



COMMUNICATE YOUR SKILLS

IN YOUR RESUME, COVER
LETTER, AND LINKEDIN

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HOW TO WRITE ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE

Do you struggle to talk about your experience and qualifications, especially in a resume, cover letter, or job application? It's very common - it's hard to talk about your skills in a succinct way! Until now ...

Follow these five steps to write effective and efficient bullet points for your resume, cover letter, and LinkedIn profile.

STEP 1: FIND YOUR KEYWORDS

This is the most important step of the process; it is the foundation for your work. Put your effort into finding your keywords, and your job applications will be much stronger.

1) Find 3-5 job listings that interest you. They can be aspirational. You aren't necessarily applying to these jobs, you're just pulling out keywords and key phrases. Find job descriptions with lots of content.

2) Copy + paste the job descriptions into a new document. Highlight the keywords and key phrases. Look for words that describe the skills they're looking for, the type of work you will be doing, and the type of person they are looking to hire.

3) Copy + paste your highlights into a new document. You will notice patterns emerge. Organize the keywords and key phrases into categories such as "teamwork," "communication," and "technical skills."

NOTE: It's okay if the phrases sound similar, now you have options to play with. Sometimes when you are working on a resume, cover letter, AND LinkedIn profile, you end up saying the same thing twice and you'll be glad for an extensive list of phrases to pull from.

4) Use tools to help. There are several online resources to help you get a quick list of top keywords. Try the keyword tools from Resume Worded, SkillSyncer, or Jobscan.

WARNING: These tools can help, but they do not replace the copy + paste steps I mentioned above - you will get better information if you manually read the job descriptions and assemble your own keyword list.

STEP 2: FIND YOUR STORIES

Find stories from your past experience that illustrate the keywords. Think about your tasks, responsibilities, and outcomes. NOTE: You don't have to be paid in order to have "experience." Time spent in school or working as a volunteer absolutely qualifies as experience.

Find stories that illustrate your keywords:

- Successes, impact, when you made a difference
- Issues you recognized and addressed
- Opportunities you recognized and acted on
- Disasters you helped avoid or quickly clean up
- Problems you solved, processes you improved
- Situations when you reduced something: expenses/waste
- Situations when you improved something: profits/workplace/morale
- Times when you failed and the lessons you learned

STEP 3: WRITE SAR STORIES

Turn your keywords + stories into SAR stories. SAR stands for "Situation, Action, Result" and it's an effective and efficient way to write your bullet points.

The SAR Method for Storytelling: Answer each point below in 1-2 sentences:

Situation: Describe the problem you needed to solve, or the challenge to overcome.

Action: What did you do and how did you do it?

Result: What were the outcomes and the impact (on the company/you)?

You should have a total of 3-6 sentences describing each story. This is a good start! We're going to make it shorter soon. First, it's time to find quantifiable measures.

STEP 4: FIND QUANTIFIABLE MEASURES

Quantifiable measures are numbers, percentages, metrics, data, or anything that will quantify and support your results. They are incredibly important for your resume, cover letter, and LinkedIn profile.

How to Find Quantifiable Measures

1) Look at your SAR stories, especially the “Results.”

2) Then ask *how many, how much, how long, how often?*

- How many people did you manage, how much money did you make, how long did the project run, how often did you present to groups? An estimate or range is okay, it doesn't have to be precise.
- If you saved money or time, that is an important quantifiable measure.

3) You can get quantifiable measures out of nearly any experience

- For example, estimate how many hours you've spent in the studio, how many logos you have created, how many costumes you have sewn, or how many sheets of music you have written.
- You could brag about the CFA program's prestige: *"5% admission rate, one of 75 students accepted out of 1,500 applicants."* Ask admissions for the data for your year.
- Helpful article from thebalancemoney.com: *"Why and How to Include Numbers on Your Resume."*
- Use ChatGPT for help. Choose a SAR story and type in this prompt: *"Please help me find quantifiable measures for bullet points for my resume based on the following story. [copy + paste your SAR story]."*

STEP 5: WRITE YOUR BULLET POINTS

Now you're ready to write effective bullet points for your resume, cover letters, and LinkedIn profile!

SRA Stories

Get your SAR stories and flip the order. Now think of them as **SRA stories: Situation, RESULT, Action.**

Another way to think about your SRA Stories:

"I helped ____ achieve ____ by doing ____."

"Helped [SITUATION] achieve [RESULT] by doing [ACTION]."

Make SRA Stories Shorter

Now you want short bullet points. Drop the "Situation" and only focus on the "Results" and "Action."

REMINDER: Bullet points are short, impactful statements

- Aim for two sentences (three sentences if they're short).
- Start with a great action word. (Search online for *"195 Resume Action Verbs That Hiring Managers Want to See"* from Jobscan.co)
- Include keywords and key phrases whenever possible.
- Do not include a "first" or "third" person, there is no person at all. (NO: "I was promoted to manager." YES: "Promoted to manager.")

EXAMPLES: Here are different ways you can write bullet points, from "Bad" to "Best"

BAD: "Handled the company's social media accounts by posting content and interacting with followers."

GOOD: "Grew three social media accounts by posting regular content and interacting with 1,000+ followers."

BETTER: "Revived three social media campaigns, boosting followers 200% and user engagement 400%."

BEST: "Increased social media followers by 200% using viral marketing campaigns that boosted sales by 50%." (This one is the best because it starts with the RESULT and includes keywords.)

And that's it! That's how you write effective bullet points for your resume, cover letter, and LinkedIn profile. You've just been handed the ultimate guide to refining your brand and attracting hiring managers. Take your time on this - put in the effort and it WILL pay off.