



## DESCRIBING YOUR EXPERIENCE

Often the most difficult part of writing a résumé is describing what you have done at each job you've had. People sometimes sell themselves short by giving too brief, overly-simplified descriptions of their job duties. A student might say, "I don't know what to write about this job – I just answered phones" when, in fact, there was much more responsibility involved.

### Tips for Describing Your Experience

- Incorporate keywords and phrases from the job description
- Start bulleted statements with action verbs in present tense for current jobs and past tense for previous jobs
- Highlight accomplishments, not just duties
- Quantify results when possible/appropriate

The following exercise can help you craft detailed descriptions of your experience that emphasize your responsibilities and accomplishments.

Step 1: **What?** Jot down your tasks and projects for each experience.

Step 2: **Why?** Identify the goal or purpose of each item. What relevant skills did you develop?

Step 3: **How?** Add more detail to your description by providing specifics about the task.

Step 4: **Action Verb.** Select an action verb that helps demonstrate what you did. ([refer to list](#) on p. 18-19 in the *College to Career Resource Guide and Workbook*)

Step 5: **Create!** Create a short, detailed description for each responsibility, focusing on the outcome or benefit.

### *Example Position 1: Server at Olive Garden*

*Step 1: Waited tables, worked with kitchen staff, served customers*

*Step 2: Customer service, multitasking, communication skills*

*Step 3: Being friendly and efficient, worked in a fast-paced environment*

*Step 4: Communicated*

*Step 5: Communicated with restaurant staff to provide friendly and efficient service in fast-paced environment*

### *Example Position 2: Customer Service Phone Representative*

*Step 1: Took phone calls*

*Step 2: To satisfy customers, provide customer service*

*Step 3: Resolving problems, explaining services, knowledge in the industry*

*Step 4: Increased*

*Step 5: Increased customer satisfaction through resolution of problems, explanation of services, and knowledge of financial planning*

Use the space below to practice describing your experience:

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Step 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Step 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Step 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Step 4: \_\_\_\_\_

Step 5: \_\_\_\_\_