



Envision's Resume Workshop for Elementary School Students

Even if the word “resume” currently means nothing to your young students, this workshop will be both fun and beneficial. The main objective is to help your students start thinking about their strengths and interests. You will also open their eyes to the concept of employment and what employers want. If students develop a rudimentary resume now, they'll be ahead of the game by the time they apply for their first summer job. They'll also be better equipped as they apply for college, and start a path toward their future careers.

Sample Resumes and Tools

In the online portion of this article, we include links to sample resume templates, which you may choose to download and print out, to use as guidelines during the workshop. You can find these templates on sites like About.com, Adventures in Education or Career FAQs. You may also choose to use online resume-building tools such as those found on the Career Kids website or Resume Genius.

Return to the main article for specific links.

Identify Interests

To help the students start imagining their future job search, ask them to list what they're interested in. They can start with fun personal interests, such as sports, animals, video games, drawing, exploring, etc. Next, ask if they've ever thought about jobs that sound interesting to them. For those who haven't yet identified specific job interests, see if they can match their personal interests with possible jobs. For example, a student who loves animals could be a zookeeper or vet. One who loves computer games might someday seek a career in web design or graphic arts.

Introduction to Resumes

Now that the students are thinking about their future career interests, you can introduce them to the concept and purpose of a resume. See if they're already familiar with the term, and who can define it. Ask them to explain why a resume might be important to them in the future, and help fill in whatever blanks you discover in their knowledge base.

Understanding Resume Components

Once they understand what a resume is, review the basic resume building blocks, as identified below. You may want to use one of the sample resumes we provided and print copies for hand-outs. Or, you can create a sample resume on the board.



The Elements of a Resume

- Name and Contact Information
- Summary Statement/Objective
- Education
- Work Experience
- Activities
- Awards
- Skills and Special Strengths

The younger the student, the more they will focus on the last three points, until they have paid work experience under their belts. When the students reach hiring age, their prospective employers won't expect a lot of work experience, but the employers *will* be looking for experiences that translate to good employee qualities.

For example:

- School awards indicate intelligence, diligence and the desire to excel
- Volunteer work indicates a desire to help others
- Participation in clubs and extra-curricular activities indicate energy, drive, involvement, experience working in groups, etc.

Through activities like these mentioned above, students are developing skills without even realizing it: people skills, communication, problem-solving, collaboration, etc. Even babysitting demonstrates patience and responsibility. Your objective in the workshop is to help students identify and articulate the skills they've already cultivated, as well as plan to fill their experience gaps through future activities. They should maintain a running record of these skills and activities, so when resume (and/or college application) time comes around, they're ready. Their activity record provides a comprehensive list of past experiences, with details on how each prepared them for the task at hand.

List Experience and Skills

Next, ask your students to make a list of all their activities and accomplishments.

Examples:

- On a team or in a club
- Traveled to another state or country
- Taken care of a younger sibling
- Opened a lemonade stand
- Created an awesome collection, piece of art, craft or poem
- Selected for the Honor Roll
- Protected children as member of Safety Patrol

Anything they've done, in or out of school, has given them experience and created the foundation of a skillset. They should include any activity that required responsibility, as well as any special achievement.



After they've listed every activity they can think of, ask them to reflect on what they learned as a result of that activity. Refer back to the section above that describes how student experiences translate to good employee qualities. At first they may think that playing a video game couldn't help them at all in a job, but you can provide examples that enable them to start thinking in these terms. What computer skills did they learn when they played those games? Is their reaction time faster than when they started? Did they learn to quickly identify both the dangers and the assets presented on the screen?

The goal of this exercise is to show your students that *all* past experience can help us in the future – and make us better potential employees.

Create a "Dream Job" Resume (Optional)

As a final step in the workshop, ask your students to imagine a dream job – anything that personally appeals to them – and to create a "dream resume" for that job. If your students are quite young, you may want to pick 3-5 jobs that seem to be of interest to the group, and review the requirements for those jobs in a class discussion. If your students are old enough, they can pick their own dream job and conduct independent research to determine what education and skills they would need in order to be successful in that career. Then, ask them to make up a set of activities and past jobs that would attract a hiring manager for that position. With these elements in mind, they can create a dream resume. At this age, formatting and writing technique are less important than grasping the basic resume concepts.

Before concluding the workshop, advise your students to **update their personal Experience and Skills List** every time they take on a new job or activity. If they jot down the new information immediately, they won't forget – and their resumes will practically "build themselves" when it's time to put a real one to use.