Resumes & Cover Letters That Work

Resume Review

Consider the resume below. What errors can you detect? How might these mistakes affect an employer's impression?

Clark Kent
Metropolis, USA
clarkkent@email.com | 555-123-4567

Objective
To get a job where I can do good stuff and help people and use my skills.

Experience
Daily Planet
Reporter
2015 - - Present

- Writing articles
- Interviewing people
- Going to events
- Typing stories
- Did some editing sometimes

Freelance
Photographer
2013-2015

- Took pics
- Used camera
- Sent photos to clients
- Did photo things

Education
Metropolis University
Bachlor of Arts in Journalism
Graduated: 2012

Skills

- Writing
- Communication
- Microsoft Word
- Flying (just kidding lol)
- Team work

References
Available upon request

Examples of Common Mistakes

Typos and Grammar Errors

Mistakes in spelling, punctuation, or grammar can make your resume appear careless and unprofessional, potentially undermining your credibility.

- Impact: Misspellings and punctuation issues can make your resume look careless.
- Example: “Bachlor” instead of “Bachelor.”
- Tip: Use spell check and ask someone else to proofread.

Unclear or Vague Language

Using vague or generic language on your resume can weaken your message, making it harder for employers to understand your skills and accomplishments.

- Impact: Vague language on your resume can blur your strengths and reduce impact.
- Example: “Did some editing sometimes.”
- Tip: Use action verbs and specific examples.

Poor Formatting

A cluttered or inconsistent layout can distract from your resume’s content and make it harder for employers to quickly grasp your qualifications.

- Impact: Inconsistent font, spacing, or alignment distracts from content.
- Example: Inconsistent spacing or formatting.
- Tip: Keep it clean and easy to skim.

Listing Responsibilities Instead of Achievements

Focusing only on job duties rather than accomplishments can make your experience sound generic and fail to highlight the value you brought to previous roles.

- Impact: Listing only responsibilities instead of achievements can blur your strengths and reduce impact.
- Example: Lists tasks like “Typing stories” instead of accomplishments like “Published 200+ articles with front-page features.”
- Tip: Consider, *“What problems did you solve or improvements did you make?”* Even small wins can make your resume stand out.

Too Long or Too Short

A resume that’s either too brief or overly lengthy can miss the mark—short ones may leave out key qualifications, while long ones can overwhelm and dilute your message.

- Impact: A resume that’s too short may leave out key qualifications. A resume that’s too long can overwhelm and dilute your message.
- Example: The resume is short in substance but long in wasted space and vague content.
- Tip: Stick to 1–2 pages based on experience level. Ask: *“Does this help me get the job I want now?”* If not, cut it.