

Writing Strong Resume Bullet Points: International Affairs Industry

Turn experiences into impact using the SAR method

What do employers look for in this industry?

Effective resumes in this industry highlight measurable results such as strengthened international partnerships, informed policy decisions, or contributions to global security, diplomacy, trade, and development objectives. Overall, this handout will help you write strong accomplishment statements for roles in the broader field of international affairs.

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 international research and policy projects

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

- Analyzed trade and economic data from 12 Indo-Pacific countries, developing 5 recommendations that informed a policy brief on regional trade diversification

How the SAR Method was implemented:

ACTION: Analyzed

SITUATION: trade and economic data from 12 Indo-Pacific countries,

RESULT: developing 5 recommendations that informed a policy brief on regional trade diversification

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., Research & Analysis, Leadership, or Diversity & Intercultural Awareness) • Tasks completed (e.g., environmental scans, policy analysis, threat assessments) • Regions or global issues examined (e.g., West Africa, sanctions, humanitarian crises)	• What outputs were produced? (e.g., # of presentations, policy briefs, situation reports, recommendations, action plans) • What did your work identify? (e.g., risks, response options, geopolitical trends) • What skills did you develop? (e.g., cross-cultural communication, strategic writing)

International Security Assignment: Assessed cybersecurity strategies across 6 NATO member states, identifying 4 common approaches to critical infrastructure protection

Model UN Coordinator: Mentored 15 student delegates representing 10 assigned countries, preparing club members for policy simulations and cross-cultural negotiations

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

Considerations for the Situation	Questions to Help Frame the Result
• International strategic initiatives led (e.g., development programs, diplomatic missions, humanitarian responses, trade partnerships) • Global priorities addressed (e.g., conflict prevention, food security, disaster relief) • International partnerships utilized (e.g., UN agencies, governments, NGOs)	• What key actions were completed? (e.g., agreements negotiated, emergency response coordinated, security programs launched) • What decisions did your work influence? (e.g., resource allocation, funding priorities) • What measurable outcomes emerged? (e.g., targets surpassed, risks mitigated)

International Security Analyst: Led threat assessments examining cyber risks to critical infrastructure across 8 regions, informing mitigation strategies adopted by 5 partner agencies

International Development Program Manager: Directed an international food security initiative across 25 partner NGOs, increasing agricultural program participation by 28%

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

- **Scope** (e.g., approximate # of countries, policies, datasets): Analyzed humanitarian needs across 15+ countries, developing recommendations for economic planning
- **Scale** (e.g., governments, multilateral institutions): Liaised with international agencies and security partners, strengthening cross-border collaboration and threat detection
- **Quality Improvements** (e.g., accuracy, consistency): Refined geopolitical risk assessment criteria, improving situational awareness and strategic decision-making

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

