SOFTWARE & TECH

Good Font Size For Resume

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The Optimal Guide to Choosing a Good Font Size For Resume Success

Every detail on your resume matters, from the action verbs you choose to the white space you leave. Yet, one of the most overlooked elements is the good font size for resume formatting. Selecting the right font size can be the difference between a document that invites reading and one that frustrates a hiring manager or gets rejected by an Applicant Tracking System. This guide will walk you through everything you need to know to pick the perfect font size for every section of your resume, ensuring your qualifications are presented clearly and professionally.

Why Font Size Matters More Than You Think

Your resume is a marketing document, and its readability is paramount. Recruiters and hiring managers often spend as little as six to ten seconds scanning a resume before deciding whether to move forward. If your text is too small to read comfortably, they will likely move on to the next candidate without a second thought. Conversely, using a font size that is too large can make you appear inexperienced and force critical information onto a second page unnecessarily. A good font size for resume design strikes a balance between readability, professionalism, and efficient use of space. It ensures that your content is accessible, scannable, and visually appealing.

Furthermore, many companies now rely on Applicant Tracking Systems to parse resume data automatically. These systems can struggle with extremely small fonts (below 9 points) or inconsistent sizing. Choosing a clear, standardized font size helps ensure your resume passes the initial digital screening phase. Ultimately, the right font size respects the reader's time and increases the likelihood that your key achievements will be noticed.

What Is the Recommended Good Font Size For Resume Body Text?

The most commonly accepted good font size for resume body text falls between **10 and 12 points**. This range works well for most standard professional fonts, including Arial, Calibri, Helvetica, and Garamond. Within this range, your specific choice depends on a few key factors:

- Font Choice: Some fonts are naturally larger or smaller at the same point size. For example, Times New Roman at 10.5 points may appear smaller than Arial at 10.5 points. Always check how your chosen font renders on the page.
- Line Length and Margins: If you use generous margins (0.7 to 1 inch), you might lean toward 11 or 12 points to fill the space comfortably. For tighter margins, 10 or 10.5 points can work well.
- Content Density: If you have a lot of relevant experience to pack into one page, 10 points can be a lifesaver. For more junior roles with less content, 11 or 12 points often look better.
- Industry Norms: Creative fields may allow slightly more flexibility, while conservative industries like law or finance typically expect a traditional look at 11 or 12 points.

A smart strategy is to test your resume on screen and in print. If you have to squint to read the content, the size is too small. If it looks like a child's book, it is too large. The sweet spot for most professionals is **11 points** for body text, as it offers a comfortable reading experience without sacrificing too much space.

Determining the Right Font Size for Your Name and Headings

Establishing a clear visual hierarchy is essential for guiding the reader through your resume. Your name and section headings should stand out, but not at the expense of the body text. Here are the recommended ranges:

Your Name

Your name is the most prominent element on the page. A good font size for resume headers is typically **16 to 24 points**. A common choice is 18 to 20 points, which commands attention without looking disproportionate. If you have a long name, lean toward the lower end of this range. For short names, you can go slightly larger. Ensure your name is bolded and set in a clean, readable font style.

Section Headings

Headings like "Experience," "Education," and "Skills" should be clearly distinguishable from body text but smaller than your name. An effective size range is **12 to 14 points**. Bold formatting is almost always recommended for section headings. Some professionals also add a subtle line or extra space above each heading to reinforce the visual break. Consistency is vital: use the same font size for every section heading to create a cohesive layout.

Subheadings

If you include subheadings, such as job titles or company names within the experience section, use a size that bridges the gap between headings and body text. **10.5 to 12 points** is ideal. Bold or italic formatting can help differentiate these from the bullet points below them.

How to Adjust Font Size for Different Resume Formats

The good font size for resume planning can shift depending on whether you are submitting a digital file, a printed document, or an online application.

PDF and Digital Submissions

For resumes submitted as PDFs, you have more control over the final appearance. A font size of 10.5 to 11 points for body text is generally safe. Because PDFs preserve your formatting exactly, you can be confident the recruiter will see your intended layout. However, avoid using fonts below 10 points, as they may become blurry or unreadable on lower-resolution screens.

Word Document Submissions

When a recruiter requests a Word document, your font size choice matters even more. Word files can render differently depending on the version and operating system. Stick to standard fonts and a body size of 11 or 12 points to minimize formatting surprises. Avoid anything below 10 points, as it might shift or appear tiny on another user's setup.

Printed Resumes

If you plan to bring printed copies to an interview, consider readability from a few feet away. Body text at 11 points is very comfortable for print. You might even opt for 11.5 or 12 points if you have the space. Printed paper tends to absorb ink slightly, so a slightly larger size can prevent text from looking crowded. Always test-print a copy before heading into an interview to check the actual appearance.

ATS-Friendly Resumes

Applicant Tracking Systems often parse resumes best when they use simple, consistent formatting. For ATS compliance, stick to standard font sizes. Avoid using multiple font sizes within the same section, as this can confuse the parser. A clean hierarchy with your name at 18 points, headings at 13 points, and body at 11 points is a safe and effective formula for machine readability.

Best Practices for Font Size Hierarchy and Consistency

Creating a clear visual hierarchy helps recruiters quickly locate the information they need. Follow these best practices to establish a professional look:

- Use a consistent scale: Choose a base size for body text (e.g., 11 points) and then scale up by 2–4 points for headings and your name.
- Limit your sizes: Avoid using more than three different font sizes on your resume. Too many sizes create visual noise and appear unprofessional.
- Bold for emphasis: Use bold formatting on your name and section headings rather than dramatically increasing the font size. This maintains a cleaner look.
- Watch spacing: Adjust line spacing (leading) to complement your font size. For body text at 10–12 points, use 1.15 to 1.5 line spacing. For headings, you can use tighter spacing.
- Consider your font pairings: If you use two different fonts (e.g., one for headings and one for body), ensure their sizes harmonize. A serif heading at 14 points might pair well with a sans-serif body at 11 points.

Consistency also extends to how you treat similar elements. All bullet points should be the same size. All dates should be the same size. All location lines should match. This uniformity signals attention to detail and makes your resume easier to scan.

Common Font Size Mistakes to Avoid

Even experienced professionals sometimes fall into these traps. Avoid the following missteps to ensure your resume makes the best impression:

- Using font sizes below 10 points: This makes your resume extremely difficult to read, especially for older hiring managers or on mobile devices. It also suggests you are trying to cram too much information into too little space.
- Setting body text above 12 points: Unless you have very limited experience or are applying for a role where large print is standard (rare), text above 12 points often looks amateurish and wastes valuable resume real estate.
- Inconsistent sizing: Using 11 points for one bullet point and 10.5 for another within the same section looks sloppy and confuses the reader.
- Making headings too large: A name at 28 points or headings at 18 points overwhelms the page and makes the body text seem insignificant.
- Ignoring line length: Even with a good font size, lines that are too long (over 80 characters) become tiring to read. Adjust margins or column spacing to maintain a comfortable line length.
- Sacrificing readability for space: Trying to fit everything on one page by reducing font size to 9 points often backfires. Recruiters can tell when content is squeezed, and it creates a negative impression. Instead, tighten your language or reformat your layout.

Special Considerations for Different Situations

Experienced Professionals vs. Entry-Level Candidates

If you have decades of experience, you might need to be more strategic with space. A body text size of 10 points can be acceptable for a senior-level resume that must stay within two pages. However, ensure that your most critical achievements still stand out. For entry-level candidates with less content, 12 points for body text can make a sparse page look more substantial and confident.

Creative Industries

Graphic designers, marketers, and other creative professionals often have more latitude with typography. You might use a display font for your name at a larger size (20–22 points) and a clean sans-serif for body text at 10.5 to 11 points. Just remember that legibility should never be sacrificed for style. Even creative resumes need to be easily scannable.

Executive Resumes

For executive-level positions, a clean, classic look is usually preferred. Stick with traditional fonts like Garamond or Calibri. Use 11 or 11.5 points for body text and 14 to 16 points for section headings. The goal is to convey authority and clarity without appearing flashy.

Older Readers and Accessibility

If you are applying to a company with an older leadership team or a strong focus on diversity and inclusion, consider using a slightly larger font size. Body text at 11.5 or 12 points can make your resume more accessible to readers with visual impairments. This small adjustment demonstrates thoughtfulness and inclusivity.

Testing Your Font Size Choice

Before you send your resume anywhere, take these simple steps to verify your font size is working:

1. Print a physical copy: Hold it at arm's length. Can you read the body text comfortably? If not, increase the size.
2. View it on multiple devices: Open your resume on your phone, tablet, and a large monitor. The text should be clearly readable at a normal viewing distance on each.
3. Ask for feedback: Share your resume with a trusted colleague or mentor. Ask them specifically about readability and whether any section feels too small or too large.
4. Run an ATS test: Use a free online tool to see how your resume parses. If key information is missed, your font size or formatting might be the culprit.

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