

Purpose of a Resume

- Resumes give employers basic information quickly; their purpose is to get you an interview.
- Employers take 10-20 seconds to screen resume and sort into piles of “yes,” “no,” “maybe.”
- Employers only spend 15-20 minutes on a resume. Be clear, concise and specific about the job for which you are applying.

Do's & Don'ts of Resumes

Do...

- Stick to one page
- Be consistent with terms and institutions: *Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University* or *Virginia Tech* (spelled out).
- Use a consistent and logical system of headings, bulleting.
- Bold only most important items, such as degree and job titles
- Stick with size 12 or 10 fonts.
- Use black ink, quality paper

Don't...

- Use shading
- Use tabs to align document; create a table or tables
- Bold too many items
- Use fancy fonts, too many fonts
- Use long wordy descriptions, sentences— instead use direct phrases
- Avoid underlined or italicized text
- Include URL of website you created
- Include the word “Resume” at the top
- Include a reference list or the words “References available upon request”

General Resume Tips

- Recruiters **do note** when resumes contain incorrect grammar and sloppy mechanics. Proofread or get others to look over and check for grammatical errors
- Best to design your own template with MS Word and tables rather than use a generic resume template or program: tailor the document design to your personal attributes
- Be neat/visually organized; make sure that you use bullet points when necessary.
- Avoid wide margins with content squeezed in. Keep margins at the standard 1.25” for left/right, and 1” for top/bottom.
- Be concise and use action words (developed, handled, organized, created, etc) and phrases when describing your experience.
- Be sure to list awards and honors you've received, accomplishments
- Regardless of your past work experience, make it work for you: there's no job or job skill which cannot be translated into something more attractive to a recruiter

Some Common Problems in Past MinE Resumes

- Objective line is a cliché, vague: “real world mining?”
- Objective not clear
- Incorrect University name
- “Expected” graduation date vs. year of graduation
- Lacks GPA; GPA not specified (cumulative or in major)
- Lists/bulleted items not parallel
- Resume includes and lists courses taken; resume too busy
- Overuse of formatting features (shading, underlining, etc.)
- Margins too wide, not standard. Stick to MS Word Default

Solutions to Some Problems

Objective Line

One way to make sure that the objective line is appropriate is to first know exactly what kind of job or position you want. The more you know about the company itself, the better you can tailor this part of the resume to reflect the employer’s needs. However, don’t use the objective to speak abstractly about your qualities. Avoid the following clichés:

“...positing which utilizes my skills and abilities”

“...a challenging position in...”

“...a position related to Mining & Minerals Engineering (using name of major)”

If you are a senior, looking for full-time employment, consider the areas or specialties in the field which you are interested in. E.g.

“A position as a mining and minerals engineer; primary interest in sales and purchasing operations”

or

“Position in the field of mining engineering, with particular interest in areas of environmental planning and reclamation”

If you are a sophomore or junior, make it clear if you are only interested in an internship or co-op.

“Internship or summer job in a mining and minerals engineering industry”

University Name

There are only two official names for the university: *Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University* or *Virginia Tech*. Any other variation of this name is incorrect

Parallelism

Lists must be syntactically parallel in a resume. All that means is that you need to be using the same word or verb forms consistently in any given list. To ensure parallelism in a list, try imagining what your implied sentence is, and make sure it is consistent or “fits” with all items in the list. Also pay attention to the time frame of your lists. Past tense should be used for all jobs and work experiences which are completed or you no longer do. Present tense is for current job or ongoing jobs (e.g. every summer). The following list shows problems with parallelism.

Incorrect List	Implied sentence
• Acid leach test work	I conducted/did a... (did a thing)
• Created Control Room windows...	I... (strong past tense verb)
• Extensive test work	I conducted/did a... (did a thing)
• Assistant for plant equipment maintenance program	I was an...
• Regulate pH of process water	I.... (strong present tense verb)

Here is the same set of information, only this time revised for parallelism:

Correct List	Implied sentence
• Conducted Acid leach test work	I.... (strong past tense verb)
• Created Control Room windows	I.... (strong past tense verb)
• Carried out extensive tests...	I.... (strong past tense verb)
• Assisted with plant equipment maintenance program	I.... (strong past tense verb)
• Regulated pH of process water	I.... (strong past tense verb)

Resources for Resumes, Cover Letters & Interviewing

MinE Writing & Communications Program

My office hours are M-F, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in 116 Holden, 231-2525. I'd be more than happy to help you start, revise, edit, or put the final touches on your resumes.

2005-2006 Career Planning Guide

You can pick up a copy of the Virginia Tech Career Services “2005-6 Career Planning Guide” in my office (116 Holden) or at the new Career Services Building (corner of Washington Street and West Campus Drive.). This booklet has valuable information on conducting a job search and preparing resumes. Particularly helpful are the sample formats for resumes and cover letters along with a number of examples. It also has a “Skills Cluster” list which provides useful words to describe field-specific responsibilities and job skills.

Virginia Tech Career Services

Finally, Tech's Career Services office (Corner of Washington Street and West Campus Drive.) can work with you individually on drafting and finalizing a resume. Call 231-6241, or visit their website: www.career.vt.edu.