

No experience? What to put instead

Easy · 1 hour · Free

Babysitting, mowing, pet care, volunteering, clubs, sports, school projects and caring for family all count. Write each like a job: an action verb, what you did, and a result with a number. "Watched two kids, ages 4 and 7, three afternoons a week for a year" beats "Babysitter." Use a skills or summary section up top, and if you need more, get experience fast through volunteering, job shadowing or an internship. Never stretch the truth.

YOU'LL NEED

- ☐ A list of everything you've done in the last few years: school, activities, side jobs, volunteering, caring for family
- ☐ Two job postings you'd apply to

WHAT TO KNOW

- 1 **List everything.** Small jobs for friends, family or neighbors, like mowing, raking, babysitting, pet care or helping an older neighbor with chores, build real work skills. So do clubs, sports, theater, music, religious groups and community activities, and you can put them on your resume.
- 2 **Pull the skills out.** Volunteering can build skills like writing, child care, teaching, coaching, fundraising, sales, answering phones, organizing and construction. Circle the ones that match the job posting.
- 3 **Write each item like a job.** Start with an action verb, be specific, and include facts and numbers. Not "Responsible for dogs" but "Walked and fed 3 neighbors' dogs daily for 2 summers; never missed a visit."
- 4 **Add a summary up top with your 3 or 4 strongest skills or accomplishments.** A highlights section is a good place for volunteer, community or school accomplishments that wouldn't show up otherwise.
- 5 **Put education near the top if you're a new grad or it's required for the job.** Include classes, training and certificates related to the job.
- 6 **Add a volunteering and activities section for things that show responsibility, commitment or skills, like sports, clubs or languages you speak.**
- 7 **Keep it to one page and proofread it, then ask a good speller to check it too.**

Watch out Be truthful. State your skills and abilities accurately. If you use AI to help, check every line: it can write descriptions that exaggerate your experience or make things up. Anything on your resume is fair game in an interview.

DAD NOTE *Everybody started with nothing on the page. Write down what you've actually done. It's more than you think.*

Full lesson: aptkeys.com/work/resumes-and-applications/no-experience-what-to-put-instead/

Checked October 2, 2026. Sources: CareerOneStop (U.S. Department of Labor); Harvard University Mignone Center for Career Success.