

Developing a Compelling Resume

You may feel a bit intimidated by the idea of writing a resume as a high school student. You are not alone! The steps listed below will help you make the task of preparing a compelling resume that employers can use to decide you are the right fit for the job they are trying to fill.

Oh, and don't worry that you may not have had your first job. Your Westbrook High School experience has provided you great knowledge and skills that will make a compelling resume.

Follow these steps:



Study job postings that interest you.

- Focus on key words the employers use in job listings.
- While researching, think about how you have practiced the skills you read about.
- Ask experienced professionals what they consider important in making hiring decisions. Ask your parents about their workplace.

Sample Job Description for Camp Office Staff at a Connecticut state park: Provides general camp office support services; registers campers; checks in reservations; directs visitors; provides directions; and answers questions about the campground, State camping rules and regulations, campground activities, and the local area. Minimum Age: 16. Special Requirements: Previous retail/customer service experience preferred. Approximate Dates of Employment: mid-May – Columbus. Ability to follow directions.

How have you practiced key skills listed in this announcement?

- Office support services – Do you have computer software skills? Any experience with greeting visitors to school events?
- Provides directions and answers question – Do you have any experience helping classmates or leading a club? Have you served as a sports or academic team captain?
- Minimum age 16 – Are you 16 years old?
- Previous retail/customer service experience preferred – Have you ever been asked to handle money on a job or in a volunteer experience? Have you volunteered at an event where you helped people find their way around?
- Mid-May – Columbus Day – What is your availability for working during this period of time?
- Ability to follow directions – Did you learn how to follow directions from any of your teachers? Would they say you follow directions well in completing school projects?

It is very important to use key words or phrases from the job description in your resume, especially since many companies use software programs that seek out key word matches to find a list of candidates for a follow up interview.



Gather and compile personal and employment information.

- For any **jobs, internships, or volunteer experiences you have held**, gather name of employer, name of supervisor, dates you were employed and a list of tasks you performed on the job. The supervisor's name will not show up on your resume, but that person might be a reference for you.
- Get **your contact information** together, including name, address, telephone number, email address, LinkedIn address.
- Have you participated in **any training outside of school**? For example, lifeguard training, Babysitting class, CPR/First Aid. Gather dates of certification and expiration dates of the certifications.
- Make a **list of awards and honors**. For example, Honor Roll, Outstanding Player, Club President, Student of the Month
- Make a **list of the courses you have taken in high school that align with the job postings** you researched. For example, if you are interested in working in the hospitality industry you would want to think about any business courses you have taken, any culinary courses you have taken or any teen leadership courses you have taken. Include AP or UConn Early College Experience courses.
- **Key information about your education.**
 - Do you know your Grade Point Average (GPA)? Plan to include your GPA if it is good. If it isn't close to 3.5, just leave it off.
 - What is the address of the school? If you transferred to Westbrook High School from another school, just include the information for Westbrook High School.
 - What clubs, sports, theatre, music or other extracurricular activities have you participated in throughout high school.
- Make a list of any **skills you have gained over your lifespan**. High School students have practiced a lot of skill building! After all, skill- and knowledge-building is what school is all about! For help with this, ask people around you how they would describe you? Or, ask yourself how would the people around you describe you? Here are some to think about:
 - *Communication skills*—presenting in class and writing papers, being friendly, reading, verbal communication, customer service, leading a team or club
 - *Dependability and responsibility*—getting to school and class on time, turning in assigned papers on time, completing group project components in a timely way, being organized
 - *Quick learner*—showing initiative, demonstrating a willingness to learn, energetic, committed to be accurate
 - *Teamwork*—teams or clubs, music or theatre groups
 - *Technology Skills*—Microsoft Office Suite (MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access), Adobe, social media (Make sure your social media sites do not contain inappropriate information.), etc.
- Contact information for at least three **people who will serve as references** for you. These should be people who know about your skills (teachers, coaches, former employers, supervisors from volunteer experiences) and people who know you personally and can speak to your integrity. Do not include family members. Gather name, professional title, address, email address and telephone number.

HINT: Be sure to ask permission to use someone as a reference first! And, don't forget to send them a copy of your completed resume so they have something to talk about should they be contacted to give a reference.



Write down everything and save it somewhere.

- You need to save this information somewhere so that you don't lose track of it, without regard to how it is formatted.
- Naviance resume builder is an excellent place to store this information for a few good reasons. First, of all, you have access to this account. You will have access to your Naviance account as long as you are in high school and after you graduate. Second, your teachers and counselors are able to take a look at your resume information as they write college and work recommendations for you.



Choose a resume layout and format the information you have compiled.

- When choosing a layout (the arrangement of items on a document), remember that hiring managers often make decisions about whether a candidate has good match for a job by what they see on the top one third of the resume. The bottom two thirds of your resume should provide the detail or evidence of those qualifications you listed in the top one third.
- A great resume layout for a high school student, or someone early in their career, includes:
 - Resume heading: Full name, home address, email address, telephone number.
 - Profile: This is a short, succinct overview that gives a hiring manager a snapshot of you, your skills and accomplishments. It is like the thesis statement of your resume. Ask yourself how do people describe me, what do I want to do, for whom or with whom do I want to do it, where do I want to do it and at what level of responsibility.

Example Profile: Responsible, motivated high school student with a positive attitude, strong work ethic and customer service skills seeking an entry level position in the hospitality industry

Example Profile: Self-motivated and reliable high school graduate with experience and training in welding, woodworking and automotive repair seeking entry level position in manufacturing, automotive or construction/maintenance trades.

- Summary of Qualifications or Highlights of Qualifications: This is a bulleted list of your skills, abilities, experience, accomplishments and what qualifies you for the position. Think about the skills you have gained through high school. This summary of qualifications appears on the top one third of your resume and should include five to eight bullet points. Be sure to use key words you discovered in the job posting.

Example Summary of Qualifications:

- *Demonstrated customer service experience with ability to convey information persuasively both orally and in writing*
- *Ability for building positive relationships with others using humor, helpfulness and cultural sensitivity*
- *Able to apply lessons learned as a lettered student athlete to motivate and support team members in assigned tasks and projects*
- *A+ math student with ability to use math skills to ensure accuracy in order processing, cash handling and credit transactions*
- *Solid command of Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint)*

- Experience Highlights: Your work and volunteer history is a very important part of your resume. This should include jobs, internships and volunteer experiences. Be sure to include the job title, company and location, dates of employment or volunteering. Provide a brief description of the job or volunteer duties and then add a bulleted list of your strongest accomplishments for each job. Use past tense if you are describing a job or volunteer experience where you no longer work. Use present tense for jobs you where you are currently working.

Example of Experience Highlights:

Designer Fashions, Anytown CT

Sales Associate (Summer 2019)

Demonstrated engaging customer service skills and a solid work ethic for a busy retail store. Greeted customers and helped in product selection, check-out and merchandising.

- Willingly stepped up to work overtime to ensure adequate staffing during sales events.
- Earned ‘Employee of the Month’ award.

- Education: Since you may not have graduated, you can simply put, “Westbrook High School, Class of 20xx, GPA x.xx. If your GPA is not at least 3.5, don’t display it on your resume.
- Certifications: (Optional) If you have certifications that are relevant to the job, create a category to list those. A sample certification might be CPR/First Aid.
- Technical Skills: (Optional) If you have technical skills that are relevant to the job, create a category to list those, if you haven’t already mentioned them in your Summary of Qualifications.
- Now choose a great format (the style of the document) for your resume. Pick a format that is not distracting. Make sure that the top one third of your resume format displays that important information that lets a hiring manager see why you are the right candidate for employment. The bottom two thirds provides the evidence for why you are the right candidate. A simple Google search will provide you with multiple resume templates to choose from.



Save your work!

- Be prepared to share your resume in a variety of forms—Google Doc, Microsoft Word, PDF, for example.
- Create a file name that is easy for a hiring manager to find and track your application.

Example: Jane.Doe_Resume.doc or DoeJane_Resume.doc



Proofread your work, edit and save the final version.

- You might think about having someone proofread for you.
- Print a copy of the resume to make sure the printed version looks like the version on your computer screen.

See an example of a great resume format for high school students on the following page.

Cathy Applicant

156 McVeigh Road, Westbrook CT 06498 · cathy.applicant@gmail.org · 860-399-6214

Responsible, motivated high school student with a positive attitude, strong work ethic and customer service skills seeking an entry level position in the hospitality industry

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- *Demonstrated customer service experience with ability to convey information persuasively both orally and in writing*
- *Ability for building positive relationships with others using humor, helpfulness and cultural sensitivity*
- *Able to apply lessons learned as a lettered student athlete to motivate and support team members in assigned tasks and projects*
- *A+ math student with ability to use skills for accuracy in order processing, cash handling and credit transactions*
- *Solid command of Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint)*

EDUCATION

Westbrook High School, Westbrook CT (Expected Graduation Date June 2021), GPA 3.57

- Honors and Extracurricular Activities: Honor Roll, Teen Leadership, Basketball Team, Theatre
- Senior Project: With a team of five students, organized Field Night for high school students with a specific role of organizing faculty volunteer chaperones
- Relevant elective classes: Accounting I, Culinary Arts I, Business Software Applications and Communications, Graphic Communications

EXPERIENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Hometown Grocery Store, Anytown, CT

Cashier (Summer 2019-present)

Demonstrate engaging customer service skills and a solid work ethic for a busy retail store. Greet customers and help in product selection, check-out and merchandising.

- Greet customers, scanned grocery items, handled cash and credit transfers with 100 percent accuracy
- Provide friendly and attentive responses to customer queries and issues
- Willing stepped up to work overtime to ensure adequate staffing during sales events
- Earned 'Employee of the Month' award

Craft Time Art Therapy School, Anytown, CT

Student Intern, November 2019-March 2020

Participated in a student internship/unpaid experiential learning activity focused on career preparation in the human services career cluster. Afterschool two days per week for a total of 60 hours

- Designed and led an art class for students in Grades 2 through 4, including developing class objectives, supply lists and purchases, communications with parents and evaluation of students
- Assisted Art Therapist in art lessons for students in Grades 2 through 4
- Oversaw set up and clean up for classes two afternoons a week

