

Writing Strong Resume Bullet Points: Computer Science and IT Industries

Turn experiences into impact using the SAR method

What do employers look for in these industries?

Effective resumes in these industries highlight measurable results such as improved system performance, enhanced security, increased automation, and optimized user experiences. Overall, this handout will help you write strong accomplishment statements for computer science and IT roles.

Tip: Remember to [customize your resume](#) by incorporating keywords from the job description. For additional guidance on formatting and structure, review our [Resume/CV templates](#).

SAR Method: Core Framework

- ✓ Your resume must contain concise bullet points to describe your experiences
- ✓ SAR statements effectively outline your accomplishments in a simple, informative way

What is SAR?

S = Situation: What was the context? (e.g., problems you encountered or tasks you took on)

A = Action: What did you specifically do? (e.g., use a strong past-tense [action verb](#))

R = Result: What changed because of your actions? (e.g., improvements or outcomes)

Note: When formatting a resume bullet point, the sequence should be Action + Situation + Result. Also, try to incorporate numbers, percentages, or dollar amounts to further demonstrate your impact.

A weak example for a summer internship could be:

- Assisted with software development and testing activities

A strong example for a summer internship using the SAR method could be:

- Developed and tested features for an internal web application used by 200 employees, resolving 15 defects and improving page load times by 20%

How the SAR Method was implemented:

ACTION: Developed and tested

SITUATION: features for an internal web application used by 200 employees,

RESULT: resolving 15 defects and improving page load times by 20%

Note: This statement includes industry-specific context and skills, clearly communicates the result or intent of the action, and incorporates numbers to strengthen its impact.

Tip: For current students, review the [Carleton Career Competencies](#) to identify the knowledge, skills, and attributes developed through your academic journey. These reflections can help articulate your employability and write stronger SAR statements.



Impact Levels: Early Experience vs Advanced Experience

This section will help you brainstorm the context of your work (Situation) and the impact of your contributions (Result), with sample examples tailored to your level of experience.

Early Experience (e.g., co-ops, placements, internships, projects, clubs, and entry-level roles)

Considerations for the Situation	Questions to Help Frame the Result
• Carleton Career Competencies (e.g., Digital Literacy, Discipline-Specific Knowledge, or Innovation & Collaboration) • Technical projects (e.g., new software or app, security assessments, ML models) • Languages, tools, or platforms used (e.g., Python, Java, SQL, AWS, Git, Agile)	• What measurable outputs resulted from your work? (e.g., # of features developed, tickets resolved, tests completed) • What findings emerged? (e.g., model predictions, vulnerabilities identified) • What new skills did you develop? (e.g., debugging, cloud computing, IT support)

Machine Learning Capstone Assignment: Developed a machine learning model using Python, achieving 94% prediction accuracy across 5,000 test images

Hackathon Team: Collaborated with 4 students to build a mobile app in 24 hours, implementing API integration that improved real-time data retrieval and contributed to a top-10 finish

Advanced Experience (e.g., professional experience and leadership roles)

Considerations for the Situation	Questions to Help Frame the Result
• Technology products and services being managed (e.g., enterprise applications, cloud infrastructure, AI solutions) • Operational challenges (e.g., security risks, system downtime, inefficient workflows) • Coordination of teams and resources (e.g., developers, analysts, vendors, budgets)	• What new technical milestones were achieved? (e.g., cloud migration completed, application deployed, security implemented) • What improvements resulted? (e.g., faster response times, increased automation) • What business value was created? (e.g., reduced costs, improved user experience)

Software Engineer: Implemented API enhancements for a cloud platform serving 10,000 users, reducing data retrieval times by 35%

Cybersecurity Analyst: Led incident response activities across 500 endpoints, reducing critical vulnerabilities by 40%

Other ways to show impact if you do not know exact numbers

- **Scope** (e.g., approximate # of users, devices, tickets): Addressed an average of 200+ technical support tickets per month, resolving hardware, software, and access issues
- **Scale** (e.g., size of infrastructure, portfolio): Implemented timely upgrades to cloud infrastructure supporting North American operations, reducing service disruptions
- **Quality Improvements** (e.g., reliability, security, usability, performance): Refactored application code to address security vulnerabilities and reinforce user data protection

Tip: Begin [tracking data](#) to incorporate stronger metrics into future SAR statements.

