ASCII RESUME

JOB SEARCH KICKSTART:

How to Create an ASCII or Plain Text Resume and When to use it.

Have you ever been asked to submit an ASCII or plain text resume for an online job application? A plain text or ASCII resume is a resume that's been stripped of most formatting in order to be scanned by an applicant tracking system. Basically it's an electronic resume in plain text that any type of computer or software can read.

Forget those lovely Pinterest worthy resume layouts. An ASCII resume is just plain ugly. But it gets your qualifications, skills, and experience past the bots and gets the job done.

ASCII (pronounced "askee") is an acronym for American Standard Code for Information Interchange. ASCII text is used for entering (or copy and pasting) your resume information into online submission forms and for adding your resume into the body of an e-mail.

Due to the sheer volume of applications that are submitted to online job applications, most companies use a computer system called ATS - Applicant Tracking system - to scan resumes looking for keywords that match the job description. Converting your resume to ASCII before pasting it into an online job application form ensures it will display properly and be read correctly by the system. Fancy formatting, graphics, columns, unusual fonts

and bullets may not be read correctly by the ATS - or even read at all. Your resume could be rejected before even reaching the hiring manager.

How to Create In ASCII or Plain Text Resume

The Simple Way:

On a Mac or some PCs, you can simply export your word or pages document to a plain text version. Here's the easy way:

1. Make a copy of your resume and paste it into a separate document.

2. Click on Export or Save As and click the plain text option. This will strip your resume of all formatting. Again, it's going to look UGLY. But it works.

3. Proofread the resume. Some words may have run together. Capitalize any words that may have changed. Fix errors but do not add formatting.

4. Add spaces between sections to make it more readable. You can use rows of hyphens ————- or equal marks =========== to simulate borders and separate sections. Asteriks can serve as bullets.

5. Click Save and name the version Yourname plain text resume.

If that doesn't work, here's the do it yourself version.

Here's the long version, i.e. the not so simple steps, to create a plain text version of your resume.

1.   Open your document in MS Word unless otherwise specified.

2. Be sure your margins are set no smaller than one inch.

3. Change all font to 12-point size text and eliminate any formatting (e.g., bold, italics, underlining, etc.)

4. Convert to a standard font such as Calibri, Arial, Times New Roman, Courier or Cambria.

5. Remove all graphics, text boxes or other formatting.

6. Replace all non-ASCII characters (e.g., bullets or other symbols) with ASCII characters such as asterisks, hyphens, and standard quotation marks.

7. Avoid capital letters except in main headings.

8. Left justify all text.

9. Save this version as "Text Only" or "Plain Text" with **no** line breaks. (Mac users: after saving as plain text, select "other encoding" then "Western (ASCII)".)

10. Open this new file with a plain text editor such as Notepad or Text Edit. (Mac users: go to Preferences and be sure "plain text" is selected.) This will display your resume as it will be seen in ASCII format.

11. Proofread your new ASCII resume carefully. Also, check for (and replace) any remaining non-ASCII characters that appear as question marks, square blocks, or other odd characters.

SAMPLE ASCII RESUME: Here's what an ASCII resume should look like.

Penny Pumpernickel

penny@whatever.com | 123.456.7890 | pennyonLinkedIN.com

QUALIFICATIONS

* Bullet points highlighting your 5-6 top qualifications

* Use only astericks or hyphens- no fancy symbols

EXPERIENCE

COMPANY NAME - Employment Dates

Position Title

* 3-5 points outlining accomplishments and skills

*

COMPANY NAME - Employment dates

Position Title 2

- 3-5 Bullets

- Again only astericks or hypens - no fancy symbols

COMPANY NAME - employment dates

- Additional positions

- Add bullets

EDUCATION

School Name - Year Started/ Ended

Degree Name

 - Use bullets to list any special achievements or awards

OTHER INFORMATION AS NEEDED

   Languages: Native plus additional languages

   Certifications: List noteworthy or required certifications relevant to the position.

   Technical Skills: List computer or other skills relevant to the position.

   Volunteer Experience or other skills noted in the Resume Guide

Basics to Remember To Optimize your Resume for ATS

- Use .doc or .docx file type. Don't send as a PDF.
- Only include information relevant to the job you are applying for.
- Insert keywords from the job description.
- Avoid using graphs, images, or other graphics.
- Don't use 2 or more columns.
- Write out the full name of months and years.
- Don't use headers or footers.
- Limit your formatting to text and bullet points.
- Use MS Word format, unless otherwise specified.

Again, this type of resume looks UGLY but it works.

What's the most important feature of your resume? The WORDS

Remember that the most important part of your resume is the actual content - the words. The computer (and hiring manager) are looking for the words that relevant to the job description and your skills and experience. **These are those all important keywords.**

This content is the meat of your resume - what's going to help you land that all important interview. Make sure your tailor your resume for each

INTERVIEW PREP CHECKLIST

job application, using key words listed in the job description. Use action verbs that show your successes and accomplishments.

It's true. A plain text or ASCII resume is just plain ugly. But it helps you slip through the Applicant Tracking System so your skills and experience can shine through, giving the hiring manager that information he or she needs to call you in for an interview - and hopefully, offer you the job.

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