

# 40 Point Technical Resume Inspection

This activity is designed to optimize your resume for:

- Readability
- Skimability
- Key Word Saturation

Required materials:

- Draft of your resume
- Job announcement

Estimated completion time:

- 1 Hour

**Andy Orr**

Technology Program

Green River College

**HEADER**

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**SUMMARY (optional)**

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**EXPERIENCE**

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**TECHNICAL SKILLS**

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**EDUCATION**

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**AFFILIATIONS (optional)**

**HEADER**

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**SUMMARY (optional)**

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**TECHNICAL SKILLS**

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**EDUCATION**

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**EXPERIENCE**

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**AFFILIATIONS (optional)**

# HEADER

Check each box if your resume meets the requirement

**Name**

**Email address**

- Be sure your email address is appropriate and professional.
- Some suggest Gmail or a personal domain over Hotmail. Food for thought.

**Phone Number**

**LinkedIn Custom URL**

**Delete your physical address**

- If you're not local, hiring managers and recruiters might not look any further. And if you are? They may take your commute time into account and turn you down if they think it would be too long.

**Avoid visuals**

- Consider, however, setting your name in a larger font to make it stand out.
- It also doesn't hurt to think about making some simple text-based design choices to make your header pop. A nice header on your resume can also be used on a cover letter to lend continuity to your personal brand.

Example:



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# SUMMARY (optional)

Check each box if your resume meets the requirement

**Summary directly answers what the job description asks for**

- Think of your summary as an elevator pitch.
- A longer summary is oftentimes a trademark of a consulting or technology staffing company.

**Summary includes keywords, phrases, and skills listed in job announcement**

- Key word saturation will be a recurring theme in this checklist. The first person to review your resume may not be a person at all. It's likely a software program known as an Applicant Tracking System (ATS). You submit your application, ATS scans your credentials then gives you a score. You're then ranked against other candidates and a decision is made based on "data."

**Delete a generic Career Objective**

- Generic statements that don't pertain to a specific position like "looking for an opportunity for growth and career advancement" aren't useful and should be avoided.

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## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Check each box if your resume meets the requirement

**Experience items are listed in reverse chronological order**

- If you have gaps in your work history, swap out the usual start and end dates for each position with years only. Example: "2010—2012."
- Need to fill up more space? Add roles in which you volunteered, worked part-time, or free-lanced. You can also discuss professionally relevant hobbies, as well as relevant coursework and projects.

**Every experience item listed is relevant to the position you're applying for**

**Every experience item listed has no more than 6 bullet points**

- 3 to 4 bullet points is optimal.

**Each bullet point includes a number or percentage, if possible**

- How many people were impacted? How many customers did you service? How many tickets did you troubleshoot? By what percentage did you exceed your goals? Answering questions like this quantifies work performed.

**Each bullet point includes at least 1 keyword or phrase from the job announcement**

**Current position uses present tense; previous positions use past tense**

**Delete anything high-school related**

- Unless you're one year out of high school, or need to bulk up your resume and did something highly relevant (and awesome) during your high school years, omit anything high-school related.
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## TECHNICAL SKILLS

Check each box if your resume meets the requirement

**List all relevant certifications**

- Write out the full name of the certification plus its related acronym to make sure the recruiter or hiring manager knows what you're talking about, and so that the ATS will pick it up no matter which format it's looking for. Example: "Microsoft Technology Associate (MTA)."

**List all relevant technologies**

- Ideally some or all of the technologies listed here align with those listed in the job announcement.
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## EDUCATION

Check each box if your resume meets the requirement

**Education items are listed in reverse chronological order**

- Be sure to use "Green River College" in light of our institution's name change. This includes previously earned Associate's degrees.

**Include NSF S-STEM Scholarship if you're a Green River Technology Scholar**

- Example: "National Science Foundation S-STEM Scholarship Recipient, 2016—2017."

**Delete your GPA**

- However, if you're applying for an internship that specifies a GPA requirement, feel free to include a number.
- Sharing academic accolades is acceptable. Example: "Graduated with Highest Honors."

**Delete anything high-school related**

- Unless you're 1 year out of high school, or need to bulk up your resume and did something highly relevant (and awesome) during your high school years, omit anything high-school related.
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## FORMAT

Check each box if your resume meets the requirement

**Font is Times New Roman, Arial, or Helvetica**

**Font size is at least 11 point**

**Line spacing is 120% of the font size, if possible**

- In Word, go to “Format” and select “Paragraph.” In the pull-down menu under “Line Spacing,” choose “Exactly” and set the spacing to 2 points above the size of your font. Example: Set line spacing to 13 if your font is 11 point. Adequate spacing will optimize your resume’s readability.

**There are no large blocks of text**

- Mega blocks of text are difficult to visually digest. Studies show recruiters and hiring managers look at resumes quickly—a minute at best, the blink of any eye at worst. Eliminating a bulky text block and replacing it with a well-organized bullet-point list will improve skimability.

**Headers and bullet points are consistent across all sections**

**Sections are visually distinct from one another**

- Adding bold capitalization and divider lines is one way to differentiate sections for the reader.

Example:



**Resume has sufficient margins**

- 1.0” margins on each side, top, and bottom is a good rule of thumb.
- If pressed for space, try reducing your top and bottom margins to 0.5” and your side margins to no less than 0.75”. This will keep your resume clean and readable but give you more room to talk about your experience and qualifications.

**All numbers are conveyed in numerical form instead of written out**

- This will help optimize your resume’s skimability. Even small numbers that are often spelled out should be written numerically as it will make them pop out to the reviewer. Example: “30%,” instead of “thirty percent.”

**Information is flush left**

- English speakers read left to right, so it's a good idea to situate information accordingly.

**Resume contains no orphan words**

- An orphan word is a single word left on a line by its lonesome self. See how you can edit the previous line to eliminate orphans, making your resume look cleaner and opening up extra lines for you to do other things with.

**Resume does not exceed two pages**

- Some argue as long as the information is good and relevant, a multiple page resume isn't taboo. However, if you have less than 10 years of experience, you should aim at fitting your resume onto one page, front and back, or if printing out, two pages.

**Delete "References Available Upon Request"**

- You can use the extra space to talk about your experience and accomplishments. That, and oftentimes a corresponding job application will ask for references.

**Above the fold is informative**

- Look at your resume "above the fold." In other words, take a closer look at the top third of your resume, which is the part that will show up on a screen when the hiring manager clicks open on the PDF. That's what's going to make your first impression so make sure it serves as a hook that makes the manager want to read more.

**Electronic version of resume is in DOC, as a general rule of thumb**

- Save as a doc to help ensure the employer's ATS reads exactly what you wrote. However, it's possible some employers might ask specifically for a PDF. If so, save and send your resume accordingly. Also, be sure to name the file itself to include your first name and last name.

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## WORDING

Check each box if your resume meets the requirement

**Resume assumes active over passive voice, where possible**

**Resume includes powerful signal verbs and fresh wording**

- See "185 Powerful Verbs That Will Make Your Resume Awesome," *Daily Muse Editor*, December 25, 2014.
- CareerBuilder's Top 10 Best Resume Terms include: "Achieved," "Created," "Improved," "Increased / Decreased," "Launched," "Managed," "Negotiated," "Trained / Mentored," "Under budget."
- CareerBuilder's Top 10 Worst Resume Terms include: "Best of breed," "Detail-oriented," "Go-getter," "Go-to person," "Hard worker," "Results-driven," "Strategic Thinker," "Synergy," "Team player," "Thinks outside the box."



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## QUALITY CONTROL

Check each box if your resume meets the requirement

***Run a spell check***

- According to Google HR Boss Laszlo Bock, 58% of resumes have typos. A typo tells the employer the applicant isn't detail-oriented or doesn't care about quality, and may oftentimes keep a resume from making it through an organization's ATS.

***Ask two different students in your program to read your resume***

- Scrutinizing a resume over a long period of time can create blind spots in the author, so ask two fellow students to give your resume a close reading. A fresh set of eyes does wonders.

***Read your resume out loud***

- This may help you catch any spelling and grammar errors the spell check didn't catch. It will also help you notice any sentences that are awkwardly constructed.

***Give your resume to someone who doesn't know you well to look at for 30 seconds***

- Then ask that person: what are the three most memorable things? Take this feedback, go back to the drawing board, and think about how you can adjust your resume to improve its first impression and ensure that it has a clear visual hierarchy.

***Update your LinkedIn profile***

- Make sure any updates you've made to your resume up to this point are also entered into your LinkedIn profile. Many recruiters and hiring managers will pull up your profile upon receiving a resume. As such, you want both documents to align. Notice the suggested resume template in this document is identical to LinkedIn's.

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## EXTRA CREDIT

Check each box if your resume meets the requirement

***Gauge key word saturation***

- Check to see if the key word saturation of your resume measures up. To do this, drop your resume into a word cloud generator like TagCrowd ([www.tagcrowd.com](http://www.tagcrowd.com)) and see which keywords are popping out, then make sure those key words align with those contained in the job announcement.
- You can do the same thing with a job or internship announcement to identify recurring key words and phrases, which you can then incorporate into your own resume.