

Action Words

Begin with an action verb to describe your bullet point; give examples in your cover letters and interviews.

Career Competencies: The National Association of Colleges and Employers or NACE has identified eight career readiness competencies, each of which can be demonstrated in a variety of ways: Career & Self-Development; Communication; Critical Thinking; Equity & Inclusion; Leadership; Professionalism; Teamwork; and Technology. For more information, visit NACE's website for the article ["What is Career Readiness?"](#)

Communication Skills ■ Companion Competencies: Teamwork, Collaboration, Leadership

- | | | | | |
|----------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| • Addressed | • Drafted | • Mediated | • Recruited | • Synthesized |
| • Advertised | • Edited | • Moderated | • Referred | • Translated |
| • Clarified | • Formulated | • Negotiated | • Reinforced | • Wrote |
| • Collaborated | • Influenced | • Outlined | • Resolved | |
| • Condensed | • Interpreted | • Presented | • Responded | |
| • Consulted | • Listened | • Proposed | • Solicited | |
| • Defined | • Marketed | • Publicized | • Summarized | |

Creative Skills ■ Companion Competencies: Critical Thinking, Teamwork, Collaboration

- | | | | | |
|------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| • Adapted | • Created | • Formulated | • Integrated | • Performed |
| • Combined | • Customized | • Founded | • Invented | • Planned |
| • Composed | • Designed | • Illustrated | • Modeled | • Revised |
| • Conceptualized | • Developed | • Initiated | • Modified | • Revitalized |
| • Condensed | • Displayed | • Instituted | • Originated | • Solved |

Data/Financial Skills ■ Companion Competency: Technology

- | | | | | |
|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| • Administered | • Audited | • Corrected | • Measured | • Projected |
| • Adjusted | • Balanced | • Determined | • Netted | • Qualified |
| • Allocated | • Budgeted | • Developed | • Planned | • Reconciled |
| • Analyzed | • Calculated | • Estimated | • Prepared | • Reduced |
| • Appraised | • Computed | • Forecasted | • Processed | • Researched |
| • Assessed | • Conserved | • Managed | • Programmed | • Retrieved |

Helping/Interpersonal Skills ■ Companion Competency: Leadership

- | | | | | |
|-------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|
| • Adapted | • Assisted | • Demonstrated | • Guided | • Referred |
| • Advocated | • Clarified | • Diagnosed | • Helped | • Resolved |
| • Aided | • Coached | • Educated | • Intervened | • Served |
| • Answered | • Collaborated | • Encouraged | • Motivated | • Supplied |
| • Arranged | • Contributed | • Ensured | • Prevented | • Supported |
| • Assessed | • Counseled | • Facilitated | • Provided | • Volunteered |

Management/Leadership Skills ■ Companion Competency: Career & Self-Development

- | | | | | |
|----------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|
| • Administered | • Coordinated | • Hosted | • Organized | • Reviewed |
| • Analyzed | • Delegated | • Improved | • Overhauled | • Secured |
| • Attained | • Developed | • Increased | • Oversaw | • Selected |
| • Authorized | • Enforced | • Initiated | • Planned | • Streamlined |
| • Consolidated | • Enhanced | • Inspected | • Prioritized | • Strengthened |
| • Contracted | • Generated | • Motivated | • Produced | • Supervised |
| • Converted | • Hired | • Navigated | • Recommended | • Terminated |

Action Words (continued)

Organizational Skills ■ Companion Competencies: Professionalism, Leadership

- | | | | | |
|--------------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------------|
| • Arranged | • Filed | • Obtained | • Provided | • Supplied |
| • Classified | • Generated | • Operated | • Purchased | • Standardized |
| • Coded | • Logged | • Ordered | • Recorded | • Updated |
| • Compiled | • Monitored | • Prepared | • Submitted | • Verified |

Research Skills ■ Companion Competency: Critical Thinking

- | | | | | |
|-------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| • Analyzed | • Detected | • Explored | • Invented | • Searched |
| • Clarified | • Determined | • Extracted | • Investigated | • Solved |
| • Collected | • Diagnosed | • Formulated | • Located | • Summarized |
| • Compared | • Evaluated | • Gathered | • Measured | • Surveyed |
| • Conducted | • Examined | • Inspected | • Researched | • Systematized |
| • Critiqued | • Experimented | • Interviewed | • Reviewed | • Tested |

Teaching Skills ■ Companion Competency: Leadership

- | | | | | |
|----------------|---------------|------------------|--------------|---------------|
| • Adapted | • Coordinated | • Explained | • Instilled | • Taught |
| • Advised | • Critiqued | • Facilitated | • Instructed | • Tested |
| • Clarified | • Developed | • Focused | • Motivated | • Trained |
| • Coached | • Enabled | • Guided | • Persuaded | • Transmitted |
| • Communicated | • Encouraged | • Individualized | • Simulated | • Tutored |
| • Conducted | • Evaluated | • Informed | • Stimulated | |

Technical Skills ■ Companion Competencies: Communication, Technology

- | | | | | |
|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| • Adapted | • Constructed | • Fabricated | • Programmed | • Solved |
| • Applied | • Converted | • Fortified | • Rectified | • Specialized |
| • Assembled | • Debugged | • Installed | • Regulated | • Standardized |
| • Built | • Designed | • Maintained | • Remodeled | • Studied |
| • Calculated | • Determined | • Operated | • Repaired | • Upgraded |
| • Computed | • Developed | • Overhauled | • Replaced | • Utilized |
| • Conserved | • Engineered | • Printed | • Restored | |

How Do I Choose?

No single word listed under a skillset is applicable for every situation. It is ultimately up to you to decide which word best describes the action in question. If you find yourself using the same word over and over, a thesaurus can be a wonderful tool for finding alternatives (also known as, “synonyms”). But be careful; synonym means *similar* meaning, not necessarily *same* meaning. Choosing the wrong synonym can completely change the meaning of your sentence or bullet point.

How to Make Responsible Synonym Choices

1. Review the dictionary meanings of both your original word and prospective substitute.
2. Compare and ask the following questions:
 - Are the meanings a close match?
 - Does the new word make sense within your sentence?
 - Is it used in everyday language?
 - Is it free from potential misinterpretation?
3. Confirm your choice by getting a second opinion.

Integrated Dictionary-Thesaurus Websites

Below is a list of several publishers who offer free web access to their dictionaries and thesauri.

Harper-Collins: collinsdictionary.com

Macmillan: macmillandictionary.com

Merriam-Webster: merriam-webster.com

Oxford: en.oxforddictionaries.com