

CONDUCT A JOB SEARCH SECURE A JOB

Administrative Information Services

Prince Charming may be telling you that you have no equal, but that won't do much good when you've got kids and a mortgage—and he has a beer gut and a wandering eye. Former Texas Governor Ann Richards
Advising high-school girls to prepare for financial and emotional independence

Evaluate job leads

The best approach for finding a job is to use all the avenues open to you—at the same time.

- ✓ Network: Contact friends and relatives to see if they know of any job opportunities where they work.
- ✓ Research: Put together a list of businesses that hire people in your occupation. Include Internet sources.
- ✓ Advertisements: Check the help section of the daily and Sunday newspaper and professional publications. Respond quickly.
- ✓ Placement: Visit your school placement office and job services.

Rule of thumb: If a job sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Look for a company with a good name and reputation, check with your local Chamber of Commerce, Better Business Bureau, and websites.

What Employers Want

Employers say they are impressed by job candidates who have excellent communication skills, good grooming habits, and relevant work experience. Employers say they want trustworthy new hires who can move right in, get along with their co-workers, and get the job done without having to be babied at each step.

Prepare employment documents

Résumé

A résumé is a one or two page summary of your education, skills, accomplishments, and experience. Your résumé's purpose is to get your foot in the door. A résumé does its job successfully if it does *not* exclude you from consideration.

To prepare a successful résumé, you need to know how to review, summarize, and present your experiences and achievements on one page. Unless you have considerable experience, you don't need two pages. Outline your achievements briefly and concisely.

A good resume shows why they should hire you by focusing on your accomplishments. It is also easy to read; each statement is visually distinct, and there is lots of white space around and between the sections. There is no official format for a resume, but you should list the most important items first.

1. Resume Essentials
 Before you write, take time to do a self-assessment on paper. Outline your skills and abilities as well as your work experience and extracurricular activities. This will make it easier to prepare a thorough resume.

2. The Content of Your Resume
 Name, address, telephone, e-mail address
 All of your contact information should go at the top of your resume.
 - Avoid nicknames.
 - Use a permanent address.
 - Use a permanent telephone and include the area code. If you have an answering machine, record a neutral greeting.
 - Add your e-mail address. Choose an e-mail address that sounds professional.

Objective or Summary

An objective tells potential employers the sort of work you're hoping to do.

- Be specific about the job you want.
- Tailor your objective to each employer you target/every job you seek.

Education

New graduates without a lot of work experience should list their educational information first.

- Your most recent educational information is listed first.
- Include your degree, major, institution attended, minor/concentration.
- Add your GPA if it is higher than 3.0.
- Mention academic honors.
- Don't include elementary school.

Work Experience

Briefly give the employer an overview of work that has taught you skills. Use action words to describe your job duties. Include your work experience in reverse chronological order—that is, put your last job first. Include:

- Title of position
- Name of organization
- Location of work (town, state)
- Dates of employment
- Describe your work responsibilities with emphasis on specific skills and achievements.

Other information

- Key or special skills or competencies
- Leadership experience in volunteer organizations
- Participation in sports

References

Ask people if they are willing to serve as references before you give their names to a potential employer.

Do not include your reference information on your resume.

Résumé Checkup

Content:

- Run a spell check on your computer before anyone sees your résumé.
- Get a friend to do a grammar review.
- The more people who see your résumé, the more likely that misspelled words and awkward phrases will be seen (and corrected).
- Use white or off-white 8 ½ x 11-inch bond paper. Print on one side only. Don't use copies.
- Use a font size of 10 to 14 points in nondecorative typeface.
- Do not fold or staple your resume. If you must mail your resume, put it in a large envelope.

Teresa A. Teasdale

310 Royal Date Court

Buckeye, AZ 85326

623.386.5555

teresat@student.com

EMPLOYMENT OBJECTIVE

A position as a part-time office assistant

SKILLS

Good with managing time

Good organizational skills

Good with following written and verbal instructions

Good with people

Good communication skills

Able to work with culturally diverse people

Keying, 35 words a minute

Document formatting and processing skills

Experience with Microsoft Office products (Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Access)

Bilingual (English and Spanish)

EDUCATION

Senior at Buckeye Union High School

High school diploma, pending graduation

Major emphasis: Business

Grade average: 3.70; upper 10 percent of class

WORK EXPERIENCE

Sales Associate, Baskin Robbins, Goodyear, AZ, June 2002 to present. Work 15 hours a week waiting on customers, designing, cakes, and making ice-cream desserts

Camp Assistant, Prescott Pines, Prescott, AZ, summer 2001

Babysitter for various families since age 12

ACTIVITIES

Editor, *The Hawk*, senior year; reporter for two years

Vice President, Future Business Leaders of America, senior year; member for three years

Member, National Honor Society, junior and senior years

Volunteer, Sun Care Nursing Home, senior year

REFERENCES

References will be furnished upon request

REFERENCES

Mrs. Arlene McLaughlin
Business Teacher
Buckeye Union High School
902 Eason Avenue
Buckeye, AZ 85326
623.386.4423, x 258
arlenem@buhsd.org

Cover letter

Managers are very busy people. They read dozens of letters, reports, memos, and proposals each week. They won't read long letters that never seem to get to the point. Keep your letter brief, clear, and to the point. Sell them on the idea of granting you a job interview. Send each manager on your list an individualized letter, addressed directly to him or her (not "to whom it may concern").

The mission of this letter is to:

1. Introduce yourself briefly to the company.
2. Interest the company in your qualifications.
3. Schedule an interview for you.

To accomplish this mission:

1. Spell correctly and use correct grammar.
2. Address your letter to the right person.
3. State why you think you would like to work for the company or employer.
4. Give a few general statements as to your qualifications and previous work experience (mention that you are enclosing a personal resume).
5. In the last paragraph, request an interview at the reader's convenience and tell where you can be reached.

310 Royal Date Court
Buckeye, AZ 85326
April 15, 2003

Ms. Helen Smith
Human Resources Director
Wal-Mart Distribution Center
23701 West Southern Avenue
Buckeye, AZ 85326

Dear Ms. Smith:

I read with interest your recent advertisement in the *Buckeye Valley News* for the position of part-time office assistant.

The enclosed resume outlines my skills and work experience. I have demonstrated qualities of leadership in both my academic accomplishments and extracurricular activities. In addition, I have computer experience and the ability to communicate effectively. I am committed to achieving excellence and have the personal drive, dedication, and determination to make a genuine contribution.

I look forward to the opportunity to meet with you to discuss my career potential at Wal-Mart. If you desire additional information, please call me at 623.386.5555.

Sincerely yours,

Teresa Teasdale

Enclosure

Complete a job application

In most places where you apply for work, you will be asked to fill out an application form. The completed form will tell the interviewer how accurate and neat you are, and it will test your ability to carry out instructions.

1. Take two pens with you, one as a spare. Fill out the application in ink, unless otherwise indicated.
2. Take your completed resume with you.
3. Take your social security card with you as well as addresses and phone numbers of your references.
4. Read the whole application form before writing anything.
5. Carefully read and follow directions so that you print when the instructions say “print” and write when they say “write.”
6. Answer all questions honestly and completely. Don’t exaggerate or lie. If you get caught, you could lose your job. If an application asks for something that bothers you, such as a criminal record or that you got fired, write, “See me.” During the interview you can explain the situation.
7. If a question does not apply to you, draw a line through the space for the answer to indicate that you have not overlooked it.
8. Employers are not fond of job hoppers (more than three jobs during the past five years).
9. If you have gaps of unemployment between jobs, you should have legitimate reasons such as job hunting, retraining, continuing education, etc.
10. When the application asks what wage or salary you expect, write “Open.”

The Interview

Preparation

To think about yourself, consider the following topics:

- Long-standing as well as brand-new interests and hobbies
- Talents and abilities that you have and would like to use in a job setting
- Skills that you would like to develop or improve
- Activities and tasks that you would like to avoid in a job setting
- Lifestyle, salary, location
- Kinds of people and environments that you prefer
- Current career and educational goals
- Past experiences that you would like to highlight and what you have learned from them. These could be ANY kind of experience including work, volunteer, academic, athletic, artistic, and travel.

About the company or organization:

- Key people in the organization
- Major products or services
- Size in terms of sales and employees
- Locations other than your community
- Organizational structure of the company
- Major competitors
- View of the company by clients, suppliers, and competition
- Latest news reports on the company or on local or national news that affects the company

What are managers looking for?

All of the questions in an interview are designed to answer three important issues.

1. Can you do the job?
2. If hired, will you do the job?
3. If hired, will you get along with all the people in the department?

First impressions

- You must arrive on time. You'll want to arrive at the location of your interview about 10 minutes ahead of your scheduled appointment.
- A well-groomed, professional appearance is essential. Look at what people in your particular field are wearing. Your appearance makes a statement. If you look neat and clean, the impression is that you take pride in yourself and your work. If you look like a slob, it implies that you might be a sloppy worker. The same applies to the appearance of your job application.
- Your attitude also makes a statement. If you act enthusiastic and eager, the impression is that you're an enthusiastic and eager worker. If you act too timid or too quiet, it implies that you may need a lot of supervision.
- If you're courteous and thoughtful, it says that you get along with people and you have a respect for authority.

- Bring along extra copies of your resume, something to write on, and something to write with in a clean folder. You might include writing samples, published, articles, spreadsheets, photos, and videos.

Heart of the interview

- Be yourself, but concentrate on being your “best self.” You want to make a positive impression.
- If you are asked to describe a failure, weakness, or negative experience, try to finish your response on an upbeat note. (Mention a lesson learned, how you have grown, what you are doing to improve a weakness.)
- Don’t discuss negatively previous bosses and boring tasks.
- Have in mind specific examples and anecdotes from your past to illustrate important points about yourself. Focus on stories that demonstrate flexibility, adaptability, creativity, initiative, leadership, and responsibility.
- A genuine air of enthusiasm should accompany your responses.
- Feel free to take time to think before you answer.
- If you feel that you have made a mistake, or said something you wish you hadn’t, you can address it directly.
- If you are being interviewed by more than one person, be sure to address all of the people in the room.
- Eliminate unnecessary nervousness by being well prepared. A good night’s sleep, a healthy breakfast, and plenty of travel time can have a soothing effect on your nerves.

What are some questions frequently asked in an interview?

One of the best things you can do is think through potential questions carefully and actually take the time to write down you answers to those questions. Remember to always answer the interview questions with complete sentences, no slang, no shrugs, no “yeah” or “un-huh.”

1. Relax and tell me a little about yourself. Talk about your accomplishments, skills, and abilities—NOT your childhood, family, hobbies, or interests.
2. How would your friends describe you?
3. Describe the accomplishment of which you are the most proud.
4. Why should we hire you?
5. What is your major strength? Weakness?
6. Describe the high-school course that has had the greatest impact on you.
7. What would you like to be doing five years from now?
8. What did you dislike most about your last job or least favorite class?
9. What have you done which shows initiative and willingness to work?
10. How do you spend your spare time? What are your hobbies?

What are some questions you might ask in an interview?

1. Please describe a typical work day. Which duties are more important?
2. How will I be trained or introduced to the job?
3. What are the department’s goals for the year?
4. How many people work in the department?
5. Who are the people I’d be working with and what do they do?

6. Has the company had a layoff in the last few years?
7. Could you give me a brief tour?
8. What could I say or do to convince you to offer me this job?
9. I want this job. Would you consider hiring me on a 30-day trial period—to prove myself?

Follow-up

- Your interviewer will usually tell you when you can expect to hear from them. If not, you may ask, “When might I expect to hear from you?”
- Take notes about what happened.
- Writing a prompt thank-you note is a must. Since most people won’t bother to send one, it could give you an edge. Write the note as soon as you get home from the interview.
- If you don’t want the job, be professional and send the manager a note thanking him for his time and to remove your name from consideration.

310 Royal Date Court
Buckeye, AZ 85326
April 18, 2003

Ms. Helen Smith
Human Resources Director
Wal-Mart Distribution Center
23701 West Southern Avenue
Buckeye, AZ 85326

Dear Ms. Smith:

Thank you very much for interviewing me yesterday for the office assistant position. I enjoyed meeting you and learning more about your work.

The interview strengthened my enthusiasm for the position and interest in working for Wal-Mart. I believe my education and work experiences fit nicely with the job requirements, and I'm certain I could make a significant contribution to your organizations over time.

Wal-Mart provides the kind of opportunity I seek. Please feel free to call me at 623.386.5555 if I can provide you with any additional information.

Sincerely,

Teresa Teasdale