A Guide to Resume Writing

What is a resume?

A resume is a written tool summarizing your education, work experience, credentials and accomplishments.

What is the purpose of a resume?

The purpose of a resume is to get an interview. In many cases, your resume is the first document a hiring manager will look at when they are reviewing your application. Employers spend, on average, less than 10 seconds screening a resume, making it a true "first impression" of you and why you are qualified for the position.

Do I need to make one?

Yes! Most professional positional positions require applicants to submit a resume and cover letter as part of the application process. We encourage you to start early and continually update your resume as you continue to obtain new skills and experiences.

What do I do with the resume?

Once you have created a solid resume, your job is to get it to the right people, which means:

- Give it to employers you meet, even if they are not currently hiring.
- Upload it to online job banks. We highly recommend starting with Wisconsin TechConnect, Job Center of Wisconsin and LinkedIn.
- Give it to your references. It will help them talk to others about your qualifications and connect you with potential employers in their professional network.
- Provide your resume to individuals that you ask to write a letter of recommendation.
- Bring plenty of copies of your resume along with business cards to career fairs or other professional working opportunities.

Madison College Career and Employment Services (CES
1701 Wright Street | Room D1624 | Madison, WI 53704
(608) 243-4598 | careerandemployment@madisoncollege.edu

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How-to Write a Resume: Step-by-Step Guide

1. Figure out what type of resume you need.

There are 4 different types of resumes, all customized to fit you and the job for which you are applying. Based on the description for each, you will choose one that fits your needs best and continue with that type in min.

Functional Resume

- Focuses on skills and experiences first, employment history second
- Works best for individuals who have gaps in employment, limited work experience, or are making a career switch.

Chronological Resume

- Focuses on work history, with the most recent position listed first. This is most preferred by employers.
- Works best for individuals with a strong work history, no gaps in employment, and if your experiences align with the job for which you are applying.

Combination Resume

- Focuses on skills and experience and backing it up with work history.
- Works best when you are trying to highlight the skills you have that are relevant.

Nontraditional Resume

- Presented in a visual or online format (e.g. video, LinkedIn, portfolio, website, blog, etc.).
- Works best for individuals in creative industries such as graphic design, internet marketing, architecture, etc.

➔**Steps 2-9 can be used for all types of resumes, but order may vary based on the type of resume**

2. Get your document ready.

Open a new Microsoft Word document. Ensure you are using a size 10-12 point font, depending on the font style. Stick with simple font styles such as Arial, Calibri, Verdana or Times New Roman. Also, make sure your resume is within 0.5 – 1.0 inch margins.

To change this setting, click the Page Layout tab ➔ Margins ➔ Normal (1.0") (pictured below)
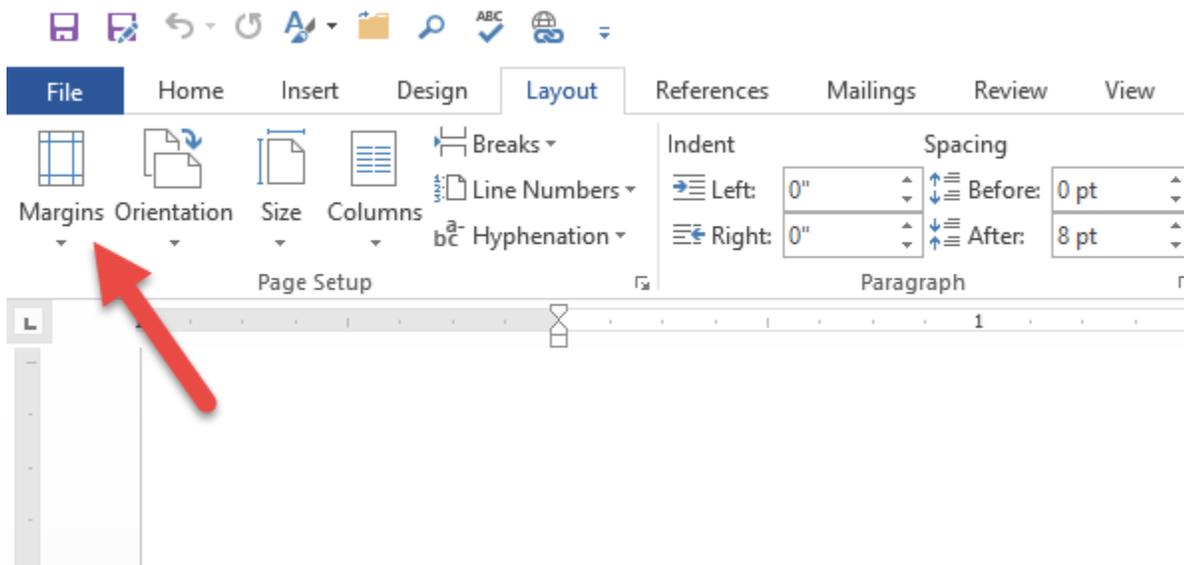
3. Make a heading that contains all of your contact information.

This section includes your name, telephone number and email address (student or professional account). *Optional:* Your address and/or LinkedIn account URL if the profile is complete.

- Your name should be the largest font on the document, but should be no bigger than an 18 point font size.
- If your resume is more than one page, make sure that your name and/or contact information is on all sequential pages. You may wish to put your contact information in a header if you are low on space.
- Be sure to check the voicemail message on the phone number provided to make sure it is professional and employer-ready!

To add additional lines in your contact information, on the Home tab, go to the Paragraph settings and click the Borders icon (it looks like a window), next click the small drop-down arrow to see the selection options. Choose the top or bottom border, depending on where you want the line.
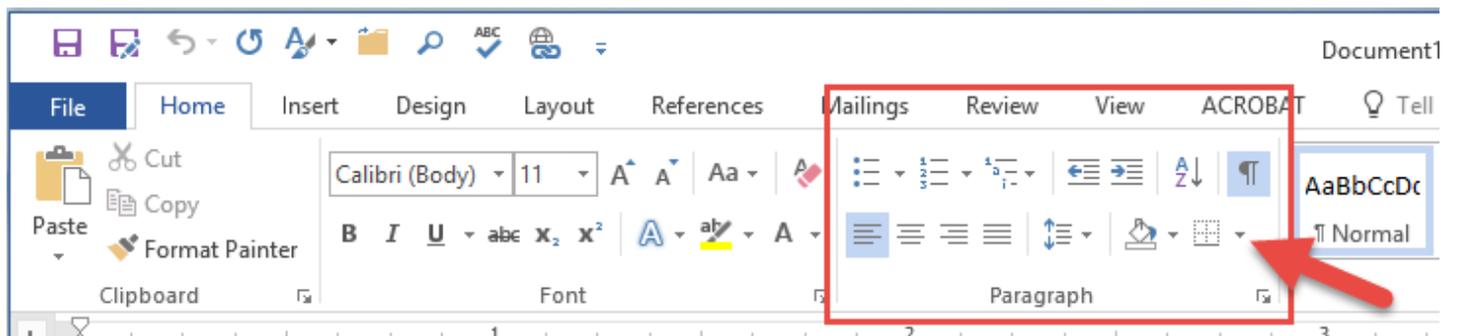
4. Write an objective statement. (optional step)

This is often used for individuals making a career switch. Your objective should be 1-2 sentences and help employers understand what makes you qualified for the position.

If the position you are applying for requires a cover letter, an objective statement is not necessary. The information you share in your cover letter will serve as your objective statement.

Example:

Customer service focused desktop and administrative technician looking forward to utilizing current education and previous expertise in new career as a programmer systems analyst.

5. Create a section that highlights your skills.

Listing your skills before education or employment would follow the format of a **functional or combination resume** type. If you are following a chronological resume, you may still wish to include this section. Remember to make this section relevant to the job for which you are applying.
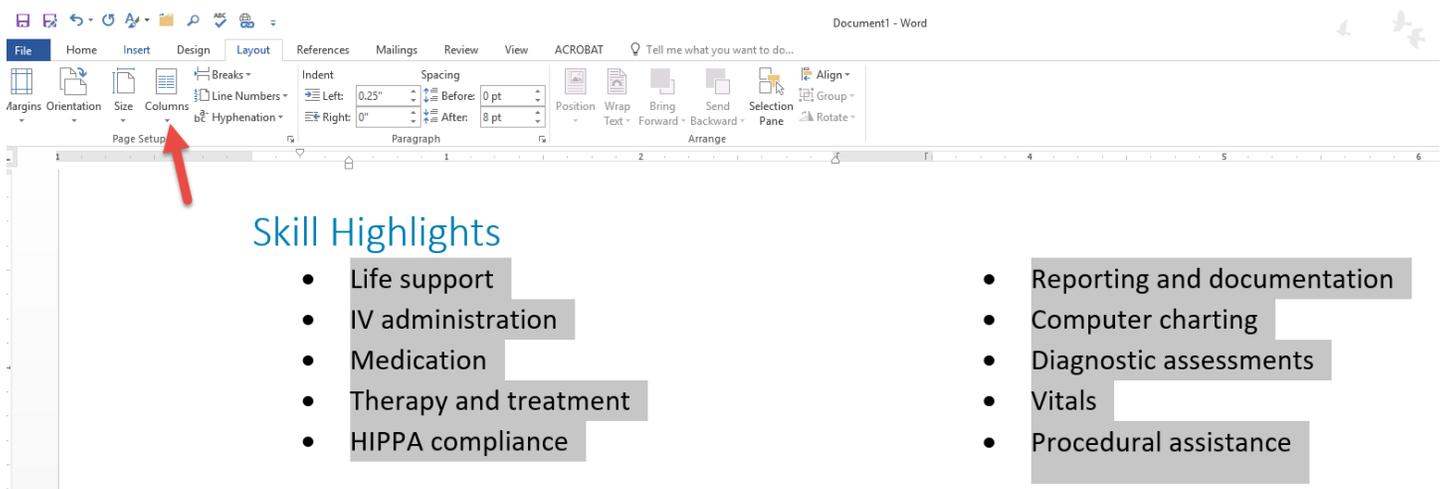
This section could also be called 'skills from coursework' if you are listing courses you have taken, or a more specific area of skill such as 'customer service' or 'social media.' See functional resume example on page 11 for other section options.

Some industries that prefer or require a skills section include:

- Information technology (IT)
- Health
- Design/Art
- Human services and
- Manufacturing

If you are fluent or proficient in a language other than English, include that skill here!

To avoid taking up too much room on your resume, consider using columns. When you are done entering your information in a bullet list, simply select the list and go to the Layout menu and Columns. In this example we have chosen 2 columns.

6. List your education.

You should list the following in this section:

- **The highest degree you earned** (bold this on your resume)
- The institution where the degree was granted
- City and state of that institution
- Date of graduation (or expected)
- Other certifications or technical diplomas received
- Do not include a high school credential if you are in college

Optional: GPA if it is high (we recommend 3.5/4.0 or higher).
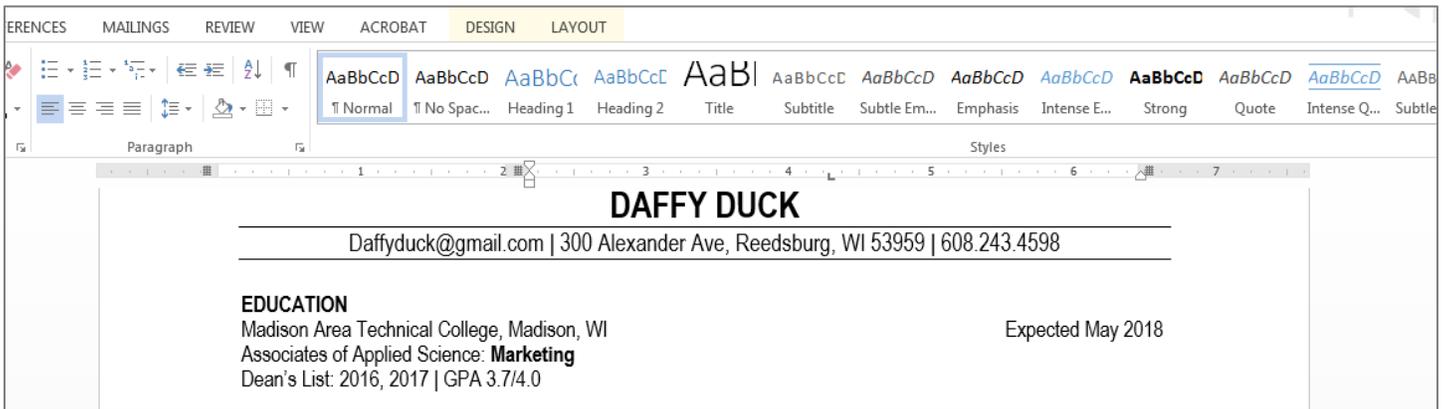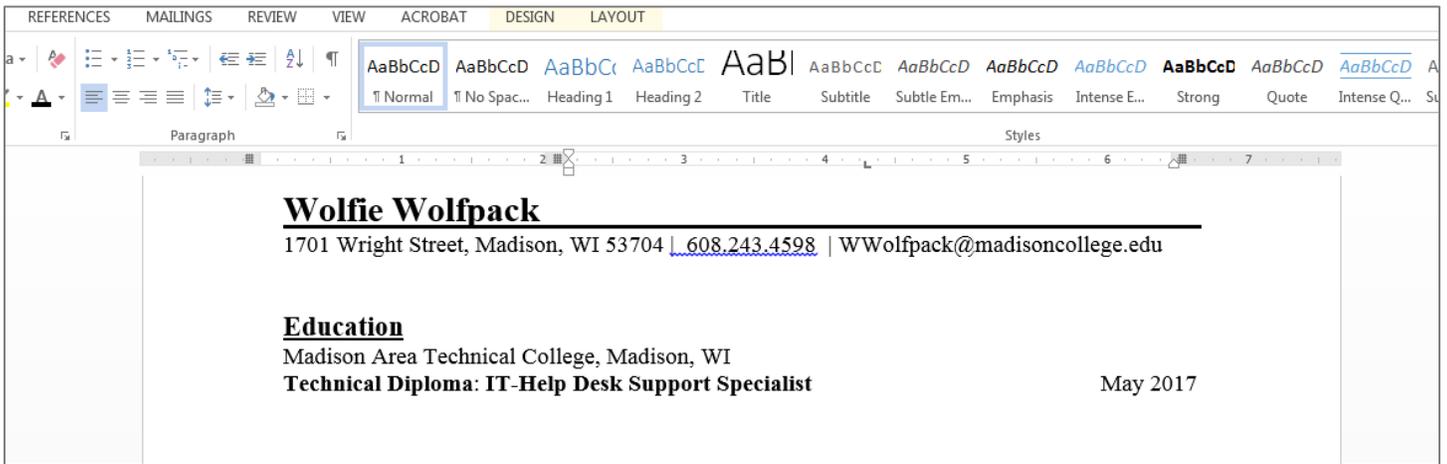
7. Write your experience section.

For each company or position, provide the name, city and state, date of employment, position title, and some key responsibilities and achievements. If the position has little in common with the position for which are you applying, you may want to include **transferrable skills**, or skills you have acquired and will transfer to future employment settings. Examples of these could be interpersonal, communication or organizational skills.
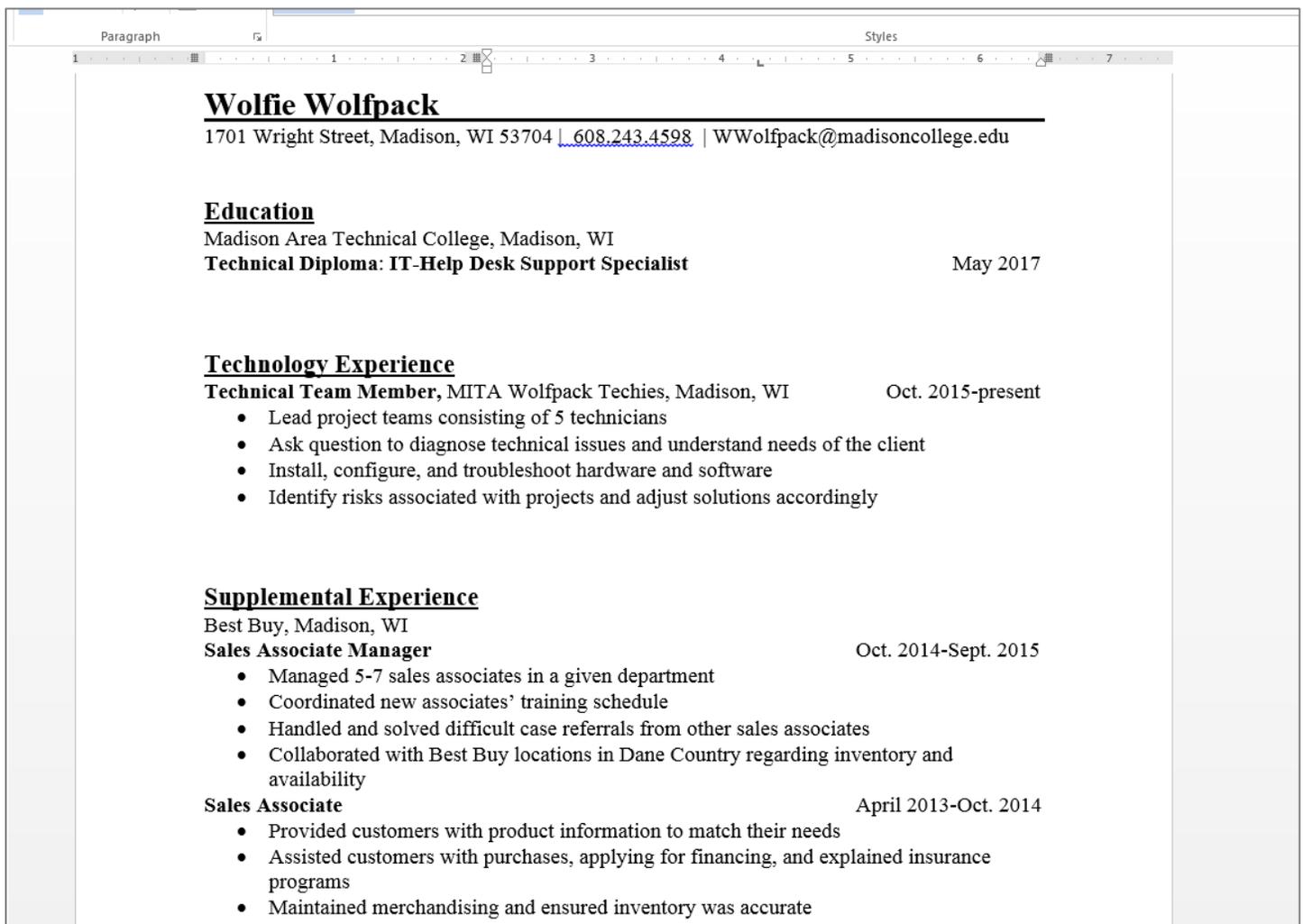
- If you are following the chronological or combined resume, list your experiences starting with the most recent.
- For a promotion within the same company, or if you've held multiple titles, list the company once and each position separately.
- Be sure to use action verbs when writing your descriptions (see action verbs on page 9).
- For a position you held in the past, use the past tense. For a job or experience you are currently in, use present tense.
- Use no less than 2-3 bullet points per experience, and no more than 6-7 (amount of bullets is based on significance/relevance of the position).

You can divide your experience into specific categories, based on relevance, such as the example below. This is often used if you have work experience that is unrelated to the position for which you are applying.

Wolfie Wolfpack

1701 Wright Street, Madison, WI 53704 | 608.243.4598 | WWolfpack@madisoncollege.edu

Education

Madison Area Technical College, Madison, WI

Technical Diploma: IT-Help Desk Support Specialist   May 2017

Technology Experience

Technical Team Member, MITA Wolfpack Techies, Madison, WI   Oct. 2015-present
- Lead project teams consisting of 5 technicians
- Ask question to diagnose technical issues and understand needs of the client
- Install, configure, and troubleshoot hardware and software
- Identify risks associated with projects and adjust solutions accordingly

Supplemental Experience

Best Buy, Madison, WI

Sales Associate Manager   Oct. 2014-Sept. 2015
- Managed 5-7 sales associates in a given department
- Coordinated new associates' training schedule
- Handled and solved difficult case referrals from other sales associates
- Collaborated with Best Buy locations in Dane Country regarding inventory and availability

Sales Associate   April 2013-Oct. 2014
- Provided customers with product information to match their needs
- Assisted customers with purchases, applying for financing, and explained insurance programs
- Maintained merchandising and ensured inventory was accurate

8. Write other sections you wish to include on your resume.

You may want to include some of these optional sections if they are applicable to the job:

- Volunteer/community service
- Professional affiliations
- Computer skills or specific areas of expertise (this could also be included in the skills section)
- Accomplishments, honors, or rewards
- Certifications
- Military Service

One section you **should not** include on your resume is **references**, nor should you include, "references upon request." Employers will ask for references and it goes without saying that you will provide them.

PINK PANTHER

panther@madisoncollege.edu

1701 Wright Street, Madison, WI 53704 | 608-243-4598 | LinkedIn.com/pinkpanther

Key Skills
- Understanding of veterinary medical terminology
- Knowledge in animal diseases and pharmacology
- Trained in automated laboratory procedures for hematology and clinical chemistries
- Strong observation skills used to perceive and interpret signs of fear, aggression, and other potentially dangerous behaviors exhibited by various animal species
- Follow Animal Welfare Act and other regulations pertaining to the care of laboratory animals
- Perform laboratory procedures, including blood chemistries, parasitology and urine analysis

Education
Madison Area Technical College, Madison, WI
Associates in Applied Science: **Veterinary Technician Program**   Expected May 2018

Veterinary Technician Experience
Animal Caretaker, Pete's Farm, Verona, WI   January 2015-present
- Provide nursing care and healing therapy for a variety of animals
- Check animal health, room temperature and humidity daily
- Maintain clean, sterile, and safe treatment room
- Educate and advise clients on animal nutrition and home care

Pet Admission Staff, Pet Resort, De Forest, WI   May 2012-June 2014
- Scheduled the boarding of pets
- Checked immunization records prior to admission to the resort
- Greeted customers and their pets in a friendly and welcoming manner

Community Service
Volunteer, Humane Society, Madison, WI   June 2014-present
- Provide physical comfort to dogs and cats in need
- Groom and bathe animals as needed
- Clean and disinfect animal rooms and cages

Volunteer, Hickory Hills Kennels, Madison, WI   August 2013-June 2014
- Assisted in the placement of dogs and cats in boarding facilities
- Supervised and ensured safety of 12-20 dogs in doggy daycare

Accomplishments
Madison Area Technical College, Madison, WI
Karen Roberts Outstanding Student of the Year Recipient   December 2016

9. Wait! Don't forget to save your resume!

To avoid formatting changes when sending your resume to employers, be sure to save the document as a PDF, unless instructed otherwise.

To do this, go to File → Save as → type your **first name, last name, and 'Resume'** → click the drop down menu for '**Save as type**' → select '**PDF**'
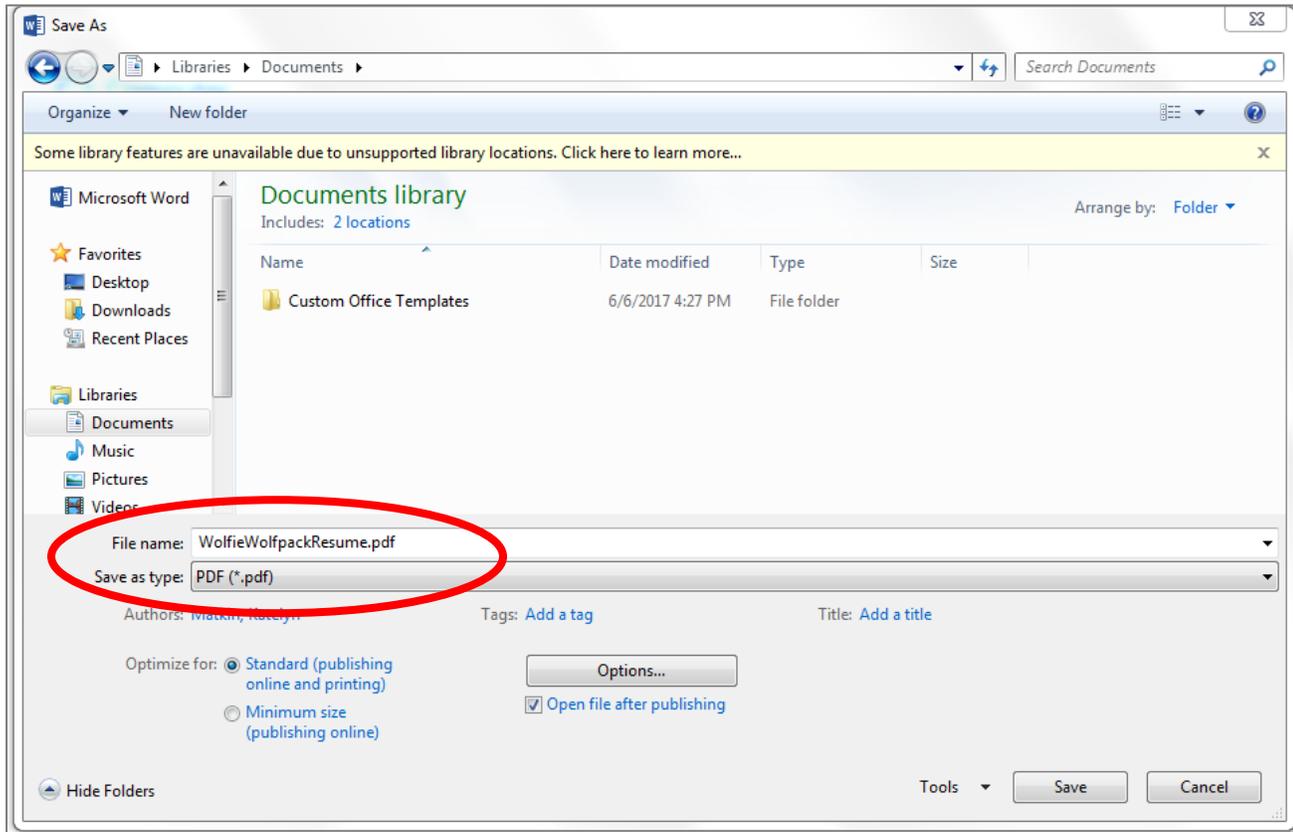
Action Verb Suggestions

When creating bulleted statements to describe your experience, use action verbs to emphasize your skills and accomplishments. The verbs will help illustrate how what you have done will transfer to what you can do for the new employer or organization. All the action verbs can be used in present or past tense.

Adaptable Skills

Adapt	Anticipate	Navigate
Adjust	Improvise	Transform
Amend	Modify	Tailor

Administrative Skills

Lead	Obtain	Pilot
Decide	Prescribe	Institute
Execute	Expand	

Analysis Skills

Conduct	Check	Appraise
Sort	Evaluate	Obtain
Summarize	Interpret	Inventory

Clerical Skills

Record	Support	Preserve
Observe	Provide	Chart
Maintain	Respond	Track

Creative Skills

Design	Develop	Produce
Create	Renovate	Construct
Conceptualize	Cultivate	Spark

Communication Skills

Explain	Convey	Propose
Demonstrate	Illustrate	Refer
Introduce	Announce	

Development Skills

Discover	Formulate	Introduce
Complete	Implement	Institute
Launch	Determine	

Financial Skills

Forecast	Quantify	Audit
Project	Maximize	Tabulate
Solve	Calculate	Secure

Helping Skills

Advise	Serve	Inspire
Aid	Guide	Assist
Facilitate	Care for	Support

Management Skills

Supervise	Monitor	Appoint
Direct	Implement	Resolve
Propose	Charge	

Marketing Skills

Persuade	Increase	Produce
Fundraise	Market	Sell
Motivate	Recruit	Escalate

Organization Skills

Compile	Maintain	Simplify
Coordinate	Arrange	Unify
Schedule	Review	

Research Skills

Investigate	Gather	Analyze
Identify	Sequence	Examine
Process	Measure	Screen

Teamwork Skills

Collaborate	Relate	Facilitate
Participate	Negotiate	Contribute
Mediate	Listen	Discuss

Technical Skills

Assemble	Refinish	Inspect
Repair	Install	Troubleshoot
Remodel	Compute	
Maintain		

Please Note: This reference guide was created by Career and Employment Services staff at Madison Area Technical College. It is intended to be a guide and may not be all-inclusive to meet your specific needs. If preparing these documents for a class, be sure to follow the directions given by your instructor. For additional assistance or to make an appointment, contact us at careerandemployment@madisoncollege.edu or (608) 243-4598. You can also stop into room D1624 at the Truax campus.

> This is an example of a **chronological resume**, specifically for an **IT-Help Desk position**. The work experience starts with the most recent position held.

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- Coordinated new associates' training schedule
- Handled and solved difficult case referrals from other sales associates
- Collaborated with Best Buy locations in Dane Country regarding inventory and availability

Sales Associate   April 2013-Oct. 2014

- Provided customers with product information to match their needs
- Assisted customers with purchases, applying for financing, and explained insurance programs
- Maintained merchandising and ensured inventory was accurate

Professional Development

Vice President of Marketing   Sept. 2014-present

Association of Information Technology Professionals, Madison Area Technical College

- Lead marketing events to promote organization around campus
- Assist offer team with brainstorming and planning events and meetings
- Volunteer with DaneNet to provide IT support to non-profits in the Madison area
- Attend networking events through Accelerate Madison

This is an example of a **functional resume**, specifically for a **marketing position**, where relevant skills are listed before work history.

DAFFY DUCK

Daffyduck@gmail.com | 300 Alexander Ave, Reedsburg, WI 53959 | 608.243.4598

EDUCATION

Madison Area Technical College, Madison, WI   Expected May 2018

Associates of Applied Science: **Marketing**

Dean's List: 2016, 2017 | GPA 3.7/4.0

SPECIALIZED COURSEWORK

- Social Media Principle
- Advanced Social Media Campaigns
- Mobile Marketing
- Global Marketing
- Innovative Trends in Marketing
- Internet Marketing
- Publicity and Promotion Strategies
- Sales Management

STUDENT LEADERSHIP

- Madison College Volunteer Center, **Alternative Break Coordinator**   08/2016-present
- Madison College Marketing Club, **Vice-President**   08/2016-present

MARKETING

- Created a marketing portfolio for a local company in Dane County which included both social media and public promotion advertisements
- Observed collaborative meetings between the marketing and sales teams at Land's End

CUSTOMER SERVICE

- Communicate with clients to answer questions and help locate products
- Average a rating of 4.5/5 on a customer satisfaction survey

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Create and maintain content for Madison College Volunteer center Facebook and Twitter
- Design Facebook events to market Madison College Volunteer Center

TEAM WORK

- Serve on Madison College Volunteer Center Programming Board
- Work with land's End team members to present satisfaction survey results to management

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Land's End, **Customer Service Representative**   06/2016-present

- Greet and provide pleasant shopping experience to patrons
- Assist customers with purchase or return of merchandise

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Safe Haven After School Program, **Volunteer**   03/2013-09/2017

- Tutored middle school students three days a week on math homework

> This an example of a **combination resume.** The work history is chronological, but it also lists key skills for a **Vet Tech position**.

PINK PANTHER

panther@madisoncollege.edu

1701 Wright Street, Madison, WI 53704 | 608-243-4598 | LinkedIn.com/pinkpanther

Key Skills

- Understanding of veterinary medical terminology
- Knowledge in animal diseases and pharmacology
- Trained in automated laboratory procedures for hematology and clinical chemistries
- Strong observation skills used to perceive and interpret signs of fear, aggression, and other potentially dangerous behaviors exhibited by various animal species
- Follow Animal Welfare Act and other regulations pertaining to the care of laboratory animals
- Perform laboratory procedures, including blood chemistries, parasitology and urine analysis

Education

Madison Area Technical College, Madison, WI

Associates in Applied Science: **Veterinary Technician Program**   Expected May 2018

Veterinary Technician Experience

Animal Caretaker, Pete's Farm, Verona, WI   January 2015-present

- Provide nursing care and healing therapy for a variety of animals
- Check animal health, room temperature and humidity daily
- Maintain clean, sterile, and safe treatment room
- Educate and advise clients on animal nutrition and home care

Pet Admission Staff, Pet Resort, De Forest, WI   May 2012-June 2014

- Scheduled the boarding of pets
- Checked immunization records prior to admission to the resort
- Greeted customers and their pets in a friendly and welcoming manner

Community Service

Volunteer, Humane Society, Madison, WI   June 2014-present

- Provide physical comfort to dogs and cats in need
- Groom and bathe animals as needed

- Clean and disinfect animal rooms and cages

Volunteer, Hickory Hills Kennels, Madison, WI   August 2013-June 2014

- Assisted in the placement of dogs and cats in boarding facilities
- Supervised and ensured safety of 12-20 dogs in doggy daycare

Accomplishments

Madison Area Technical College, Madison, WI

Karen Roberts Outstanding Student of the Year Recipient   December 2016

This is an example of a **combination resume**. It is both chronological in experience, but lists the functional skills necessary for a **graphic design position**.

This resume was also created within a table.

DAISY DUCK

Madison, WI 53704 | (608) 243-4598 | www.daisyduckdesign.com

QUALIFICATIONS PROFILE

Highly creative and multitalented **Graphic Designer** with experience in multimedia marketing and print design.

PRINT	PHOTOGRAPHY	WEB/MULTIMEDIA
• Brochures	• Lithography	• Web Site Design
• Logos	• Retouching	• Video Editing
• Posters	• Photograph	• CD Cover Design
• Stationary	Restoration	

EDUCATION

Madison Area Technical College | Madison, WI | May 2016

Associate Degree in Applied Arts in Graphic Design

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Mad-Designs | Madison, WI | August 2010-present

Graphic Design Assistant

- Develop and implement solutions to problems encountered in all phases of the graphic design process
- Apply typographic skills and knowledge to create effective visual communication
- Manage time effectively and meet deadlines

Wolfpack Websites | Verona, WI | May 2008-June 2010

Design Intern

- Collaborated with team members on graphic design projects

- Learned about the variety of technologies used to create, capture and manipulate design elements
- Communicated clearly and professionally in both verbal and written formats

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS   American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) | Madison College

2012-present

ADDITIONAL SKILLS

- Expert in Microsoft Suite and Adobe Illustrator
- Bilingual in English and Spanish

This is an example of a **combination resume** for the **healthcare field**. The experience is chronological but also includes functional skills relevant to a nursing position.

WOLFIE WOLFPACK, RN

1701 Wright Street, Madison, WI 53704 | C: (608) 243-4598 | wolfpack@madisoncollege.edu

Professional Summary

Compassionate Intensive Care Registered Nurse with experience in large and small hospital environments. Proficient in handling emergency situations and working cooperatively with clinical staff.

Licenses

Registered Nurse, State of Wisconsin   2016-present

Certified Nursing Assistant, State of Wisconsin   2014-2016

ACLS and BLS Certification   2015

Skill Highlights

- Life support
- IV administration
- Medication
- Therapy and treatment
- HIPPA Compliance

- Reporting and documentation
- Computer charting
- Diagnostic assessments
- Vitals
- Procedural assistance

Education and Training

Madison Area Technical College   Madison, WI

Associate in Applied Science: Nursing   May 2016

Professional Experience

Intensive Care Registered Nurse   10/2016 to Current

Verona Health Systems   Verona, WI

- Give compassionate care to critical patients suffering from injuries or debilitating conditions
- Assess patient conditions and administer medications
- Observe behavior and symptoms and report changes to on-call physicians

Certified Nursing Assistant   05/2015 to 10/2016

UW-Hospitals   Madison, WI

- Provided patients personal hygiene and activities of daily living
- Maintained patient stability by checking vital signs and weight, testing urine, and recording intake and output information
- Served and protected the hospital community by adhering to professional standards, hospital policies and procedures, federal state, and local requirements

Certified Nursing Assistant   01/2014 to 03/2015

Barrett Nursing Home   Baraboo, WI

- Worked with staff to collaboratively manage and assist intensive care wing of nursing home
- Monitored behaviors and symptoms and reported changes to nurses
- Learned new ways to effectively assist individuals in intensive care from clinical staff