

The Writer's Resume

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Were you born to write, but have writer's block when it comes to your resume? You're not alone. Frustrated scribes frequently discuss such struggles on the Monster Resume Tips message board. Whether you're seeking freelance assignments or a full-time writing position, follow these tips to create a powerful resume.

Determine Your Key Selling Points

Given what you know about the prospective employer's needs, why should you be selected for the assignment or job? What do you offer that your colleagues may not? By answering these questions first, you can tailor your resume to the employer's requirements.

Create a Targeted Summary

Include a qualifications summary below your name and contact information. Your summary should present your career objective and the main reasons why you are an excellent candidate. Keep it brief — a paragraph of about six lines or several short bullet points should suffice.

For example:

Accomplished corporate communications writer with 10 years of experience developing effective materials, including: press releases, marketing collateral, product packaging, software manuals, training manuals, internal communications and Web sites. Successfully fosters positive relationships with senior executives, stakeholders, clients and team members. Proven ability to use writing and interpersonal skills to meet corporate objectives.

Focus on your related experience

Many writers, especially freelancers, have work experience outside the writing field. Even if you held other day jobs, you may create an employment entry for your freelance assignments.

For example:

Freelance Writer, 1/2000 to present

Write copy for advertisements, brochures, press releases, newsletters and phone scripts for diverse industry clients. Consistently meet tight deadlines while delivering top-quality materials.

Key Accomplishments:

- Reached 120% of customer acquisition target, capturing 7,500 new subscribers in six months following development and launch of a niche-marketing campaign.
- Created brochures and supporting materials that contributed to maximum-capacity attendance at sales prospecting events for a leading technology solutions provider.
- Facilitated a medical billing company's domination of the northeast market with successful PR initiatives. Wrote press releases that secured media hits in the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times and BusinessWeek.

Include positions that are unrelated to writing to show your employment history, but keep the descriptions brief and emphasize any writing-related job responsibilities and achievements.

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Include a Publications List

It's best to include work that was actually published, but inexperienced writers may include unpublished work. Separate your publications into different categories based on the genres for which you wrote (e.g., short stories, fiction, newsletters, magazine articles, books, e-books, etc.).

List Your Awards

If you've received any awards or accolades, create a separate "Awards" section for them.

Prepare Your Clips

You will probably be asked to present clips along with your resume. Select samples of your best work. You may want to have them nicely bound in a portfolio for your hard-copy presentation. You should also have clips ready to send via email (in Adobe PDF or MS Word format) and available online. Remember, that clips are writing samples and you cannot grant the permission for them to be reprinted unless you own the copyright.

Inexperienced writers need to get creative when preparing clips. Did you help write or edit any newsletters in school or for charity? Have you written short stories, poetry, travelogues or movie reviews? Were you involved in developing marketing materials or in-house communications for any of your employers? You might be surprised at how many writing gems you find when you start searching your files.

Proofread Your Resume

Most hiring managers detest typos on resumes, but it is especially crucial for writers to avoid such careless mistakes. Meticulously review your resume to ensure accuracy and consistency, and ask your colleagues to double-check your resume to make sure it's perfect.