

Active Verbs

Why You Should Use Active Verbs

Using active verbs on a resume helps you clearly and confidently convey your accomplishments to both human readers and applicant tracking systems (ATS). For hiring managers, using strong verbs makes your contributions stand out and demonstrates initiative. For ATS, using clear, industry-relevant action words increases the chances your resume will be flagged as a good match for the role.

7 Tips for Using Active Verbs on Your Resume

1. Make Your Actions Stand Out

Use precise, energetic verbs that highlight your responsibilities and accomplishments. For example, “Monitored recruitment goals using Excel” is stronger and more focused than “Used Excel to track recruitment goals.”

2. Be Specific and Honest

Describe what you did and avoid exaggerating. “Created coffee beverages for hundreds of customers each day” is more professional and accurate than “crafted artisanal espresso beverages for a diverse clientele.”

3. Expand and Vary Your Vocabulary

Avoid repeating the same verbs. Instead of writing “managed” five times, mix it up with “supervised,” “led,” or “delegated”—as long as those words reflect what you did.

4. Use Words You Understand

Don’t try to impress with jargon or buzzwords you wouldn’t say out loud. If you can’t explain a verb or it sounds overly complicated, swap it for a clearer choice.

5. Match Verbs to Skills or Industry Terms

Think about the nature of your work—did you analyze data, instruct students, or collaborate on projects? Choose verbs that reflect both your tasks and the language used in your field.

6. Start Each Bullet Point with a Strong Verb

Begin each bullet with a dynamic action verb to immediately draw attention to what you accomplished. This keeps your writing concise, focused, and easier to scan for both recruiters and ATS systems. Avoid “helping” verbs, such as “support”, “assisted”, or “contributed to”.

7. Match Verbs to the Job Description

When tailoring your resume, mirror the language of the job posting, especially the verbs. This not only shows you’re a fit for the role but also helps your resume pass through applicant tracking systems that scan for keyword matches.

Active Verbs

Here are examples of active verbs you can use, based on skills that recruiters value highly.

Leadership

advance, appoint, arbitrate, assign, authorize, coach, control, decide, delegate, employ, enable, focus, govern, head, hire, lead, manage, mobilize, promote, recruit, set goals, steer, strategize, supervise, train

Relationship Building

acquaint, assess, centralize, collaborate, confer, contribute, convince, cooperate, coordinate, evaluate, extend, familiarize, integrate, interact, listen, maintain, motivate, negotiate, orient, partner, persuade, support, unify

Communication

address, advocate, answer, author, communicate, consult, contact, correspond, document, edit, facilitate, interpret, narrate, present, propose, publicize, respond, revise, sell, speak, translate, write

Project Management

accomplish, achieve, activate, administer, attain, chair, enforce, establish, execute, finalize, involve, initiate, launch, oversee, pinpoint, prepare, preside, prioritize, reorganize, simplify, streamline, target, sponsor, transform

Quantitative / Financial

allocate, appraise, audit, budget, capitalize, capture, distribute, double, earn, eliminate, estimate, finance, forecast, gain, insure, maximize, minimize, net, place, reconcile, rectify, reduce, realize, synchronize, sustain, validate, verify

Creative / Design

compose, create, customize, design, discover, display, edit, illustrate, innovate, inspire, invent, market, model, modify, perform, photograph, print, produce, publish, remodel, reshape, shape, supersede, synthesize

Service

advise, aid, assist, counsel, deliver, encourage, enlist, guide, help, host, introduce, join, mediate, provide, receive, refer, secure, serve, service, sponsor, support, visit, volunteer

Research & Analysis

analyze, catalogue, chart, classify, collect, compare, compile, conduct, define, gather, identify, index, interview, log, monitor, observe, plan, profile, report, research, review, study, summarize, test

Teaching

apply, award, convey, cultivate, demonstrate, educate, ensure, evaluate, guide, inform, instruct, judge, navigate, teach, tutor