

The resume checklist

25 checks to run before you hit apply. Print it, or keep it open next to every application. It takes about five minutes once you know it.

1. Target

Pick roles where you can be the obvious match.

2. Tailor

Use the job's own language for skills you really have.

3. Test

Make sure software can read it and humans can skim it.

01 Before you apply

Pick the right roles so your resume can be the obvious match.

- ☐ **The job title on your resume matches the posting, or honestly maps to it**
Recruiters search their ATS by title.
- ☐ **You meet most of the must-have requirements**
Not every nice-to-have. Most of the must-haves.
- ☐ **The posting is fresh, ideally under 3 days old**
52% of recruiters say applying early improves your chances.
- ☐ **You have read every screening question carefully**
Knockout questions are what actually auto-reject people.

02 Tailor it to this job

Translate your real experience into the job's language.

- ☐ **Your headline mirrors the target job title**
Example: Content Marketing Manager · B2B SaaS
- ☐ **Your summary names their top 2 or 3 must-haves, with one number**
Two or three lines. No adjectives without proof.
- ☐ **The top bullets of your latest role match their priorities**
Move the most relevant results to the top.
- ☐ **Your skills section leads with the posting's skills, in their wording**
Same tool and method names as the job description.
- ☐ **Acronyms are spelled out once**
Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
- ☐ **No keywords for skills you do not actually have**
You will be asked about them in the interview.

03 Bullets that show impact

Results beat responsibilities.

- ☐ **Every bullet follows action + what you did + result**
Grew X by Y by doing Z.
- ☐ **At least half of your bullets include a number**
Percent, money, time saved, volume, team size.
- ☐ **No bullet starts with “responsible for” or “helped with”**
Start with a strong verb: Led, Built, Cut, Grew.
- ☐ **Each bullet is one or two lines**
Long sentences lose the skimmer.
- ☐ **The last 5 to 10 years get the most space**
Older roles can shrink to one line.

04 ATS-friendly format

Easy for software to parse and for humans to skim.

- ☐ **One column, no text boxes, no layout tables**
- ☐ **Standard headings: Summary, Experience, Education, Skills**
- ☐ **Contact details are in the body, not only the header or footer**
- ☐ **All text is real text: no images of text, logos or skill bars**
- ☐ **Dates use one consistent format, like Mar 2023 to Present**
- ☐ **Saved as a text-based PDF or .docx, whichever the posting asks for**

05 Final checks before you hit apply

Two minutes that save the application.

- ☐ **The plain-text test passes**
Copy all text from your PDF into a notes app. Is it in order?
- ☐ **The 7-second test passes**
Could a stranger tell what job you want, and why you fit?
- ☐ **File is named FirstName-LastName-Resume-Company.pdf**
- ☐ **You will message the hiring manager after applying**
Three or four sentences: role, your most relevant result, thanks.

Want these checked automatically?

Callback runs 22 resume checks, finds the keywords you are missing for any job, and tailors your bullets from your real experience.

Try it free at callbackcv.com