

Your Work Experience on Your Resume

Your work experience is one of the first things an employer looks for on your resume. Enter this information carefully, using the following tips to make the best impression, even if you have a less-than-perfect work history.

Enter Your Work Experience

Open the resume format you chose ([chronological](#), [functional](#), or [combination](#)) in [Step 3](#). Input the dates, job titles, employer names, cities, and states of your work history in the resume template. In the chronological and combination formats, your work experience will be typed in the body of the resume where you will later write bullet point achievement statements under each job title. In the functional format, your work history is placed very neatly near the end of the resume.

When listing your work experience, you should:

- **List your jobs in reverse chronology;** that is, most recent first.
- **Use years (no months)** when listing dates on your resume. This makes it easier for the employer to quickly grasp your employment timeline.

Dealing With Work History Problems

Almost everyone has a less-than-perfect work history, so don't worry if you do too. What's key is that you present your history so the employer either doesn't notice or feels okay about your work history "flaws."

Here are two issues I see a lot of on resumes. (Be sure to follow the link for each point to find in-depth solutions to these work history problems.)

- [Unemployment](#). If you've ever been laid off, fired, quit, or are returning to work after years of retirement, parenting, illness, or something else, don't leave those years of unemployment blank in your work experience. Fill that gap with a relevant "job title" for some activity (paid or unpaid) you were doing during that time. If you can't come up with a title that's relevant, then pick one that's honest and shows you have good character (such as "parent" or "student"). Otherwise, an employer might think something bad happened that you don't want to talk about and he might not call you for an interview.
- [Dates that trigger age discrimination](#). Dates on your resume give clues about your age. So be careful how far back in your history you go. Remember, you don't have to start with your first job if it's not to your advantage. As long as everything on your resume is true, it's okay to leave something (such as early dates) off.

Once you've entered your work experience, you're ready for the next step. Just click **Next>>** (below).