

Resumes: Myths and Realities

Work through the list of statements below and try to agree whether each is 'Probably TRUE', 'Probably UNTRUE' or tick the 'NOT SURE' box. You can check the suggested answers afterwards. Make a note of additional comments or queries you may have.

	Probably TRUE	Probably UNTRUE	?	COMMENTS
1. The only use of a resume is to get a job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. You should write a different resume for every different situation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. A resume is a description of yourself that shows you have as many different talents as possible.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. It's a good idea to include an objective at the start of the resume.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. When looking for a job, it's best to send your resume to hundreds of employers rather than to just a few.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Employers like detailed, lengthy resumes because it gives them complete information for screening candidates. Try to get as much as possible on each page.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. You should not include your hobbies or recreational pursuits in your resume eg reading, cycling.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

8. It's essential to put salary expectations and references on your resume.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9. You should list all your courses and grades.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10. You must include details of your age, sex, marital status, ethnic origin etc as well as a photo of yourself in your resume.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
11. Potential employers are more interested in your holiday jobs and extra-curricular activities than in your academic record.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
12. The resume is less important than other activities, e.g. interviews, in getting a job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Comments:

1. Not exclusively. While certainly the main use of a resume is to apply for a job, it could also be used in other situations to introduce yourself, your background and your achievements in a professional context.
2. True. You may have to adapt the form and content of your resume to take account of different situations and the needs of different employers. A resume aimed at getting a part time teaching job would require a different focus from one accompanying a management training application
3. No. It is an honest description of yourself that nevertheless presents your best aspects in relation to a particular job. Don't claim talents that you do not possess but do make the most of talents which are relevant. Try to provide evidence
4. Yes. An objective gives your resume coherence. It helps to relate past experience and education to the future direction you wish to take. It shows you are a purposeful individual.
5. No. Your resume should normally be targeted at the needs of a few specific employers as specified in their job advertisements. However, in some cases, and at certain points in your life, eg when testing the job market, wider use could be made of a more generally applicable resume.
6. No. More than 1 or 2 pages will lose the employers interest. Also if you crowd too much on one page your resume (and you) will look disorganized and uninviting. Proper use of fonts and good presentation help to reduce no. of pages.
7. This is probably true, as they do not add much to the profile of yourself. However you should include hobbies that can strengthen your objective in relation to the employer's needs eg by providing evidence of a particular skill that will help convince the employer of your competence and professional suitability eg for an aspiring travel agent, organising cycling tours, reading travel guides
8. Not really, unless the recruitment ad specifically asks for the information. The main purpose is to introduce your self in order to get an interview. You can deal with these issues then.
9. No - unless you have taken courses that are relevant to employers needs and your objective, or on which you obtained excellent results.
10. Not true. This is a rather sensitive area. Different cultures and countries may have different laws and expectations on these issues.
11. Not true. Your qualifications are very valuable. Remember to mention any relevant academic specialisation.. Also, fresh graduates are not expected to have substantial job experience. However, where a number of applicants have similar qualifications, their job experience and relevant extra-curricular activities may make the difference.
12. The interview is the key to getting a job but you can't get an interview unless an employer likes what he reads on your resume Your resume must be an attractive, error-free document that represents your best self - it's the key to getting an interview so it is important.