

Artistic Résumé Guide

When a job vacancy is posted, an organization communicates the need for an individual with a certain set of skills and abilities. **The function of your résumé is to pitch yourself as the solution to the organization's staffing need.** A *chronological résumé* is a customized document that highlights your experiences, educational background, and skills in the order that they occurred. A *targeted résumé* takes into account the intended reviewer(s) of the document and formats the information accordingly. You should use a *targeted résumé*, in conjunction with a cover letter, whenever you are applying for a specific job.

Artistic and Administrative Résumés: What's the difference?

Depending on the position for which you are applying, your résumé should present the best possible pitch to the hiring committee. Because the "hiring committee" to which you are pitching is an audition panel, and because that panel will likely review your résumé while you are in the process of performing your audition, it is particularly important to be concise; therefore, thorough descriptions of your past experience is not necessary on an artistic résumé. **While the most important element of your audition is your performance, a nuanced résumé can help to provide critical background information and add clarity to your level of experience and training.**

Begin by creating a comprehensive list of your important performances, educational experiences, teachers, masterclasses, ensembles, jobs, and training. This can include degrees, festivals, student ensembles, private studies, competitions, professional and student performance experiences, teaching, volunteer work, honors, scholarships, and non-musical activity. Include any skills or training that you consider to be special, useful, or relevant. You can include technology skills, language fluency, secondary instruments, library skills, or certifications. At this point in the process, don't worry about whether or not these items will be included on the finished résumé – just get the ideas down on paper. You will have the chance to select and organize the content for your résumé later in the process. **Think about the narrative that emerges from your list of activities and try to put it in context of the position for which you are applying.** Use this as an opportunity to consider any gaps in your experience that you may notice, and consider expanding your potential for future opportunities by seeking new experiences or training.

Organize your major accomplishments and responsibilities into groups with headings. Information can be grouped according to each area of specialization, such as teaching experience, performance experience, volunteer work, and education. Information can also be grouped in chronological order. Strategize about which format will best highlight your qualifications for the position, moving the most relevant group of activities to the top. From there, organize the groups by relevance, and the items within each group of activities chronologically with your most recent experiences listed first.

Formatting

Though there are no hard-and-fast rules for formatting, the standard rule of thumb for early career applicants is one page in length. **The most effective method is to be as concise as possible while organizing the information as strategically as possible.** Include only details that will be useful to the employer. For example, if you are applying for a position in an orchestra, your teaching experience may not be as relevant as the summer festivals at which you have performed. Include the most detail for information that is relevant to the skill set. Try to do this within a global context of your collective experiences, as it is important to craft the design of your résumé in order to highlight your unique skills and experiences. Below are some formatting tips:

- 11 pt. font and 1 inch margins are standards.
- Use fonts that are easy to read.
- Avoid any font size under 10 pt.
- Create contrast by using different-sized fonts, boldface, lines, and shapes to distinguish between groups, headings, and subheadings.
- Make sure your résumé looks good on both color and grayscale printers.
- **Once you have decided on a format, it is important to remain consistent within your chosen parameters.** Make sure that all headings are formatted the same way, along with all spacing. It is this attention to detail that will help to distinguish you among other applicants, and it will give the panel a positive impression of you before you have begun to play.

Your résumé should appear neat, nuanced, and easy for the reader to skim through with speed. Do not use a form or template to construct your résumé! Most forms and templates are designed with administrative résumés in mind, and, considering the specific level of detail that an artistic résumé provides about an applicant, these forms can often hinder your process. As you continue to update your résumé, your formatting needs are subject to change alongside your experience, and templates can restrict the ease of future restructuring, additions, and content-specific formatting. Additionally, a résumé constructed using a form or template will not stand out from the countless other template résumés that your potential employer is likely to review. Deliver the information in an organized manner so that the user can easily find the information they seek without having to read through superfluous information that they do not need. Chances are that the reviewer will not read through your résumé in a linear top-to-bottom manner, so it is particularly important that the most unique information stands out.

Common categories on a musician’s résumé include **performances, ensemble experience (organized by type), principal teachers, coaches, conductors, masterclasses, festivals, competitions, awards, scholarships, internships, and teaching experience, with education coming last.** Composers often include works performed, premieres, works published, and recordings. It is common for singers to organize a résumé by operatic roles, partial roles, and solo/choral performances. Most résumés use a combination of lists, outlines, and columns. See the accompanying sample résumé for examples.

Keep it fresh. Try to use a variety of descriptive words to keep your résumé varied. Experiment with different headings, and choose the heading that best communicates your particular brand. Focus on content that highlights your accomplishments and outcomes with regards to the job posting. Avoid stating the obvious in your job descriptions, and eliminate qualifiers, such as, “Responsibilities include.” Here is a list of useful action verbs to help keep your vocabulary diverse.

Action Verbs

Achieved	Constructed	Followed	Moderated	Reinforced
Acted	Controlled	Forecasted	Monitored	Remodeled
Adapted	Copied	Formulated	Motivated	Rendered
Administered	Coordinated	Founded	Negotiated	Reorganized
Advanced	Corresponded	Gathered	Observed	Repaired
Advised	Counseled	Generated	Operated	Reported
Analyzed	Created	Graduated	Organized	Represented
Anticipated	Decided	Guided	Originated	Researched
Appraised	Defined	Handled	Participated	Resolved
Approved	Delivered	Headed	Perceived	Reviewed
Arranged	Demonstrated	Helped	Performed	Revised
Assembled	Designed	Identified	Persuaded	Scheduled

Assessed	Determined	Illustrated	Planned	Set up
Assisted	Developed	Implemented	Prepared	Simplified
Attended	Devised	Improved	Presented	Sketched
Audited	Diagnosed	Improvised	Printed	Started
Balanced	Directed	Inaugurated	Processed	Steered
Budgeted	Discovered	Increased	Produced	Streamlined
Built	Displayed	Influenced	Programmed	Strengthened
Calculated	Disproved	Informed	Promoted	Studied
Charted	Distributed	Initiated	Propelled	Summarized
Checked	Drafted	Installed	Proposed	Supervised
Classified	Edited	Instructed	Protected	Supported
Coached	Enabled	Interacted	Proved	Systemized
Collected	Encouraged	Interpreted	Provided	Targeted
Communicated	Enhanced	Interviewed	Publicized	Trained
Compared	Established	Investigated	Published	Taught
Compiled	Estimated	Launched	Purchased	Traveled
Completed	Evaluated	Led	Raised	Updated
Composed	Executed	Listened	Read	Upgraded
Computed	Expanded	Located	Reasoned	Utilized
Conceived	Expedited	Maintained	Recommended	Volunteered
Conceptualized	Explained	Managed	Recorded	Worked
Conducted	Fabricated	Measured	Recruited	Wrote
Consolidated	Facilitated	Mediated	Reduced	

Useful Adjectives and Phrases

Ability to delegate	Critical thinking skills	Present information
Ability to train	Customer oriented	Problem solver
Ability to implement	Extensive experience with	Public speaker skills
Ability to work well	Fluent in	Results oriented
Ability to plan	Flexible with	Risk taker
Accurate	Follow-through	Self-management
Adaptable	Follow-up	Self-starter
Assertive	Good sense of	Setting priorities
Assertive worker	Handle multiple tasks	Strong design experience
Analytical ability	High energy	Supervisory abilities
Competitive	Industrious	Supportive
Communication skills	Innovative	Takes initiative
Conceptual ability	Leadership qualities	Team player
Conversant with	Organizational skills	Willing to travel
Creative	Persuasive	Working knowledge of