common to all resumes (the anatomy).
- Differentiate between the three different types of resumes.
- Select the resume that is most appropriate for your work history so that your job skills can best be presented.
- Identify skill sets and write skills statements.
- Draft a functional (skills-based) resume targeted to the job you are seeking.

**Slide 13****POST-LECTURE EXERCISE/REQUIREMENT  
(10 minutes)****Posting Resume in VetSuccess**

**Say:** Now that we are nearing the end of this class, I would like to ask all those of you are not already registered in <http://www.vetsuccess.gov/> to register as soon as possible. If you would like to come with me to the job lab we can register after we finish up this class.

After you develop your final resume, please post your resume in <http://www.vetsuccess.gov/> in order to distribute your resume.

**Slide 14****Questions**

**Say:** Are there any other questions or issues regarding the material we have covered today?

**Note:** If you have extra time ask the trainees if any of them would like to share anything related to writing a resume that they have found particularly effective or useful in the past.

**End of Training****Note:**

- Thank Trainees for their time and attention.
- End the course by having trainees sign out.