

A resume checklist you can print

Layout, content, honesty and last checks before you send. Free to print and share.

Hiring systems and employer settings vary, so no checklist can promise a particular result. These are habits that make a resume easy for both people and software to read.

1. Layout and file

- ☐ **One column, simple structure.** Tables, text boxes and multi-column layouts can scramble when software or a person copies the text out.
- ☐ **Real, selectable text** — not a scan, a photo or a picture of text.
- ☐ **Conventional headings:** Summary, Experience, Skills, Education, Certifications.
- ☐ **Contact details in the main body** of the page, not only in a header, a footer or an image.
- ☐ **A readable font** (10 to 12 points) with enough white space to scan in a few seconds.
- ☐ **One date format**, used everywhere (for example “Mar 2021 – Present”).
- ☐ **No graphics that carry meaning:** skill bars, rating stars and icons in place of words.
- ☐ **The file follows the posting’s instructions.** If it names no format, a PDF keeps your layout; if it asks for Word, send Word.
- ☐ **A clear file name**, such as First-Last-Resume.pdf.
- ☐ **The copy test.** Select all, paste into a plain text editor. If the order is scrambled or letters are missing, simplify the layout.

2. Content

- ☐ **The top third says why you fit this job.** The summary is written for this posting, not for every posting.
- ☐ **Your most relevant experience is easy to find**, with dates you can see at a glance.
- ☐ **Each bullet starts with a verb** and says what you did and what changed.
- ☐ **Numbers where you have true ones:** how many, how often, how long, how big.
- ☐ **The posting’s own words**, where they honestly describe your work.
- ☐ **Cut what a resume does not need:** objective statements, “references available on request”, date of birth, social insurance or social security number, marital status. City and province or state is enough; skip the street address.
- ☐ **Photo:** leave it off unless the posting or local custom asks for one. Customs differ by country.
- ☐ **Length matches your experience.** One to two pages is common in Canada and the United States; follow the posting if it says otherwise.

3. Honesty

- ☐ **You can explain every line** in an interview, with an example.
- ☐ **No tool, certificate or duty you do not have.** “Keen to learn” is honest; “experienced in” is not.
- ☐ **Dates and titles match** what a former employer would say.
- ☐ **Gaps are shown honestly.** Years only is fine; a sentence in the cover letter can explain.
- ☐ **If an AI tool helped**, you have read and checked every line.

4. Before you send

- ☐ **The company name and job title** are spelled correctly in the email and the cover letter.
 - ☐ **Read it aloud**, then ask someone else to read it.
 - ☐ **Your phone number and email work**, and your voicemail greeting sounds professional.
 - ☐ **Save a copy of the posting**. Postings disappear before the interview call.
 - ☐ **Note where and when you applied**, so you know what you sent to whom.
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