**What is a Resume?**

A resume is a summary of your skills, education, and experience. Like an advertisement for a company trying to sell something, your resume is your advertisement. A resume is one of the most important pieces of writing you will ever create, because a solid resume is the key that will open the door to good jobs. Don’t cheat yourself - work hard on it - and make it a good one.

**What should be included in a resume?**

***Heading***

Your heading includes your most 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 even if they only look at for 30 seconds or less. Also include your address, phone number, and email address.

***Career 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 and 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***

If you are in college, you only need to include college because it is assumed that you have graduated from high school. For the same reason, high school students should not include information from junior high/middle school. You should specify the dates of attendance or graduation (or expected graduation). As a college student, include your major and the degree you expect to receive. 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 cannot assume that the job title explains what you did to all readers so you should include at least two one-line descriptions of what your job duties and responsibilities were. Use action verbs to start each of these descriptions. Do not use “I” in descriptions.

***Activities***

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, baseball team, etc.). Include the years in which you participated. Be aware, however, that some employers may eventually view this information as irrelevant. As high school students, this should not be a concern.

***Summary of Skills***

Some people use this section to include special skills or talents that are not included elsewhere on the resume, but would be relevant to the employer. Some possibilities are:

* Type 60 words per minute
* Fluent in French

***References***

You should have two or three people who have observed your work habits (employers, teachers, coaches, etc.) and are willing to discuss them with a potential employer. These people should also be willing to speak about your character. Be sure that you only ask people to be a reference for you if they will speak well of you, and make sure you have asked their permission to include them as references. “References Available Upon Request” is often listed at the bottom of a resume rather than listing the references directly on the resume. Create a separate list of references including their names, addresses, employers, job titles, and phone numbers (it is up to the reference what phone number they would like you to use). Take this nicely printed list of personal references with you to an interview in case a potential employer requests a list of references.

**How do I set up a resume?**

Your resume should be divided into distinct sections. The italicized words on the first page of this handout are typical section headings - except for the heading section, which should stand out as boldfaced, larger text (without being listed as “Heading Section.”)

**Should items be arranged in any particular order?**

Create your resume so that it lists information in a reverse chronological style: 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.

**Does how the resume look 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.).