

MITOCW | mitres16-9960-resumes_and_cvs_captions

[Morse code beeps] [Woosh] [Helicopter rotor]

Hi.

My name is Annika Thomas, and I'm a fellow with the Aero Astro Communication Lab, and today we're going to be talking about resumes and CVs.

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to understand what makes a resume successful.

It needs to be convincing, concise, organized, concrete and error free.

You should also learn how to tailor your document and quantify impact to make your qualifications stand out.

By the end of the lesson you'll also be able to grasp best practices for formatting, proofreading, and audience focused writing.

So some criteria for success for your resume or CV is it should be convincing.

It should take someone who's reading it less than 60 seconds to confirm whether you're a fit for the role.

It should be concise, having clear and succinct communication.

It should be organized, having an intuitive layout that guides the reader through the document.

It should be concrete, with specific actions and outcomes that result in tangible impact.

And it should be error free, having zero typos and consistent formatting.

Now the purpose and types of documents we're talking about today include resumes and CV's, or curriculum vitae.

A resume is a quick snapshot of your abilities.

It should be about 1 to 2 pages or one sheet of paper in limit.

You never want to be stapling multiple pieces together for a resume, and some typical sections can include your name, professional website and portfolio, contact information, education, work experience, skills, leadership and service, and honors and awards.

A CV, on the other hand, is a bit longer of a document.

It's a comprehensive record of your academic and professional accomplishments.

As a graduate student, usually a CV is about 2 to 3 pages, but throughout the course of your career it gets longer and longer.

A CV is going to include a lot of the same sections as a resume, but it should also include some additional components as well, such as your research experience, teaching experience, and outreach, to name a few.

Now, your resume or CV should be tailored to the audience that you are presenting it to.

So you actually want to customize this document every time you share it.

So you should understand who reads your resume.

Nowadays, when you're applying for a job that can look like an HR scanner or a technical reviewer, and you want to tailor your document, highlighting keywords, reorder sections, and pruning irrelevant content that doesn't fit to whatever role or circumstance that you are sharing that document in.

And something that you can do, which I recommend, is to create a comprehensive long resume or CV.

This is an ongoing, detailed document with every single role, project, and bullet point that you've done or written for something that you've applied for.

And when you're applying, you can copy the relevant parts into a tailored version for that role.

So some best practices for your resume or CVs in the process of demonstrating impact is to use what's called the PAR framework, which is project, action, and result.

In the PAR framework, we traditionally start with an action verb.

In this process, you want to think of industry specific skills and competencies and combine that with a relevant task.

So here you're going to discuss your experience using key words and jargon about the role that you're applying for.

And now these result in an outcome, a result of the task, and or an accomplishment.

So think what is something important or noteworthy that came from your actions.

And in the process of using the PAR framework, we want to use strong action verbs like designed, led, or developed as opposed to weak passive ones like participated or researched.

Now we're going to go ahead and do an activity using the PAR framework.

So you can find the file that's called activity PAR Framework Transformation.

This should take about 20 minutes to complete.

And on the activity sheet you'll find a set of vague experiences, including a problem or project and the corresponding strong quantified PAR bullets using actions and results.

So for practice, go ahead and take about 20 minutes on this document to rewrite the vague versions of these different bullet points into the full PAR bullets.

[Alien spaceship beeps]

Now, for some best practices in readability and proofreading.

Your resume should have a scalable design.

So it should have headers that allow people to look at the different sections and find them easily, balanced whitespace, logical ordering, and you should bold key phrases.

Some formatting tips include that you want to have readable fonts, usually you should have at least 11 point, if not larger, and clean layouts and clear headers.

For proofreading, some strategies that you can use are to read your document aloud, get a second pair of eyes from a friend or coworker, or if you're here at MIT, book an appointment with the Comm Lab and you can have a fellow such as myself look at it with you.

Some final resources.

You can look at the AeroAstro Communication Lab to see commkits, which include sample resumes and CVS with additional commentary.

These are open to everyone inside and outside of the MIT community.

For tools, there are some different templates that you can use from the Comm Lab that use resources like word and LaTeX.

You can also use ATS keyword tools like Jobscan, Zety, and TopResume, just to name a few.

So for some next steps, you want to keep a long comprehensive living resume or CV so that tailoring is quick and systematic when you want to share this document.

Start by drafting it and then tailor using this comprehensive or long version to the context in which you're sharing the document.

And finally, peer review and finalize it.

So by now you should be able to diagnose strengths and weaknesses in resumes and CVs.

You should be able to customize your document to different roles and reviewers, and you should be able to write clear and impact driven PAR bullets that showcase your experience and contributions.

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