

ATS Resume Checklist: Avoid Technical Rejections



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Formatting & Structure

File Format:

- Saved as a PDF (unless job post specifies .docx).
- **File name:** "FirstName_LastName_JobTitle.pdf" (e.g., Maria_Gonzalez_Marketing_Manager.pdf).

Layout Simplicity:

- Single-column format (no tables, columns, or text boxes).
- Standard section headers: Work Experience, Education, Skills.

Fonts & Spacing:

- Sans-serif fonts (Arial, Calibri, Helvetica).
- Font size 11-12pt for body text; 14-16pt for headers.

No Graphics/Icons:

- Remove logos, charts, or images (ATS can't read them).

Headers/Footers:

- Avoid headers/footers for contact info (ATS often misses them).



Keyword Optimization

Job Description Keywords:

- Mirror exact phrases from the job post (e.g., "project management," "CRM software").
- Include hard skills (e.g., Python, SEO, QuickBooks) and certifications (e.g., PMP, Google Analytics).le.pdf" (e.g., Maria_Gonzalez_Marketing_Manager.pdf).

Natural Keyword Placement:

- Avoid stuffing (e.g., "detail-oriented detail-oriented detail-oriented").
- Spread keywords naturally in summaries, job descriptions, and skills sections.

Skills Section:

- List 6-8 core skills relevant to the role (e.g., Budget Management, Client Relations, Data Analysis).



Content Best Practices

Bullet Points > Paragraphs:

- Use 3-5 bullet points per job role.
- Start with action verbs: Led, Built, Optimized, Increased.

Quantify Achievements:

- Replace duties with metrics (e.g., "Boosted sales by 25%" vs. "Handled sales").

Employment Dates:

- Use Month/Year format (e.g., June 2020 – Present).
- Explain gaps briefly (e.g., "2022: Career break for freelance UX design certification").

Tailored Content:

- Customize your resume for each job application.



Technical ATS Checks

ATS-Friendly Headers:

- Use standard headers: Work Experience, Education, Skills (not "Career Journey" or "My Expertise").

Contact Information:

- Place name, email, phone, and LinkedIn at the top (not in headers).
- Avoid fancy email addresses (e.g., marketingpro2024@gmail.com → jane.smith@gmail.com).

No Special Characters:

- Replace symbols (&, %, /) with words (e.g., "and" instead of "&").

Test Your Resume:

- Run it through a free ATS checker like Jobscan or ResumeWorded.



Red Flags to Delete

Personal Pronouns:

- Remove "I," "me," or "my" (e.g., "I managed a team" → "Managed a team").

Unrelated Experience:

- Omit short-term roles or irrelevant jobs older than 10-15 years.

Buzzwords:

- Cut "hard worker," "team player," "go-getter" (unless paired with examples).



Final Checklist Before Sub-

- Proofread for typos (use Grammarly or a friend).
- Saved as a PDF with a professional file name.
- Keywords from the job post are included naturally.
- Tested with an ATS checker tool.

Pro Tip:

Hiring managers spend 6-10 seconds on the first scan. Place your biggest achievement at the top of your resume!



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