

BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE RESUME

EDUCATION:

Begin the resume with your law school information, even if you have significant work experience prior to attending WCL. Upon receiving your resume, the employer should recognize immediately that you are a law student. Consider including: Honors, Awards, Activities, Study Abroad, or a Senior Thesis within your educational institutions. When formatting, use visual variety (e.g., bold, italics, underline) to ensure that important information stands out.

American University Washington College of Law, Washington, DC

Juris Doctor candidate, May 2011

Honors:

Activities:

EXPERIENCE:

Depending on your background and application strategy, it may be appropriate to further qualify your experiences using additional headings (e.g., “Legal Experience,” “Management Experience,” “International Experience,” or “Community Involvement”).

Include both paid and unpaid positions. What is important is the experience you gained, thus, clinic and externships/internships are appropriate. Description is the key. Think career highlights and results achieved. Put the most significant responsibility first, even if it constituted the *least* amount of your work day. Demonstrate writing experience, research skills, analytical abilities, critical thinking, and level of responsibility. Quantify and qualify your experience wherever possible (e.g., number of people managed or cases worked on, specific issues dealt with, dollar amounts involved, or savings/profits realized). Use either bullet points or paragraph format, as long as the narrative is not so thick that it becomes difficult to read and information hard to access.

Honorable John Smith, Virginia Supreme Court, Richmond, VA

Judicial Intern, May – August 2008

Drafted bench memoranda and provided recommendations for rulings on civil and criminal cases in response to bills of costs and motions for new trials, reconsiderations, and sanctions. Researched and prepared legal memoranda related to motions to suppress, reduce sentences, review bonds, and compel discovery. Observed oral arguments before the Court.

ADDITIONAL CATEGORIES TO CONSIDER:

- Publications
- Language Skills
- Personal Interests & Travel (if unique and extensive)
- Special Skills, Licenses, or Affiliations (e.g., CPA or Bar Admission)
- Leadership & Community Service
- Security Clearance

ISSUES TO DISCUSS WITH AN OCPD CAREER COUNSELOR:

- Whether to include your GPA
- Whether to include membership in a fraternity/sorority or organizations that show political affiliation, religion, sexual orientation, etc.
- Whether to use a format other than reverse chronological
- Appropriate length (strive for one page; two pages may be acceptable)
- The use of local and/or permanent address