

# USING ACTION VERBS TO DESCRIBE YOUR SKILLS

## Communication & Team Building Skills

advocated	educated	orchestrated	reached out
accelerated	emphasized	participated	staffed
authored	edited	planned	strengthened
built	elected	processed	translated
clarified	enlisted	protected	served
collaborated	introduced	projected	worked
composed	interacted	published	spoke
confronted	integrated	responded	surveyed
contributed	interpreted	prompted	summarized
convinced	listened	outlined	taught
coordinated	located	provided	understood
critiqued	lectured	publicized	updated
cultivated	mediated	qualified	unified
decreased	moderated	reported	wrote
diagnosed	negotiated	represented	generated

## Creativity & Problem Solving Skills

accentuate	crafted	inspired	performed
acted	customized	installed	practiced
activated	designed	merged	quantified
adapted	devised	memorized	rendered
augmented	drafted	made	repaired
approved	drew	marketed	repurposed
assembled	engineered	manufactured	restored
budgeted	expressed	manipulated	revitalized
brainstormed	exhibited	mastered	sculpted
combined	fabricated	modified	shaped
conceptualized	fixed	rehabilitated	supplied
constructed	illustrated	transformed	sketched
consolidated	improvised	overhauled	submitted
corrected	inspected	operated	trouble-shot

## Leadership, Management, & Supervision Skills

accomplished	directed	guided	generated
achieved	identified	headed	promoted
administered	interviewed	hired	realized
allocated	maintained	increased	sold
arbitrated	earned	initiated	solved
boosted	enhanced	instituted	sponsored
built consensus	expanded	mobilized	specified
chaired	exceeded	led	seized
commanded	established	launched	suggested
commissioned	exhibited	managed	traded
conferred	finalized	overcame	united
contracted	fostered	ordered	undertook
created	founded	presided	uncovered
decided	financed	persisted	used
designated	formed	persuaded	ventured

## HOW TO USE ACTION VERBS

### #1. Identify and Explore Your Skills

Use Action Verbs to expand awareness of your skills using this activity. First, create a basic statement about an activity or task you have recently participated in. For example, I might write:

I am working on creating a handout about verbs.

← Task Description

Next, skim the action verb lists to trigger ideas for expanding on your initial task description and explore skills you're using! For example, the verbs *provided*, *researched* and *collaborated* made me think of these three additional facts.

#### To do this I...

...*provided examples and instructions*

...*researched how others presented information*

...*collaborated with team to identify learning goals.*

Now I see I used research, team collaboration, instruction, and information presentation skills I didn't see before.



### #2. Pass the 10 Second Resume Test

Resume readers typically decide to read or skip your resume in less than 10 sec. Keep them reading by using ACTION VERBS so they can visualize you:

- ✓ using skills
- ✓ performing activities
- ✓ achieving goals

### #3. Create STAR Interview Answers

Using the **STAR** technique is an effective approach to Interview Questions. Begin answers by describing the **Situation** (what was needed, who was involved...)

**T**ask or your goal (...so we needed to complete...)

**A**ctions you took (... I created, combined, shaped...)

**R**esults or the outcomes you achieved (I made it under the deadline and...)



★ Use Action Verbs to describe your **A**ctions. For example:

**S:** A team I am working with had several improvement ideas for our Verb Handout. I volunteered to help.

**T:** The goal was to update the sheet and integrate the team's ideas.

**A:** So I: ...edited the old handout to create room for new information

...clarified ideas shared by team members

...drafted options and gathered individual feedback

**R:** We integrated multiple great ideas, retained the original strengths, and added helpful ideas about how to use the new handout.

# PRACTICE USING ACTION VERBS

## Identify and Explore Your Skills

#1. Write a task or activity statement below about something you have worked on recently. It can be related to school, work, volunteer, helping out friends or family or any activity you are part of.



#2. Skim the action verb lists to brainstorm ideas to expand the description.

To do this I...

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## Writing Telegraphic Resume Phrases

When writing a resume using a telegraphic writing style is recommended. This means being concise and starting with action verbs, and avoiding whole sentences or pronouns. For example:

our sentence: "I am working on creating a handout about verbs."

becomes: Created a handout about verbs.

The phrases you wrote to expand your original statement above are probably already in telegraphic form that you could add to your resume. Convert your original statement to a telegraphic form here.



## Action Verbs in Interviews

Imagine you are asked in an interview to describe something you have been working on recently and you decide to describe the task you worked on in activity A and B. Using the STAR technique and the phrases you have developed above, write what you might say in the interview about the task.

Situation:

Task:

Actions:

Results:

## Teaching, Social Service, & Training Skills

advised	developed	influenced	supervised
advanced	discovered	familiarized	maximized
assessed	explored	modeled	navigated
broadened	facilitated	invented	gathered
coached	encouraged	learned	recorded
communicated	empowered	mentored	observed
consulted	investigated	informed	stimulated
conveyed	measured	motivated	tested
contacted	employed	proposed	trained
counseled	enforced	recognized	tutored
determined	executed	resumed	volunteered
delivered	helped	recruited	recommended
demonstrated	instructed	served	researched
dissected	improved	supported	utilized

## Organization & Administrative Skills

adhered	controlled	prepared	produced
addressed	corresponded	produced	reduced
anticipated	bought	prioritized	rated
appraised	explained	streamlined	read
arranged	dispatched	qualified	revised
attained	documented	referred	sorted
audited	invoiced	represented	scheduled
briefed	logged	received	surpassed
balanced	estimated	reorganized	shared
charted	compared	retrieved	simplified
checked	ensured	reconciled	transcribed
detected	liquidated	regulated	transacted
conserved	oversaw	resolved	

## Research & Information Processing

analyzed	conducted	invested	predicted
applied	computed	obtained	reached
attended	converted	licensed	reviewed
calculated	defined	organized	routed
catalogued	entered	regulated	tabulated
centralized	extracted	prevented	tracked
classified	evaluated	reached	secured
collected	examined	prescribed	selected
combined	eliminated	monitored	sorted
compiled	followed	proved	systematized
completed	focused	purchased	synthesized
computed	forecasted	programmed	upgraded
concluded	formulated	related	validated
condensed	implemented	reasoned	verified

You can also use action verbs to improve your verbal communications and applications for:

- ✓scholarships
- ✓volunteer opportunities
- ✓leadership roles
- ✓internships
- ✓admission to your major
- ✓graduate school
- ✓study abroad
- ✓research opportunities
- ✓...and more.

### Walk-In Advising Hours

Monday, 10:30am-5:30pm

Tuesday-Thursday, 9:00am-4:00pm

Friday, 9:00am-12:30pm

\*See [uwm.edu/careerplan](http://uwm.edu/careerplan) for summer hours

### See These Handouts for More Tips:

Resume Writing

Interviewing Resources