

How to Write Up Experiences for Your Resume (3 steps)

Step 1

Brainstorm everything you might say about this experience. Don't try to write complete sentences, just phrases will do. **(This step should take the longest).**

Ask yourself the reporter's questions:

Who – Who did you work with? Who were your students? How would you describe them? Did they have special needs? What were these? Who were your colleagues, other teachers, teacher aides, specialists?

What – What did you do? List your duties and responsibilities. Use the language of your profession. Try not to use inexact words and phrases like "various". Think planning, teaching, managing behavior, assessing learning, collaborating with others. Be specific and clear in your terminology.

How – How did you do these things? What were the methods, approaches and techniques you used? Use phrases like differentiating instruction, scaffolding lessons, using positive reinforcement, token economy, etc.

Where – What was the setting of this work? Was there anything unusual or different about it? Was it a self-contained class or did the students change classes? Special education setting – 8:1:1, 12:1:1, LEAP, Loop or other special acronym?

What results did you have? - So what happened as a result of your work? What can you point to that shows you did well? Can you add numbers here to demonstrate how well you did? Did your student's scores improve, were they able to spend more time on task, etc.

What did you learn? - This is particularly important for student teaching which is designed as a learning experience – so what did you learn? Try completing one or both of these sentence fragments:

Learned how to.....

Learned more about.....

What skills did you use? - Did you use certain software programs or technical equipment? Assistive technology? Were there other special skills you used? SCIP training, ABA, other?

Wild Card – What else happened here that was significant/interesting?

Step 2

Review the above and highlight those things that you think are important. In making this decision use your own internal frame of reference and don't guess what you think your audience wants to hear. This decision is critical. If you highlight something it MAY wind up in your description. If you don't highlight it, it's definitely out.

Step 3

Decide which of the things you've highlighted is most important. That thing becomes your first sentence fragment (verb first, no subject, **do not ever use the word I in your resume**). Your first sentence fragment is the one most likely to be read and remembered. You should select it carefully. The second most important thing you highlight becomes sentence fragment number two, etc. You usually don't get to sentence fragment number four unless this is a really important experience like student teaching. This is how you edit a description to a reasonable length.

Other hints:

You should never repeat yourself! If you are saying the same thing or using the same phrase over and over you are making a mistake. Make your point once, make it in the best way and in the best place possible on your resume, then use the space you create by not repeating yourself to tell your reader something else interesting.

Always think of the verb! Use verbs of action to start each sentence fragment. Use present tense to describe what you are doing now, past tense for experiences that have ended.

Get feedback on what you've written! Your description may be crystal clear to you but then again you did these things, so you know what you mean. Check out how clear you've been by asking others to read your descriptions and ask you questions. If it isn't clear to them, it isn't clear enough.