

# Keywords In Resumes



## What are Keywords

Keywords are made up of the main **skills, experience, and traits** that an employer is looking for. They can all be distilled down into basic keywords that will be picked up by applicant tracking software (ATS) and make it simpler for employers to tell if you have what is required to be in the position they are trying to fill. Keywords are important to include on resumes, cover letters, and CVs but this guide is going to focus on keywords in resumes.

A few examples of keywords are; Organization; Management; Administer; Coordinate; Plan; C++; First Aid; Masters; Survey; Interpret; and many more. Keywords are important but they **should not be used to the exclusion of your other relevant skills and experience**. You should also **never lie about yourself** just to ensure the keywords are in your resume.

## Where to Find Keywords

Keywords are **not** something you have to come up with on your own, instead, you should be looking through the job description to see what keywords the **employer is looking for** and try to see where your skills and experience match. Once you find those keywords you not only know what the employer is trying to find, but you also have more of an idea about what will be important to include on your resume. If you cannot find any from the job description try looking up similar jobs and see what they are looking for.

Here is an example of a job description, try and locate as many keywords as you can:

(Beginning of Description)

*Office Assistant - Summer Student*

Welcome to the office building! Here we passionately assist our clients in ensuring that they get the supplies they need to operate their businesses. We manage transactions, inventory, and communications to ensure we are an effective liaison between businesses and manufacturers.

Key Responsibilities:

Organizing emails and the company google drive.

Reaching out and responding to email inquiries from businesses and manufacturers.

Maintaining inventory lists and ensuring they are accessible.

Reporting to the supervisor, summer students on a weekly basis.

Engage in customer service practices with both in person and digital communications.

Thorough understanding of common office programs such as G Suite and Microsoft Office.

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(End of Description)

**Here are some keywords that we picked up from that description:** Assist, manage, transactions, communications, liaison, organizing, google, reaching out, responding, email, maintaining, inventory, accessible, reporting, customer service, G Suite, Microsoft Office.

Another way to find keywords is to use a word cloud program. These programs can be found online and help with visualization. Simply search for one, copy your job description and paste it in the generator. It should create a word cloud of significant words and phrases with the biggest being the ones that turn up most often. This can show some of the most significant words in the description. It is important to note though, the word cloud generator likely **won't** find all of the keywords.

## **How to use Keywords**

Keywords can and should make their way into every section of your resume. Some of them will naturally be present—even your education level is probably a keyword—while others you might need to pay extra attention to, which is why it is recommended that you tailor your resume to the job you are applying to.

In your **Skills section** your skills should either be the keywords or include the keywords if you are giving explanations to your skills. That is not to say your only skills should be the keywords, if you have other, relevant, skills then for sure include them but if an employer is looking for organization skills and you have them, make sure they are on your list.

In your **Work Experience section** you should include the keywords in the bullet points you attached to your various experiences. Since you should be starting your points with action verbs anyway, you might as well use the ones the job description is asking for.

In your **Education section** you might have more of a challenge incorporating the keywords, which is understandable. Try to think about your coursework and see if any of the course titles or skills you developed would be suitable to add into your educational experience.

In your other sections, try and see if there are ways to incorporate any keywords. If you can't, that is fine as long as they have appeared elsewhere in your resume. Lastly, try to use the exact wording and not synonyms for keywords since ATS might not pick up on the synonyms you used.