SOFTWARE & TECH

How To Write A One Page Resume

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Introduction

In today's fast-paced hiring landscape, recruiters spend an average of just six to seven seconds scanning a resume before deciding whether to read further. That fleeting window of attention makes every word, every bullet point, and every inch of space count. A one-page resume is no longer just a matter of preference for entry-level candidates—it is increasingly expected across industries, even for seasoned professionals with decades of experience. The ability to distill your entire professional narrative into a single, clean page demonstrates clarity, focus, and respect for the reader's time. Yet many job seekers struggle with this exercise, unsure of what to keep, what to cut, and how to structure the limited real estate. This guide will walk you through every step of **how to write a one page resume** that is both concise and compelling, ensuring your qualifications are presented with maximum impact.

Understanding the Purpose of a One Page Resume

A one page resume is not about leaving out critical achievements—it is about selecting only the most relevant, high-impact information that aligns with the job you are targeting. Recruiters often use applicant tracking systems (ATS) to filter resumes, but human eyes still make the final decision. When your resume fits one page, you force yourself to prioritize accomplishments over responsibilities and results over routine tasks. This discipline also makes your resume scannable, a key requirement in modern hiring processes. Moreover, a single-page format conveys that you understand brevity and can communicate effectively—traits highly valued in almost every role. Remember, the goal is not to shrink your career but to spotlight your most significant contributions.

Essential Elements of a One Page Resume

Before you begin cutting content, you must first identify the must-have sections. Even on one page, certain components cannot be sacrificed. Below are the core building blocks you should include, organized for clarity and brevity.

Contact Information

Your name, phone number, email address, and LinkedIn profile (and optionally a portfolio link) should appear at the top. Do not include your full mailing address—only your city and state, or simply "Remote" if applicable. Use a slightly larger font for your name to establish hierarchy.

Professional Summary or Objective

A two-to-three-line summary that highlights your experience level, key skills, and what you bring to a new role. This is your elevator pitch. Avoid generic cliches like "hardworking team player." Instead, mention your years of experience, industry expertise, and one major measurable achievement. For example: **"Marketing specialist with 6+ years of experience driving 30% growth in online sales through data-driven campaigns and SEO strategy."**

Professional Experience

This section will consume the most space. List your last two to three positions, or only the most recent 5 to 7 years of work history. Use bullet points (three to five per role) focused on achievements, not duties. Start each bullet with

a strong action verb (e.g., **“Led,” “Increased,” “Designed,” “Implemented”**). Quantify results wherever possible: percentages, dollar amounts, time saved. Avoid listing every responsibility from a job description—recruiters already assume you performed the basics.

Education

Include your highest degree, the institution name, and graduation year. If you have advanced degrees or certifications relevant to the position, you can list them in place of less relevant work experience. For recent graduates, education may appear before professional experience.

Key Skills

A compact list of 6–10 skills that are directly relevant to the target job. This can be formatted as a single line or two columns. Include hard skills (e.g., Python, project management software, foreign languages) and soft skills only if they are specific and supported by your experience (e.g., **“cross-functional team leadership”**). Avoid overused buzzwords.

Strategies for Condensing Content Without Losing Value

Now that you know what to include, the real challenge is fitting it all on one page. The following techniques will help you cut the clutter while preserving the essence of your career story.

Focus on Achievements, Not Responsibilities

Every bullet point should answer the question, “What did you accomplish, and what was the impact?” Instead of writing “Managed a team of five sales representatives,” say “Managed a team of five sales representatives, exceeding quarterly targets by 15% on average.” The latter uses fewer words to convey a stronger message. Review each bullet and delete anything that describes a routine duty without a result.

Use a Reverse-Chronological Format

This is the most ATS-friendly and recruiter-preferred layout. It places your most recent and relevant experience first. Older roles can be summarized in one or two lines with only key achievements. If you have pre-2015 experience that is not directly related, consider removing it entirely or noting it only in a brief “Previous Experience” line without bullet points.

Eliminate Redundant Information

Do not repeat the same skill across multiple jobs. If you have used Excel in every role for the past five years, mention it once in your skills section and highlight a specific Excel achievement in one of the positions. Also, remove outdated experience like internships that are more than five years old unless they are highly relevant to the role you are targeting.

Combine Education and Certifications

If you have multiple degrees or certifications, group them under one “Education & Certifications” heading. List each on a single line: “B.S. in Computer Science, University of Michigan, 2018 | AWS Certified Solutions Architect, 2022.” This saves vertical space compared to separate sections.

Adjust Formatting Carefully

Margins can be reduced to 0.5 inches on all sides (but not less). Use a clean, professional font like Calibri, Arial, or Helvetica at a size of 10 to 11 points for body text, and 12 to 14 for your name. Increase line spacing to 1.0–1.15 for readability. Strategic use of bold for job titles and company names can help the eye navigate quickly. Avoid using

multiple columns for your experience section—ATS often misreads them. However, a two-column layout for skills or contact details is usually safe.

Common Mistakes to Avoid in a One Page Resume

Even with the best intentions, many job seekers make errors that undermine their one-page effort. Steer clear of these pitfalls:

- Using tiny font sizes. Anything below 9.5 points becomes too difficult to read, especially on screen. If you cannot fit your content at 10.5 points, you have too much content—cut it.
- Removing all white space. A dense wall of text is overwhelming. Leave small gaps between sections and between bullets. Your resume should look inviting, not claustrophobic.
- Including an “References Available Upon Request” line. This is understood and wastes precious space. Use that line for an additional bullet point instead.
- Listing every job you have ever held. Unless you are a recent graduate, limit experience to the last 7–10 years. Older roles can be omitted or summarized as “Additional experience in X, Y, and Z.”
- Using paragraphs instead of bullet points. Paragraphs are harder to scan. Bullet points allow recruiters to pick out keywords instantly.
- Including hobbies or unrelated interests. Avoid them unless they directly demonstrate a skill relevant to the job (e.g., “Marathon runner” to show discipline for a sales role is borderline).

Formatting Tips for Maximum Impact

Great content can be ruined by poor layout. The following formatting guidelines will help your one page resume look polished and professional.

- Use a clear hierarchy. Your name should be the largest text, followed by section headings (bold, slightly larger than body text), then job titles, then bullet points.
- Keep consistent spacing. Use the same spacing before and after each section. A good rule is 6–8 points after each section heading and 2–4 points between bullet points.
- Leverage bold strategically. Bold key words or numbers within bullet points to draw the eye, but do not bold entire sentences. Example: “Increased customer retention by 22% over two quarters.”
- Choose a single column layout. While two-column layouts look modern, they can confuse ATS software. Stick to a single column for the main content to ensure your information is parsed correctly.
- Test readability. Print your resume on paper or view it in PDF at 100% zoom. If you have to squint or scan horizontally, make adjustments.

A Note on Applicant Tracking Systems

Many companies use ATS to parse resumes and rank candidates. To optimize your one page resume for these systems, avoid headers/footers that contain contact info (some ATS miss them), use standard section titles like “Experience” and “Education,” and save your file as a .docx or .pdf. Do not use tables, columns, or graphics. While you are condensing content, ensure you include relevant keywords from the job description—naturally, not stuffed. For example, if the job requires “project management,” mention it in your summary and one of your bullet points.

Sample Structure of a One Page Resume

To give you a concrete visual, here is a simplified outline of how a one page resume could be organized (text only, not a full template):

1. Header: Firstname Lastname | City, State | Phone | Email | LinkedIn
2. Professional Summary: Two lines with your value proposition and a key metric.
3. Core Competencies: One line with 8–10 skills separated by vertical bars.
4. Professional Experience: Two roles, each with 3–4 achievement-focused bullet points.
5. Education: Degree, university, year. Optionally one certification.
6. Additional (optional): Languages, technical proficiencies, or volunteer work if relevant.

This structure keeps the most important content above the fold while still fitting comfortably on one page.

Adapting Your One Page Resume for Different Careers

Certain industries require slight modifications. For example, creative professionals (graphic designers, writers) may include a portfolio link in the header and use a more visual layout, but still keep it one page. Tech professionals should emphasize programming languages, frameworks, and systems. For executives, a one page resume is harder but achievable by focusing on leadership impact (revenue growth, team size, strategic initiatives) while omitting early career roles entirely. Always tailor the resume to the specific job description; a generic one page resume is less effective than a targeted one.

Conclusion

Writing a one page resume is not about squeezing your entire career onto a single sheet—it is about curating the most powerful, relevant evidence of your ability to do the job at hand. By prioritizing achievements over duties, using strategic formatting, and ruthlessly cutting anything that does not serve your application goal, you can create a document that respects the recruiter's time and makes your case in seconds. Start by reviewing the job description, then select only the experiences and skills that directly match. Apply the techniques outlined here, and you will not only meet the one-page requirement—you will produce a resume that stands out for its clarity, impact, and professionalism. Remember, less is rarely easy, but it is almost always more effective.

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