

RESUME CONSTRUCTION TIPS

www.citadel.edu/career_services/ResumeSamples.htm

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The Citadel
THE MILITARY COLLEGE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
CAREER CENTER



Your resume is your personal marketing tool. It serves to communicate with potential employers regarding your educational background, your experience, your skills and training, and what makes you stand out from other applicants.

Below you will find **Resume Construction Tips** to use with a variety of other resources as you construct *your resume*. Obtain as many ideas as possible for *your resume* by referring to several samples. Keep in mind that the final layout that may work best for showcasing your skills and experience may differ from the samples you view. For example, you may need additional bullets to list responsibilities or to place your Leadership activities before your Experience section. Refer to www.citadel.edu/career_services/ResumeSamples.htm for additional resources.

RESUME CONSTRUCTION TIPS:

1. **Review the Resume web page** and corresponding links for information, tips, and samples.
www.citadel.edu/career_services/ResumeSamples.htm
2. **Getting Started.** If you have not crafted a resume before, applying the technique of brainstorming will help you get started. When you “brainstorm”, you simply jot things down. You do not rule anything out and you do not worry about exact wording. Just get the key concepts down on paper and figure out the details later. Print the **Brainstorm Activity** sheet to help organize your experiences, skills, and other qualifications. Depending on your experience, you may need to include jobs and activities held while in high school.
www.citadel.edu/career_services/Students/Brainstorm.pdf
3. **Avoid using resume templates** found in software packages. Most do not allow individual customization and are not good for several reasons: the font is generally too small, the use of space is inefficient (leaves lots of empty space), and your ability to edit is limited. The provided formats are significantly stronger.
 - a. Use the provided **Resume Format** as a guide.
www.citadel.edu/career_services/Resumes/ResumeFormat.pdf
 - b. Or start with a **blank page**, begin typing, and use the features of the software to arrange your page; use the tab key, change the default margins (top/bottom/left/right), center your contact information, use italics and/or bold to help various pieces stand out, etc. **OR** use a **sample** to plug in your information. When using a sample, be careful to avoid replicating something only because it sounds good. It must also apply to you and must be something you can demonstrate to an employer as a skill or experience you possess.
 - c. Refer to the **Resume Sample Packet (Includes: Resumes [2]/Cover Letter/Reference Page)**.
www.citadel.edu/career_services/Resumes/Resumes_CL_Ref.pdf
4. Pull information from the **Brainstorm Activity** and add it to your resume. Determine what to keep and what to discard later in the process.
5. Refer to the **Action Verbs** to help describe your experience and leadership roles.
www.citadel.edu/career_services/Resumes/ActionVerbs.pdf
6. Set each **margin** (top, bottom; left, right) to .7” initially for a one-page resume. Adjust to as great as 1” around or as small as .5” around without your resume looking too cramped or out of balance.
7. Use the **tab and margin** adjustment keys vs. the space bar to keep everything in proper alignment.
8. **Most resumes** (especially for undergraduates) **are one page in length**. Some individuals, however, have backgrounds and experiences that may require a second page. As you write your initial draft, do not worry about page length. Get everything down on paper first and then begin to rework your resume to become a finished, yet always revisable, product.
9. **Resume Formats.** The **Reverse Chronological** format is most widely used and is best suited for undergraduate resumes. As you complete each section of your resume, the most recent education, experience, etc. is listed first, followed by what occurred just before that and on down the line.
 - a. The **Functional** format may be a better fit for those who need to emphasize their experiences and skill sets, while taking the focus away from the chronology of the positions held. (This format tends to be for

more experienced graduate students and alumni who are shifting focus to a new job, industry, or are changing jobs with frequency).

10. **Be consistent throughout your resume.** If you use all capital letters on the OBJECTIVE section heading, do the same on all section headings. If you punctuate each bulleted item in the Experience, Leadership, etc. sections, do the same for each bullet. Use the same size font in the body of your resume (Objective and below).
11. **Contact Information.** Your name, address, phone, and email should appear at the top of the page. Cadets should include their Citadel information and another secondary permanent address, as well. Provide only one email address to help you keep track of your job search related email.
12. **Regarding email and phone.** Be sure to check the email address you list regularly for employer correspondence. (You may prefer to maintain an email account solely for your job search; do not give this address out to friends or family so that keeping up with employer correspondence will be easier to track). Keep your inbox maintained to avoid an employer receiving an “exceeds quota” message, which may lose you an opportunity to interview, etc. Have a voicemail or answering machine set up to your local phone with a professional message. If you share an answering service with roommates, work out a plan to ensure that you receive messages in a timely manner.
13. Use between 18 and 22-point font for your name and bold it. Use between 10 and 12-point font for your contact information. Be sure that it can be read.
14. For security measures, **do not include** your social security number or your CIT ID on your resume.
15. **For the body of the resume** (Objective and below), use either a 12 or 11-point font and sometimes a 10-point font will work (be sure it is readable). Anything smaller may be too difficult to be read and can easily smear when faxed or copied.
16. An **Objective** is a concise statement that communicates your specific goal. For example: To obtain a management trainee position. If you are still determining your objective, you have two options for proceeding from this point. Either put aside your resume and determine your objective *OR* leave the objective blank and finish constructing your resume. Keep in mind that once you determine your objective, you may need to revise your resume format to appropriately market yourself for the desired goal. Take the **FOCUS** program via www.citadel.edu/career_services/FOCUS.htm to help narrow your options. (Use Access Code of **citadel215**). Continue researching your options via the **Occupational Outlook Handbook** that is developed by the U.S. Department of Labor and is tied in with the FOCUS program. You may research online at <http://www.bls.gov/oco/> or review a hard copy at the Career Center.
17. Under **Education**, list the degree you are pursuing, your major(s) and minor(s) (if you have any), followed by The Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina. Then list the month and year you expect to graduate. You may want to include your cumulative and/or major GPA if a 3.4 or better. Unless you plan on applying for a position in the same school district, you do not need to list your high school education. It is assumed that you earned the diploma by providing your undergraduate degree information. **Graduate Students:** Be sure to include the program you are currently pursuing at The Citadel, listing it first followed by your undergraduate degree, and provide the month and year you expect to graduate vs. indicating when you started the program. Employers want to know when they can expect that you will earn your current degree.
18. Highlight your **Skills and/or Training** in one or two sections as appropriate. You may find it easier to skip this section(s) until you have completed the remaining sections of your resume. Draw from the Experience and other appropriate sections (Leadership, Activities, etc.) to complete the Skills and/or Training section. Look for skills/duties/responsibilities that are repeated in more than one job you have held. If you have limited computer skills, include them within a broader skills’ section. If you have several computer skills, place emphasis on them by identifying them in their own section. If you indicate that you have Microsoft Word skills, be sure that your resume and associated application materials are an example!
Ask yourself:
 - a. What skills do I possess that make me stand out from others and would be of benefit to an employer?
 - b. What training have I received that makes my candidacy stand out from others?
 - c. What computer skills do I have?
 - d. How will I explain to an employer that I am skilled or trained in a particular area?
19. For your **Experience** section, list each job you have held since high school graduation (or during high school if your job experience during college is limited). Note your job title, firm, location, and timeframe in which you have held each position. From the Brainstorm Activity (#2a), describe the duties/responsibilities you listed as a bulleted item and lead each with an **action verb**. www.citadel.edu/career_services/Resumes/ActionVerbs.pdf

Ask yourself questions about each job to help you best describe to a potential employer what you gained from the job and thus, what the company will gain by employing you.

- a. Did I supervise or train anyone?
- b. Did I improve conditions or sales numbers by my performance or through my job function?
- c. Did I receive a promotion in title or in duties?
- d. Did I work with others? Who did I work with and how? Did I work with customers, peers, management, parents, children, etc.?

20. If you have held several leadership roles at The Citadel, it may be to your advantage to list them in a separate **Leadership** section with a similar format as the Experience section. This section may be used before/instead of the Experience section if your work experience is limited. Those who have held leadership roles in high school may also wish to list them here as appropriate. If your leadership experience is limited, include it with your Experience section.
21. A **Volunteerism** section may be included if you volunteer on a regular basis. If your volunteerism is limited, it may be more appropriately listed in the Activities' section. Set it up in a column format or similar to the Experience section if you have several duties to report.
22. An **Honors/Activities**' section may be combined or split into two sections as appropriate. It will be important for some to also list honors and/or activities from high school. Consider setting up one column for The Citadel and another for high school.
23. An **Interests**' section should be set up in a 2-3-column format to list any hobbies or interests. This may establish common ground with an interviewer.
24. If you have an **Academic Portfolio**, refer to it along with your **References** at the bottom of the page. Visit www.citadel.edu/career_services/Resumes/AcademicPortfolios.pdf for details about an Academic Portfolio and www.citadel.edu/career_services/Resumes/ReferencePageInfo.pdf for details about References.
25. **Review and Revise.**
 - a. Review resume (and interview preparation) information via "**Knock 'Em Dead**" by Martin Yate. Hard copies are available at the Career Center or visit www.knockemdead.com.
 - b. Review **Common Errors to Avoid** and make necessary revisions to your resume. www.citadel.edu/career_services/Resumes/CommonErrors.pdf
 - c. Re-read your resume several times, and do so in separate sittings.
 - d. Do not rely on spell check to catch any misspelled words. Errors can be costly!
 - e. Check the use of past vs. present tense action verbs with each past and current job or activity.
 - f. Look for stray punctuation, correct contact information, and make sure all columns are in proper alignment.
 - g. Have a friend read your resume for a comprehension test. If your friend is unclear about something, it may mean that you need to re-word or re-present the information.
 - h. With each new job and/or leadership role you hold, take some time to update your resume vs. having to later recall your responsibilities.