



JOB JUMPSTART
YOUR CAREER. YOUR FUTURE.

Job search basics - Workbook



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Introduction

The Department of Jobs and Small Business has developed this booklet to help you with your job search.

This booklet:

- 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.
- helps you to tailor job applications and prepare for interviews.

Chapter 1 - Know what you want and can offer

Finding a job that's right for you can seem hard. It can also be hard for other people to help you if you don't know what you want.

Finding out more about yourself and your own work preferences is a good place to start. This will help you promote yourself to employers and explain how you are right for their business.

My preferences

Employers want you to understand their business and explain what you can offer them.

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

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

Activity 1.1: Places I like to work

It can be hard to know what you want to do or the type of work you might enjoy when you are first starting out in the workforce.

To help understand your work preferences, think about the types of activities you enjoy and where you work best.

Complete the following table by circling the work places you prefer.

Location	Outside	Mixed	Inside
Noise	Medium noise levels	Mixed noise levels	Low noise levels
Organisation	Follow instructions	Mixed	Figure it out myself
Pace	Fast pace	Mixed pace	Steady pace
Physical	Mostly physical work	Some physical work	Limited physical work
People	I like working with people a lot	I like working with people most of the time	I do not really like working with people

Now use your answers above to finish the sentences below.

I like to work in a location that is:

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I like noise levels that are:

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I like organisations that:

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I like the pace of work to be:

.....

Physical work is something I:

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Working with people is something I:

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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 doing can help you choose the right job for you.

Think about the tasks you prefer by completing this table:

Tasks	I like these a lot	I don't mind these	I try to avoid these
Practical tasks Focus on what is realistic and what can be done using the tools, materials and people available.			
Analytical tasks Collecting and looking at information and building an understanding of how one thing affects another.			
Creative tasks Involve an appreciation of design, style, form and beauty and an ability to express this appreciation through the development of products or services.			

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.

Remember, you can have a successful career by being flexible about the way you deal with people and open to the opportunities available.

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

How I like to work with people	I like this alot	I don't mind this	I try to avoid this
Helper Working with someone to achieve a goal or need			
Persuader Convincing another person to do something			
Enforcer Keeping rules and obeying standards, and ensuring others do the same			
Provider Agreeing to do something for someone else and making sure you do it			
Competitor Actively seeking rewards and recognition for your achievements			
Collaborator Working with others to identify common goals, and working together to achieve them			



How to use what you found out

Knowing your workplace preferences is an important first step. It can help you be honest and genuine in the way you talk to employers.

You will still need to find out what jobs are available and are the best match for your preferences.

Knowing your preferences will also be helpful when you talk to people about what you want to do.

Often people you know and meet can help you with your job search. For example, they might remind you of what you are good at. Or they can tell you what jobs are available and what might suit you.

It is important to learn how to network and make the most of the support available to you.

Chapter 2 - Understanding employers

Once you know a bit about how you want to work, the next step is to research employers you want to work for.

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

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

Activity 2.1: What are employers looking for?

Read the following job ad, then answer the questions:

Casual sales assistant – Fitness Foods

Local health food and supplements store requires motivated part-time 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:

- Customer service
- Product knowledge

Skills and experience

- Exceptional customer service
- A passion for health and fitness
- Basic computer skills using Word, Excel and Outlook

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 attributes they want. For example, 'Customer service'.

Look at the 'Job tasks and responsibilities' section of the job ad. What skills and attributes do you think the employer expects for 'Customer service'?

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You might think you do not have the right skills to do the job. But look at those tasks more closely and you might realise you have what they want.

For example, consider these two job seekers:

1. Khan is friendly with local customers as they go to the same gym so he understands what they want. He is confident and has a lot of energy. Khan also knows a lot about the products because he takes supplements.
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.

So who makes the best candidate? They both have good customer services skills so it really depends on the employer's specific needs and expectations.

Think about your preferences, skills and abilities. What do you think you can offer this employer?

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What are some common ways employers recruit?

Research how employers in your chosen field usually recruit. This will help you know where to look for job vacancies.

Where to find them?	Tips and hints:
Internet advertising	This includes posting ads on jobs boards such as Seek, Gumtree, Australian JobSearch, and on the employer's own website.
Newspaper	This seems old fashioned but it's still a common way for employers to advertise jobs.
Recruitment agencies	Always 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 part-time positions and jobs in healthcare.
Social media	<p>This includes Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Anyways make sure your online profile shows you in a positive light.</p> <p>Not sure? Google yourself and ask 'Would I hire me?'. Also be aware that jobs advertised on social media can get hundreds of applications.</p>
Being directly approached by a job seeker	Even when an employer does not have a current job opening, you can ask them to keep your résumé for the next time they are recruiting.
Word-of-mouth	<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 find local networking events or work experience opportunities as these could lead to a job in the future.</p>

How to contact employers directly

Not all jobs are advertised. Here are some tips on contacting an employer about job opportunities.

Prepare in advance

- Research employers you want to work for. Know what they do and what you can offer them.
- Find out the best way to contact employers. Is it best to call, email or visit them?
- Think about and practise what you are going to say before you rock up.

Pick the right time to make contact

- Avoid peak times. At certain times some businesses are too busy to give you their time.
Want to work in a café or restaurant? Don't pop in during meal times!
- Don't visit 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 deals with recruitment. If they are not available, hand in your résumé. Ask when might be a good time to follow-up with them.

Be ready to impress

- First impressions are very important. Dress right 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, always follow up after submitting an application. Even if they are not currently recruiting, they might contact you later.
- Ask for feedback on your application. Always thank them for their time.

How to make a great first impression

The Australian Government regularly surveys Australian employers. We asked them what young people can do to make a good first impression.

Employers said that they are impressed by job seekers who:

- are punctual
- dress appropriately and are well presented
- offer a firm handshake and make eye contact
- smile and are friendly
- have good posture (it makes you appear more confident).

As well as this, think of ways to show an employer you really want to work with them:

1. **Be your best self.** Employers will use a range of information to form an impression of you. They will look at your social media profile, observe your interactions with other people and your personal presentation. They will try to get an idea of your personality, abilities and your values, such as respect for others and yourself, reliability and trustworthiness.
2. **Show them you understand their business.** Research employers so you understand their business challenges and priorities. This will help you explain what you can offer them.
3. **Ask interesting questions.** Ask questions about the company's business strategy, products and services or upcoming projects. Ask the employer questions they want to answer. They'll remember you for it.

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

Chapter 3 - Your job application

How to build your résumé

There's lots of advice out there on how to create the 'perfect' résumé, but what does that mean?

A 'perfect' résumé shows an employer that you are the right person for the job.

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. Do not include your age, address or other personal information.
- Skills and achievements - include the technical, workplace and communication skills you have gained from work, hobbies, study and volunteering.
- 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 schooling and anything after that.
- 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!

Tailor your résumé to meet an employer's needs

Tailoring your résumé to each job you apply for can improve your chances of getting the job.

Follow these four steps to tailor your résumé and show an employer you've got what they want:

1. Scan the job ad for the employer's keywords.

Employers make statements in their job ads about the kind of worker they want. Employers use 'keywords' that describe the most important traits they are looking for. Also look out for any required qualifications or certifications and address these in your résumé.

2. Research the employer.

Find out what they do. Look at their website and social media sites. What are their business challenges and priorities? If you can't find anything about this business, learn about the industry or job more generally.

3. Prepare your pitch.

If you had 30 seconds to explain why you are the right person for this job, what would you say? How can your work experience and skills benefit this employer? Include this information in your application, either in your cover letter or the 'Personal profile' or 'Career objectives' section in your résumé.

4. Use your knowledge of the employer.

Leave out anything that isn't relevant to the employer. Outline any work experience and skills that match the employer's keywords. Find a résumé template that matches this type of business. Use your knowledge of the employer and industry to decide how to present your résumé.

Activity 3.1: How to write a tailored résumé

Use this activity to help you build a tailored résumé. You can then search online for a résumé template to build a résumé tailored to a specific employer.

Important things to keep in mind when preparing a résumé include:

- Always tell the truth. In a job interview, employers will ask questions to check the claims you have made in your résumé.
- Tailor your résumé to each job to show the employer that you can meet their needs.
- Identify your skills and achievements. Explain why you are right for the job and how you can benefit the business.
- Check for spelling mistakes and typos. Always ask someone else to proof-read your résumé before you give it to an employer.

Exercise 1 - What does your résumé say about you?

Direct information:

- Skills built through paid employment, volunteer roles and through work experience placements.
- Knowledge gained through study and training, both at work and through community or sporting activities.
- Your personality traits that will help you at work.

Indirect messages you could be sending an employer:

- Email address that is not professional. For example, mrfunny@bigpond.com = “they are not serious about our job”
- Spelling errors = “careless about their work”
- Unexplained gaps in your work history = “hiding something”
- Error free résumé featuring relevant key words = “shortlist this person!”

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

1.
2.
3.

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

1.
2.
3.

Exercise 3 - 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.

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

How to find the right referees

Thinking about the job ad you have selected, list two relevant referees. Try to choose people who supervised you.

Don't worry if you've lost touch with former managers. Search for them online (try social media sites like LinkedIn) to find their current contact 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, try to find a manager who is not related to you. If you only worked with family, you may need to find someone else who can act as a referee.

Character references

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



Referee 1

Name:

Current title:

Business they work for:

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

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

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Dates you worked together:.....

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

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Referee 2

Name:

Current title:

Business they work for:

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

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

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Dates you worked together:.....

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

.....

Résumé checklist

Use this checklist to check 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.

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 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 you have included hobbies or interests, do these support and strengthen your application? If not, remove them.	
Have you included two relevant referees? Are their contact details current?	

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

Sometimes you may need to include a cover letter. For example, for professional roles or when you are contacting an employer directly about a job.

Check for content:

- Keep it short (no more than one page long). 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.
- Address all the required skills needed for the job. Include a summary of relevant previous employment, qualifications and industry and 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.
- Always attach your tailored résumé when you send out a cover letter.
- Address it to a specific person. If you do not know who to address it to, call the business and find out the name of the recruitment manager.

Check for errors:

- Check for spelling mistakes and grammar errors.
- Make sure everything you say about yourself is true.
- Ask a family member, friend or co-worker to check your letter.

Check for presentation:

- 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, Mrs, Ms)
- Use a formal sign off, for example 'Yours sincerely'. Sign the letter if you are posting it.

Chapter 4 - Interviews

Five steps to interview success

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

Be ready for the employer's call	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check your phone messages and emails regularly and respond asap.• When you accept an interview request, record all the interview details. Include the date, time, location, a contact name and phone number.
Spend time preparing for interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.• Practise your responses to common interview questions.
Present yourself well	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aim to get there 10 minutes early. Have the employer's contact details handy in case you are delayed.• Show confidence through good posture and a firm handshake.• Be polite, make eye contact, smile and speak clearly.• Bring a pen and paper to make notes.• Take any opportunity to ask questions. Look online for ideas or use your research on the employer to come up with questions.• If you are doing a phone interview, make sure you are in a quiet place with no distractions.
Stay calm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you start feeling stressed, take a couple of slow, deep breaths to help you calm down.• Practise your answers to 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.
Follow-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.• When following up (a day or two after the interview) ask for feedback about your interview performance.

Activity 4.1: Succeeding at job interviews

Complete this activity to build your confidence for job interviews. Choose an employer or job ad that interests you.

Exercise 1 – 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 relaxed? 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 major 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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Exercise 2 – 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 change up 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.

For example, imagine you are applying for a job at a popular family restaurant. You could start with the fact that you were born into a large extended family (if you were). You could then talk about how you thrive in busy environments dealing with people. Or say that you like to stay fit and healthy so you have lots of energy. Relate your answer to what you like about the job.

From the job ad you selected, identify the key traits the employer is seeking. Now 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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Exercise 3 – 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 a few points about the main things you would cover in answering each question.

“Why do you want to work here?” Hint: 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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Exercise 5 – 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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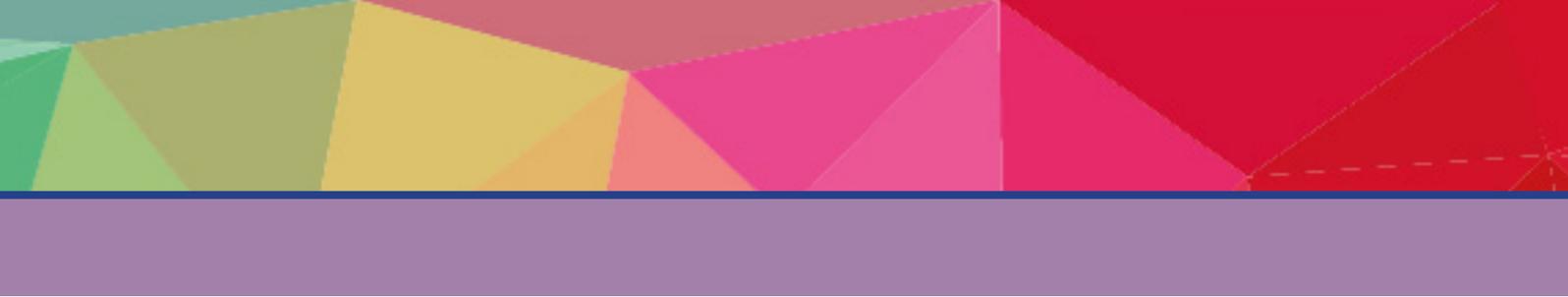
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Exercise 6 – Review your job interview readiness

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

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



Notes:

ABOUT JOB JUMPSTART

Job Jumpstart (at jobjumpstart.gov.au) is an Australian Government website, managed by the Department of Jobs and Small Business.

Job Jumpstart is a single spot where job seekers can access practical, independent and free employment planning advice from a trusted source.

The Department worked with young people and their supporters and advisers to develop this website.

How can Job Jumpstart help?

Job Jumpstart offers a range of support for job seekers, young workers and their advisers. We have over 40 printable workbooks and tip sheets as well as job search tips from Australian employers. We also offer information and links to relevant government resources.

Job Jumpstart provides information and resources to help you:

- learn about the different ways to contact employers about jobs
- learn how to find out about the jobs and industries that might suit you
- understand how to develop your skills and build your experience
- learn how to make your job application stand out to employers
- settle into the workforce and understand your workplace rights and responsibilities

Want to find out more?

- Visit us at jobjumpstart.gov.au
- Provide feedback at jobjumpstart.gov.au/job-jumpstart-beta
- Email us at jobjumpstart@jobs.gov.au



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