



Identifying Your Skills & Qualifications

When developing a résumé for a specific position, the employer's viewpoint should be your top consideration. What will the employer be looking for on the ideal candidate's résumé? Experience and qualifications are typically the principle concerns of the employer. For those who are new to the workforce, these employer focal points may result in a dilemma. New job seekers often become discouraged by thinking, "But I don't have any experience." However, with the completion of the exercises within this reference and a better understanding of the definition of experience, new job seekers can often transform their discouragement into an empowering self-confidence.

What is Experience?

Experience is not just the equivalent of your employment history. Experience and qualifications can be derived from a variety of sources. Among sources of experience are part-time and full-time paid experiences, non-paid part-time and full-time experiences, volunteer work, internships and practica, committee and organization work, travel experiences, personal endeavors, research projects, and military experience. Each of these areas should be explored when trying to determine your qualifications for a specific position.

Skill Exercises

NOTE: An example of each exercise is included at the end of this reference. Also, the Verbs, Modifiers, Qualities and Skills Ready Reference (E7) may be useful in determining word choice for the exercises.

Exercise 1: Turning Tasks into Skills

Step 1 – Divide a piece of paper into three columns. In the first column, make a comprehensive list of all of your past and present job titles and/or titles of activities, leaving space under each title to list all of the duties you performed in that function, even if the responsibilities don't seem important.

Step 2 – In the next column, describe how you performed each of the responsibilities you listed in the first column by using action verbs. Be sure to use this step to concisely describe your accomplishments within each experience and to provide concrete examples of any significant achievements. Completing this process will create concrete tasks from your responsibilities.

Step 3 – Refer back to the second column to determine the functional skills and personal qualities you used to complete each task and write them in the third column.

Step 4 - Evaluate the second and third columns for skills and qualifications that directly relate to the position for which you are applying. Circle the relevant tasks, functional skills, and personal qualities.

Exercise 2: Meeting the Challenge

Step 1 - Divide a piece of paper into two columns. In the first column, describe a particular challenge or adversity you faced during an experience or activity. If you have encountered numerous challenges, list a brief description of each challenge you have faced.

Step 2 - List the steps you took in the strategy to overcome or meet each challenge in the second column. Remember to use

action verbs and positive modifiers to indicate exactly how each step was performed.

Step 3 - Circle the skills within the second column of your list that relate to the qualifications for your desired position.

Exercise 3: Accentuating the Positives

Step 1 - Imagine an inefficient or undesirable worker in the position for which you are applying. On a piece of paper divided into four columns, list the traits that generate this imaginary worker's inefficiency in the first column.

Step 2 - In a column adjacent to your list of negatives, accentuate the positives by listing the opposites to the imaginary worker's ineffective qualities.

Step 3 - In a third column, list efficient or desirable outcomes for this position that support the positive qualities in column 2.

Be sure to use action verbs and positive modifiers in describing the abilities.

Step 4 - Search through descriptions of your past experiences and activities and identify where any of the abilities listed in column 3 may be found. List the titles of the related experiences in the fourth column.

Tips for Including Skills on Your Résumé

- Stress results. Make achievements tangible by indicating specifics and using numbers.
- Keep descriptions simple and relevant. Do not include any descriptions that are not pertinent to the position desired.
- Do not list skills or personal qualities that cannot be demonstrated.
- Use strong action verbs and positive modifiers to describe your experiences, skills, and qualifications.

Examples of Skill Exercises

Example 1: Turning Tasks into Skills

<u>Step 1</u>	<u>Step 2</u>	<u>Step 3</u>
Rush Chairman, Illa Geta Joba Was responsible for recruiting new pledges. Didn't use the same old recruitment procedures. Got the members to work a lot harder and help out more during rush. The number of pledges recruited was higher than last year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Restructured recruiting process used by fraternity ■ Coordinated events to promote fraternity to potential members ■ Motivated membership to actively participate in recruiting activities. ■ Managed involvement of members in recruitment activities. ■ Increased the size of pledge class by 35 percent over previous year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Initiative ■ Organizational skills ■ Creativity ■ Persuading others ■ Teamwork use ■ Supervising others ■ Speaking in public

Example 2: Meeting the Challenge

<u>Step 1</u>	<u>Step 2 and Step 3</u>
<p>Sales Associate, Green Thumb Garden Center</p> <p>An irate customer began a tantrum because he could not find the fertilizer he wanted for his newly sodded yard. He was making a big scene and I was concerned that we might lose customers because of his angry display and accusations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Politely asked hostile customer if he needed assistance (Performed under pressure) ■ Assisted customer in searching for desired product (Assisted consumer) ■ Educated customer on new equivalent fertilizer (Sold product) ■ Apologized for inconvenience to customer and loaded fertilizer into customer's cart (Resolved complaint)

Example 3: Accentuating the Positives

<u>Step 1</u>	<u>Step 2</u>	<u>Step 3</u>	<u>Step 4</u>
<p>Desired job: Public Relations Representative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Shy ■ Poor public speaking ■ Can't write ■ Unwilling to travel ■ Does not know company 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Outgoing ■ Talented public speaker ■ Good writing skills ■ Willing to travel ■ Knowledgeable about company and products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Initiate new public relations campaign ■ Write articles for company newsletter ■ Visit with chambers of commerce in branch locations ■ Organize company-sponsored staff development activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Contributing writer, <i>The Cowboy Journal</i> ■ Chairperson, Alpha Zeta Professional Development Committee