GENERAL

how to write a resume for high school

Published: September 3, 2026 | Index ID: #-

How to Write a Resume for High School: A Step by Step Guide

When you're still in high school, a polished resume can open doors to internships, part time jobs, volunteer opportunities, and even college admissions. A well crafted document showcases your strengths, highlights your achievements, and demonstrates your readiness for the next step in your academic or career journey. This guide walks you through every part of the process—from understanding why a resume matters to formatting your final draft—so you can create a standout high school resume that speaks to employers, college counselors, and scholarship committees alike.

Why a High School Resume Matters

Most people think resumes belong only to college graduates or seasoned professionals, but a student's resume can be a powerful tool even before you leave school. Here's why:

- Early Career Exploration: It helps you articulate interests, skills, and goals to potential employers or internship coordinators.
- College Applications: Many universities and scholarship programs ask for a resume to gauge extracurricular involvement and leadership.
- Professional Development: A resume forces you to reflect on accomplishments, set goals, and present yourself confidently.
- Networking: Whether you're applying for a summer job or a volunteer position, a resume is the first impression you make.

Essential Sections of a High School Resume

Unlike a corporate résumé, a high school resume is concise and focused. The following sections are essential:

1. Contact Information

Place this at the top. Include your full name, phone number, professional email address, and optionally a LinkedIn profile or personal website if you have one. Keep it simple and professional.

2. Objective or Summary (Optional)

A brief 1–2 sentence statement that tells the reader who you are and what you're seeking. Example: "Motivated sophomore with a passion for STEM, seeking a summer internship in robotics." Use this sparingly—many recruiters prefer a clear skill list instead.

3. Education

List your high school, expected graduation year, GPA (if above 3.0), and any relevant coursework (e.g., AP Calculus, Honors English). If you have a dual enrollment or community college credit, include it here.

4. Work Experience

Include part time jobs, tutoring, or any paid work. Use bullet points to describe responsibilities and achievements. Focus on transferable skills: communication, time management, teamwork.

5. Extracurricular Activities

Highlight clubs, sports, student government, or music ensembles. Emphasize leadership roles and any projects you led.

6. Volunteer Experience

Showcase community service, charity work, or mentoring. This demonstrates social responsibility and initiative.

7. Awards & Honors

List academic awards, scholarships, or recognition from school or community organizations.

8. Skills

Separate hard skills (e.g., Microsoft Office, Python, Spanish) from soft skills (e.g., problem solving, adaptability). Keep the list concise—no more than 10–12 skills.

9. Certifications & Online Courses

Include any relevant certifications like CPR, Google Analytics, or Coursera courses that bolster your profile.

Formatting Tips for a Clean, Professional Look

Presentation matters as much as content. Follow these formatting guidelines to keep your resume readable and visually appealing.

Use a Consistent Font and Size

Choose a clean serif or sans serif font (e.g., Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri) at 10–12 point size. Avoid decorative fonts.

Margins and Spacing

Set 1 inch margins on all sides. Use single spacing within sections and a line break between them. This keeps the document uncluttered.

Bullet Points Over Paragraphs

Use bullets for responsibilities and achievements. Each bullet should start with a strong action verb (e.g., “Managed,” “Coordinated,” “Implemented”). Keep them brief—ideally one line.

Quantify Achievements

Numbers provide context. Instead of “Helped organize school event,” write “Coordinated a school event attended by 300 students.”

Keep It One Page

High schoolers usually have limited experience, so aim for a single page. If you have an extensive extracurricular record, consider a second page but only if absolutely necessary.

File Format and Naming

Save your resume as a PDF to preserve formatting. Use a clear file name, e.g., “JaneDoe_Resume.pdf.”

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Typos and Grammatical Errors: Always proofread. Use spell check and ask a teacher or friend to review.
- Irrelevant Information: Exclude hobbies that don’t add value (e.g., “likes pizza”).

- Exaggeration: Be honest—misstating experience can backfire.
- Too Many Jargon Terms: Use simple, clear language that anyone can understand.
- Using a Generic Template: Customize each resume to fit the position or program you're applying for.

Sample Resume Layouts

Below are two sample resumes—one for a high school student applying for a part time job, and another for a student applying to a college scholarship. Each example demonstrates how to structure information effectively.

Sample 1: High School Resume for a Part Time Job

Jane Smith
123 Maple Street, Springfield, IL 62704
(555) 123 4567 | jane.smith@email.com | LinkedIn: linkedin.com/in/janesmith

Objective

Enthusiastic sophomore seeking a part time cashier position to develop customer service skills and support my academic goals.

Education

- Springfield High School – Expected Graduation: May 2026
- GPA: 3.7/4.0
- Relevant Coursework: Algebra II, World History, Intro to Computer Science

Work Experience

- Cashier, QuickMart – Springfield, IL (June 2023 – Present)
- Processed an average of 150 customer transactions daily with 99% accuracy.
- Assisted in inventory management and restocking of shelves.

Extracurricular Activities

- Debate Club – Vice President (2023–Present)
- Organized weekly debate sessions and led training for new members.
- Volunteer, Springfield Food Bank (2022–Present)
- Sorted donations and distributed food to families in need.

Skills

- Customer Service
- Cash Handling
- Microsoft Office Suite
- Basic Spanish (Conversational)

Certifications

- First Aid & CPR – American Red Cross (2023)

Sample 2: High School Resume for a College Scholarship

Michael Lee
456 Oak Avenue, Riverdale, NY 10471
(555) 987 6543 | michael.lee@email.com | LinkedIn: linkedin.com/in/michaellee

Academic Highlights

- Springfield High School – Class of 2026

- GPA: 3.95/4.0
- Honors: AP Scholar with Distinction, National Honor Society

Academic Projects

- Robotics Club Senior Project – Designed and built a line following robot that placed 2nd in the state competition (2025).
- Science Fair: Renewable Energy – Developed a prototype solar powered charger; received “Best in Category” award (2024).

Extracurricular Leadership

- Student Council President – Led a team of 10 to organize school-wide initiatives, including a charity fundraiser that raised $5,000 for local shelters.
- Volunteer, Riverdale Youth Center – Mentored middle school students in STEM (2023–Present).

Skills & Competencies

- Programming: Python, Java
- Technical: CAD, Arduino, LabVIEW
- Languages: English (Native), Mandarin (Intermediate)
- Soft Skills: Leadership, Time Management, Problem Solving

Professional Development

- Google IT Support Professional Certificate (2024)
- First Aid & CPR – American Red Cross (2023)

How to Tailor Your Resume for Different Opportunities

Each role or program has unique expectations. Adapt your resume accordingly:

For Part Time Jobs

- Emphasize customer service, punctuality, and reliability.
- Showcase any prior retail or cash handling experience.
- Include a brief objective that mentions your availability.

For Internships

- Highlight relevant coursework or projects.
- Showcase analytical or technical skills.
- Include any research experience, even if it’s a science fair project.

For College Applications

- Focus on leadership roles and community impact.
- Include awards and honors that align with the scholarship criteria.
- Use a concise, bullet point format that is easy for admissions officers to scan.

For Scholarships

- Match your achievements with the scholarship’s mission (e.g., STEM, community service).
- Include any essays or letters of recommendation that accompany your application.
- Keep the resume clean and professional; avoid excessive graphics.

Final Checklist Before You Hit “Send”

1. Proofread – Check for typos, grammar, and formatting consistency.

2. Tailor – Ensure each section aligns with the specific job or program.
3. Keep it Concise – No more than one page unless you have a substantial record.
4. Use Action Verbs – Start bullet points with strong verbs like “Managed,” “Created,” “Implemented.”
5. Quantify – Whenever possible, add numbers to illustrate impact.
6. Save as PDF – Preserve formatting and avoid compatibility issues.
7. Ask for Feedback – Have a teacher, mentor, or career counselor review your resume.

Conclusion

A high school resume is more than a list of activities—it’s a strategic tool that showcases your readiness for future opportunities. By structuring your document thoughtfully, focusing on relevant achievements, and polishing the presentation, you can create a resume that stands out to employers, scholarship committees, and college admissions officers alike. Start building your résumé today, and take the first step toward turning your ambitions into reality.

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