

Building Your Resume

Applications, Resumes, Interviews, and Following Up

Pathways to Success



Introduction

A resume is one of the most important documents in the job-search process. It is often the first document an employer reviews when deciding whether to invite someone for an interview.

A resume should help the employer understand who you are, what you have done, what skills you bring, and why you may be a good fit for the job. It should be clear, organized, honest, and focused on information that is relevant to the role.

The *Building Your Resume* section of Module 2 explains the basic parts of a resume and how each section helps support your application. The goal is to help students understand what to include, how to organize their information, and why a resume should be treated as a focused employment document rather than a full personal history.

What is a Resume?

A resume is a short document that summarizes your education, experience, skills, and qualifications. Employers use resumes to decide whether an applicant may be a good fit for a position.

A strong resume should summarize the most relevant parts of your background. This can include your program of study, previous work experience, volunteer experience, projects, skills, certifications, and other qualifications connected to the job.

A resume should also highlight information that is relevant to the job. This means that not every detail from your life or work history needs to be included. The purpose of the resume is to help the employer quickly see why your experience may match the role.

Simon Belfast
123-456-7890 | SimonBelfastEmail@email.ca | LinkedIn

Business student with customer service, event support, and administrative experience. Skilled in communication, teamwork, Microsoft 365, and supporting students in busy service environments. Interested in student support, office administration, and customer service roles.

Education

Diploma Of Business
Canadore College, Entrepreneurship Academy

North Bay, ON
September 2025 - Present

- Relevant coursework includes business communication, marketing, accounting, and organizational behaviour.
- Developed skills in teamwork, written communication, presentations, and basic business planning.

Experience

Customer Service Associate
Fresh Store Grocery

North Bay, ON
May 2025 - Present

- Assisted customers with questions, purchases, and product locations in a busy retail environment.
- Operated the cash register and handled transactions accurately.
- Communicated with supervisors and team members to complete daily tasks.

Volunteer Experience, Projects, and Community Involvement

Event Support Volunteer
Canadore Volunteer Support

North Bay, ON
September 2025 - Present

- Helped set up and clean up student events, workshops, and cultural activities.
- Greeted students, answered basic questions, and directed participants to event areas.

Group Project Leader
Canadore College

North Bay, ON
January 2025 - May 2025

- Coordinated a class business project with four group members.
- Presented project findings clearly to classmates and instructor.

Skills & Certifications

Microsoft 365 Suite

Obtained March 2025

- Experience using Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Outlook, and Excel for school projects, communication, and basic data organization.

Standard First Aid and CPR-C

First Aid Training Org
Obtained April 2025

- Completed training in basic first aid, CPR, and emergency response procedures.

**Example of a resume*

A good resume should be clear, organized, and easy to scan. Employers may review many applications, so they need to find important information quickly. Simple headings, consistent formatting, and clear bullet points can help make your resume easier to read.

A resume also must use honest and verifiable information. This means that you should only include education, experience, skills, certifications, and accomplishments that are real and that you can explain if asked. Employers may ask about your resume during an interview or verify information through references.

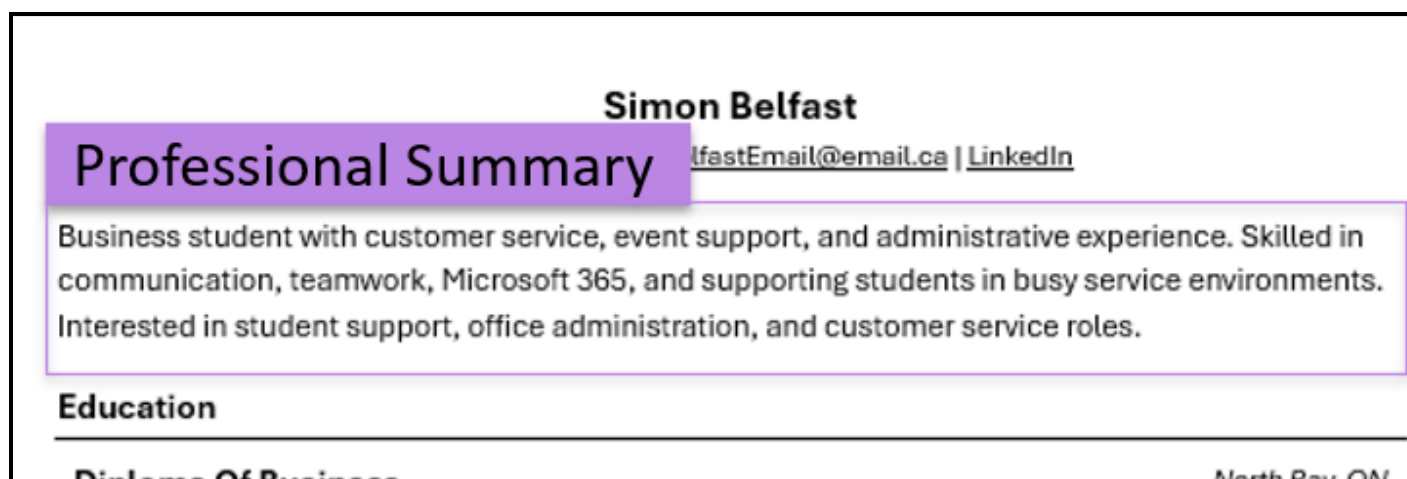
The main purpose of the resume is to help the employer decide whether to invite you for an interview. A resume does not need to explain everything. It needs to give the employer enough relevant information to see that you may be worth speaking with.

A resume is not your full life story. It is a focused document that markets your relevant experience to the employer. A strong resume helps answer the question: “Why should this employer consider interviewing me before other candidates?”

Professional Summary

The professional summary is usually placed near the top of the resume. It is a short section that tells the employer who you are, what skills you bring, and what kind of role you are looking for.

A professional summary should be brief. For many students, two to three lines is enough. The goal is to give the employer a quick overview before they read the rest of the resume.



**Example of a professional summary*

A strong professional summary can answer three basic questions.

First, it can explain **who you are**. For example, a student might write: “Business student with customer service, event support, and administrative experience.” This tells the employer the applicant’s general background.

Second, it can explain **what you bring**. For example: “Skilled in communication, teamwork, Microsoft 365, and supporting students in busy service environments.” This gives the employer a quick view of the applicant’s strengths.

Third, it can explain **what you are looking for**. For example: “Interested in student support, office administration, and customer service roles.” This helps the employer understand the kinds of positions the student is targeting. You can also include if you are looking for full-time or part-time work here, however, this is not strictly needed.

A professional summary should not be too vague. Phrases such as “hardworking individual looking for an opportunity” are common, but they do not tell the employer much. It is better to include specific skills, experience, and job interests.

At the same time, the summary should not exaggerate. Students should avoid claiming to be experts if they are still developing their experience. A good summary is honest, specific, and confident.

The professional summary is useful because it gives the employer a quick first impression. It should make the rest of the resume easier to understand by summarizing you and your interests.

Education and Experience

The Education and Experience sections are usually the main parts of most resumes. These sections show what you have studied, where you have worked, and what skills you have developed. It is suggested to list experiences in each section chronologically with the most recent experience coming first.

Education	
Education	
Diploma Of Business Canadore College, Entrepreneurship Academy	North Bay, ON September 2025-Present
• Relevant coursework includes business communication, marketing, accounting, and organizational behaviour. • Developed skills in teamwork, written communication, presentations, and basic business planning.	
Experience	
Customer Service Associate Fresh Store Grocery	North Bay, ON May 2026 - Present
• Assisted customers with questions, purchases, and product locations in a busy retail environment. • Operated the cash register and handled transactions accurately. • Communicated with supervisors and team members to complete daily tasks.	
Experience	Community Involvement

**Examples of the education and experience sections*

The **Education** section should include your program, school, location, dates of study, and relevant academic details. For students, education may be especially important if they have limited work experience.

In the education section, students can include their program name, institution, expected graduation date, relevant coursework, academic projects, or skills developed through school. For example, a business student might mention coursework in business communication, marketing, accounting, or organizational behaviour if those topics are relevant to the job.

The **Experience** section should include previous jobs or work-related experience. This section usually includes the job title, organization, location, dates of employment, and bullet points explaining key responsibilities or accomplishments.

Strong experience bullet points should show what you did, what skills you used, and how your work connects to the job. For example, instead of only writing “helped customers,” a stronger bullet might say, “Assisted customers with questions, purchases, and product locations in a busy retail environment.”

This kind of bullet point is stronger because it gives more context. It tells the employer what the student did, where they did it, and what kind of skill it demonstrates.

Students should also think about transferable skills. A job may not be exactly the same as the role being applied for, but it may still show useful skills such as communication, teamwork, customer service, organization, problem-solving, reliability, or leadership.

Education and experience sections should be easy to read. Use clear headings, consistent dates, and bullet points that focus on relevant information.

Do not only list where you studied or worked. Use these sections to show the employer what skills, knowledge, and experience you can bring to the role.

What Else to Include

A resume can include additional sections when they help show that you are a good fit for the job. These sections are especially useful for students who may not have a long work history but have relevant experience from school, volunteering, training, or community involvement.

Volunteer Experience, Projects, and Community Involvement		
Event Support Volunteer		North Bay
Canadore Volunteer Support		September 2025 - Pre
- Helped set up and clean up student events, workshops, and cultural activities. - Greeted students, answered basic questions, and directed participants to event areas.		
Group Project Leader		North Bay
Canadore College		January 2026 - May
- Coordinated a class business project with four group members. - Presented project findings clearly to classmates and instructor.		

**Example of additional information which might appear on a resume*

Depending on your experience, you may include volunteer experience. Volunteering can show communication, teamwork, reliability, leadership, community involvement, and willingness to contribute. For students who are new to the Canadian job market, volunteer experience can also help build local experience and references.

You may also include class projects or academic projects. These can be useful if they show skills that connect to the job. For example, a group project may show teamwork, presentation skills, research, planning, or communication. A technical project may show software, data, design, or problem-solving skills.

Certifications or training can also be included. Some jobs may require or prefer specific certifications, such as First Aid, CPR, Food Handler certification, Smart Serve, safety training,

or software training. If the certification is relevant to the job, it should be easy for the employer to find.

Technical skills or software skills can also be useful. For example, students may include Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, Google Workspace, data entry, social media tools, design software, coding languages, or other tools if they are relevant to the role.

Languages can also be included if they are relevant to the job. For example, language skills may be useful in customer service, community support, settlement services, tourism, education, or other roles where communication with different groups is valuable.

Awards, scholarships, or achievements may also be included if they help show strong performance, leadership, dedication, or relevant accomplishments.

Students should also be careful about what not to include. In Canada, resumes usually do not need personal information such as a photo, age, marital status, or full home address. This information is usually not needed for the job and can take up space that could be used for relevant experience or skills.

It is important to have a professional tone in resumes; use the third person when writing your resume, avoid using “I”, or “we” where possible. A resume is not a place to show humor or quirkiness, it is a self-marketing tool, and communicating professional fit effectively is the primary goal of a resume.

The main rule is that every section should have a purpose. Include information that helps the employer understand your skills, experience, and fit for the role.

Additional Experience, Skills, and Certifications

Additional experience, skills, and certifications can help show experience, training, and abilities that may not fit under regular paid work.

For many students, especially international students or students early in their careers, useful experience may come from more than paid employment. It may come from volunteering, class projects, student leadership, community involvement, workshops, training, or campus activities.

Volunteer experience and projects can show relevant experience, teamwork, leadership, communication, and community involvement. For example, helping with student events can show event support, customer service, organization, communication, and reliability. A group project can show teamwork, planning, problem-solving, and presentation skills.

Skills show tools, abilities, and strengths you can use in the workplace. Skills should be specific enough to be useful. For example, instead of only writing “computer skills,” a student could write “Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Outlook, and Excel.” If possible, the student should also show how those tools were used.

Certifications show training or qualifications that may help meet job requirements. A certification can make an application stronger if the employer requires or values that training. For example, First Aid and CPR-C may be useful for certain student support, childcare, recreation, community, or service roles.

Volunteer Experience, Projects, and Community Involvement	
Event Support Volunteer Canadore Volunteer Support	North Bay, ON September 2025 - Present
- Helped set up and clean up student events, workshops, and cultural activities. - Greeted students, answered basic questions, and directed participants to event areas.	
Group Project Leader Canadore College	North Bay, ON January 2026 - May 2026
- Coordinated a class business project with four group members. - Presented project findings clearly to classmates and instructor.	
Skills & Certifications	
Microsoft 365 Suite	Obtained March 2025
Experience using Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Outlook, and Excel for school projects, communication, and basic data organization.	
Standard First Aid and CPR-C	First Aid Training Org Obtained April 2026

**Examples of additional experience, skills, and certifications sections, separated into volunteer experience and community involvement as well as a skills & certifications section.*

This section can be especially helpful when students do not have much paid work experience. It gives them a place to show that they have developed skills in other ways.

However, students should still keep the resume focused. Not every certificate, workshop, project, or activity needs to be included. Choose the ones that help support the job application.

Resume Styles

Most students should begin with a simple Canadian-style resume that is clear, organized, and easy for an employer to read. The best resume style depends on your experience, the job you are applying for, and what information you want the employer to notice first.

Common Resume Styles:

Chronological Resume

A chronological resume lists your experience from most recent to oldest. This is one of the most common resume styles in Canada because it helps employers quickly understand your work history, recent experience, and career development. It works well when your previous jobs, volunteer roles, or placements connect clearly to the position you are applying for.

Example:

A student who has worked as a customer service associate, then as a student event volunteer, may list those experiences in reverse order so the employer can quickly see their recent work and volunteer background.

Functional Resume or Skills-Based Resume

A functional resume focuses more on skills than on job history. This style may be useful for students with limited paid work experience, students changing fields, or students whose relevant experience comes from volunteering, school projects, training, or community involvement. Instead of leading with job titles, the resume highlights skill areas such as communication, customer service, teamwork, leadership, or technical skills.

Example:

A recent graduate applying for an office assistant role may create sections such as “Communication Skills,” “Administrative Skills,” and “Customer Service Skills,” then include examples from class projects, volunteer work, and part-time jobs.

Chronological resume

Summary

Financial Advisor with 7+ years of experience delivering financial/investment advisory services to high value clients. Proven success in managing multi-million dollar portfolios, driving profitability, and increasing ROI through skillful strategic planning, consulting, and financial advisory services.

Professional Experience

Wells Fargo Advisors – Houston, TX

Senior Financial Advisor, August 2020–Present

- Deliver financial advice to clients, proposing strategies to achieve short- and long-term objectives for investments, insurance, business and estate planning with minimal risk
- Develop, review, and optimize investment portfolios for 300+ high value clients with over \$190M AUM (Assets Under Management)
- Ensure maximum client satisfaction by providing exceptional and personalized service, enhancing client satisfaction ratings from 88% to 99.9% in less than 6 months

Suntrust Investment Services, Inc – New Orleans, LA

Financial Advisor, July 2017–August 2020

- Served as knowledgeable financial advisor to clients, managing an over \$20.75M investment portfolio of 90+ individual and corporate clients
- Devised and applied a new training and accountability program that increased productivity from #10 to #3 in the region in less than 2 year period
- Partnered with cross-functional teams in consulting with clients to provide asset management risk strategy and mitigation, which increased AUM by 50%

Maverick Capital Management – New Orleans, LA

Financial Advisor, July 2014–August 2017

- Served as the primary point of contact for over 15 clients
- Managed the portfolios of several major clients with over \$8.5M in total assets

EDUCATION

Louisiana State University

Baton Rouge, LA

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration,
(concentration: finance)

Honors: cum laude (GPA: 3.7/4.0)

May 2014

RELEVANT SKILLS

- Proficient in MS Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) Outlook, MS Project, Salesforce, TFS Project Management, and Webex
- Fluent in English, Spanish, and French

Functional resume format

Summary

Experienced customer service representative with a proven track record of boosting month-to-month sales. Able to predict, evaluate, and meet the specific needs of customers while maintaining an efficient work schedule. Awarded “Employee of the Month” for consistently receiving positive feedback. Seeking to leverage my experience in customer service to fill the Sales Clerk position at Blarney’s.

Relevant Skills

Customer Service

- Receive an average score of +95% on customer service feedback surveys by providing a friendly in-store environment
- Enhance the customer experience by providing quality assistance and in-depth product knowledge
- Educate customers on up-and-coming brands and the latest fashion trends

Sales

- Exceeded sales goals an average of 10% for 5 straight months at GAP
- Upsell customers through the recommendation of products that meet their specific needs
- Process 30+ customer transactions a day, factoring sales, discounts, and promotions into the final price

Merchandising

- Restock and organize new shipments of inventory in a timely manner, cutting average of 2 days off the merchandising process
- Develop and create unique displays that attract customers to a desired product

Professional Experience

Ulta, Manhattan, NY

Sales Clerk

20XX–20XX

GAP, Albany, NY

Sales Representative

20XX–20XX

GAP, Albany, NY

Jr. Sales Representative

20XX–20XX

Education

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (concentration: finance) Honors: cum laude (GPA: 3.7/4.0)

Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA

May 20XX

Combination Resume or Hybrid Resume

A combination resume includes both a skills section and a chronological work history. This can be useful when you want to highlight your strongest skills while still showing where and when you gained experience. A combination resume can work well for students who have some relevant experience but also want the employer to notice specific skills, projects, certifications, or accomplishments.

Example:

A student applying for an International Student Navigator role may include a skills section for communication, Microsoft 365, event support, and student-facing service, then include their work and volunteer history below.

Non-Traditional Resumes

A non-traditional resume may include creative elements such as images, portfolios, videos, websites, or custom layouts. These resumes are more common in creative fields, such as design, media, marketing, or the arts. They may help show creative ability, but they are not the safest choice for most applications. Many employers prefer a simple resume that is easy to read, print, and scan.

Example:

A graphic design student may create an online portfolio with samples of their design work and include a simple resume alongside it.

Infographic Resume

Combination resume

Summary

A general bookkeeper with 8+ years of experience using both single-entry and double-entry systems for medium-sized businesses. Specialize in performing bookkeeping for multimillion-dollar companies. Possess expertise in numerous pieces of bookkeeping software. Identified and eliminated departmental inefficiencies to increase productivity by 15%.

Relevant Skills

Finance

- Performed financial calculations such as amounts due, interest charges, balances, discounts, equity, and principal for a multimillion-dollar company.

Organization

- Checked figures, postings, and documents for correct entry, mathematical accuracy, and proper codes.
- Performed general office duties such as filing, answering telephones, and handling routine correspondence.

Professional Experience

General Bookkeeper

Franklin & Rodgers Business Solutions

Scottsdale, AZ

September 2012 - Present

- Accessed computerized financial information to answer general questions as well as those related to specific accounts.
- Accessed computerized financial information to answer general questions as well as those related to specific accounts.

Administrative Assistant Bookkeeper

Patton Group

Tempe, AZ

June 2010 - August 2012

- Operated computers programmed with accounting software to record, store, and analyze information.
- Operated 10-key calculators, typewriters, and copy machines to perform calculations and produce documents.

Education

B.S. Accounting

Wilhem University, Phoenix, AZ | 2010

A.S. Accounting

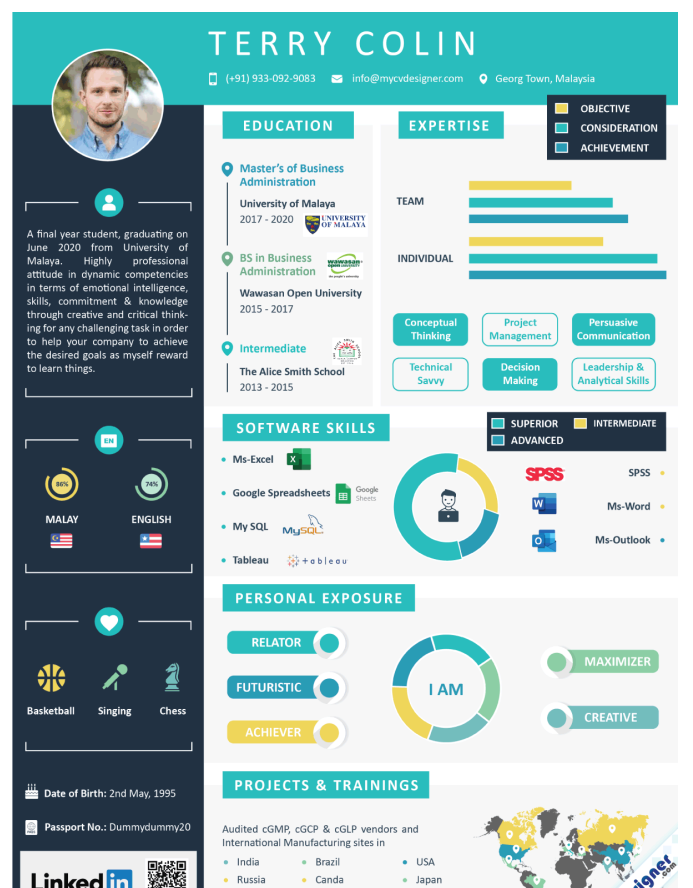
Wilhem University, Phoenix, AZ | 2008



An infographic resume is a type of non-traditional resume that uses visuals, icons, colours, charts, or design elements to present information. This style may be useful for creative or design-focused roles, but it should be used carefully. The resume still needs to be readable, professional, and clear. Some applicant tracking systems may not read heavily designed resumes correctly, so students should usually use a simpler resume unless the job or industry expects creative design.

Example:

A student applying for a social media or design role may use an infographic resume to show design skills, but should still make sure their education, experience, skills, and contact information are accurate and



Use Caution with Creative Resume Styles

Some resumes use graphics, images, colours, videos, websites, or infographics. These may be appropriate for some creative or design-related roles, but they are not the best choice for most job applications. Many employers prefer resumes that are simple, professional, and easy to scan. Applicant tracking systems may also have difficulty reading heavily designed resumes.

For most students, a clear chronological or combination resume is usually the safest starting point.

For more information about different resume styles, examples, and templates, review the **Links and Resources**.

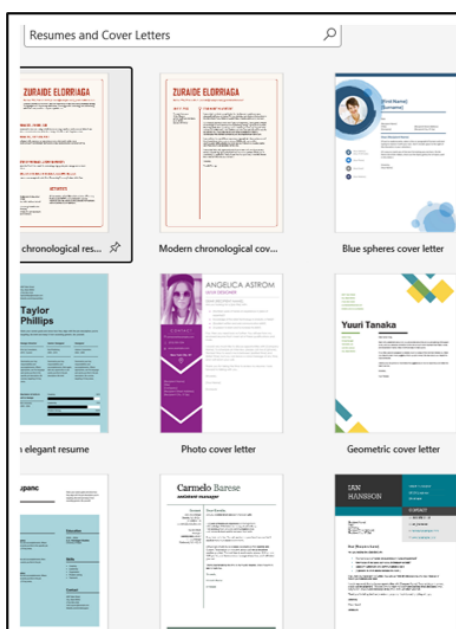
Resume Templates

Students do not need to design a resume from nothing. A resume template can provide a helpful starting point.

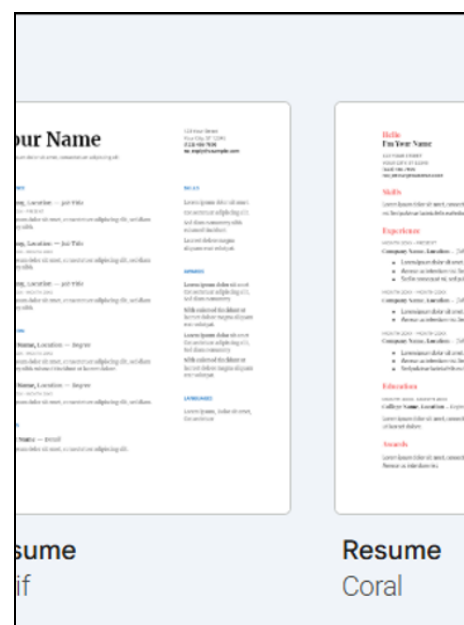
Students may use the Pathways template, a Microsoft Word template, a Google Docs template, or another simple resume format. The important thing is that the resume is clear, organized, and easy to read.

You Name Here Phone Number Email LinkedIn 2-3 lines summarizing your program, relevant experience, key skills, and job goal			
Education <table border="0"> <tr> <td> Education Title, Institution • Bullets </td> <td align="right"> City, Dates of Study/ Date of Completion </td> </tr> </table>		Education Title, Institution • Bullets	City, Dates of Study/ Date of Completion
Education Title, Institution • Bullets	City, Dates of Study/ Date of Completion		
Experience <table border="0"> <tr> <td> Position Title Organization • Key Information • Bullets </td> <td align="right"> City, Dates of Employment </td> </tr> </table>		Position Title Organization • Key Information • Bullets	City, Dates of Employment
Position Title Organization • Key Information • Bullets	City, Dates of Employment		
Volunteer Experience, Projects, and Community Involvement <table border="0"> <tr> <td> Nature of Participation/ Achievement/Position Organization • Key Information Bullets </td> <td align="right"> City, Dates of Participation </td> </tr> </table>		Nature of Participation/ Achievement/Position Organization • Key Information Bullets	City, Dates of Participation
Nature of Participation/ Achievement/Position Organization • Key Information Bullets	City, Dates of Participation		
Skills and Certifications <table border="0"> <tr> <td> Skill Name • Details or sub information </td> <td align="right"> Location/ Organization of Obtainment Date Obtained </td> </tr> </table>		Skill Name • Details or sub information	Location/ Organization of Obtainment Date Obtained
Skill Name • Details or sub information	Location/ Organization of Obtainment Date Obtained		

**Pathways template*



**Templates on MS Word*



**Templates on Google Docs*

When choosing a template, students should remember that both humans and applicant tracking systems may need to read the resume. An applicant tracking system, or ATS, is software that some employers use to help manage applications. If the resume is too complicated, uses unusual formatting, or has information in difficult-to-read sections, it may be harder for the system or employer to understand.

A simple resume is usually better than an overdesigned resume. Avoid templates that rely too much on graphics, icons, columns, photos, colours, or complicated design features. These may look attractive but can make the resume harder to scan.

A good template should have clear sections, readable fonts, consistent spacing, and enough room for useful bullet points. The employer should be able to find your name, contact information, education, experience, skills, and certifications quickly.

The template is only a tool. The content matters most. A simple template with strong, relevant information is usually better than a visually impressive template with unclear or unfocused content.

References on Resumes

In Canada today, references are usually not included on a resume unless the employer specifically asks for them. In many cases, employers will request references separately, later in the hiring process, or after an interview.

This is different from some older resume practices and from practices in some other countries, where references may be listed directly on the resume. Because expectations can vary by employer, students should always review the application instructions carefully.

As a standard rule, do not include references directly on your resume. If an employer wants references up front, they may ask for them on the resume, in a separate document, or as part of the application form.

The operating principle is simple: only include references up front if the employer clearly asks for them.

What Should You Do Next?

Before moving to the next video, choose a resume template and begin filling it out.

Start with your name and contact information. Then add your education, including your program, school, location, and dates of study. After that, add your work experience, volunteer experience, projects, skills, and certifications.

Do not worry if your first draft is not perfect. A first resume draft is a starting point. You can revise it later, especially after learning how to tailor your resume for a specific job.

- As you fill out your resume, ask yourself:
- What education and experience do I have?
- What skills have I developed through work, school, volunteering, or projects?
- What certifications or training do I have?
- What information would help an employer understand that I may be a good fit?
- Is my resume clear, organized, and easy to read?
- Is everything on my resume honest and verifiable?

The next video is **Tailoring Your Resume**. That section will explain how to adjust your resume for a specific job posting and how to highlight the experience that best matches the employer's needs.

Final Takeaway

A resume is a focused document that helps an employer understand why your experience, skills, education, and qualifications may match a job.

A strong resume is clear, honest, organized, and relevant. It should include the information that best supports your application, such as education, work experience, volunteer experience, projects, skills, certifications, and other useful qualifications.

Your resume does not need to include everything about you. It should help the employer understand why you may be a strong candidate for the role.

