

How long can a resume be?

By [Pete Leibman](#)

In general, a resume can be more than one page for executives with 10+ years of experience. However, 99% of students or young professionals (those with less than 10 years of work experience) should keep their resume to one page.

Your resume is not your life story or autobiography. I occasionally see 2-3 page [resumes](#) from students who have never even had a full-time job. I also recently reviewed a convoluted 4-page resume for a senior executive who had 31 bullet points listed for one job! Seriously... 31 bullet points.

It's not the employer's job to sift through your entire professional history and decipher why you should be hired or how you can help them. The typical recruiter, referral source, or [hiring](#) person will spend less than 10 seconds reviewing your resume. It's *your job* to present your resume in a **concise**, logical manner that makes it abundantly clear how you can help a specific employer solve their unique problems. This is one case where less is more.

While it's valuable to brainstorm every possible responsibility, qualification, skill, achievement, etc. that could have any relevance to your ideal employers, you have to go one step further by trimming the fat *before* you [submit your resume](#). Approach your resume like a sculptor. To sculpt a masterpiece, you start with a big slab of "marble." Then, you chip away from there. Perfection is achieved by subtraction, not by addition.

To tighten up your resume, make sure that every single word on your resume serves a purpose and increases your perceived value. Yes, every single word. Otherwise, hit "delete." This will be painful at first, but the end product will be well worth it.

I went through this challenge when writing my first book. The word limit from my publisher was 70,000 words, but my initial manuscript was around 100,000 words. I had so much career wisdom to impart on my readers. 😊

So, I went back to my publisher and asked if there was any flexibility on the word count. There was no way that I could cut out 30,000 more words and still convey my points clearly and effectively, right?

Luckily, my publisher held firm to the word limit and I was forced to delete 30% of my work! Initially, this was very challenging. However, the process actually became enjoyable as I went through the draft for my entire book 10 times to chip away unnecessary sections, paragraphs, sentences, and words. The end result was an incredibly tight product that one of my best friends said was "the smoothest book he's ever read."

In addition to being a wordsmith with your entire resume, here are 7 ways you can tighten up your resume through better formatting (while still leaving plenty of white space):

- Widen your margins on the top, bottom, left, and right (just stay within reason).
- Use a smaller font (just don't go lower than Times New Roman, size 11, for example).
- Avoid run-on lines where you have a bullet point that runs-on to the next line for just a few words.
- Keep your bullet points to one line, if possible.
- Create an additional document separate from your resume. For example, if you have a long list of speaking engagements, articles or papers published, media appearances, laboratory experiments, etc., why not include them in a separate attachment instead of lumping them into your resume where they can get lost in the mix?
- Don't include a line that says "References available upon request." It's like writing "willing to meet with you for an interview."
- Remove personal interests and hobbies, unless they are relevant to the job you want or they demonstrate your character (i.e. completing a marathon shows mental/physical toughness and discipline).

If you decide that you need multiple pages to adequately represent yourself on paper to employers, here are a few best-practices to keep in mind:

- Make sure that any additional pages are at least half-full. Otherwise, the extra white space looks sloppy. (Note: if you find yourself adding in "fluff" to fill up the 2nd page, you should probably be using a one page resume.)
- Try to avoid one section of your resume running on to another page (i.e. bullet points from one job running onto page 2). This looks sloppy as well.
- Include your contact information (and page numbers) on secondary pages of your resume.

How long can a resume be? I hope this article helps you answer the question for yourself!

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