

4 Common Resume Mistakes | Find Them, Fix Them

It's National Proofreading Day, and while you probably have plans to celebrate in style, carrying on the National Proofreading Day traditions of your parents and their parents before them, I suggest that this year, you try something a bit more productive:

proofread your resume!

Below, you'll find a list of common resume mistakes, where they tend to rear their ugly, proverbial heads, and of course, how to correct them.

Inconsistent punctuation and capitalization

- **Date range:** Dashes, hyphens, and the like can be tricky, especially when you're using a platform that kicks in auto-formatting from time to time. Ensure that all dashes in your date ranges are the same type of dash (did you know there are three kinds?). Also take a close look to confirm that there's a like number of spaces before and after each dash.
- **Bullets:** If you use bullets, select one style of bullet (unless for some reason, you need to use nested bullets, which we don't recommend). Whether it's a dash, a dot, or a triangle, pick one and stick with it.
- **Capitalization:** While degree programs should be lowercase (unless it's a proper noun like English, Spanish, German, etc.), it's acceptable to capitalize when you're listing one on your resume (lowercase in your cover letter). For example, BA in Ethnomusicology. Capitalization of job titles is a bit more tricky. For the full break down, check out The Chicago Manual of Style. If you choose to capitalize your job title, degree, or other proper nouns, be sure that you're committing to one grammatical standard for consistency.
- **Periods:** If you use periods at the end of one sentence, use a period at the end of *every* sentence.
- **Pro Tip:** I highly recommend the use of periods as it also denotes a more complete statement. Avoid forcing an HR manager to wade through a bulleted list of incomplete

details. Descriptive statements offer a more colorful picture of what you accomplished and how you grew.

Incorrect grammar

- **Current experience vs. past:** Make sure that once you are no longer at a job, you update your bulleted accomplishments and responsibilities to past tense.

Inconsistent formatting

- **Italics and bold:** Similar to many of the other examples thus far, if you're going to bold the job title for one job, make sure you do it for all job titles listed. Again, if you italicize the date range of a job, make sure to italicize all date ranges.
- **Fonts:** Most HR professionals will agree that consistency rather than variety is preferable. Remember that these folks have to review hundreds of resumes, so keeping your resume clean in terms of font and formatting will be greatly appreciated.
- **Indents and spacing:** A simple way to ensure consistent indentation is by using a table with no borders. This offers an easy-to-implement format for columns and rows and takes the guesswork out of indents. However, if you're using tables, be sure they're maintained if you convert the document to a PDF. When proofing spacing on your resume, remember to review spacing around dates (as mentioned above).
- **Pro Tip:** Two spaces after a period are a thing of the past. While it may be hard to swallow—especially if you learned this rule in a typing class—it's nearly universally accepted these days, that one space after a period is the standard.

Incorrect contact information

- **Resume header:** Did you move recently? Do you have a new email address? Did you perhaps marry and hyphenate your last name? Double check of these details, as even the smallest error can come across as forgetful and unprofessional.

Source: <https://www.idealist.org/en/careers/4-common-resume-mistakes-find-them-fix-them>