

**THE BASIC RULES OF LEGAL RESUME WRITING –**  
**FROM THE TOP DOWN by K.C. Victor**

1. Always include your address and phone number. Include your e-mail address, if you have one. Where you live is important personal information. How to contact you is the point. You want an interview. Along these lines, when job hunting it is helpful to have both an answering machine and call waiting. Employers will not necessarily call back.
2. Underline or italicize all Latin phrases – e.g., magna cum laude. Latin is a foreign language.
3. Put degrees and degree years as well as job tenure years in right or left column, clearly visible. Don't try to hide a gap. Instead explain in the resume (e.g., 1978-1985 - Full-time parent). Prevent the irrelevant years from becoming a focus of the interview.
4. If two or more years out of law school, "Experience" should precede "Education" unless you went to a much more prestigious law school than employer AND you graduated fewer than five years ago.
5. Keep job descriptions pithy, but be complete. List anything you have done that you would be willing to do again. If appropriate, leave some things off for particular jobs. In our computer age, it is easy, and often appropriate, to have more than one resume.
6. Do not exaggerate. Anything on your resume is fair game – e.g., if you say you speak fluent Spanish, you may be interviewed in Spanish.
7. If you graduated in the top third or better of your college, law school or other graduate school, say so. Prospective employers assume worse if you say nothing.
8. Put down all graduation dates. Age discrimination exists, but hiding your college graduation date will not change that. Also, a missing college graduation date will lead many to think you are close to retirement.
9. List all academic honors. List non-academic honors only if relevant to a particular job or unusually impressive, e.g., captain of a chess team that won a regional championship, marathon runner.
10. If you have done fundamentally the same work at two or more places, give one description and list above or below all the places and dates for which that description applies.
11. If you worked twenty hours or more a week during school, say so. Employers believe, usually correctly, that you would have done better academically if you had had that time to study instead.

12. List your college major. It says something about your interests and perhaps your character, at least at that point in your life.

13. List all scholarships, academic or otherwise. These are not ubiquitous. You were competitively selected.

14. Except for very recent graduates, if only admitted to the expected state, leave out "Admissions." It is assumed.

15. Never state, "References available upon request." If they are not, you have a problem.

16. The goal is a one-page resume, two at the most. If you want to describe particularly interesting transactions or litigations, make a separate "Representative Transactions" or "Representative Litigations" list.

17. Include any foreign languages in which you could conduct business. A particular employer may be interested in even an infrequently used language.

18. Unless known to be relevant to a particular employer, do not list your personal interests. This is a job interview.

19. White paper; no photos; no funny fonts.

20. Have two people, besides yourself, proofread your resume. Interviews have been denied because of a single typographical error.

21. Capitalize or bold all employers and schools as well as your name. People spend little time reading your resume, and this is the information that should jump out.