Ted's Resume Tips

- Most companies have a pile of resumes waiting to be looked at. It is your job to make yours effortless and even enjoyable to read.
- Most people who look at your resume will not read it. Of the ones that do, most will only read:
    - The name of the companies you worked for
    - Your most recent job title
    - How long you spent at each job
- Even though most people don't read resumes, they decide who to interview and who to ignore based on it, so this one document is very important. Format and style are as important as content.
- Get in touch with someone who works at the company before you send your resume. Tell them you're sending your resume. It's more likely to get looked at if someone internal brings it up.
- Format
    - PDF, HTML, MS Word are generally acceptable. PDF is best at preserving formatting.
        - If I don't know how to open your resume, I'm not going to spend effort trying.
        - Google Doc is acceptable for tech resumes. Make a frozen copy of your resume for each company if you share it as a Google Doc.
        - Exporting to PDF through your word processor is better than "Print to PDF" because it preserves searchable text.
    - Imagine looking at your resume next to 20 others without reading them. Which one do you want to read first?
        - Does it look polished and professional?
        - Is it too long?
        - Is whitespace used with intention?
    - Everything should be in reverse chronological order (most recent first)
    - Use bullet points!
    - One page maximum (unless you have 10+ years of experience and jobs to list).
        - Resume is different from an academic CV. Look elsewhere for advice on CVs.
    - Space is critical
        - Remove any excess content that doesn't help prove you are qualified
        - Use wide margins
            - At least 1 inch on all sides
            - Too many resumes have tiny margins. Small margins are uninviting.
        - Conserve horizontal space by packing more information into single lines.
            - You can easily fit the name of the company, your title, and the time you worked there in one line.
            - Consider using columns.
    - Stick to black and white. People will print your resume, and they won't use color ink.
- It should be easy to find basic factual information about you (contact info, education, skills, etc)
    - Your name and contact info should stand out at the top.
        - It should be easy to white out your name and contact info. Some recruiters will white out names and/or contact info before passing resumes to managers to decide which people to interview.
- Find out what the correct sections and ordering are for your type of job. In software engineering, many people are surprised to learn that "skills" belong at the top of your resume, above your experience and education. Different fields have different styles.
    - Software Resume:

- List your skills as a comma separated list near the top of your resume.
  - Software recruiters may search through resumes to find those that mention a skill they need. Yours should be keyword searchable.
  - If you have a lot of skills you can have multiple sections like Programming Languages, Tools, Libraries & Frameworks. Programming Languages should always be first.
  - List skills in order of preference/familiarity, not alphabetically. People will assume that the first language/tool/etc. listed is your preferred one.
  - Any skill you list is fair game on an interview. You are not expected to be an expert but you should be proficient.
  - Sans-serif fonts are fine, as long as they look professional.
    - Serif fonts draw the eye horizontally, while sans-serif fonts are easier to scan.
  - If you have a skills section, do not talk about tools or skills in the experience section. Put all that in the skills section and focus on responsibility and outcomes in your experience section.
- Experience section
  - Don't talk about process or how you did something. Talk about impact and results. Talk about your role in making things happen.
  - If you used specific tools to accomplish the task, that belongs in a "Skills" section, not under "Experience".
  - Use past tense. You can use present tense only on your current job, or past tense everywhere.
  - Use action words
    - Don't bother with complete sentences. Start with action words. You do not need to say "I".
    - Be sure the action words include words about:
      - working with others. "collaborated", "coordinated"
      - working alone. "researched", "developed", "streamlined", "learned"
      - leadership and taking responsibility. "organized", "became", "lead", "taught"
    - Avoid words like "managed" or "supervised" unless your role was people-management.
- If you are fresh out of college
  - Include your GPA if you're proud of it.
  - List extracurriculars and awards relevant to the job you're applying for.
  - List courses you took outside your major that are relevant to the job you're applying for.
    - If you are a CS major, you don't need to list CS courses. But if you're e.g. a Psychology major applying for a software job, you should list CS courses.
  - Remove these things from your resume after your first full time job.
- Do not include references unless asked.
  - No need to say "references upon request". Everyone assumes you can provide references upon request.
- Do not include a cover letter unless asked.
- Never ever have a typo or a grammar-o in your resume. Give it to someone else to read and edit. A typo makes you look sloppy and unprofessional. One typo is grounds for skipping a resume.