

# BUILDING YOUR RÉSUMÉ

Résumés provide employers with an easy-to-understand outline of your education, experience, activities, accomplishments, and skills as they pertain to your employment goals. Think of it as a marketing tool that should be tailored to a specific opportunity. Plan for multiple revisions in order to have a polished piece that catches the attention of employers.

Résumés are noticed when they:

- Emphasize relevant accomplishments and skills
- Are concise, well-organized, and easy to read
- Show results through accomplishment based statements

## GETTING STARTED

1. **Review Examples** – Look over the sample résumé(s) provided for formatting and content ideas. We also have a collection of examples for specific majors linked to a drive inside Handshake.
2. **Make A List** – Once you have reviewed samples, begin making a list of your experiences including internships, volunteering, jobs, academic projects, and campus and community involvement.
3. **Review the Job Description** – Highlight key skills, experiences, and traits the employer is seeking. Résumés are best when tailored for a specific position.
4. **Organize Content** – Once you understand the position and have identified which experiences are most relevant, you can begin to organize the content.
5. **Take Your Time** – Constructing a résumé takes time! Plan to spend more than an hour on this document. Being intentional about your personal brand allows you to show the unique value you bring to the table and allows for employers to get a real insightful look at who you are and what you are all about.

## RÉSUMÉ CHECKLIST

Once a draft of your résumé is complete, double check the formatting and content using the checklist below.

### Step 1: Check your formatting

- Easy to find and read information
- Pay close attention to consistent formatting (headings, fonts, line spacing, etc.).
- Fonts are professional and readable (10 pt or greater).
- Most résumés should only be one page (education majors are an exception).

### Step 2: Check your content

- Section headings are easy to find.
- Relevant experience (classes, volunteer, or work) is clear and towards the top.
- Each experience lists the organization, city and state, position title, and length of experience.
- Within each section, experiences are listed with most recent first.
- Has well-written accomplishment statements. Each statement should begin with an action verb, and include accomplishments, not only responsibilities.
- No personal pronouns (I, my, me, our, etc.).
- Edited for grammar and spelling mistakes.
- References should be included in a separate document or page. You do not need to say "References Available Upon Request"

**Head to Handshake to make an appointment!**

# Amy Parker 1

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amparker@gmail.com | (616) 381-2895 | Holland, MI

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## 3 OBJECTIVE

Inquisitive, purpose-driven senior seeking full-time position in Washington, D.C. as a research assistant

## EDUCATION

**Hope College, Holland, MI** 5

6 Bachelor of Arts in Psychology  
GPA: 3.32/4.00

4 Expected Graduation: May 2020

**Guanajuato, Mexico** (June 2020) 7

- Council on International Educational Exchange: Studied Spanish grammar and culture

## 8 RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services, Grand Rapids, MI 9

Summer 2019 - Present 11

### Psychology Intern

- 14 • Interview and assess patients by evaluating mental status and/or conducting psychometric testing, as well as reviewing records obtained from other patient care staff
- Select appropriate therapies or treatments for the patients based on the scientific knowledge of human learning and behavior
- Ensure that patients' progress notes are entered into the medical records on a timely basis and in accordance with established organizational and departmental procedures

Children's Health Hospital, Dallas, TX

Summer 2018

### Psychology Summer Intern

- Shadowed various positions gaining first hand perspective into careers within the world of psychology
- Performed research activities that contributed to benchmarking activities of the department
- Attended various seminars, monitored patients' progress, and worked on the creation and integration of new treatment plans

Camp Geneva, Holland, MI

10

17

Summer 2016, 2017

### Camp Counselor

- Mentored a group of five campers, enriching interpersonal communication and relationship skills
- Supervised campers with the aim of providing a healthy, safe and enjoyable camp environment and experience

## COLLEGE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Hope College - Women's Soccer, Holland, MI

Fall 2016 - Present

### Student Athlete

- Commit approximately 20 hours per week to training, watching film, travel and competing while simultaneously maintaining a full course load, sharpening time management capabilities

15 Hope College Dorian Sorority, Holland, MI

Fall 2016 - Present

### President (Fall 2018 - Present)

- 12 • Lead chapter of 100 members and develop goals to promote and enhance our core values, strengthening problem solving and leadership skills

13 **D.C.C.C (Dorian Chapter Culture Champion) (Fall 2016 - Fall 2018)**

- Promote and inspire a strong and inclusive community among all members

## SKILLS

- Intermediate knowledge and experience with SPSS software
- Fluent in written and spoken Spanish 16

### 1 MAKE YOUR NAME STAND OUT

Your name should be at least two font (no larger than 22pt font) sizes bigger than the text of your résumé.

### 2 FUTURE E-MAIL

As a senior, consider listing a non-Hope e-mail address that employers can reach you at once your Hope e-mail account has been deactivated.

### 3 OBJECTIVE

**Including an objective is optional.** However, a well-written and thoughtful statement describing your employment goal and some of your unique selling points can provide context for the reader. If you are applying to positions in a variety of fields, you should plan to develop a specific objective for each résumé. An objective is another way to showcase your personal brand.

### 4 GRADUATION DATE

Always list your expected graduation date rather than the time span you have attended college.

### 5 FORMAL DEGREE

List your formal degree by spelling out Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, Bachelors of Music, or Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Make sure to also include any accreditations your major may have (e.g. ABET, CSWE, ACS, CCNE).

### 6 GPA

Include your GPA if it is 3.0 or higher. Be sure to indicate the scale and use the same number of decimal points.

### 7 EDUCATION EXTRAS

The education section can be an ideal place to add international experience or significant project work.

### 8 EXPERIENCE MATTERS

Notice that this candidate has highlighted her international and communication experience in the Relevant Experience section, and does not need to list non-related work from the past. This may or may not be the case for you, but as you approach your senior year, you should consider how you can distinguish "Relevant Experience" from "Work Experience."

### 9 CONSISTENT FORMATTING

Each experience should include the organization, city and state, position title, and the length of the experience. It is very important that you use a consistent format throughout your résumé to list these four items.

### 10 NUMBERS

Always spell out numbers ten or under.

### 11 CONSISTENT DATES

Dates are typically listed by season or month. Either way is correct. However, you must be consistent throughout your résumé. The exception to the rule is your graduation date, which can be listed as a month.

### 12 QUANTIFY AND QUALIFY WHEN POSSIBLE

Using numbers in your descriptive statements is an effective way to show significant work accomplishments. Using qualifiers is also important when communicating skill level to employers.

### 13 ACRONYMS

Spell out acronyms.

### 14 ACTION VERBS

Begin each bullet statement with an action verb. Notice in this example that the action verb is in present tense (interview vs. interviewed). This is because she is currently working in the role. Action verbs should be past tense when communicating a position previously held.

### 15 GET INVOLVED

Employers value students who are actively involved on campus and in their community. They especially look for students who hold leadership roles. "College and Community Involvement" is a great section header. Community can refer to experiences (including volunteer) in the greater Hope community or in your hometown.

### 16 SKILLS

Skills sections often include computer, language, or laboratory proficiencies. Notice how this student qualified her level of understanding with words like proficient, conversational, or fluent. This section should be used to set you apart as a candidate so avoid listing skills common to every college graduate e.g. Microsoft applications. There may be times you move your skills section to the top of your document if you have a unique skillset you wish to highlight.

### 17 REVERSE CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

The reverse chronological résumé style is the most commonly used style. This means that your most recent job is listed first, followed by each of your previous jobs in order by date.

# BUILDING YOUR RÉSUMÉ

## WRITING ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENTS

Accomplishment statements describe your work and achievements. They communicate to employers you have achieved results and that you have developed transferable skills necessary for the position. These statements should: **use action verbs, use numbers to quantify, indicate positive results, and provide meaningful detail.**

■ **Typical non-description résumé statement:**  
Responsible for writing the monthly newsletter.

✚ **Improved accomplishment-based résumé statement:**  
Created and produced an electronic monthly newsletter for the international student center which was distributed to 3,000 alumni and parents of the College.

Use the APR "formula" below to write accomplishment-based statements:

**Action Verb:**  
"Coordinated"  
+  
**Project:**  
"three fundraising events  
for local food banks"  
+  
**Result:**  
"which raised over \$3,500 (10% over goal)  
and improved community awareness"  
=  
Coordinated three fundraising events for  
local food banks, which raised over \$3,500  
(10% over goal) and improved community awareness.

**Action Verb:**  
"Planned and promoted"  
+  
**Project:**  
"20 guest speakers on campus"  
+  
**Result:**  
"50% increase in student attendance  
from the previous year"  
=  
Planned and promoted 20 guests speakers  
on campus resulting in a 50% increase in  
student attendance from the previous year.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **What should I name my file?** Incorporate your name: ParkerRes2020 vs. Spring2020Resume
- **Do I need a personal photo?** A photo is not recommended on this document.
- **Do I include references on my résumé?** You only include references if you have constructed a CV (curriculum vitae). In this case you should include at least 3 references and their contact information.
- **When do I need to construct and submit a CV (curriculum vitae)?** When applying for a job abroad, applying for graduate or medical school, and if you are searching for an academic or research oriented position.
- **How many pages should my résumé be?** One page for most majors (exception being Education majors). Two pages is appropriate if you have constructed a CV (curriculum vitae).
- **Can I include my StrengthsFinder results?** Yes! They should be in the footer of the first page of your résumé.
- **Can my résumé be in color?** Sometimes color may be appropriate. We strongly encourage personal branding. Think about your font style and the format of your document to get creative.

## HEADING & GREETING

Create your letterhead by copying and pasting your designed contact info from your résumé.

The heading includes your contact info, the date, and the contact info of the person you are contacting.

Find the name of the person who will read your cover letter – If not listed, it is appropriate to call the employer and ask who to direct your info to. LinkedIn can also be used as a tool to find who to contact.

If you do not have a contact name, you may address the letter: “Dear (Insert Company) Hiring Manager”

Use “Dear Mr./Ms./Dr.” to address the individual, followed by a colon (:).

## INTRODUCTION

This paragraph is to indicate the specific position you are applying for, how you found out about the position, and to attract the employer’s attention. If you have any personal contact(s) within the company who helped you find the opening – and you have permission to use his or her name – this would be the paragraph to mention the individual(s). This may also be a good place to mention something that impressed you about the organization, based on your research.

## ARGUMENT

Use this paragraph to relate your skills, knowledge, passions, and experiences to the needs of the employer. Use the job description and research you have completed on the organization to connect your relevant education, work experience, skills or other characteristics that meet the needs of the employer. Use similar language from this description or from the organization in your cover letter. This is your chance to highlight your qualifications and demonstrate knowledge of the organization. Refer the reader to your résumé. Focus on how you can be an asset to the employer. Use specific examples.

## CLOSING

Thank the reader for his or her time and consideration regarding your application. Indicate when and how you are going to contact the person to discuss your status for this opportunity. Provide a phone number and/or email address where you can be reached. End with a positive statement! For example, indicate that you are looking forward to hearing from them or excited about the possibility to be a part of the organization.

## E-COVER LETTER

**What to Name & How to Send Cover Letters:** Too often, people’s résumés and cover letters are given the generic name “resume.doc” or “coverletter.doc.” Step it up a notch and personalize the files by adding your name, e.g. “AnnaSmithResume.pdf” and “AnnaSmithCoverLetter.pdf.”

**Email:** The body of your email could be used in place of a formal cover letter if you have networked with that person and are sending your résumé to them. This is a less formal option but may be useful in certain situations.

## EXAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION

- 1 Nordstrom is looking for a Design Intern in Chicago. We are seeking an individual who will be an active part of our team by doing their part to keep the department “runway ready,” which includes stocking, remerchandising, display, price markdowns, merchandise transfers and light cleaning. Gain hands-on experience while spending the majority of the internship working on our sales floor and learning business and management skills in a variety of settings.
- 2 **Qualifications:**
  - Graduating from college in 2015 or 2016
  - 3.0 GPA or above average student
- 3 **Desired Skills:**
  - Eager to put your retail fashion career on the fast track to a management role
  - Can keep a calm head when dealing with customer concerns
  - Thrive in a fast-paced environment
  - Organizational skills and the ability to quickly learn new processes and procedures
  - Demonstrates outstanding verbal and written communication



**1 RESEARCH**

Use the job description and other research on the company or industry to help create strong language in your cover letter.

**2 QUALIFICATIONS**

Be sure you meet the job qualifications before applying.

**3 SKILLS**

Read through the skills and requirements then highlight your related experience or strengths in these areas in the body of your cover letter.

**4 HEADER**

The header on your cover letter should match the header on your résumé document. If you have a list of references, the header should be the same on that as well.

**5 DATE**

The date appearing on your cover letter should be the date you plan to send the letter.

**6 ADDRESS**

List the correct company address: Contact Name, Company Name, Address, City, State, and Zip Code.

**7 GREETING**

Find out the person who will be receiving your cover letter and use their name. Address them formally as Mr./Ms./Dr. If a name is not listed, it is appropriate to call the employer and ask to whom you should address your letter.

**DO:**

*Proofread! Be sure your letter is free of any typographical, spelling or grammatical errors.*

*Tailor your letter for each opportunity and tell the reader why you are qualified for the position.*

*Mention something you know about the organization that is related to the position for which you are applying.*

*Write clearly and simply, using industry specific keywords.*

*Sign your cover letter and include your phone number, email and*

*address. Or use electronic PDF signature options.*

*Showcase your written communication skills.*

*Check your layout for adequate margins and white space and it is centered top to bottom.*

*Ensure the font style matches your résumé and is simple and easy to read.*

*Use high quality résumé paper — the same paper on which you print your résumé.*

**8 LIMIT THE USE OF 'I'**

Throughout your writing try to limit the use of 'I', especially when starting a new sentence.

**9 CONTACT NAME**

If someone referred you to this job or internship opportunity, be sure you get his or her permission, then state their name and how you found out about the position in the first paragraph.

**10 SPECIFIC EXAMPLES**

Use specific examples when discussing past experiences and related skill sets.

**11 TRANSITIONS**

Use transition sentences to connect paragraphs and create an enjoyable reading experience.

**12 FOLLOW UP**

If you choose to include a follow up date, be sure to actually follow up on that date.

**13 THANK YOU**

Be sure to thank the reader for his or her time and consideration.

**14 NAME**

Three spaces below your salutation, be sure to type your name exactly how you will sign the letter.

**DO NOT:**

*Give a summary of your life, values, goals, etc. longer than 50 words.*

*Describe, at length, your admiration for the company's history.*

*Repeat your résumé verbatim.*

*Explain why you left your last job or want to leave your present one.*

*Use a form letter and only change the company name.*

*Include your salary requirements,*

*unless asked to provide this information.*

*Inflate or exaggerate your experience or qualifications.*

*Hint that you are interested in virtually any job within that organization.*

*Use contractions.*

*Overuse flowery language such as "love" and "passion".*

*Provide links to non-professional social media.*

## EXAMPLE COVER LETTER

Anna Smith

123 East 1st Street | Holland, MI 49423  
(616) 123-4567 | anna.smith@gmail.com

March 8, 2015

Mr. Thomas Bond  
Nordstrom  
55 E Grand Ave  
Chicago, IL 60611

Dear Mr. Bond,

As a Hope College junior, I have had the opportunity to study communications and design. I found the Design Internship on your website and I have enclosed a copy of my résumé for your consideration. My friend, Jim Banks, worked at Nordstrom for 41 years and he encouraged my application for this internship.

Over the last two years, I have been involved with a diverse range of opportunities. As an Architecture and Design marketing Intern at Haworth, a global office furniture manufacturer, I worked on projects including market tools such as post-convention presentations, strategic planning, graphic design, and internet-based advertising. I learned that marketing and design is intentional, creative, innovative, and competitive. A second significant experience has been to develop creative and attractive costumes for both period and modern musicals and dramatic presentations on campus. Working within a budget and consulting with the director and creative team has allowed me the chance to develop my interest in fashion. The combination of my experience in the visual industry along with my commitment to the fashion field has prompted me to pursue opportunities in industries focused on the visual beauty of our world.

My strengths in student leadership landed me a position on the Student Activities Committee that annually plans 28 campus events, a weekly coffee house and two movies every weekend. In this role, I developed strong communication skills, problem-solving abilities and effective time management strategies. In addition, I served as a Residential Assistant to a group of 20-25 first-year women. Residential Life allowed me to work on a multi-tiered leadership team and gave me good practice in communicating a consistent message and maintaining a high standard of excellence throughout our interactions with residents. Relationship building was an important part towards my success in this role and one that I know will help at Nordstrom.

I look forward to using the skills gained through my experiences and training to positively contribute to Nordstrom. I will follow up with you in two weeks to see where the process stands and determine if you need any additional information from me. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Anna Smith

Anna Smith

\* Please do not copy content. This document serves as a teaching example only, do not copy word for word.