

Lawyer Resume Proofreading Tips

By Claire Bellon

The worst mistake you can make on your lawyer resume is failing to proofread it. No one wants grammatical and spelling errors but many submit resumes with small, yet deadly errors, showing lack of attention to detail and poor writing skills. Lawyer resumes that contain typos or grammatical errors are not only embarrassing, but they can also kill any chance of landing a job.

Mistakes that can be found on a lawyer resume range from typos to poor punctuation marks and awkward sentence construction that obstructs smooth flow of reading, making you look careless and ignorant. Be careful about:

- Correct word usage and sentence construction
- Correct use of abbreviations
- Word capitalization
- Consistency in information and text formatting
- Consistency in visual design
- Proper sequencing and working links

Though everyone has a unique proofreading process, here are some general strategies that can be helpful when proofreading your lawyer resume:

1. Always use spell check, but be aware of its limitations! Ask others to proofread your resume. There is no substitute for several proofreaders.
2. Proofread backwards. Begin at the end of your resume and work back through your resume line-by-line or even word-by-word. This will force you to look at the surface elements rather than the content of the resume.
3. Place a ruler under each line as you read it. This will give your eyes a manageable amount of text to read.
4. Read sentences out loud. This will help point out punctuation and grammatical errors more easily.
5. Know your own typical mistakes. Look for the errors you make repeatedly.
6. Proofread for one type of error at a time. If commas are your most frequent problem, go through the resume checking just that one problem. Then proofread it again for the next most frequent problem.
7. Take a break between writing and proofreading. Set your lawyer resume aside for some time before you start to proofread it.

8. Give yourself ample time to proofread your lawyer resume. Approach your proofreading with a clear head and take at least an hour to work on editing.
9. Read through your lawyer resume slowly. If you read at a normal speed, you won't give your eyes sufficient time to spot errors.
10. When in doubt, use a professional resume writer. They can spot the typos and grammatical errors you or your friends will not catch. They can provide you with an error-free resume, as well as give you valuable suggestions to improve the content and format of your lawyer resume.

The following are often misspelled or misused in legal resumes and cover letters.

Words often misspelled or mistyped:

address
advice
appellate
believe
constitutional
conscientious
judgment
committed/commitment
criterion (pl. criteria)
cum laude
foreign
government
knowledge
liaison
memorandum (pl. memoranda)
miscellaneous
misspell
occurrence
precede/proceed
perspective/prospective
privilege
public

Words often misused or missed by spell checking programs:

affect/effect
then/than
apprise/appraise
capital/capitol
my/by
is/it

its/it's
complement/compliment
council/counsel(ing)
Juris Doctor (not Doctorate)
principle/principal
oriented (not orientated)
trial/trail
there/their/they're
you/your/you're

Remember your lawyer resume is not only a marketing tool, but also a representation of your writing skills. So, proofread it to perfection to land the job.

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