



Australian Government

Workforce  
Australia



# Job search basics workbook

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## **This workbook:**

- aims to help you to understand your work preferences and skills and what you have to offer employers
- provides practical information to help you research employers you want to work for and
- helps you to tailor job applications and prepare for interviews.

Before starting to look for a job, take some time to understand what's involved in getting a job in your chosen field and what employers are looking for. This can help you find and choose the right jobs to apply for.

# Chapter 1

## Know what you want and what you can offer

### My preferences

Employers want you to understand their business and explain why you are the right fit for the job.

They also want to know a bit about you and your story.

By thinking about how you like to work and what you want out of work, you can get a better idea of the type of jobs and industries that might be right for you.

You can also use this information to promote yourself to employers. For example, say you are applying for a landscaping job. You could explain to the employer how you like working outdoors, being creative and meeting client needs.

### Other things to consider

You might also have other preferences, commitments or responsibilities that can impact on how you work.

For example, study or caring duties could limit when you are available to work. You might only be available at night and on weekends and want casual or part-time work.

This in turn may have an impact on the type of jobs and roles that might be available to you.

It pays to be open to all opportunities around you so you have the best chance of finding a suitable job.



## Activity 1.1 – Places I like to work

To help understand your work preferences, think about the types of activities you enjoy and how you like to work.

Complete the following table by selecting the workplaces you prefer.

<p><b>Location</b></p> <p>Inside locations include offices, warehouses and shops. Outside jobs include construction and landscaping.</p>	Outside	Mixed/ I don't mind	Inside
<p><b>Noise</b></p> <p>Some workplaces have background noise, like machinery or voices.</p>	Medium noise levels	Mixed noise levels	Low noise levels
<p><b>Organisation</b></p> <p>Some workplaces are highly organised and have clear instructions. Others offer workers more flexibility.</p>	Follow instructions	A mix of organised and more flexible work	Figure it out myself
<p><b>Pace</b></p> <p>Some workplaces are always busy, while some have a more steady pace.</p>	Fast pace	A mix of fast and steady pace	Steady pace
<p><b>Physical</b></p> <p>Some jobs are more physically demanding. These jobs include hands-on work and require strength.</p>	Mostly physical work	Some physical work	Limited physical work
<p><b>People</b></p> <p>While many roles are completely people focused, most jobs require at least some interaction with other people.</p>	I like working with people a lot	I like working with people most of the time	I do not really like working with people

## Activity 1.2 – Tasks I like

It is also useful to get an idea of the types of tasks you might be good at and prefer doing. Knowing what you enjoy can help you choose the right job for you.

**Think about the tasks you prefer by completing this table.**

**Hint:** Every job includes elements of each of the task types below.

Tasks	I like these a lot	I don't mind these	I try to avoid these
<p><b>Practical</b></p> <p>People with practical interests enjoy physically active, hands-on work activities. They like working with plants and animals, and materials like wood, tools, and machinery. They often enjoy outside work.</p> <p>Jobs with lots of practical tasks include engineers, chefs and beauty therapists.</p>			
<p><b>Analytical tasks</b></p> <p>People with analytical interests enjoy searching for facts and figuring out problems. They like learning from and evaluating complex, often technical information and data.</p> <p>Jobs with lots of analytical tasks include geologists, data scientists, and other ICT professionals.</p>			
<p><b>Creative tasks</b></p> <p>People with creative interests enjoy artistic or expressive activities. They like work that involves creative thinking and using new ideas. They often enjoy work that can be done without following a set of rules.</p> <p>Jobs with lots of creative tasks include marketing executives, graphic designers and artists.</p>			

## Activity 1.3 – How I like to work with people

It can also help to understand how you like to work with other people. Knowing your preferences can help you choose a job with interactions that suit you.

Think about how you like working with people, by completing this table.

How I like to work with people	I like this a lot	I don't mind this	I try to avoid this
<b>Helper</b> This means being people focused and includes working with others to achieve a goal or satisfy a need. Helping others is a common theme across many jobs, not just healthcare roles.			
<b>Persuader</b> Convincing another person to do something. This requires good communication and listening skills.			
<b>Enforcer</b> Keeping rules and obeying standards, and ensuring others do the same. Everyone needs to follow rules and procedures sometimes, particularly when they impact the safety of others.			
<b>Provider</b> Agreeing to do something for someone else and making sure you do it. This means committing to providing high quality products or services to other people.			
<b>Competitor</b> Actively seeking rewards and recognition for your achievements. This means you are motivated by competition with others.			
<b>Collaborator</b> Working with others to identify common goals, and working together to achieve them. This requires teamwork skills, including flexibility and open-mindedness.			

## Activity 1.4 – Identifying jobs that suit you

**Step 1:** Review your responses to the previous three activities and fill out the below table based on your answers.

I have the following work preferences:

Interactions with others e.g. persuader	Tasks I like e.g. practical	How I like to work e.g. outside, physical work

**Step 2:** Use the below matrix to find examples of occupations that could suit you, based on your Task and Interaction preferences outlined in Step 1.

**Note:** All jobs include a range of interactions and tasks. This matrix aims to give you a snapshot of the types of roles that could suit you based on your identified preferences.

Task	Interactions					
	Helper	Persuader	Enforcer	Provider	Competitor	Collaborator
Creative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher</li> <li>Child Carer</li> <li>Recreational Therapist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Relations Manager</li> <li>Journalist</li> <li>Advertising Specialist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Archivist</li> <li>Curator</li> <li>Driving Instructor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Florist</li> <li>Jewellery Designer</li> <li>Visual Merchandiser</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chef</li> <li>Photographer</li> <li>Actor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Graphic Designer</li> <li>Hair and Beauty Salon Assistant</li> <li>Translator</li> </ul>
Analytical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clinical Psychologist</li> <li>Dietician / Nutritionist</li> <li>Optometrist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solicitor</li> <li>Insurance Broker</li> <li>Intelligence Officer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Product Quality Controller</li> <li>Marine Surveyor</li> <li>Auditor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Architect</li> <li>ICT Help Desk Officer</li> <li>Helicopter Pilot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental Consultant</li> <li>Stock Broker</li> <li>ICT Business Analyst</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Web Developer</li> <li>ICT Project Manager</li> </ul>
Practical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Café Worker</li> <li>Lifeguard</li> <li>Veterinary Nurse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Police Officer</li> <li>Call Centre Worker</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarantine Officer</li> <li>Park Ranger</li> <li>Building Inspector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Barista</li> <li>Chauffeur</li> <li>Plumber</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sports Coach</li> <li>Human Resources Manager</li> <li>Sportsperson</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fast Food Cook</li> <li>Kitchenhand</li> <li>Construction Manager</li> </ul>

**Note:** Some of these occupations require tertiary qualifications. However there are a range of jobs, including entry level roles, that involve many of same interactions and tasks.

**Step 3: Explore occupations that interest you on Your Career (www.yourcareer.gov.au).**

This could include roles from the matrix at Step 2 or any other jobs you have considered or are interested in.

Your Career profiles over 1000 occupations. Each occupation profile includes information about:

- common tasks you would perform in this job
- the skills and knowledge that are required for this role and
- what the work environment looks like for this job.

**Step 4: Compare the information you have found for each occupation to the work preferences you outlined in Step 1.**

Does it match? If so, you might be a good fit for this job! Record the occupations that match your preferences below:

**Occupations I might be a good fit for:**

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**Step 5: Once you have a list of occupations that could suit you, you need to understand how to communicate your value to the employers who are recruiting for these jobs.**

Use the exercises in the next chapter to better understand the needs of employers and how you can show them that you are a good match for their jobs.





# Chapter 2

## Understanding employers

Once you know a bit about the type of work you want to do, you can research employers you want to work for.

The next activity involves working through a job ad to figure out what skills and personal attributes the employer is looking for.

### Activity 2.1 – What are employers looking for?

When talking to employers about jobs, you need to understand what they look for in potential workers. This includes how they recruit and how you can market yourself to meet their needs.

**Read this job ad, then complete the following exercises:**

#### **Casual sales assistant – Fitness Foods**

Local health food store requires motivated part-time (10 to 15 hours per week) sales assistant to provide quality customer service and advice to our clients.

No experience is required as we offer training to the right applicant.

#### **Job tasks and responsibilities**

- Provide great customer service
- Build product knowledge to assist customers with their enquiries and purchases
- Cash handling and processing sales
- General maintenance of store

#### **Skills and experience**

To succeed in this role, you will:

- Have strong communication skills
- Provide great customer service
- Value integrity and doing things the right way
- Enjoy working with a team in a high energy, fast paced environment
- Be 'solutions focused' when faced with problems

#### **Job benefits and perks**

The successful candidate will be rewarded with generous staff discounts and the opportunity to work with an exceptional company that provides a great team environment and company culture.

Employers use particular words to describe the skills and personal attributes they want employees to have. For example, the attribute 'Strong communication skills' includes being able to listen to and provide information to a range of different people. These terms are also called 'keywords'.

**Exercise 1: Review the Fitness Foods job ad. What skills and personal attributes do you think the employer expects for: “Provide great customer service”?**

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## Putting it all together

Don't think you have the right skills to do this job? Look at the tasks more closely and you might realise you have what employers want.

**For example, consider these two job seekers:**

1. Khan is friendly with local customers as they go to the same gym. He is confident and has lots of energy. Khan also knows a lot about the products because he uses them.
2. Millie has experience working in her family's import business so she knows a little about the products. She is very good at putting people at ease. She is also calm, well presented, patient and a good listener.

Who makes the best candidate for the job? They both have good customer service skills so they could both be suitable for this position. It will come down to who can better communicate their skills and personal attributes to the employer in their job application and at interview.

**Exercise 2: Think about your own preferences, skills and personal attributes. What do you think you can offer this employer?**

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## Common ways employers recruit

Do some research into how employers in your chosen field usually recruit. This will help you know where to look for job vacancies. To find this information, visit their website, ask people you know who work there or approach them directly.

Where to find vacancies	Tips and hints
<b>Online jobs websites</b>	<p>This includes posting ads on jobs boards such as Seek, Jora, <b>Workforce Australia</b> and on the employer's own website.</p> <p>Vacancies advertised online can attract many applicants. To stand out from the crowd, you need to tailor your application to the advertised role.</p> <p>Be aware that many employers use automatic 'keyword' software to screen out applications that aren't tailored to the job ad.</p>
<b>Word-of-mouth</b>	<p>This is a great way to find opportunities!</p> <p>Connect with people you know (friends, family and people in your community) about job opportunities. You can also ask for advice on where to look.</p> <p>Also try to find local networking events or work experience opportunities as these could lead to a job in the future.</p>
<b>Contact employers directly</b>	<p>Job seekers who can demonstrate their enthusiasm in person often stand a better chance than those who simply 'drop off' their résumé. To make a good first impression, choose the right time to approach an employer so that they have the time to talk to you.</p> <p>Even when an employer does not have a current job opening, you can ask them to keep your résumé on file for the next time they are recruiting.</p>
<b>Social media</b>	<p>This includes platforms such as Facebook (through local jobs groups or on the employer's own page) and LinkedIn. Always make sure your online profile shows you in a positive light. If you aren't sure, search for yourself online and ask 'Would I hire me?'</p> <p>Be aware that jobs advertised on social media can get hundreds of applications, so you need to find a way to stand out from the crowd.</p>
<b>Recruitment agencies</b>	<p>Try and find an agency that specialises in recruiting for the type of job you are looking for. For example, some agencies only recruit for casual positions or for particular industries, e.g. healthcare or retail.</p>
<b>Newspaper</b>	<p>This is still a common way for employers to advertise jobs, particularly in regional areas.</p>

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## How to contact employers directly

Not all jobs are advertised. This means you need to be proactive in contacting employers, even when they aren't actively recruiting. This is also known as 'cold calling'. Here are some tips on contacting an employer about job opportunities.

### **Prepare in advance**

- Research employers you want to work for online by checking out their website
- Find out the best way to contact an employer. Is it best to call, email or visit them?
- Think about and practise what you are going to say before you arrive.

### **Pick the right time to make contact**

- Avoid peak times. At certain times some employers will be too busy to give you their time.
- Don't contact an employer when you are in a rush. The employer may want to interview you on the spot, so choose a time when you can give them as much time as they need.

### **Talk to the right person about jobs**

- Be polite to everyone in the business.
- Ask to speak to the person who is responsible for recruitment. If they are not available, hand in your résumé. Ask when it's a good time to follow-up with them and get their contact details.

### **Be ready to impress**

- First impressions are very important. Dress neatly and appropriately for the job.
- Be positive, smile, be polite and speak clearly.

### **Is the employer interested?**

- How did the employer respond to your approach? Were they positive? This will help you decide whether or not to follow-up with them later.

### **Follow-up**

- If you think you would be a good fit for a business and the employer seems receptive, always follow up after submitting an application. Even if they are not currently recruiting or if the job has been filled, tell them you are interested in being considered for future jobs.
- Ask for feedback on your application. Always thank employers for their time.

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## How to make a great first impression

The Australian Government regularly speaks to employers about their workforce needs. We asked employers what young people can do to make a great first impression when looking for work.

**Employers told us that they place as much value on communication and people skills as technical skills.**

**They look for workers who:**

- have a positive attitude, are motivated and are willing to work
- are prepared to learn and take direction.

**Employers also look for staff who:**

- are punctual, dependable and who are willing to commit to the business
- understand what is expected of them in the workplace. Hint: You can build this through unpaid work experience and volunteer work
- are friendly and respectful to colleagues and customers.

**Personal presentation matters to employers. Be sure to:**

- dress appropriately for the job and be well presented
- make eye contact, smile and be friendly
- have good posture as it makes you appear more confident.

**As well as these tips, other ways to show an employer you really want to work with them include:**

1. **Be your best self.** Employers will form an impression of you by observing your interactions with others and your personal presentation and by looking at your social media profile. They will try to get an idea of your personality, abilities and your values, such as reliability and trustworthiness.
2. **Show you understand their business.** Research employers you want to work for to understand their business challenges, priorities and what they do. This helps you explain what you can offer them.
3. **Ask interesting questions.** Ask employers about their business strategy, products and services or upcoming projects. Come up with some questions they'll want to answer. They'll remember you for it.

Once you understand the needs of employers you want to work for, you can start to work on your application.

# Chapter 3

## Your job application

Your résumé needs to show an employer that you are interested in the role and that you have the skills and personal qualities that they are looking for.

### Activity 3.1 – Build your basic résumé

If you have never written a résumé before or it has been a while, start by writing down all the important information about you.

**Write down your:**

- **Contact details** – include your name, email and mobile number. Hint: Do not include your age, gender, address or other personal information.
- **Skills and achievements** – include the technical, workplace and communication skills you have gained from work, hobbies, study and volunteering.
  - Think about ways you can use these experiences to demonstrate your transferable work skills. For example, you can show your project management skills through group assignments or cooking for your family. Managing a budget shows your ability to manage and balance priorities. Participating in sport shows your reliability and teamwork.
- **Work experience** – include all your previous workplace experience, even if it was unpaid or volunteer work.
- **Education and courses completed** – include your highest level of study and any other relevant training.
- **Qualifications, registrations and licences** – include things like a driver's licence, safety white cards, First Aid certificates and formal industry certificates.
- **Referees** – include contact details for at least two referees who can support your application for the job. Always ask them before including them!

The next step is to use this information to build a résumé that is tailored to each job you apply for.



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## Why should you tailor your résumé?

- Tailoring your résumé means making it specific to a particular job and employer.
- A tailored résumé shows the employer that you understand their business and can meet their needs.
- Some employers will instantly reject résumés that aren't tailored to their business.

Use the exercises on the next few pages to help you build a tailored résumé.

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## Activity 3.2 – How to write a tailored résumé

Follow these five steps to tailor your résumé and show an employer you have the skills they want.

### **Step 1:** Scan the job ad for the employer's keywords

The first step in tailoring a résumé is to understand what the employer is looking for in workers for this role.

Employers make statements in their job ads about the kind of worker they want. These statements are also called 'keywords'.

Keywords describe the required personal traits, skills and qualifications that the employer is looking for.

For example, look for statements like 'good communicator', 'motivated', 'experience in customer service' and 'Certificate III in Individual Support'.

Once you have identified the keywords in a job ad, you need to address and reflect these in your résumé.



## Exercise: Reviewing job ads

**Task:** Complete the following exercise

1. Find a job ad online that interests you and that you think might suit you.
2. Read through the job ad and highlight the keywords.
3. List any keywords you find in the following table in the relevant column.

**Job title** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Personal attributes required</b> e.g. team player, reliable	<b>Skills and experience required</b> e.g. cash handling, data entry	<b>Training/qualifications required</b> e.g. Drivers licence, construction white card

**Task:** Using the same job ad and your résumé, think about how your personal traits and skills match these keywords and make you a suitable candidate for the role.

Consider the skills you have built from paid work, volunteering, study and other experiences. List these in the columns below.

**Hint:** Try to use the same statements that the employer uses in their job ad. This makes it clear that you have read and understood their requirements.

**Job title** \_\_\_\_\_

Personal attributes required e.g. team player, reliable	Skills and experience required e.g. cash handling, data entry	Training/qualifications required e.g. Drivers licence, construction white card

## Step 2: Research the employer

In order to tailor your résumé to a specific employer, you need to understand what they are looking for.

To do this, take some time to research them and their business. Look at their website and social media sites. If possible, visit them in person.

Hint: If you can't find anything about this business, learn about the industry or job more generally.

**Task: Using the same job from Step 1, do some research on the employer.**

Use your research to answer the following questions:

**What does the business do for customers?** Sell them a product? Perform a service? Look after them?

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**What do you think are the business's main priorities?**

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**Describe their business culture.** Do staff wear a uniform, perform shift work and work with customers?

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**How do you see yourself fitting into this business?** What would you like about working here?

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You can use the information you have collected to build your 'pitch' to explain why you want to work for this employer and why you are the right person for the job.

**Step 3: Prepare your pitch**

If you had 30 seconds to explain why you are the right person for a job, what would you say? How can your work experience and skills benefit this employer?

It can help to write down a short 'pitch' linking your skills and strengths to the needs of the employer.

You can include this 'pitch' in your application, either in your cover letter or the 'Personal profile' or 'Career objectives' section of your résumé.

**Hint:** Use your insights from Chapter 1 to help you explain how your work preferences match this job.

**Task:** Using the same job ad, write your 'pitch' of how you could fit in this business:

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## Step 4: Referees

For each job you apply for you will need at least two relevant referees.

Always ask permission before listing someone as a referee. Once you have their permission, you can include their name and contact details at the end of your résumé.

Most employers, such as small businesses, will only reference check people they want to hire.

However, some recruitment and labour hire agencies will check your referees at the beginning of the hiring process. This reassures them that you are ready to take a casual or temporary job when one comes up.

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## How to find the right referees

- Try to choose people who have supervised you.
- If you have lost touch with former managers, search for them online (try social media sites like LinkedIn) to find their current details and make contact.
- People who have supervised you could be from paid employment, a work experience placement or a volunteer role.
- If you have worked for a family business, don't list a family member as your referee, especially one with the same surname as you! Try to find a manager who is not related to you. If you have only worked with family, you may need to find someone else who can act as a referee. For example, contacts made through volunteering or other community activities.

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## Character references

- If you have never had a job, you could ask a teacher, sports coach, neighbour, or someone from your community for a character reference.



**Exercise:** Thinking about the above points, record the details of two referees you could call on to support your job applications:

### Referee 1

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Current title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Business they work for:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact details:** (Direct phone, email and main company phone number)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Name of the business where you worked together,** if this is different from the referee's current employer:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Dates you worked together:** From \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

**Work relationship:** (e.g. Your manager or another senior manager) \_\_\_\_\_

### Referee 2

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Current title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Business they work for:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact details:** (Direct phone, email and main company phone number)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Name of the business where you worked together,** if this is different from the referee's current employer:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Dates you worked together:** From \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

**Work relationship:** (e.g. Your manager or another senior manager) \_\_\_\_\_

## Step 5: Résumé templates

The next step is to find a résumé template that suits the job you are applying for.

There are many free résumé templates available online. Templates may also be included in your word processing software.

Look for templates with a simple to read format so you can clearly outline how your skills and experience make you the best person for the job.

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### Top tips for writing a killer résumé

- Your résumé should be no more than 2 to 3 pages.
- Check for spelling mistakes and typos. Always ask someone else to proof-read your résumé before you give it to an employer.
- Always tell the truth. In a job interview, employers will ask questions to check the claims you have made in your résumé. They will also contact your referees to see if they can back up your claims.
- Use the checklist on page 26 to check your résumé before you send it to an employer.

**Exercise:** Using the job ad and your responses to the exercises above, find a suitable template and start building your tailored résumé.

**Notes:**

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## Step 6: Reflection: What does your résumé say about you?

Review your tailored résumé to ensure you are sending the right message to employers.

**Direct messages are the things that you want the employer to know about you.** This can include:

- The skills and experience you have developed through paid employment, volunteer roles and through work experience placements.
- Any knowledge and skills you have gained through study and training, at work and through community or sporting activities.
- Your personality traits or attributes that will help you at work.

**Indirect messages are information that an employer could infer from your résumé that you don't necessarily intend to convey to them.**

Some indirect messages can negatively impact how the employer responds to your résumé. However, if you know what the employer wants, these messages can increase your chances of getting the employer's attention.

Indirect messages you could be sending an employer include things like:

- Unprofessional email address (e.g. mrfunny@bigpond.com) = "Not serious about our job"
- Spelling errors = "They don't have good attention to detail so will be careless about their work"
- Unexplained gaps in your work history = "They are hiding something..."
- Error free résumé featuring relevant keywords = "Shortlist this person!"

### Exercise: Review your résumé and answer the following questions:

**What are three direct messages an employer could get from your résumé?**

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**What are three indirect messages an employer could draw from your résumé?**

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## Résumé checklist

Use this checklist to review your résumé for errors before sending it to an employer.

It can be hard to find mistakes in a document you have written. Give your résumé and this checklist to someone else to review for you. If possible, also give them the job ad you are responding to or information about the employer.

Task	Okay?
Only use a professional sounding email address such as your name. Does your email sound professional?	
Is your name, phone and email included on each page? Even if you send your application by email, an employer may print out a hard copy and the pages could get separated.	
Have you included your key skills and personal attributes on your résumé? Do these match the keywords used in the job ad that describe what the employer is looking for?	
Is your résumé tailored to the specific job and employer? Is there anything in the résumé that is not relevant to this role or has been left over from previous job applications?	
Is all the information 100% correct? Can you answer questions at a job interview about everything you have included in your résumé?	
Are there any typos or spelling mistakes? If so – have these been fixed?	
<p>If you have included hobbies or interests, do these support and strengthen your application? If not, remove them.</p> <p>Hint: Including relevant hobbies and interests can give employers a better idea of who you are, your values and what you care about. This is particularly relevant for industries such as Health and Community Services where employers often seek to match potential workers with specific clients based on shared interests and values.</p>	
Have you included two relevant referees? Are their contact details current?	



## What is a cover letter and why do I need one?

The role of a cover letter is to introduce yourself and encourage the employer to read your résumé.

It should clearly explain why you are the right person for their business and briefly outline your relevant qualifications, experience, and positive work traits.

Not all employers will ask for a cover letter. Always follow the employer's instructions when applying for their jobs.

It is a good idea to attach a cover letter to the front of your résumé when you are contacting an employer directly about a job.

## Cover letter checklist:

### Check the content:

Task	Okay?
Keep it short (no more than one page). Explain how your skills, experience and personality make you a good match for the job. Tailor your cover letter to the specific job and employer.	
Check all names are correct, including the business name and all contact details.	
Highlight the skills you have that are required for the job. Include a brief summary of your relevant previous employment, qualifications and any industry/occupational licences.	
Make sure it is easy to read. The employer should be able to read the key points in your cover letter in less than a minute and understand why you are right for the job.	
Address it to a specific person. If you don't know who to address it to, call the business and find out the name of the recruitment manager.	
Always attach your tailored résumé when you send out a cover letter.	

**Check the presentation:**

Task	Okay?
Choose a simple and professional format and layout. Use a font that is easy to read.	
Your letter should have a clear structure with an opening and closing paragraph.	
Address the employer formally (e.g. Mr, Ms, Dr).	
Use a formal sign off, for example 'Yours sincerely'. Sign the letter if you are posting it.	

**Check for errors:**

Task	Okay?
Check for spelling mistakes and grammatical errors.	
Make sure everything you say about yourself is true.	
Ask a family member or friend to check your cover letter.	



# Chapter 4

## Interviews

### Five steps to interview success

Preparing for your interview in advance will help you feel more confident on the day.

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#### **Be ready for the employer's call**

- Keep your phone on if you are expecting a call from an employer. Check your phone messages and emails regularly. Call the employer back as soon as possible.
- When you accept an interview request, write down all the interview details. Record the date, time, location, a contact name and phone number.

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#### **Spend time preparing for interviews**

- Plan ahead so you present well and know how to get to the interview.
- Review your résumé so you know what you have said about yourself.
- Research the employer to refresh your knowledge of their business.
- Prepare some relevant questions to ask the employer. Look online for ideas or use your research on the employer to come up with questions.
- Practise your responses to common interview questions.

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#### **Present yourself well**

- Aim to get there 10 minutes early. Have the employer's contact details handy in case you are delayed.
- Show confidence through good posture.
- Be polite, make eye contact, smile and speak clearly.
- Take a pen and paper to make notes.
- For phone interviews, sit in a quiet place with no distractions.

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#### **Stay calm**

- If you feel stressed, take some slow, deep breaths to help you calm down.
- Practise your answers to common interview questions with someone (or in front of the mirror) before the interview. This is a great way to build your confidence and feel more calm on the day.

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#### **Follow-up**

- At the end of the interview, ask about the next steps in the selection process.
  - Check who you should follow up with about the outcome and how long it might take to make a decision.
  - If the employer is not sure of the timings, it's okay to check in with them a few days later to reaffirm your ongoing interest.
  - You can also contact them to thank them for the interview opportunity. Hold off on seeking feedback until after they have made a decision.
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## Activity 4.1 – Succeeding at job interviews

Complete this activity to build your confidence for job interviews.

### **Exercise:** Choose an employer or job ad that interests you.

#### **Task:** Research the employer

It is really important to research the employer before a job interview. If you know someone who already works at the business, ask them for their insights and tips. You can also review the job ad, look the business up online and on social media, and use your personal knowledge as a customer. Using your knowledge of the business, answer these questions:

**What does the business do?**

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**What do you see as the business's main priorities?**

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**Can you describe the business's working style?** Do they have a formal workplace or do they seem more casual? Also think about things like whether staff wear a uniform, perform shift work or work with customers.

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**What are the business's values?** What do they pride themselves on?

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**How does the business work with the wider community?** This could include selling to the public but also sponsoring a community event or a local charity.

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**How do you see yourself fitting into this workplace?** What would you like about working there?

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**Task: Interview warm up**

Think about how you might answer some common interview questions. The more you prepare, the more confident you will feel on interview day.

*Try this warm up: 'Tell me about yourself?'*

Many employers will ask this question at the start of the interview.

It can help to develop a short 'script' in advance that you can adapt for each interview.

Your 'script' should include some personal information mixed with relevant work-related information. Make sure that this information is relevant to the type of job you are being interviewed for.

**From the job ad you selected in Exercise 1, identify the key skills and attributes the employer is seeking.**

**Write out your script:**

"Tell me about yourself?"

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**Create another script for this common interview question: "Why should I hire you?"**

Your script should explain why your skills, experience, training and personal attributes make you a good fit for the role. Try to keep your script to four sentences.

"Why should I hire you?"

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**Task: Think up answers to other common interview questions**

Using the same job ad, think about how you could answer the other common interview questions listed below. Write down the main things you would cover in answering each question.

**“Why do you want to work here?”** Use the research you did about the employer and the job tasks to build your response.

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**“What are your strengths?”** Choose skills, abilities and aptitudes that relate to the tasks for this job.

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**“Why did you leave your last job?”** Be as honest as you can without saying anything negative about your former employer. Was the role made redundant? Was the work site too far from where you live? Did you want a new challenge?

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**“You have not worked in a while, what have you been doing?”** Have you been caring for a family member? Studying? Doing work experience or volunteering? Working on your personal development such as better health and fitness?

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**Task: Time to rehearse out loud**

Pick three questions from the previous exercises.

**Working with a friend or family member, practise answering these questions in interview mode.**

Ask your interview partner for feedback on your:

- **Answers:** Were they relevant to the type of job you want? Were they short and interesting to listen to, or did you talk for too long?
- **Voice:** Were you too soft, too loud or talking too fast? Did you use a lot of filler words, for example, 'um' or 'yeah...?'
- **Eye contact:** Did you look at your partner while speaking? Or were you looking down or to the side?
- **Body language:** Were you using your hands? Were you sitting stiffly? Did you look confident and relaxed?
- **Facial expression:** Did you smile or frown?

**If your partner is also looking for a job, swap roles. You might learn some tips from what they say or the way they speak.**

**Notes:**

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**Task: Identify and remove barriers to success**

Identify any potential barriers to succeeding at a job interview and what you could do to remove each barrier.

Examples include:

**Barrier:** You do not like planning things out before you do them. This means that you often get flustered at presentations or job interviews.

**Action:** Spend a few hours studying your own résumé and the employer’s website. Practise answers to common interview questions.

**Barrier:** You sometimes forget to turn your mobile phone off.

**Action:** Set an alarm or alert to remind you to switch your phone to silent before you reach the job interview. Change your ring tone if it is not workplace appropriate.

**Barrier:** Being late.

**Action:** Set an alarm, build in extra time to get ready, plan your journey ahead of time. This includes working out how long it will take you to get there.

**What are your barriers and what will you do to remove them?**

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**Task: Review your job interview readiness**

How prepared are you for a job interview? Rank yourself on these key interview skills to understand the areas you would like to work on.

Job interview skill	Beginner	Okay	Strong
<b>Knowing myself</b> – I have a good understanding of my skills, experience, qualifications and personal attributes			
<b>Job fit</b> – I understand how my skills, experience, qualifications and personal attributes relate to the job			
<b>Well informed</b> – I can do background research on the employer and industry			
<b>Personal presentation</b> – My clothes fit the job role and business and have no stains or buttons missing. I wear appropriate jewellery and perfume			
<b>Well organised</b> – I can plan my journey to the interview location including how long it takes to get there and my mode of transportation. I always know the name of the interviewer and relevant contact details			
<b>Punctual</b> – I usually arrive early for interviews (but no more than 10 minutes early)			
<b>Courtesy</b> – I am polite and courteous to each person I meet no matter their role. I remember to thank the interviewer for their time			
<b>Speech</b> – I speak clearly and not too quickly, using a moderate volume			
<b>Quality of answers</b> – I listen closely to the questions and provide concise and clear answers. I avoid giving yes and no answers			
<b>Body language</b> – I sit up straight, smile and lean slightly forward to show interest when others speak			
<b>I ask questions</b> – I always prepare two or three questions to ask the interviewer at the end of the interview			
<b>Eye contact</b> – I maintain good eye contact with the interviewer			

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## Disclaimer

The contents of this workbook is intended as general information only and does not replace professional advice. It is derived from a variety of sources and has been prepared without taking into account your individual objectives, situation or needs.

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