GENERAL

how to write a high school resume

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How to Write a High School Resume: A Complete Guide for Students

When you're a high school student, you may think that a resume is only for college seniors or seasoned professionals. In reality, a well crafted resume can open doors to summer internships, volunteer opportunities, scholarships, and even part time jobs. It also gives you a clear snapshot of your strengths, achievements, and goals—information that can be invaluable when you're applying for college admissions or future career paths.

This guide will walk you through every step of creating a high school resume that stands out. From choosing the right format to highlighting the experiences that matter most, you'll learn how to present yourself confidently and professionally.

Why a High School Resume Matters

A resume is more than a list of jobs. For students, it serves several important purposes:

- College Admissions: Many colleges ask for a resume as part of the application. It gives admissions officers a quick way to gauge your extracurricular involvement and leadership potential.
- Internships and Part Time Jobs: Employers often look for a concise summary of your skills and experiences. A polished resume can set you apart from other applicants.
- Scholarships: Many scholarship committees require a resume to assess your academic record, community service, and extracurricular activities.
- Personal Growth: The process of writing a resume forces you to reflect on your accomplishments and future goals.

Because of these benefits, it's worth investing time in mastering the art of resume writing at an early stage.

Choosing the Right Resume Format

High school resumes typically use one of three formats: chronological, functional, or combination. Each has its strengths, and the best choice depends on what you want to highlight.

Chronological Format

This format lists your experiences in reverse chronological order, starting with the most recent. It's ideal if you have a steady stream of relevant activities, such as club leadership roles, sports teams, or part time jobs.

Functional Format

A functional resume focuses on skills rather than dates. Use this format if you're emphasizing transferable skills—like communication, teamwork, or technical proficiency—over a specific timeline.

Combination Format

Combining the two, the combination format highlights both skills and chronological experience. It's a good middle ground if you have a mix of academic achievements and extracurricular activities.

Most high school students find the chronological or combination format most effective because they can clearly display their growing responsibilities and achievements.

Essential Sections of a High School Resume

Every student resume should include the following core sections. Use **bold headings** to separate them and keep the layout clean and easy to scan.

1. Contact Information

   Full name
2. Phone number
3. Email address
4. LinkedIn profile (optional)

A brief statement (one or two sentences) that highlights your goals and what you bring to the table. Keep it focused on the opportunity you're applying for.

- School name, city, state
- Expected graduation date
- GPA (if 3.0 or higher)
- Relevant coursework (e.g., Advanced Placement, Honors, STEM electives)
- Honor rolls, scholarships, class rankings, academic competitions
- Clubs, sports teams, arts, student government
- Positions held and responsibilities
- Job title, employer, location, dates
- Key responsibilities and accomplishments
- Organization, role, dates, impact
- Technical skills: software, programming languages, laboratory techniques
- Soft skills: communication, leadership, problem solving
- Relevant certifications (e.g., CPR, Microsoft Office Specialist)

Briefly list personal interests that reflect your personality and can spark conversation.

How to Write Each Section Effectively

1. Crafting a Standout Contact Section

Keep it simple. Use a professional email address (e.g., *jane.doe@email.com*). If you have a LinkedIn profile, include it—just make sure your profile is polished and up to date.

2. Writing an Impactful Objective

Instead of a generic "seeking a challenging position," tailor it to the opportunity. For example: *"Motivated sophomore with a passion for environmental science seeking a summer internship at the City Water Department."*

3. Highlighting Academic Strengths

When listing courses, choose those that align with your future plans. If you're applying for a science internship, mention AP Biology, Chemistry, or advanced math courses.

4. Showcasing Extracurricular Leadership

Use action verbs and quantify achievements. For instance: *"Led a team of 15 students to win the regional robotics*

competition, securing a 10% increase in sponsorship."

5. Detailing Work Experience

Even part time jobs teach valuable skills. Emphasize responsibilities that demonstrate responsibility, customer service, or teamwork. Use bullet points and start each with a strong verb.

6. Emphasizing Volunteer Impact

Describe the mission of the organization and your role. Quantify where possible: *"Organized 20+ community clean up events, resulting in 500+ pounds of trash removed."*

7. Showcasing Technical and Soft Skills

List specific tools or languages you're proficient in (e.g., "Adobe Photoshop, Java, Microsoft Excel"). Pair them with soft skills like "team leadership" or "time management."

8. Adding Certifications and Awards

Include any certifications that demonstrate competence—especially those relevant to your intended field. For example, a **First Aid and CPR** certification can be valuable for a healthcare internship.

9. Including Interests (Optional)

Keep it professional. Mention interests that could be relevant to the role—such as "hiking and environmental advocacy" for a conservation internship.

Formatting Tips for a Clean, Professional Look

- Use a Simple Font: Arial, Calibri, or Times New Roman in 10–12 point size.
- Margins: 1 inch on all sides.
- Keep It One Page: High school resumes should stay within 1 page. Use concise bullet points.
- Consistent Bullets: Use either dashes or round bullets; avoid mixing styles.
- Avoid Excessive Graphics: Stick to a clean layout. If you use a color scheme, keep it subtle.
- Proofread: Typos can undermine credibility. Use spell check and have a teacher or mentor review it.
- Use White Space: Adequate spacing makes the document easier to read.

Sample High School Resume

Below is a sample resume that incorporates all the sections and formatting tips discussed. Feel free to adapt it to your own experiences.

John A. Smith

123 Maple Street • Springfield, IL 62704 • (555) 123 4567 • johnsmith@email.com • linkedin.com/in/johnsmith

Objective

Enthusiastic sophomore eager to secure a summer internship in environmental science, combining academic knowledge with hands on project experience.

Education

Springfield High School, Springfield, IL
Expected Graduation: June 2026
GPA: 3.8/4.0
Relevant Coursework: AP Biology, AP Chemistry, Honors Calculus, Environmental Science

Academic Achievements

- National Honor Society Member (2023–present)
- First place, State Science Fair (2024)
- Recipient, Green Thumb Scholarship (2023)

Extracurricular Activities

- Student Government, Vice President (2024–present)

  Organized school-wide recycling initiative, increasing participation by 35%
- Led design and programming of autonomous robot, winning 2nd place at regional competition
- Scored 12 goals in 2024 season; contributed to district championship

Work Experience

- Cashier, FreshMart Grocery (Summer 2023)

  Managed cash register, processed 200+ transactions daily
- Implemented a new inventory tracking system, reducing stock discrepancies by 15%

Volunteer Experience

- Volunteer, Springfield Community Garden (2022–present)

  Organized weekly planting events; grew 500+ plants for local shelters

Skills

- Technical: Java, Python, Adobe Illustrator, Microsoft Office Suite
- Soft: Leadership, Team Collaboration, Problem Solving, Time Management

Certifications

- First Aid & CPR (American Red Cross, 2024)
- Certified Microsoft Office Specialist (Excel, 2023)

Interests

Environmental activism, hiking, robotics, creative writing

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Including Irrelevant Information: Stick to experiences that demonstrate skills or achievements relevant to your target opportunity.
- Using a Generic Resume for All Applications: Tailor each resume to the specific internship, job, or scholarship.

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