

# TIPS FOR PREPARING A SCANNABLE RESUME

Many employers are using scanning and imaging technology to help collect, store and manage resumes they receive from job seekers. Once received your resume is scanned into an electronic resume database as an image with the aid of OCR (optical character recognition) software. The result is a text file which is read by artificial intelligence for important information such as your name, address, phone number, education, work history, etc. Following are tips for preparing a “scannable” resume that will maximize your chances of being matched with available employment opportunities.

## Tips for Maximizing Scannability

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- Use white or light-colored 8 1/2 x 11 paper, printed on one side only.
- Avoid dot matrix printouts and low quality copies.
- Do not fold or staple.
- Use standard typefaces.
- Use a 10 to 14 point sans-serif font.
- Do not condense spacing between letters.
- Use boldface and/or all capital letters for section headings, as long as the letters do not touch one another.
- Avoid using special characters such as bullets.
- Avoid fancy treatments such as italics, underline, shadows, borders and reverse (white letters on black background).
- Avoid vertical and horizontal lines, graphics and boxes.
- Avoid two-column format or resumes that look like newspapers or newsletters.
- Place your name at the top of the page on its own line. (Your name can also be the first text on pages two and three.)
- List each phone number on its own line.
- Use white space - computers like white space. It recognizes that one topic has ended and another has begun.
- Left justify the entire document.

## Tips for Maximizing Hits

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- Use specific, descriptive words to define your skills and experience to maximize your ability to get “hits” (a hit is when one of your skills matches one of the “keywords” the computer has been programmed to find). Include names of software applications you use such as Microsoft Word and Lotus 1-2-3, if appropriate.
- Use more than one page if necessary (place your name at the top of each page). The computer can easily handle multiple-page resumes. It uses all of the information it extracts from your resume to determine if your skills match available positions. It allows you to provide more information than you would for a human reader.
- Use jargon and acronyms specific to your industry (spell out the acronyms for human readers).
- Use common headings such as: Objective, Experience, Employment, Work History, Positions Held, Appointments, Skills, Summary, Summary of Qualifications, Accomplishments, Strengths, Education, Affiliations, Professional Affiliations, Publications, Papers, Licenses, Certifications, Examinations, Honors, Personal, Additional, Miscellaneous, References, etc.
- When faxing, set the fax to “fine mode” - the recipient will get a better quality copy.

(The above information was extracted from “Preparing the Ideal Scannable Resume” by *Resumix, Inc.*, located in Sunnyvale, CA. The sample of the scannable resume on the back of this page was copied from a handout prepared by Los Alamos National Laboratory.)



## Additional Tips and Examples

- Avoid ambiguous phrases and vague word choice:
  - Vague** - “responsible for project organization”
  - Preferred** - “organized series of projects for marketing new line of software on West Coast”
- Use active verbs and concrete, detailed language to describe your experience:
  - Passive** - “experience with blueprints”
  - Preferred** - “drafted electronic blueprints”
- State the names of tools, instruments, hardware and software you have used:
  - Unspecific** - “computer skills”
  - Preferred** - “Microsoft Word, UNIX, C++, WordPerfect for Windows”
- Maximize the use of key terminology from your industry, including jargon and recognized acronyms:
  - General** - “researched student motivation”
  - Preferred** - “researched effects of positive nexus on student motivation”
- State quantitative terms and measurable results:
  - Unquantitative** - “trained in handling nuclear materials”
  - Preferred** - “100 hours training in handling of nuclear materials”

### Sample Scannable Resume

**Johanna S. Bach**

PERMANENT ADDRESS:  
1238 Park Avenue, San Jose, CA 95129

CURRENT ADDRESS:  
1236 Foothill Blvd., Apt. 34, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

HOME PHONE: (805) 543-xxxx  
MESSAGE PHONE: (408) 725-xxxx

RESEARCH INTERESTS: Software Engineering

EDUCATION:  
Master of Science Degree, Computer Science, June 20xx, GPA 3.5  
California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo  
Bachelor of Science Degree, Mathematics, June 20xx, GPA 3.0  
California State University, Sacramento

SKILLS: FORTRAN, C Programming, UNIX, NCR's VRX; Fluent in Spanish

EXPERIENCE:  
Software Engineer, January 20xx-December 20xx  
IBM, Santa Clara, CA  
Documented and designed a software for database management. Provided technical support to customers to assist in installation of company software.

Junior Software Engineer, June 20xx-December 20xx  
Data Net, Inc., Sacramento, CA  
Developed and implemented projects to handle voice synthesis for real-time system on the microprocessor.

HONORS:  
Dean's List  
Published article, "Analysis and Modeling of Empirical Data in Collaborative Environments"

Johanna S. Bach (page 1 of 2)

MISCELLANEOUS:  
Intramural Basketball and Soccer  
Enjoy reading, jogging and hiking

Johanna S. Bach (page 2 of 2)

**Annotations:**

- Use up to a 32-point font size for name.
- Identify addresses by current, permanent and/or school.
- Use common subject headings in caps, ending with a colon.
- For employment date ranges, specify a distinct time period for each experience.
- Type on separate lines.
- When listing work experience, provide at least 2-3 lines with specific details reflecting breadth and depth of your skills.
- Identify phone numbers by home, work, message or school.
- Identify degree (Associates, Bachelors, Masters), major, date earned (mo/yr), GPA, school, minor, etc.
- Type related information within the same block of lines.
- Type basic information in a footer.
- Leave optional information for the end.