

PublicServicePrep Comprehensive Guide to Canadian Public Service Exams

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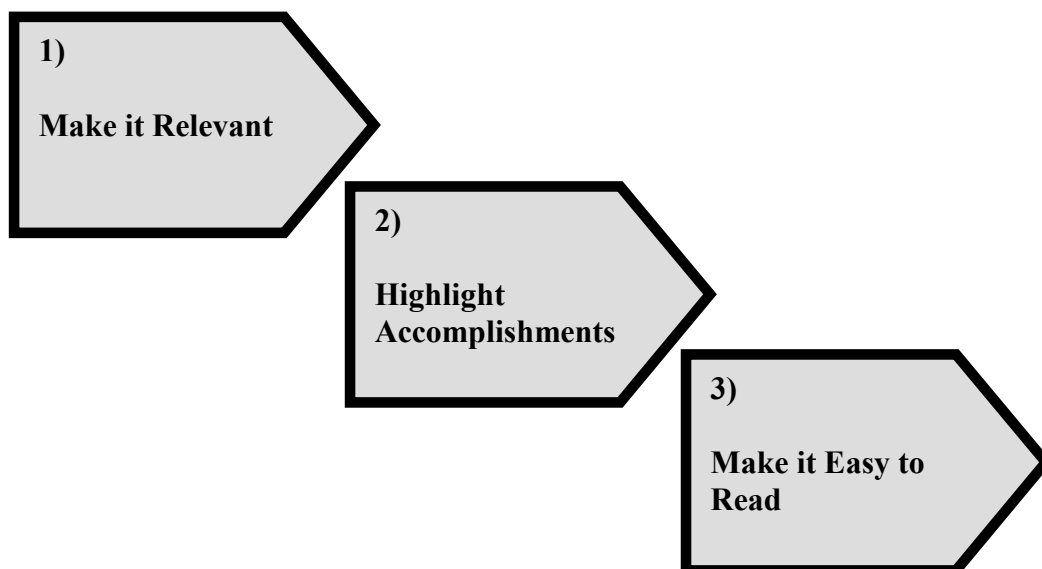
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Resume Building

A resume is a tool you can use to demonstrate your fit for the job-specific requirements of a career. Few people have received instruction on building a resume, or had much experience writing them. They don't understand what should or should not be included to present themselves in the best manner they can.

Resume building does not start at the writing stage. If you are serious about applying for a government position, you should have a long list of volunteer experience, academic achievements, languages, computer skills and other highlights to place on your resume. If you don't, begin today. Many organizations, including food banks, charity organizations and Children's Aid Societies are desperate for volunteer help. Languages, especially French are important for government agencies, as are computer skills and any other life skills.

The main purpose of your resume is to frame your experiences, skills and knowledge in a manner relevant to the position to which you are applying. You have to not only demonstrate what you've done, but also show that you have done it well. It is crucial to present information clearly and concisely so the person reviewing your resume can quickly find what they require. Three principles should be followed:



Principle One: Make it Relevant

Government agencies want to fill positions with people who fit their needs. It is important to determine what competencies are required for the job. Below is a sample list of competencies that may be useful for many government jobs.

Analytical Thinking	The ability to analyze situations and events in a logical way, and to organize the parts of a problem systematically.
Self – Confidence	A belief in your capabilities and recognition of personal limitations.
Communication	You must have the skills to effectively communicate using listening skills and verbal and written communications skills.
Flexibility / Valuing Diversity	With government jobs, you will have to work with a wide cross-section of the community with diverse backgrounds, cultures and socio-economic circumstances. You must have the ability to adapt your approach to each situation.
Self - Control	You must establish that you can control your emotions and actions when provoked.
Relationship Building	Developing contacts and relationships both within and outside your area of employment is extremely valuable.
Achievement Orientation	You must demonstrate a desire for continuous improvement in service and accomplishments.
Information Seeking	The ability to seek out and consider information from various sources before making decisions.
Assertiveness	The capacity to use authority confidently and to set and enforce rules appropriately.
Initiative	Demonstrated proficiency to be self-motivated and self-directed in identifying and addressing important issues.
Cooperation	Willing to act with others by seeking their input, encouraging their participation and sharing information.

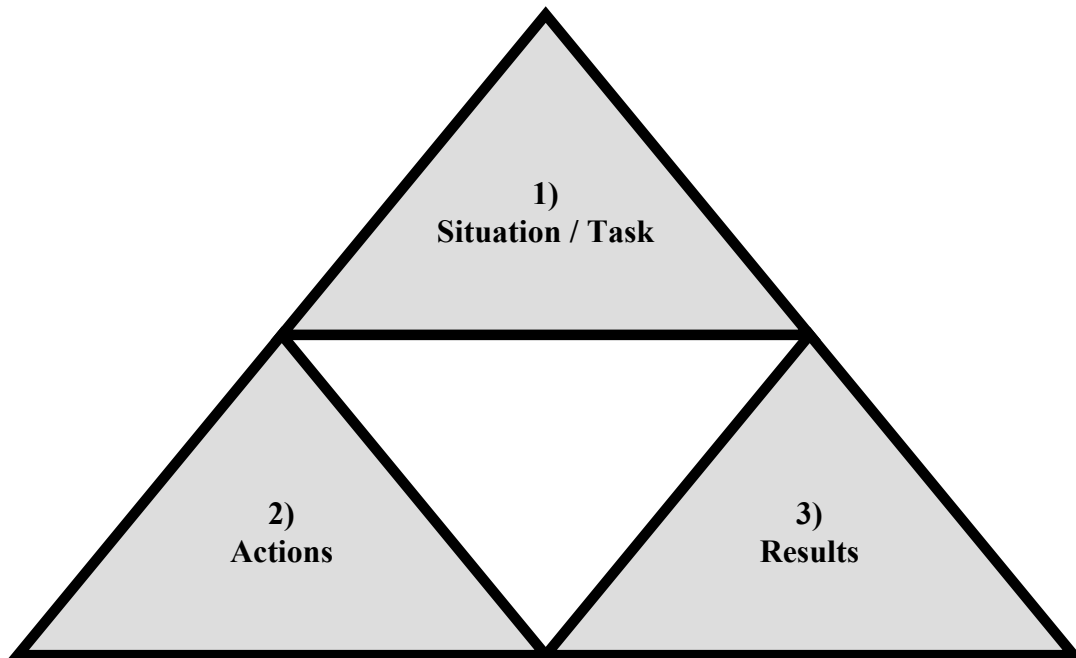
Negotiation / Facilitation	The ability to influence and persuade others by anticipating and addressing their interests and perspectives.
Work Organization	The ability to develop and maintain systems for organizing information and activities.
Community Service Orientation	Proven commitment to helping or serving others.
Commitment to Learning	Demonstrated pattern of activities that contribute to personal and professional growth.
Organization Awareness	A capacity for understanding the dynamics of organizations, including the formal and informal cultures and decision-making processes.
Developing Others	Commitment to helping others improve their skills.

Many people squeeze everything into a resume hoping that something will click. Any material on your resume that does not exhibit traits from the list of core competencies the specific department is looking for is a waste of space.

Do not include every employer on your resume unless you are specifically asked to provide that information. Many government agencies require an employment history application. Pick out the most relevant positions you have had and focus on demonstrating the qualities. Any additional information such as Activities, Volunteer Experience, Education, or Special Skills should also demonstrate your competencies.

Principle Two: Highlight Accomplishments

Accomplishment statements should give your potential employer an indication of how well you performed. It should reveal not only what you did, but also how well you did it. Each statement should include the following:



Each accomplishment should describe skills relevant to the job you're applying for. Practice writing these statements. Typically, accomplishment statements fall under the Work Experience, Volunteer Experience, or Education sections of your resume.

Example Action Statements

1) Day Camp Counsellor

<u>Core Competency</u>	<u>Situation / Task</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Result</u>
Developing Others, Cooperation, Assertiveness, Community Service, Communication.	Field trips as a day camp counselor.	Instruction and supervision.	Ensured safety of 60 children with fellow counselors.

"Supervised and instructed 60 young children on field trips ensuring their safety and enjoyment with a team of fellow counselors."

2) Retail / Grocery

<u>Core Competency</u>	<u>Situation / Task</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Result</u>
Work Organization, Communication, Negotiation / Facilitation	Controlling Inventory.	Organized units and placed orders (quantified)	Diverse customer's needs anticipated and satisfied.

"Organized shelving units and placed orders in excess of \$20,000 ensuring diverse customer needs were anticipated and satisfied."

3) Post-Secondary Education

<u>Core Competency</u>	<u>Situation / Task</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Result</u>
Initiative, Achievement Orientation, Analytical Thinking, Commitment to Learning, Communication	Attending post-secondary education.	Studied sociology (or any other major)	Graduated with a strong standing, developing a core set of skills.

"Developed analytical, presentation, computer and XXXX skills, studying sociology and graduating with a 75% average."

4) Volunteer Work

<u>Core Competency</u>	<u>Situation / Task</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Result</u>
Initiative, Communication, Cooperation, Work Organization, Developing Others, Self-Confidence, Flexibility / Valuing Diversity, Negotiation / Facilitation, Community Service Orientation	Food drive at work.	Organized and implemented.	Raised \$2,000 for needy people in the community.

"Organized and implemented a Food Drive with a team of volunteers, effectively raising \$2,000 for needy people in the community."

Action Verbs to be used for your Accomplishment Statements

Accelerated	Displayed	Negotiated	Saved
Accumulated	Documented	Ordered	Scheduled
Accomplished	Effected	Organized	Selected
Acquired	Enforced	Performed	Separated
Analyzed	Engineered	Perpetuated	Served
Applied	Evaluated	Planned	Set
Arranged	Facilitated	Prepared	Shared
Assessed	Filed	Prescribed	Showed
Authorized	Financed	Presented	Solved
Approved	Founded	Problem-solved	Strengthened
Began	Generated	Processed	Succeeded
Bought	Hired	Produced	Supplied
Budgeted	Identified	Promoted	Taught
Coached	Implemented	Provided	Team-built
Collected	Invented	Questioned	Trained
Combined	Launched	Raised	Translated
Communicated	Learned	Read	Tutored
Conducted	Made	Realized	Uncovered
Convinced	Maintained	Reorganized	Unified
Coordinated	Managed	Repaired	Utilized
Developed	Marketed	Researched	Vitalized
Directed	Minimized	Revised	Won
Discovered	Monitored	Risked	Wrote

Principle 3 - Make it Easy to Read

Recruiters may look at thousands of resumes each year. They do not necessarily spend a lot of time on each one. This means your resume has only a few minutes to prove that you are a good fit for the job. The information presented has to be immediately pertinent and easy to read. Key things you should be mindful of when finishing up your resume are:

- use high quality bond paper
- incorporate as much white space as possible so the reader is not overwhelmed
- highlight only key words or positions to attract attention
- use bullet points rather than paragraphs
- keep font sizes between 10 and 12 pt

Language and grammar are very important to a resume and the following should be observed:

- make every word count
- use short, simple and concrete words that are easily understood
- use strong nouns and vital verbs to add action, power and interest
- avoid personal pronouns
- spell check the document and always have someone proof read the material
- double check the meaning of easily confused words, i.e.:

affect (influence) vs. effect (result)

personal (private) vs. personnel (staff)

elicit (draw forth) vs. illicit (unlawful)

discreet (showing good judgment) vs. discrete (distinct or separate)

allude (indirect reference) vs. elude (to evade)

A few rules-of-thumb

- months do not need to be included in dates when the length of employment is greater than six months
- part-time and full-time descriptors are generally not included
- do not include names of supervisors
- check with the government service to which you are applying to about disclosing full employment history

Review the copy of the sample resume below.

Resume Components

Name	Address Telephone Number E-mail
Education	
Educational Institution Location Degree	Date
Educational Institution Location Degree	Date
Work Experience	
Company, Geographic Location Position title - Descriptive Statement if needed - Relevant Accomplishment Statement - Relevant Accomplishment Statement	Date
Company, Geographic Location Position title - Descriptive Statement if needed - Relevant Accomplishment Statement - Relevant Accomplishment Statement	Date
Company, Geographic Location Position title - Descriptive Statement if needed - Relevant Accomplishment Statement - Relevant Accomplishment Statement	Date
Examples of Optional Section Headings	
- Professional Development - Computer Skills - Languages - Activities and Interests - Volunteer Experience	- Awards - Summary of Qualifications - Functional Skills - Publications - Academic Achievements

Jane / John Doe (EXAMPLE)

2 / 2 Wellington Crescent, Winnipeg, Manitoba Phone: (204) 555-1212
jdoe@xxx.ca

Education

CITY COLLEGE, Winnipeg, Manitoba (2002 -2006)
B.A. in Political Studies

- Elected Class President and managed a budget of \$5,000 and a team of 15 volunteers to deliver class social activities and educational assistance programs.

MAIN STREET COLLEGIATE, Brandon, Manitoba (1998-2002)
OSSD, OAC Certificate, Honour Roll, Senior English Award

Professional Experience

Bank of Canada, Vancouver, British Columbia (2006-present)
Customer Representative

- Solved customer problems by providing individual solutions to specific customer needs.
- Assisted the implementation of a new deposit procedure to reduce customer wait times.
- Responsible for daily cash deposits and withdrawals.

Toronto Parks Department, Toronto, Ontario (1995-1999)
Assistant Activity Implementer

- Scheduled and implemented a variety of after school activities for 50 – 60 children with fellow co-workers.
- Used a needs-based approach to assist children from diverse cultural backgrounds with a variety of problems such as schoolwork, bullying and loneliness.

Volunteer

- Thanksgiving Food Drive - annually delivering food to needy people throughout the community
- Children’s Aid Society – Special Buddy Program (1995-1998)
- City College Orientation Leader (1999)

Interests

- Shodan Black Belt in Jiu Jitsu, running, weight training, snowboarding, rock climbing, white water rafting, sport parachuting, water skiing and SCUBA diving.
- Piano – Royal Conservatory Grade 5. Guitar - Introductory lessons.

Computer Skills

- Excel, WordPerfect, PowerPoint
- Internet development, Outlook