

# GUIDELINES FOR AN ACTOR'S RESUME

The actor's resume—coupled with the actor's headshot—is the calling card an actor takes to each audition. **You are the product. Package the product well!!**

## GENERAL RESUME TIPS:

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**LENGTH:** *Always* limit your resume to one page. It needs to fit on the back of your 8x10 headshot.

**PAPER:** Use plain paper (white, light cream, or pale gray). You may wish to print the resume on the back of your headshot. Please note that headshots are 8x10 photographs, but standard sized paper is 8½x11. You will need to specify that the document size is 8x10 when you create it.

**FONT:** Use a standard font for the main text of your resume (e.g., Times New Roman, Arial, Garamond, Georgia). Text size should be 10-12 points. Section headings can be a little larger and can use funkier fonts (as long as they are readable). Fully utilize a variety of design tools, including **bolding**, *italics*, underlining and ALL CAPITALS. DO NOT use icky, bizarre, or day-glo font colors—black is best.

**ORDER:** In English, we read from top to bottom and from left to right. Readers lose interest as they read down and across the page. Thus, within each resume section, prioritize information in order of importance.

**ABBREVIATIONS:** Minimize use of abbreviations. DO NOT assume the reader of your resume knows the meaning of any abbreviation. The *only* exceptions to this rule are:

College Degrees: BA, MFA, PhD, etc.

Professional Actors' Union References: SAG, AFTRA, AEA, EMC, AGMA, AGVA

State Abbreviations: UT, AZ, CA, NY, etc.

The abbreviation "dir." for Director (listed in your experience section)

## ACCURACY:

- **KEEP CURRENT:** Make sure all information is accurate and truthful. Update your resume every time you take a new class or act in a new project. Also, update your resume every time you gain or lose a lot of weight. DO NOT put in handwritten changes unless you did the new job yesterday.
- **PROOFREAD:** Check spelling, grammar, and information very carefully! Also, be sure your formatting is consistent (font, using/not using colons, etc.). Finally, proofread your resume out loud to pick up any hidden errors.

**ATTACHMENT:** *Always* securely attach your resume to the back of your headshot. Either:

- **PRINT YOUR RESUME DIRECTLY ON THE BACK OF YOUR 8x10 HEADSHOT**, or
- **PRINT YOUR RESUME ON 8½x11 AND TRIM IT TO BE THE SAME SIZE AS YOUR HEADSHOT.**

If you choose this option be sure to put your name and message number or your agent's information on back of your photo before stapling it to your resume in case the two get separated. *Securely staple the two pages together in each corner.* DO NOT use paper clips. DO NOT assume that casting directors will have staplers for you to use at auditions.

## RESUME FORMAT:

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Your resume should include the following four sections (in this sequence):

- 1) **HEADER** (includes name, contact info, physical description, and union affiliations)
- 2) **EXPERIENCE**
- 3) **TRAINING**
- 4) **SKILLS**

Clearly label each of these sections (except the Header Section) on your resume.

## Section One: Header

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### NAME:

Your name should appear much larger on an acting resume than on other types of resumes and should be visible from several feet away. It may be centered, right justified, or left justified. This is up to you. Be creative with the font used for your name, but be sure it is readable. If your name is printed on your headshot (which is highly recommended), you may wish to use the same font on your resume as on your headshot. Remember, this is your marketing tool, so the formatting should be clear and attractive.

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

#### FOR UTAH FILM AUDITIONS:

- **If you have an agent:** list your agency name, address, phone number, and email address. You may also wish to include an agency fax number and/or web address (especially if you are featured on the agency's website). You do not need to list your personal contact info.
- **If you do not have an agent:** list your personal contact phone number (cell phone or other phone with voicemail) and an email address. Be certain your e-mail address sounds professional (e.g., not "HotLips@whatever"). If you have a personal website, you may list the URL. *Never list your home phone number or address.*

#### FOR UTAH THEATRE AUDITIONS:

- Please note that Utah talent agencies work only with the film, modeling, and telecommunication industries—not with theatre. For *all* Utah theatre auditions, list your personal contact phone number (cell phone or other phone with voicemail) and an email address. Be certain your e-mail address sounds professional (e.g., not "BeerFace@whatever"). *Never list your home phone number or address.*

### PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

Your current **height**, **weight**, **eye color**, and **hair color** MUST be listed on your resume. You do not need to list other measurements or clothing sizes. You do not need to list your age or birth date (unless you are a minor). If auditioning for a singing role, this section should include your **voice part** (soprano, alto, tenor, bass, etc.) and **vocal range** (e.g., C3 to C6).

### UNION AFFILIATIONS:

List any professional performers' unions where you have membership. These include:

- SAG** (Screen Actors Guild)
- AFTRA** (American Federation of Television and Radio Artists)
- AEA** (Actors' Equity Association)
- AGMA** (American Guild of Musical Artists)
- AGVA** (American Guild of Variety Artists)

If applicable, you may wish to list that you are SAG eligible or that you are a candidate for EMC (Equity Membership Candidate) points. If not affiliated with any unions, omit this section. **DO NOT** lie about union affiliation.

## Section Two: Experience

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**Experience section = acting credits.** Group credits together by category. List the most applicable category first (e.g. If you are auditioning for a film, list your film credits first). Within each category, list your most impressive credits first. **DO NOT** worry about chronological order. **DO NOT** list dates of credits. It is not necessary. You will likely want to include the following categories:

### THEATRE or STAGE:

List the **play title**, **role played (character's name)**, **theatre company**, and **director** using columns. You may also wish to list the **city and state** where the play was produced (especially if it was outside of Utah). For example:

HAMLET	<i>Laertes</i>	Oregon Shakespeare Festival ( <i>John Doe, Director</i> )	Ashland, OR
BIG RIVER	<i>Tom Sawyer</i>	Playhouse Merced ( <i>Jane Smith, Director</i> )	Merced, CA
THE NERD	<i>Axel Hammond</i>	Hale Centre Theatre Orem ( <i>Jen Erick, Director</i> )	Orem, UT
OLIVER!	<i>ensemble</i>	Terrace Plaza Playhouse ( <i>Joe Shmoe, Director</i> )	Ogden, UT

If you have very little in the way of actual credits, you may list scene work from acting classes. For example:

scenes from KING LEAR	<i>Regan</i>	Acting & Directing Shakespeare Class ( <i>dir. Bob Nelson</i> )
scenes from RUMORS	<i>Claire</i>	FATStudio Comedy Workshop ( <i>dir. Frank Gerrish</i> )

## FILM and TELEVISION:

List the **film or show title**, **role type** (see the last page of this document for a list of film role types), **production company**, and **director** using columns. You do not need to list the name of the character you played. For example:

MUSIC UNDERGROUND	<i>lead</i>	Independent ( <i>dir. Danielle Roberts</i> )
THE REASON	<i>principal</i>	University of Utah Student Film ( <i>dir. Matt Walker</i> )
AMERICAN GOTHIC	<i>supporting</i>	American Gothic, LLC ( <i>dir. Paul Kampf</i> )
EVERWOOD	<i>featured</i>	Warner Bros. Television ( <i>dir. Martha Mitchell</i> )
BLIND DATING	<i>extra</i>	Catfish Productions ( <i>dir. James Keach</i> )

If you have very little in the way of actual credits, you may list scene work from acting classes. For example:

scenes from SEINFELD	<i>lead</i>	Advanced Acting for Film/TV Class ( <i>dir. Lynne Van Dam</i> )
scenes from THE JERK	<i>lead</i>	Auditioning for Film Workshop ( <i>dir. Jeff Johnson</i> )

If you have worked closely with a well-known actor, you may include his/her name following the project title. For example:

THE WILD STALLION (w/Robert Wagner)	<i>supporting</i>	Myriad Pictures Inc. ( <i>dir. Craig Clyde</i> )
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As you earn more credits, you may wish to create several resumes to target specific industries or types of jobs. Category titles will expand and change. A beginning stage actor may lump all of his or her credits into one category: *Theatre*. A very experienced stage actor may separate credits into different categories: *Broadway*, *Off-Broadway*, *Regional Theatre*, *Shakespeare*, *Musicals*, etc. Likewise, a beginning film actor may lump all of his or her credits into one category: *Film and Television*. A very experienced film actor may separate credits into different categories: *Feature Film*, *Short Film*, *Documentary*, *Television Series*, *TV Movies*, *Soaps*, etc.

### *Film role types for your resume:*

#### **SPEAKING ROLES:**

**LEAD (AKA Female Lead, Male Lead):** The most important character in a movie, speaking opposite other lead characters which are the primary focus of the story. In television, appears in every episode. Leading man, ingénue, protagonist or antagonist.

**PRINCIPAL (spelled "PAL"—not "PLE"):** speaking, with recurring scenes opposite lead to progress story line. In television, may appear in one or more episodes. Doctor, lawyer, detective, scientist, psychologist, mother, father, girlfriend or boyfriend, as examples.

**SUPPORTING or DAY PLAYER:** speaking, usually limited to no more than a few lines. In television, usually limited to one episode. Cashier, secretary, salesman, fireman, policeman, waitress, and reporter are typical supporting/day player characters.

**VOICE-OVER ARTIST:** The unseen person who does the speaking necessary to create a voice-over.

#### **NON-SPEAKING ROLES:**

**FEATURED:** non-speaking, to lend credibility to a scene. Coroner's assistant, fingerprint tech, limo driver, bartender, SWAT team members.

**EXTRA:** non-speaking background, generally used to liven up a scene. Pedestrians, office workers, audience members for sports or entertainment events, etc. Extras are often recruited from wherever they are available.

**STUNT PERFORMER (AKA Stunt Player, Stunts):** A specialist actor who performs stunts.

**STAND-IN:** A person who has the same physical properties of a particular actor, and takes the actor's place during the lengthy setup of a scene. This allows the actor to prepare for the filming itself.

**BODY DOUBLE:** For some shots, a director may consider that a particular actor's body may not be suitable for the impression desired. In these situations, the actor is "doubled" (replaced) by a person whose body is more suitable. Typically, body doubles are used for shots requiring nudity or depictions of physical fitness.

**STUNT DOUBLE:** A stunt performer who specifically takes the part of another actor for a stunt. Stunt doubles rarely (if ever) speak, are typically chosen to resemble the actor that they are replacing as much as possible.

The following are possible additional categories you may wish to include in the experience section of your resume:

### VOICEOVERS / INDUSTRIALS / COMMERCIALS / PRINT:

These categories are more applicable to a film/TV resume than to a stage resume. You may wish to simply state “List Available upon Request” or “Conflicts Available upon Request”. Doing so could be advantageous for two reasons:

- 1) It allows you more space on the resume to list more prominent roles
- 2) It may provide you with more opportunities. If you have appeared in a past advertisement for one company and a competing company sees that credit listed, the second company may rule you out.

Be sure that if someone does request to see your list that you have created one.

### MISCELLANEOUS CATEGORIES:

If there is something *relevant*, you may create an additional category. Perhaps you have sung as a soloist with the Utah Symphony, danced with Ballet West, recorded a CD, worked in a local haunted house, participated in an improv troupe, performed at a trade show or theme park, entertained on a cruise ship, or participated as a street theatre performer or in other interactive venues.

## Section Three: Education and Training

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**DO pay attention to training. When you have very little in the way of performances on your resume the training section is the most important section. Develop it well.**

### FORMAL UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE EDUCATION:

List *only* college degrees related to acting in this section. These should be listed in reverse chronological order (most recent first). Include your **degree, major, school name, and school location (city/state)**—especially if the school is outside of Utah). If you are currently enrolled in a college or university training program, list your **upcoming graduation date**. This is the *only* place/reason you need to mention any dates on an acting resume. It tells the reader—without being too wordy—that you are currently in training with an end goal in mind. Here is an example of how to list your finished degree(s):

<b>MFA, Acting</b>	Regent University	Virginia Beach, VA
<b>Bachelor of Arts, Theatre Studies</b>	University of Utah	Salt Lake City, UT

Here are two examples of how to list a degree in progress:

<b>Bachelor of Fine Arts, Theatre – Acting Emphasis</b>	May 2009
University of Utah	Salt Lake City, UT

<b>B.A., Film Studies</b>	University of Utah	August 2010
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Include your GPA if applying for an internship or graduate program.

A sub-category like “Related Coursework” can help explain in more detail the actor training you received during your college career. Be specific. Include not only course titles, but also techniques taught. For example, rather than merely listing “Voice and Speech”, include the method used in the course (e.g., Skinner, Lessac, Linklater, Fitzmaurice, etc.).

### ADDITIONAL TRAINING:

This includes any acting-related workshops, seminars, on-going studio classes, masterclasses, or private coaching received outside of a college or university setting. You may also include training in *related* fields such as music (especially singing), dance, martial arts, stunts, etc. Be specific. When possible, include not only title of what was taught, but also technique used. For example, rather than merely listing “Acting” or “Movement”, include the method of acting or movement taught in the course (e.g., “Meisner Technique” or “Alexander Technique”).

List well-known studios, teachers, or coaches with whom you have studied. You may wish to list the number of years you have trained in a particular area, technique, or discipline.

## Section Four: Skills

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Group skills together by type. You may wish to indicate your proficiency level in each skill (*expert, fluent, proficient, expertise in, extensive knowledge of, experience with, awareness of, familiarity with, basic understanding of, etc.*). Be specific. Don't merely list hobbies. Consider what type of resume you are creating before listing skills. For example, mention your snowboarding abilities for a film resume. They will probably not matter for a theatre resume.

### **SKILL TYPES TO CONSIDER:**

**VOICE AND SPEECH** (languages, accents, dialects, impressions, etc.)

**MUSIC** (instruments, styles, whether you read music)

**DANCE** (styles)

**COMBAT or WEAPONRY** (stage combat, fencing, martial arts, shooting, archery, etc.)

**ATHLETICS** (team sports, individual sports, extreme sports, stunts, etc.)

**CIRCUS SKILLS** (tumbling, juggling, stilts, unicycle, etc.)

**VEHICLES** (motorcycle, able to drive standard transmission, etc.)

**TEACHING**

**MISCELLANEOUS** (If you have professional credentials outside of acting *which may be applicable or helpful on set*, you may list those here—e.g., nurse, doctor, dentist, etc.).

**DO NOT** get clever or cute. Be professional. Sun tanning, stargazing, shopping, and kissing are *not* special skills.

### **ADDITIONAL HEADSHOT/RESUME DOs:**

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**DO** change your photo every time you change (e.g. hair style, facial hair, nose ring, braces on/off, etc.).

**DO** save your resume on a computer. It makes it so much easier to update.

**DO** include a cover letter with all mailed headshots/resumes.

### **ADDITIONAL HEADSHOT/RESUME DONTs:**

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**DO NOT** lie or pad your resume. You will get caught at the worst possible moment by the worst possible person.

**DO NOT** put non-acting or non-performance information on your acting resume. It is for acting or other performance related credits. Ask your agency if they want you to put modeling on your film acting resume.

**DO NOT** include explanation of job objectives.

**DO NOT** use white out.

**DO NOT** be stupid. No one cares if you are a Virgo.

**DO NOT** put your social security number on your headshot or resume.

**DO NOT** use nude, seminude, or sexually suggestive photos.

**DO NOT** show up to an audition not looking like your photo.

**DO NOT** attach clips of reviews, articles, or non-headshot photos.