

**C**CAREER  
**S**WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY  
SERVICES

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**GUIDE TO  
RESUME WRITING**

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- The purpose of a resume is to give a **30-second snapshot** of your qualifications to a potential employer. Your resume will initially be **skimmed, not read**. Keep your information **pertinent and concise**.
- Resume categories typically include:
  - A. Objective
  - B. Education
  - C. Honors
  - D. Experience (Related Experience, Other Experience, or Career Specific i.e. Accounting, Research, etc.)
  - E. Skills (Computer, Language, Technical Abilities, etc.)
  - F. Summary of Qualifications
  - G. Activities
  - H. Professional Involvement (Association membership, presentations, publications, etc.)
  - I. Volunteer Service
  - J. References
- Write down everything you have done in each of the categories. Include:
  - A. Name of Organization
  - B. Title of Your Position
  - C. Location
  - D. Dates
  - E. Description of Your Role, Responsibilities, and Accomplishments. Use phrases that start with **action verbs**.
- An issue that concerns students is how to market themselves if they have a low G.P.A.
  - A. Highlight experiences and skills that relate to the position sought. These are often considered more important than G.P.A. to an employer.
  - B. If your overall G.P.A. is lower than that in your major, be sure to include both G.P.A.s.
- Bring your typed and formatted resume to Career Services for a critique. If you are having trouble preparing a one-page resume, we will be happy to assist you.

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### How to Annoy a Potential Employer? Misspell His Name

Resume mistakes that annoy employers include:

- Dates Missing
- Experience not listed chronologically.
- Accomplishments are not listed--only job duties are reported.
- Accomplishments are listed with no reference of where and when they were made.
- Typos, misspellings, poor grammar, and incomplete sentences.
- Claims of personal strengths not backed up by fact; some claims of skills or strengths seem inflated and make the candidate appear to have qualifications that he doesn't really possess.
- Information is disorganized and lacks clear direction and focus.
- Attitude of the applicant. (There's an "entitlement" mentality that suggest he wants to know what the company can do for him.) *Resume Magic* in Journal of Career Planning and Employment.

# REVERSE CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME OUTLINE

This resume style is the most common.

## NAME

### Campus Address

P.O. Box 123  
Lexington, VA 24450  
Phone Number  
Email Address

### Home Address

123 Main Street  
Metropolis, GA 12345  
Phone Number

**Objective** This is a **simple** statement to tell the employer which position interests you. It can be stated as a job title or career field. (This category is optional.)

**Education** List colleges you've attended (including summer classes and study abroad). List this information in reverse chronological order. Include name of school, degree earned, date earned, major, G.P.A., and any other pertinent information as applicable.

You may wish to include your high school if you attended a well known school or are returning to the area following graduation. If you are seeking a teaching position, your attendance at an independent school may be very relevant.

**Honors** You can list honors and scholarships in a separate section, or include this information under education.

**Experience** List your work experience in this section. Be sure to include the name of the company or organization for which you worked, the location of the company (city and state), your job title, and the dates of your employment. Rather than simply describing your duties, highlight your contributions or achievements. Use short phrases that begin with action verbs(see list on page 3). List this information in reverse chronological order.

If you have experience that is directly related to your objective, you may want to have a section entitled "Related Experience" and another section called "Other Experience." Again, each section should be organized in reverse chronological order.

**Skills** This section can list foreign languages spoken, technical abilities related to your field of interest, or computer skills (hardware and software familiarity). You may wish to call this section "Summary of Qualifications" and highlight skills (technical and transferrable) that relate to your objective.

**Activities** List college and community activities in this section. Organize them as in "Experience."

**References** Do not list your references directly on your resume. For positions in journalism, attach an accompanying list of your references and the address and telephone numbers. You may say simply, "Available upon request" or if you have written recommendations on file with our office, you may say "Available from Career Services, Washington & Lee University, Lexington, Virginia 24450-0303. (540) 463-8595."

# ACTION VERBS AND PHRASES

## Analytical Realm

Analyze  
Evaluate  
Classify  
Estimate  
Appraise  
Examine  
Research

## Communications Realm

Buy  
Correspond  
Distribute  
Edit  
Interpret  
Translate  
Read  
Proofread  
Represent  
Recruit  
Promote  
Sell  
Solicit  
Speak  
Present  
Advertise  
Write

## Creative Realm

Arrange  
Display  
Design  
Develop  
Perform  
Desktop Publish  
Print  
Layout  
Paint  
Photograph  
Sketch  
Illustrate

## Physical Realm

Demonstrate  
Construct  
Protect  
Repair

## Interactive Realm

Coach  
Direct  
Tutor  
Advise  
Counsel  
Handle complaints  
Interview  
Meet  
Greet  
Gather data  
Teach  
Train

## Organizational Realm

Manage  
Delegate  
Plan  
Record keep  
Supervise  
Oversee  
Update

## Quantitative Realm

Account  
Bookkeep  
Budget  
Calculate  
Compute  
Process data  
Maintain  
Track  
Monitor  
Program

## Scientific Realm

Handle specimens  
Inspect  
Examine  
Assess  
Set up  
Design experiments  
Measure  
Treat  
Diagnose

From *Liberal Arts Power* by Burton Jay Nadler, copyright 1989.

# SAMPLE REVERSE CHRONOLOGICAL FORMAT

## ROCHELLE RICHARDS

*Campus Address*  
2 State Street  
Lexington, VA 24450  
540-463-0000  
email: rrichards@wlu.edu

*Permanent Address*  
11 Cole Avenue  
New York, NY 15236  
412-773-1111

### OBJECTIVE

Events Coordinator for Museum

### EDUCATION

#### **Washington & Lee University, Lexington, Virginia**

Candidate for Bachelor of Arts Degree in English and French, June, 1999. GPA 3.19

#### **Institut d'Etudes Europeennes, Paris, France**

One year of study during 1997-98

### EXPERIENCE

#### **L'Assemblee Nationale Internship, Paris, France, Spring, 1998**

Assisted French deputies with constitutional and media research. Used computerized archive machine.

#### **Middlesex Historical Society, Middlesex, Pennsylvania, Summers 1996, 1997**

Provided house tours, developed and conducted in-house and outreach interpretive programs. Researched Middlesex history and residents. Inventoried and catalogued collections and wrote new brochure for 1995 conference. Recognized as outstanding intern as result of successful outreach programs for intercity youth.

#### **Town of Babylon Summer Camp, Bay Shore, New York, Summer 1995**

Led groups of young children, ages 7-12 in arts and crafts activities. Handled clerical duties in front office.

### ACTIVITIES

#### **Fancy Dress Ball, Washington & Lee University**

Chairman. Managed \$85,000 budget, organized details of university-wide event attended by three-thousand guests. Supervised committee of one hundred and fifty workers in set-up. Revised committee training to include bookkeeping and contract negotiations. Successfully introduced community service initiative that provided surplus funds to local free health care clinic.

#### **The Reeves Center, Washington & Lee University**

Assisted in the research for major collection of porcelains, furniture, and paintings. Led guided tours and provided background of extensive collection.

### SKILLS

Speak French fluently. Computer knowledge includes WordPerfect, Microsoft Word, Quattro Pro, Aldus Pagemaker, Photoshop, and internet including webdesign.

### REFERENCES

Available upon request.

## MICHAEL G. ROBINSON

### Campus Address

P.O. Box 123  
Lexington, VA 24450  
540-464-0000  
email: mrobinson@wlu.edu

### Home Address

123 Main Street  
Greenville, SC 12345  
516-512-4444

**OBJECTIVE** Staff Accountant Position with a Public Accounting Firm.

**EDUCATION** **Washington & Lee University**, Lexington, Virginia  
Bachelor of Science with Special Attainments in Commerce, June 1995  
Major in Accounting, extensive coursework in Journalism,  
Recipient of the Vincent L. Bradford Scholarship  
GPA 3.03

**COMPUTER**

- Proficient in operating various accounting software packages including Computer Associates' ACCPAC Plus and Sourcemate's Accountmate.
- Developed expertise in utilizing Computax, ProSystem Fx, and Lotus 1-2-3.
- Proficient in WordPerfect and OfficeWriter.

**RELATED EXPERIENCE**

*Accounting Intern*, Summer 1994  
**Marks Shron & Co., CPAs**, Greenville, SC

- Maintained client ledgers.
- Generated computerized financial statements; manage the input, processing and transmittal of client tax returns via Computax.
- Recorded journal entries and invoices for outside clients.
- Maintained in-house time and billing system.

*Accounts Payable & Payroll Clerk*, Summer, 1993  
**Coca-Cola Bottling Co. of South Carolina**, Greenville, SC

- Batched invoices, purchase orders, and receipts.
- Contacted vendors for verification of payment.
- Completed workers compensation forms and issued checks to respective branches.

**VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE**

*Personal Care Attendant*, 1993-present  
Lexington, Virginia

- Prepare physically challenged student for classes and activities.
- Prepare meals and monitor required exercises.

**ACTIVITIES**

- Lambda Chi, Treasurer
- Volunteer Consulting
- Intramural Football and Softball

**REFERENCES** Available upon request

# Nathaniel Panther

## Present address

123 Main Street  
Lexington, Virginia 24450  
(540) 464-1234  
email: [apanther@wlu.edu](mailto:apanther@wlu.edu)

## Permanent address

123 Winnetka Avenue  
Winnetka, Illinois 60093  
(708) 446-1234

**Objective:** Position in Sports Marketing

## Professional Experience

### **Washington & Lee University**

*Lexington, Virginia 1998-1999*

**Assistant to Sports Information Director.** Represented Public Relations Office at athletic events. Wrote, edited and assisted in the layout of media guides and game programs. Compiled game statistics; reported highlights to major media outlets. Served as public address announcer for lacrosse games.

### **National Basketball Association**

*New York, New York Summer 1998*

**Public Relations Internship.** Corresponded with writers and reporters. Responsible for fact checking and research. Compiled and updated periodical archives; distributed information to staff. Maintained daily contact with fans; answered all general questions and fulfilled all requests forwarded to Public Relations Office.

### **Cook County School System**

*Glenview, IL Summer 1997*

**Grounds crew.** Worked approximately 50 hours per week. Learned to prune trees and maintain athletic fields including golf greens. Successfully worked on projects staffed by local parolees, youth offenders, and seasonal workers.

## Education

### **Washington and Lee University**

*Lexington, Virginia*

Bachelor of Arts Degree in Journalism, June 1999.

## Activities

### **Ring-tum Phi student newspaper**

Sportswriter 1997-99

### **Model United Nations**

Research Chairperson 1998-99

### **LIFE (Lifestyle Information For Everyone)**

Publications committee member 1997-98

Wrote pamphlet introducing parents to campus resources for drug and alcohol drug information and assistance.

## SAMUEL S. SCIENCE

### Campus Address

601 McLaughlin St.  
Lexington, VA 24450  
540-123-1234  
sscience@wlu.edu

### Home Address

532 Liberty  
Odessa, TX 24405  
540-533-3333

## EDUCATION

**Washington and Lee University**, Lexington, Virginia  
Candidate for Bachelor of Arts Degree in Geology, June 1998  
GPA 3.1

## RELATED EXPERIENCE

**Thyme Oil Co.**, El Paso, Texas, Summer 1997.

Updated well files and maps, constructed computerized horizontal well plots, created computerized subsurface geologic maps based on 3-D seismic data, made picks for prospective drilling sites, and assisted with 3-D seismic survey.

**Pioneer Energy Co.** Odessa, Texas, Summer 1996.

Gathered data on specific wells and prospective drilling areas, constructed cross-sections, created subsurface geologic maps based on interpolation of well data.

## SKILLS

**Computer Skills:** Proficient in Quattro Pro, MS Excel, MS Word, Word Perfect, Windows, 3-D Pak and various mapping programs. Knowledge of GIS, Grass, AutoCad, ER Mapper and Remote Sensing.

**Field Equipment:** Experience with seismic refraction surveys, gravity surveys, electrical resistivity surveys, and writing related technical reports.

## OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE

**Washington and Lee Snack Bar**, Lexington Virginia. 1995-present.  
Reorganized student work schedule to produce better attendance and productivity.

**Odessa County**, Odessa, Texas, Summers 1993-1995.  
Organized youth programs and supervised baseball leagues for intercity youth.

## ACTIVITIES

**Minority Student Association**, 1994-present.  
President, 1996-1997.

Coordinated the membership drive and reorganized meetings to include community service initiative. Recruited largest and most diverse membership in history of the University.

**Student Recruitment Committee**, 1996 and 1997.  
Presented information and gave student tours to prospective freshmen and families.

**Student Activities Board**, 1997-present.  
Provided leadership in developing new venues for international performers and lecturers. Marketed new programming resulting record attendance.

## JOHN SMITH

### Campus Address

P.O. Box 123  
Lexington, VA 24450  
540-464-0000  
email: jsmith@wlu.edu

### Home Address

123 Main Street  
Arlington, VA 12345  
703-512-4444

**OBJECTIVE** Summer internship with a management consulting firm.

**EDUCATION** **Washington & Lee University**, Lexington, Virginia  
Bachelor of Science in Psychology, June 1997  
Significant coursework in Economics. GPA 2.89

**EMPLOYMENT** **Clerk, Washington & Lee University Registrar's Office**  
**Lexington, VA Summer 1994**

Organized files of student and alumni academic records.

**Coach and Counselor, Metropolitan Soccer School**  
**Annandale, VA Summers 1990-93**

Coached various age groups.

**Arby's**  
**Summers 1992 & 1993**

Assisted with drive through window orders. Operated grill equipment and trained new workers.

**Runner, Smith and Jones Law Firm**  
**Arlington, VA Summers 1991-92**

Delivered documents and assisted with data entry.

**COMPUTER SKILLS** Familiar with internet, Windows, WordPerfect, Microsoft Office, Excel, and PageMaker.

**ACTIVITIES** **Washington and Lee Soccer Team.** 1993-present. Starter.

**Outing Club.** 1993-present.

Designed and edited *Guide to Rockbridge County Outdoor Activities*. Initiated flyfishing and fly-tying interest group. Received University support and funding for production and distribution of *Guide* to alumni.

**REFERENCES** Available upon request.

# FUNCTIONAL RESUME OUTLINE

This style highlights specific skills that relate to your objective.

For the most part, employers prefer the Chronological style.

If you have questions about how this style may work for you, see a counselor.

## NAME

### Campus Address

P.O. Box 123  
Lexington, VA 24450  
Phone Number  
Email Address

### Home Address

123 Main Street  
Metropolis, GA 12345  
Phone Number

### Objective

This is a simple statement to tell the employer which position interests you. It can be stated as a job title or career field.

### Summary of Qualifications

This section is optional. It allows you to describe qualities that may not be obvious from your experience. It also summarizes the highlights of your experience.

### Education

This section is the same as on the chronological resume.

### Experience

The information in this section will be different from the chronological resume in that your skills and experience will be separated by type. For example, you may want to highlight your organizational skills. In a paragraph with that heading, you would describe, using action verbs, specific tasks that used those skills. The tasks may come from a job, an activity, volunteer work, or another experience in which you have been involved.

Other skills would be described in the same manner and separated by a space.

### Work History

List name of company or organization, your job title, and dates. No descriptions are necessary, as they have been included in the "Experience" section.

### Activities

List college and community activities in this section with the organizational name, your role, and dates.

### References

Available upon request.

**JON F. MACKEY**

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*Campus: 123 Washington St., Lexington, VA 24450, (540) 123-4567*

*Home: 123 George Avenue, Charleston, WV 23456, (123) 123-4567*

**OBJECTIVE**

Position as a Library Assistant

**SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS**

Successfully designed and created proposal database  
Special talent for locating needed information  
Excellent written and oral communication skills  
Extensive marketing and promotional experience

**EDUCATION**

Washington & Lee University, Lexington, Virginia  
Bachelor of Arts Degree in English, June 1999, GPA 2.89  
Extensive Coursework in Computer Science

**RELEVANT EXPERIENCE**

**INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND RETRIEVAL**

- ↑ Extracted and disseminated proposal lists for weekly/annual marketing reports.
- ↑ Coordinated interviews and conducted research for newsletter on firm developments.
- ↑ Provided employees with specific proposal information from a broad range of disciplines.
- ↑ Gathered information from a variety of sources for government forms.
- ↑ Streamlined marketing department for easier access to promotional materials.

**COMPUTER AND TECHNICAL SKILLS**

- ↑ Macintosh and IBM experience; proficient in Microsoft EXCEL/Word; QuarkXPress; WP 6.0.
- ↑ Monitored technical radio equipment.
- ↑ Knowledge of PASCAL and BASIC programming languages.
- ↑ Created budget spreadsheets on EXCEL for cost proposals.

**COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

- ↑ Programmed and engineered own radio show.
- ↑ Wrote, edited and formatted newsletters, brochures and presentations.
- ↑ Created and scheduled print and spoken advertisements.
- ↑ Publicized theater events and letter writing campaign.
- ↑ Wrote press releases, PSAs, and mass-mailed letters.

**EMPLOYMENT HISTORY**

Marketing Intern, Urbitran Associates, New York, NY	Summer 1998
Publications Intern, West Virginia Arts Center, Charleston, WV	Summer 1997

**ACTIVITIES**

Disk Jockey, WLUR (Student radio station)	1994-1996
Member, Washington & Lee Society for the Arts	1996-1997
Features Writer, Ring-tum Phi (Student newspaper)	1997-1999

# ELECTRONIC RESUME SCANNING

## TIPS FOR WRITING A “SCANNABLE” RESUME

In today's computer age, more and more large companies are beginning to electronically scan resumes to maximize efficiency in their search for new employees. A scannable resume

- maximizes the computer's ability to “read” your resume.
- maximizes your ability to get “hits” (a hit is when one of your skills matches the computer search)

The following tips will be helpful in making your resume more easily scannable.

- Use *Sans Serif* fonts. These are fonts that do not have little diagonal “slash marks” at the ends of horizontal lines to make the letters fancy. The following sans serif fonts are best to use: Helvetica, Futura, Univers, Optima. Times, New Century Schoolbook, ITC Bookman, Palatino & Courier are serif fonts that work well, too.
- Font size should be between 10-14 points.
- Avoid italics, script and underlining words.
- Boldface type is usually okay, but avoid it if you want to be safe.
- Avoid any graphics and shading.
- Use horizontal and vertical lines sparingly. It is best to avoid them entirely, but if you do choose to include a line, make sure there is plenty of room on either side of it.
- Do not compress your resume to make it fit on one page. More white space means a more scannable resume.
- NEVER use a dot -matrix printer. Use an ink jet or laser printer to insure a good quality print job.
- ALWAYS send originals. Photocopied resumes lose clarity in the process.
- Avoid abbreviations, even for degree titles. When in doubt, write it out.
- Do use industry jargon and abbreviations (like MIS for Management Information Systems) whenever possible. Scanners are programmed to search for certain keywords in a resume, so make sure you use as many as possible! (see pages 58-68 in *Electronic Resume Revolution* by Kennedy & Morrow located in the resource library).
- Use traditional resume formats (chronological, functional, achievement or a combination of these formats).
- Use light colored (white or ivory) 8 1/2” X 11” paper. Print on one side only!
- Your name should stand alone on the first line of your resume. Put your address below your name, not next to it or above it.
- Explain any unfamiliar job titles.
- No staples!
- Do not fold your resume! Send it in a large envelope (make sure it has enough postage).

(From *Electronic Resume Revolution* by J.L. Kennedy & T.J. Morrow, 1994 and *Preparing the Ideal Scannable Resume* by Resumix, 1994)

## FINAL POINTS

For more resume samples, visit the Career Services library. Some of our favorite titles include:

- *Liberal Arts Power!* by Burton Jay Nadler
- *The Damn Good Resume Guide* by Yana Parker
- *The Smart Woman's Guide to Resumes and Jobhunting* by Julie Adair King and Betsy Sheldon.

Don't forget to have your resume reviewed by a counselor during Quick Questions! Check our website for days and times: [careers.wlu.edu](http://careers.wlu.edu)

And always remember--NO errors accepted in a resume!

**Revised August, 1999**