

What to Include in a Resume Experience Section

When you're writing a resume, the resume experience section provides detailed information about your employment history. This is the real heart of your resume, and the more years you are employed, the more decisions you will have to make about what to include and what to leave off in this section.

This section of your resume is where employers will look to see what jobs and job titles you've held in the past, and will give employers a sense of your career arc.

Ideally, you want the experience section of your resume to demonstrate growth. Over the course of your career so far, you've almost certainly added skills, experience, and responsibility. This section will demonstrate how you've developed as a candidate, as well as providing a sense that you're an ambitious person who's always learning.

If your career path has taken some twists and turns, this might give you pause, but don't worry – even a zig-zaggy path can demonstrate growth. Some of the strongest candidates are those who've added skills in other, seemingly unrelated fields. It's all about how you present the information. It's also OK to leave out jobs that don't fit the story you're trying to tell the hiring manager.

Writing the Experience Section

List the companies you worked for, dates of employment, the positions you held, and a bulleted list of responsibilities and achievements. Internships, summer jobs, and temporary jobs, in addition to permanent positions, can all be included in this part of your resume.

Where should you keep your money?

You do not have to include every job that you have held, especially if you have several years of experience or have worked in unrelated fields. Entry-level employees, who do not have a lot of on-the-job experience, should include every job possible, while emphasizing the skills that match the job listing.

But once you have worked for more than 10 years, you may find that some of your earlier jobs are less relevant to your career. You can leave those positions off, or group together earlier experience in a very truncated format at the end of your resume. Here are two examples of how early jobs can be listed on your resume:

Additional experience includes retail sales jobs at Barry's Books (20XX-20XX), Cindy's Clothing Store (20XX-20XX), and waitressing at Muffins and More (20XX-20XX).

Additional experience includes positions at ABC Company and XYZ company.

How Much Experience to List

Typically, a resume will have information about your most recent 10 to 15 years of experience. Pay attention to the amount of experience the employer prefers. Do not exceed that amount of specialized experience by more than two years. Beyond that timeframe, you do not need to include details, unless the positions are relevant to your current career.

In some industries, including experience that dates back more than 10 or 15 years can actually hurt candidates. For example, in tech, including jobs that focused on older, outdated technologies might

make a candidate look stuck in the past – even if they’ve kept their skills current. Here's more information on how many years of experience to include on your resume.

Writing Resume Job Descriptions

For each company you have worked for, you will want to provide your title, the company's name and location, the years you were employed, and a short summary (usually in bullet points) of your responsibilities and accomplishments.

Avoid making the mistake of simply listing tasks. You want to use this section to highlight your abilities and accomplishments. Use resume action words and focus on demonstrating that you helped the company solve its problems and achieve its goals – bonus points if you can do so with dollar sign attached. Here's more information on how to write job descriptions on your resume.

There are many ways you can present the information about each job. A resume template can help guide you toward choosing a design that works for you. Whatever style and format you select, make sure to be consistent.

If you are using bullet points to describe your most recent position, you should use bullet points to describe each position you have held. If you have the years you worked right-aligned for one job, make sure that you follow that same alignment for each and every position listed in the section.

Resume Experience Section Example

Here is how the resume experience section is formatted:

Company #1
City, State
Dates Worked

Job Title

Responsibilities / Achievements
Responsibilities / Achievements

Company #2
City, State
Dates Worked

Job Title

Responsibilities / Achievements
Responsibilities / Achievements

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