

Preparing a Winning Résumé



Cite those activities that will set you apart from other applicants.

Pam Stephens

In the previous two columns, we explored questions to establish if art teaching is truly your calling and how to find the perfect fit with an art-teaching job. If you have determined that you are ready to pursue your dream of teaching art in a K–12 classroom, this month’s column will assist you with preparing a job-winning résumé.

Functions

There are two important functions of a résumé. The first function is to act as a showcase for your unique qualities. The second function is to act as a springboard to that all-important interview.

Types

There are three basic types of résumés: chronological, functional, and a combination of the two. Chronological résumés include your professional history, in order, with most recent events listed first. Functional résumés show only a work history. Combination résumés include elements of both chronological and functional résumés. For first-time teachers, the combination résumé works best.

Format

Design a one-page résumé format that subliminally says, “I am a professional art specialist.” Recall your foundational design classes and apply that knowledge to the design of your résumé. The résumé should:

- have your name and contact information

written at the top.

- have plenty of white space.
- use the same format and typeface throughout. Avoid hard-to-read fonts.
- use either bulleted lists or short essays (not both).
- be no more than one page in length.
- be printed in black ink on high-quality white, beige, or pale grey paper.

Content

The content of your résumé should include only that which is pertinent. The résumé should:

- state your post-secondary degree(s). Start with the most recent and include all degrees awarded after the high-school diploma. Do not include the high school diploma.
- cite your recent work history. A brief explanation of duties for each job is a plus. Volunteer positions could also be included.
- list any honors and awards, presentations at conferences, publications, exhibitions, or other activities that will make you stand apart from the competition.

Other Pointers

Do not send the same résumé to every school district. Customize the résumé so that potential employers know you have taken the time to familiarize yourself with their schools. For example:

- Include an objective that is a re-statement of the job announcement.

“To teach beginning art classes at XYZ High School” is a much better objective than stating a generic phrase such as “To teach art.”

- Unless the job announcement requires that you submit references, do not include them. If you do include references, always seek permission prior to submitting the résumé.
- Use active verbs with short essays.
- Ask someone to proofread your résumé, checking for consistency in style as well as errors in grammar and spelling.
- Make sure your contact information is current and that your e-mail address sounds professional.
- Include a brief letter of introduction.

Further Help

There is not a single correct method for writing a résumé. Search online and look at a variety of styles. Choose one that stands out to you and use it as a model. Remember that you have only one opportunity to make a first impression and for most applicants, the résumé is the first impression. 📧

Sample Résumé

www.artresourcesforteachers.com/files/Resume_Format2.doc

Pam Stephens is associate professor of art education at Northern Arizona University and is a member of the SchoolArts advisory board. Pamela.Stephens@nau.edu