

There is both an art and a science to crafting an effective, eye-catching document to market one's skills. It must be keyword-specific for automated software systems and visually eye catching for human eyes, too.

Can YOU spot key strengths and weaknesses on a Nursing resume?

Indicate each item below as either a **Strength (S)** or a **Weakness (W)**, based upon the resume under review.

- If the resume has what is needed OR is free of what should be avoided, mark the item as a **Strength**.
- If the resume has items present that shouldn't be there or if it is unclear/uncertain, mark it as a **Weakness**.

S W

- Name and contact information should be clearly displayed, not "grayed out" which may indicate such information is housed in a "header" format which should always be avoided when submitting resumes online.
- Name and contact information should stay within 1" of total vertical space. Information should be in 12-14 point fonts. Name can be bolded and bigger than everything else but not HUGE by comparison.
- Entry-level job seekers can use an Objective statement; however, job seekers with 5+ years in their field should build a professional Nursing Profile. Whichever one is used should best reflect their rank.
- Objective or Profile should clearly state the actual position desired right away or toward the very beginning, i.e. Staff Nurse or Nurse Education Coordinator or Certified Nursing Assistant. Must not be generic/all-purpose.
- Key words and phrases in evidence should directly reflect the needs and requirements of the desired position – space should not be taken up stating irrelevant or disconnected information.
- Education should be listed above work experience, especially for entry-level Nursing positions.
- Education section should INCLUDE additional healthcare certifications (use acronyms *and* spell out in full), actual license numbers, and in which states such licenses are held and valid.
- Nursing Experience should be listed before all other non-nursing work experience. If the only Nursing experience has been Clinical Rotations, list clinical sites and dates with brief notes about what was learned at each, including: population served, equipment used, skills developed, etc.
- Nursing experience should not consist of only a basic collection of duties – that is ineffective. Instead, look for bulleted statements under each employment or work history entry to be in the highly effective and readable form of: *Action Word + Detail + Impact*.
- Non-nursing work experience should be listed last, and focus less on actual duties and more upon universal skills sets that will be of value in Nursing, i.e. customer service, communication skills, time management skills, etc and a note about HOW those skills had meaningful impact.
- Look at which items are in **bold** text. Items bolded should relate directly to the job seeker versus simply making category headers stand out. Therefore, bold **job titles** held and **degrees earned** instead of section titles (headers) of Objective, Education, Work History, etc. Roughly 5% of the resume should be in bold font, no more.
- Fancy formatting should be avoided including graphics/pictures, or using multiple formatting techniques at once such as **bold and underline and italics** all together for same item. It's too much.
- Overall page layout, general look and feel, spelling and grammar, etc should all be crisp, clean, consistent and visually appealing to the eye. Can you get a sense of "balance" on the page? Does it end well – crisp and clean?

Once feedback has been provided, the resume should be edited and improved with special attention paid to items noted as weaknesses. Resumes should be professionally evaluated for best results.