

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY EDWARDSVILLE GRADUATE SCHOOL

Translating Experiences into Marketable Skills

When representing previous experiences for the purposes of a resumé, interview, or program application, expand beyond WHAT you did and also describe the SKILLS you used and the IMPACT of your work. This applies to all types of professional experiences, including paid work, unpaid internships/practicums, research projects, volunteer work, leadership experiences, and beyond.

EXAMPLE #1: Graduate Teaching Assistantship

Describing the WHAT:

- Provided instruction to 25 undergraduate students in chemistry courses.

Describing the WHAT, the SKILLS used, and the IMPACT:

- Developed and delivered interactive lesson plans to undergraduate students in introductory chemistry courses that resulted in progressively lower course withdrawal rates over three semesters.
- Utilized strong interpersonal skills and cultural competencies to create an inclusive and welcoming classroom environment that resulted in strong peer connections and positive feedback on anonymous course evaluations.

EXAMPLE #2: Full-Time Work Experience

Describing the WHAT:

- Supervised a team of three employees.

Describing the WHAT, the SKILLS used, and the IMPACT:

- Effectively mentored three full-time direct reports, utilizing exceptional communication skills to provide constructive feedback that resulted in a 20% reduction in customer complaints.
- Utilized technical acumen to create video-based SOPs for new team members that improved data entry accuracy and reduced onboarding time.

EXAMPLE #3: Research Experience

Describing the WHAT:

- Conducted research for master's thesis under the guidance of a faculty mentor.

Describing the WHAT, the SKILLS used, and the IMPACT:

- Designed and built a vibration isolation system for sensitive lab equipment, utilizing accelerometers for data acquisition, resulting in a 40% reduction in measurement error.
- Collaborated with faculty mentor to execute a qualitative study, including participant recruitment, data collection, and thematic analysis that resulted in a deeper understanding of self-monitoring behaviors.

PRACTICE: Translating Your Experiences into Marketable Skills

What You Did	Skills You Used to Do it Well	Impact/Results of Your Efforts	Pull it Together for a Resumé Bullet Point (start with a strong action verb)

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The Bigger Picture: What are your Top Skills?

After reflecting upon the skills you have demonstrated in your professional experiences, zoom out and write a brief paragraph that summarizes your key skillsets.

This type of narrative can be used in a profile/summary section at the top of a resumé or adapted for integration in cover letters and personal statements.

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