

# The Resume Checklist

12 things senior engineers and hiring managers scan for in the first 8 seconds — before they ever read a word of your bullet points.

Most engineering resumes get skimmed, not read. A senior engineer or recruiter glances for 8–10 seconds before deciding whether to actually read further. This checklist is exactly what they're scanning for — go through it line by line before you submit anything.

## PART 1 · FORMAT & SKIMMABILITY

### 1. Contact info and links are impossible to miss

Name, phone, email, city/state, and clickable links to LinkedIn and a portfolio/GitHub if relevant — all in the header, no hunting required.

### 2. One page. No exceptions.

As a student or new grad, you don't have two pages of relevant experience yet. A two-page resume signals you don't know what to cut.

### 3. Formatting is identical everywhere

Same font, same bullet style, same date format (e.g., "May 2026," not a mix of "5/26" and "May 2026") in every single section.

### 4. Sections are ordered by relevance, not tradition

If your project or internship experience is stronger than your GPA, it goes higher on the page. Don't bury your best material at the bottom out of habit.

## PART 2 · SUBSTANCE & PROOF

### 5. Every bullet starts with a strong action verb

"Designed," "built," "reduced," "debugged," "led" — not "Responsible for" or "Worked on." Passive phrasing reads as passive involvement.

### 6. Impact is quantified wherever humanly possible

Numbers, percentages, dollar amounts, time saved, tolerances hit. "Reduced test cycle time by 30%" beats "Improved testing process" every time.

### 7. Projects show outcome, not just description

Don't just say what the project was — say what problem it solved, what tools you used, and what the result was. A project with no result reads like a class assignment, not real work.

### 8. Technical skills are things you can actually do under pressure

List tools/software you could use in a live interview or on day one — not something you watched a tutorial on once. Reviewers probe this list; don't pad it.

### 9. Keywords match the job posting

Many companies screen resumes with automated keyword matching before a human ever sees them. Mirror the language of the posting (tools, methods, certifications) where it's genuinely true.

## PART 3 · RED FLAGS TO KILL

### 10. No objective statement or filler language

"Hardworking team player seeking opportunities to grow" tells a reviewer nothing. Cut it and let the content do that work instead.

### 11. Relevant coursework only appears if you need it

A coursework list is a placeholder for students with nothing else yet. The moment you have a real project or internship, cut it and give that space to proof of work instead.

### 12. Zero typos — verified by more than just you

Read it backwards, bullet by bullet, to catch what your brain auto-corrects. Then have at least one other person check it. A typo on a resume for an engineering role reads as a lack of attention to detail — the exact opposite of what the role requires.

## THE 5-SECOND GUT CHECK BEFORE YOU HIT SUBMIT

Print it out, or shrink it to actual size on screen, and ask honestly:

1. Could a stranger tell what I actually did — and how well — in under 10 seconds?
2. Is there at least one number on this page?
3. Would I be a little embarrassed if a senior engineer read this out loud in a meeting?

## WANT THE FULL TEMPLATE PACK?

Resume, cold outreach emails, thank-you notes, and meeting-prep checklist — built by Newbie Engineer. New videos on the gap engineering school doesn't teach you.