

Better Bullet Points for Resumes

1. Action-oriented

Start bullets with action verbs (See: [“Action Verbs to Describe Your Experience”](#))

- avoid phrases such as *Responsible for...* and *Duties included...*
- avoid starting with nouns: *Market research, Poster presentation, etc.*

Use verbs that are specific

- minimize common generic verbs: *worked, participated, involved*
- for a list of specific verbs by type of action, see “Action Verbs to Describe Your Experience”

Focus on your actions

- don’t repeat your role or position when clear from job title
- don’t repeat dates or time period worked when clear from date range of position

Focus on your actions

- avoid bullets that describe only your organization or group actions; make clear your contribution

Use phrasing that makes you a main actor, not a supporting actor

- minimize common supporting-actor verbs: *help, assist*
- instead, identify what your help consisted of specifically
- it’s ok to be an ensemble actor: *co-organized x* or *designed x in a team of four*

Use simple tense verbs

- for present actions: *Design and program a sensor...*
- for past actions: *Designed and programmed a sensor...*

2. Details, Details

Emphasize tools, techniques, and skills used

- these are crucial elements of technical work; including them in the context of projects & experiences is more interesting and persuasive than only putting them in a list

Include details about context

- who did you do x with? who for? why—what purpose?

Quantify whenever possible

- how many? how large? how frequently?

3. Highlight Positives

Go beyond process (your actions) and include positive results

- what improved? in what way? by how much?
- recognition earned?
- gained or improved skills?
- learned something? deepen existing knowledge?
- achieve or maintain a high standard?