

Are you frustrated because you have sparse work experience and do not know how to make it look good on a résumé? Has it been too many years since your last paid job and you're worried that an employer won't take you seriously? Are you trying to make a career change and are feeling unsure about how to make your current work experience relevant and appealing to employers in your new field?

*If you answered 'yes' to any of these questions, consider using a skills-based résumé.*

## WHAT IS A SKILLS-BASED RÉSUMÉ?

A skills-based résumé is a document that lists a person's job qualifications in skill categories, rather than the standard approach of using reverse chronological work experience categories. You should consider using a skills-based résumé if it would help you present yourself to potential employers in a more powerful way than a chronological résumé would. Reasons that applicants typically choose this route include:

- (1) It is required/preferred by their industry
- (2) They have insufficient work experience
- (3) They have large or frequent employment changes/gaps
- (4) They want to change careers
- (5) Their educational/training background is atypical for this position
- (6) They have been terminated from one or more positions

For a visual comparison of the typical differences between the chronological and skills-based résumé styles, see the following examples.

### Standard Chronological Résumé

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <h2>Amanda D. Ondricek</h2> <p>123 Idaho Avenue • Rexburg, ID 83440 • 123-221-4567 • amandadondricek@byui.edu</p>  |  |
| <b>Education</b>   |  |
| <b>Bachelor of Science in Social Work</b><br>Brigham Young University – Idaho  | Anticipated Graduation Dec 2010<br>Rexburg, ID |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relevant Coursework: Individual, Group, &amp; Macro practice, Welfare Policy, Drug Use and Abuse, Juvenile Delinquency, Abnormal Psychology, Values and Ethics</li> <li>Prepared ethics training with class for local social work professionals to gain CEUs</li> <li>Completed Infant Adoption Training Initiative sponsored by Spaulding For Children</li> <li>Executive Vice President, Social Work Academic Society</li> <li>Director, Realizing the Mission of BYU-Idaho student-led college course</li> </ul> |  |
| <b>Work Experience</b>   |  |
| <b>Career Preparation Mentor</b><br>Internship and Career Services, BYU-Idaho  | Jan 2008 – Present (Seasonal)<br>Rexburg, ID   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advise 20-30 students weekly, in a one-on-one setting, on presenting themselves successfully in internship, job, and career-seeking endeavors</li> <li>Taught students how to focus on their positive qualities in their résumés, cover letters, and when interviewing</li> </ul>   |  |
| <b>Child Caregiver</b><br>Macpherson Family  | Aug – Dec 2009<br>Leesburg, VA                 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhanced ability to adapt to different communication needs of both children and adults</li> <li>Multi-tasked scheduled naps, meals, play time, and learning for new born and 2-year old</li> </ul>  |  |

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## Skills-based Résumé (functional approach)

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### Amanda D. Ondricek

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**EDUCATION**

Brigham Young University-Idaho, Rexburg, ID  
B.S. in Social Work, Spanish emphasis

Graduating Dec 2010

**SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE**

**TRAINING/LEADERSHIP SKILLS**

- Conducted over 100 one-on-one résumé, cover letter, and job interview mentoring sessions, which assisted college students in presenting themselves successfully to potential employers
- Directed the training and teaching of 6 instructors and 2 instructor supervisors for several college-level general studies course sections
- Coached junior employees in time-saving techniques, company policies, and sales tips
- Trained and oversaw the efforts and activities of a small team of full-time volunteers for 9 months
- Managed and monitored the online discussions and assignments for a total of 90 freshman in a general studies course
- Consulted with 20-30 students a week in one-on-one settings, giving positive and constructive feedback
- Accommodated individual students with learning and language disabilities to help them succeed
- Maximized capacity to meet needs of students and office staff by taking initiative to apply and adapt to rapidly fluctuating policies and procedures
- Encouraged academically and emotionally struggling 12 year-old student through positive activities and instruction

**ORGANIZATION/COORDINATION**

- Prepared and presented 45-minute life enhancement lessons daily to inner-city youth
- Inspired teen students to love learning and fulfill responsibilities through effective course instruction and delegating class duties
- Provided 70 hours per week of service for 18 months, which involved planning and teaching life improvement lessons to Hispanic children, youth, and adults
- Contributed to an effective annual Career Fair by coordinating with participants, setting up equipment, and manning aspects of the event
- Increased camp enrollment through innovative advertising and new enrollment activities
- Organized enrollment campaigns and delegated assignments to 15 other students
- Spearheaded the planning of Oppression Awareness Week activities for over 2,000 students
- Led group discussions with over 70 local community leaders, teachers, and students to explore effective ways to solve cultural and personal challenges

## HOW SHOULD A SKILLS-BASED RÉSUMÉ BE FORMATTED?

To determine the best way to format your skills-based résumé, consider what your audience is looking for and also your specific situation. The bottom line is to arrange your résumé in a way that will help your reader assess what you have to offer them in the quickest, easiest, and most powerful way possible. The example above illustrates what is typically called a *functional* skills-based approach. It includes multiple skills sections with bulleted content that proves competencies or proficiencies with the respective skills.

Notice that the employment details such as the job title, company name, location, and dates of employment are not included in these sections. Instead, this information is often included in a separate section toward the latter part of the document, as shown in the following samples.

## Functional Approach

### Employment History Inclusion Options

**Note:** In the sample below, the applicant has used what is often called the ‘bare bones’ approach of including the bare minimum employer information (job title, company name, location, and date).

| EMPLOYMENT HISTORY  |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| Career Preparation Mentor, Internship and Career Services, BYU-Idaho; Rexburg, ID | Jan 08 - Present           |
| Peer Facilitator, Continuing Education, BYU-Idaho; Rexburg, ID                    | Jul - Sep 08               |
| Nanny, Hunt and Holman Families; New York, NY                                     | Sep - Dec 07; Sep - Dec 08 |
| At-Your-Service Runner, Marriott International; Salt Lake City, UT                | Oct 04 - Nov 05            |
| Server Assistant Trainer & Hostess, Old Spaghetti Factory; Salt Lake City, UT     | Jul 02 - Aug 04            |
| Sales Associate, American Eagle Outfitters; Salt Lake City, UT                    | Oct 02 - Feb 02            |
| VOLUNTEER/COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP  |                            |
| Student Director, Realize the Mission, BYU-Idaho; Rexburg, ID                     | Mar 09 - Present           |
| Peer Facilitator, Continuing Education, BYU-Idaho; Rexburg, ID                    | Apr - Jul 08               |
| Seminary Teacher, Church Educational System; New York, NY                         | Sep - Dec 07               |
| Full-Time Missionary, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Tempe, AZ  | Jan 06 - Aug 07            |
| Mentor, Big Brothers Big Sisters; Salt Lake City, UT                              | Apr - Jun 04               |
| Intern & Youth Camp Counselor, Nat'l Conference for Community & Justice; SLC, UT  | Sep 01 - May 03            |

**Note:** In the sample below, the applicant has included details from this job that were not necessarily included in the skills-sections of his résumé.

| <u>Work Experience</u>   |               |
|--|---------------|
| <i>Public Works</i>  | 08/03-Present |
| City of Rexburg Streets Department; Rexburg, ID  |               |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtained class B drivers license to operate tractors and other larger equipment</li> <li>• Sprayed weeds around the city using chemicals and strong fertilizers</li> <li>• Ensured good condition of city streets by repairing pot holes, and patching roads gaps with tar and asphalt</li> <li>• Installed sprinkler systems in city parks using PVC pipe and cement glue</li> </ul> |               |
| <i>Pharmacy Tech</i>   | 09/03 - 04/04 |
| BYU-Idaho Pharmacy; Rexburg, ID  |               |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worked with all medications in Pharmacy</li> <li>• Resolved customer's concerns and issues by being personable and professional</li> <li>• Calmed concerned customers by effectively listening and understanding</li> <li>• Multi-tasked while on the phone with customers (date entry, profile lookup, etc.)</li> </ul>  |               |

De-emphasizing employment information allows you to show your most relevant skills and abilities without bringing attention to employment gaps, frequent job changes, terminations, atypical professional background, etc. Some drawbacks of using this method, however, are that this format may be a deterrent to potential employers who prefer chronological résumé styles\*, since chronological résumés are the most widely used. In addition, it may not be clear and easy for your potential employer to assess what you accomplished at each previous job.

\*This drawback does not apply to those whose industries require a skills-based résumé and may not necessarily apply to industries that are flexible with their résumé formats.

If you are concerned about these drawbacks, but still feel that the skills-based approach will allow you to present yourself most effectively to potential employers, you may want to consider the *combination (or hybrid)* skills-based résumé approach. This will enable you to draw from the strengths of both the chronological and functional styles. As shown in the following example, you can create skills-based sections and include employment information within that section. If you decide to use this method, make sure to avoid being redundant across your skills sections. For example, although it could be appropriate and powerful to include the same work experience in multiple categories, it would be redundant and count against you to copy and paste the same bullet in multiple categories.

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## Combination (Hybrid) Approach Employment History Inclusion Option

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|---|---------------------|
| <h3 style="margin: 0;">Amanda D. Ondricek</h3> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: small;">444 South 3<sup>rd</sup> East, Apt. 3 • Rexburg, ID 83440 • 655.222.2777 • ond07777@byui.edu</p>   |                     |
| <b>EDUCATION</b>  |                     |
| <b>Brigham Young University-Idaho; Rexburg, ID</b><br><i>B.S. in Social Work, Emphasis in Spanish</i>   | Graduating Dec 2010 |
| <b>TRAINING/LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE</b>   |                     |
| <b>Internship and Career Services, BYU-Idaho; Rexburg, ID</b><br><i>Career Preparation Mentor</i>   | Jan 2008 - Present  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advised students on how to present themselves successfully in internship, job, and career-seeking endeavors</li> <li>Consulted with 20-30 students a week, giving one-on-one positive and constructive feedback</li> </ul>                           |                     |
| <b>Continuing Education, BYU-Idaho; Rexburg, ID</b><br><i>Peer Facilitator</i>  | Apr - Sep 2008      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitated and planned weekly lessons for 6 classes of 15, discussing personal application of principles and mission of BYU-Idaho</li> <li>Accommodated individual students with learning and language disabilities to help them succeed</li> </ul> |                     |
| <b>Church Educational System; New York, NY</b><br><i>Seminary Teacher</i>   | Sep - Dec 2007      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Built relationships of trust and respect with youth, resulting in an increase of enrollment</li> <li>Prepared and presented 45-minute life enhancement lessons daily</li> </ul>  |                     |
| <b>The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Tempe, AZ</b><br><i>Full-time Missionary</i>  | Jan 2006 - Aug 2007 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trained and supervised small team of fellow female representatives</li> <li>Provided 70 hours per week of service which included planning and presenting life improvement lessons to Hispanic children, youth, and adults</li> </ul>                 |                     |
| <b>Big Brothers Big Sisters; Salt Lake City, UT</b><br><i>Mentor</i>  | Apr - Jun 2004      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encouraged academically and emotionally struggling 12 year-old student through positive activities and instruction</li> </ul>  |                     |
| <b>CUSTOMER SERVICE/RETAIL EXPERIENCE</b>   |                     |
| <b>Marriott International; Salt Lake City, UT</b><br><i>At-Your-Service Runner</i>  | Oct 2004 - Nov 2005 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Created a comfortable home-away-from-home environment while offering personalized customer service to dozens of international business travelers weekly</li> </ul>   |                     |
| <b>Old Spaghetti Factory; Salt Lake City, UT</b><br><i>Server Assistant Trainer &amp; Hostess</i>   | Jul 2002 - Aug 2004 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Served guests in seating, delivering food, and cleaning space while simultaneously learning the basic operations of a successful business</li> </ul>   |                     |

[Click here](#) to utilize the 'Skills-based Résumé Checklist' and review skills-based samples, or go to: <https://ucs.byu.edu/colleges/hum/resume-writing>.