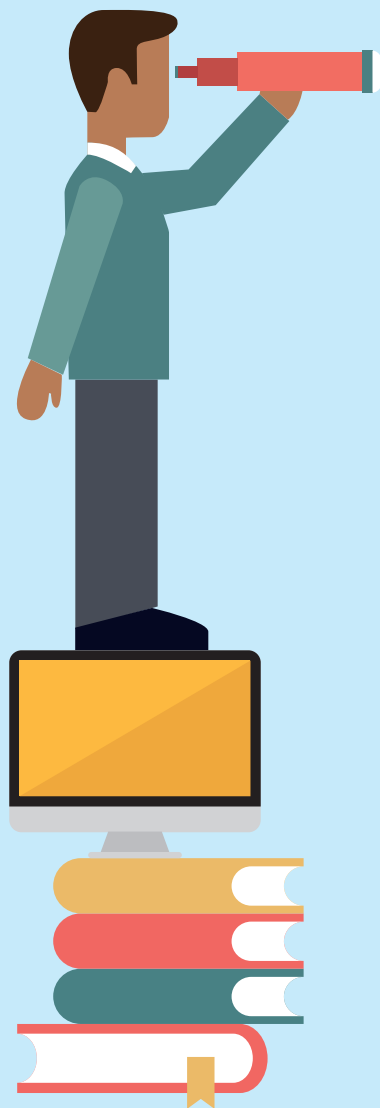


Getting Ahead

Resource Booklet

Helping Young People to Learn More,
Do More, Become More



Your Name _____

Tutor Group _____

Welcome!

This booklet is designed to help you. It will give you practical advice and support that will prepare you for the future.

Everyone has strengths - you've just got to work out what you are good at and how you can show people!

This booklet will help you whenever you have to write a CV, fill in an application form or attend an interview.

Make sure you keep it safe.

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This booklet has several activities that you can do to help you prepare for different stages in your life. Look for the pen icon to find them.



Your Skills

To successfully apply for work experience, a place at college or university or a job, you need to create a good, and truthful, impression of yourself.

Completing an application form, writing a CV or performing well in an interview, requires you to know what your strengths are – what qualities, skills and experiences you have.

You must be able to explain your strengths by giving examples from your life where you used those qualities and skills.

The activities in this section will help you think about your strengths and give you effective ways to explain them to others.



My Ideal Employee

What qualities and skills are employers looking for? If you were the boss what kind of person would you want to work for you? Most bosses would want the 'Ideal Employee'.

Pretend you're the employer and identify some of the skills and qualities of an Ideal Employee. You have 5 minutes to write them in the boxes below.

1.	2.
3.	4.
5.	6.
7.	8.



Rate your skills

There are two types of skill you need at work: hard and soft skills. Hard skills are the specific skills you need to do a job well. You usually learn these skills through studying at school, college or university. Soft skills are the skills you need to help you interact well with the other people at your place of work. Employers will need to see that you have both hard skills and soft skills.

For each skill, score yourself out of 10. 10 meaning there are no improvements needed and 1 meaning there are lots of improvements needed. Write your score in the yellow box.

In the white box, write down one thing you could do to improve that skill.

COMMUNICATION:

The ability to share information with another effectively and efficiently.

How can you develop this skill?

TEAMWORK:

The process of working effectively with a group of people in order to achieve a goal.

How can you develop this skill?

CONFIDENCE:

A feeling of trust and firm belief in yourself or others.

How can you develop this skill?

TIME MANAGEMENT:

Managing time effectively so that the right time is allocated to the right activity, enabling you to complete all your tasks.

How can you develop this skill?

CREATIVE THINKING:

Looking at something in a new way. Planning new ways of carrying out tasks, solving problems and challenges.



How can you develop this skill?

FLEXIBILITY:

The ability to adapt easily to different situations. Making changes to when, where and how you work to better meet the business' needs.



How can you develop this skill?

INDEPENDENCE:

The ability to work by yourself and make decisions without help from others.



How can you develop this skill?

ORGANISATION:

Working efficiently and in a structured way.



How can you develop this skill?


LEADERSHIP:


Managing and organising people so they can reach a shared goal.





How can you develop this skill?


Can you think of any other skills an employer may look for? Write them in the boxes below. Score them in the same way as you did for the skills on the previous page.

SKILL: Definition:	
How can you develop this skill?	

SKILL: Definition:	
How can you develop this skill?	

SKILL: Definition:	
How can you develop this skill?	

SKILL: Definition:	
How can you develop this skill?	

SKILL: Definition:	
How can you develop this skill?	



Who Am I? Backing Up Your Qualities and Skills

Think about your life – what are your favourite subjects in school? What are you proud of? What are your hobbies and what do they say about you? How would your friends or teachers describe you? What do they like about you? By asking these questions, you will start to build a list of your qualities and skills as well as examples of where you've used them. Circle the words below that describe you.

Determined	Enthusiastic	Good Humoured	
Numerate	Team Worker	Flexible	Trustworthy
Ambitious	Problem Solver	Well-Organised	
IT Literate	Punctual	Helpful	Considerate
Good Communicator	Independent	A Leader	
Keen To Learn	Conscientious	Reliable	Energetic
Adventurous	Friendly	Hard Worker	

Select four of the circled words and add them to the table below. For each word write down how you show this quality or skill. There is an example for you to follow.

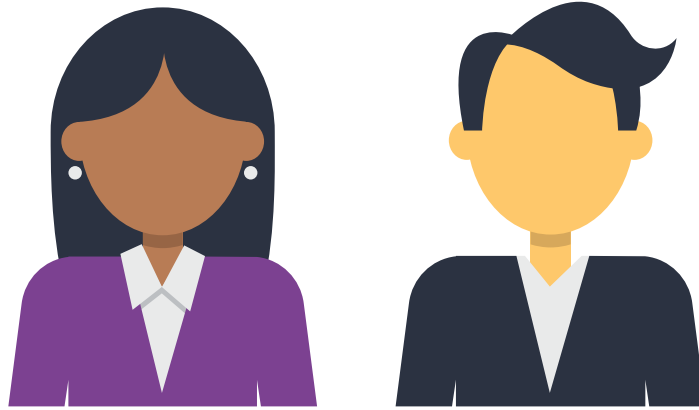
Quality/Skill	Evidence showing I have it...
I am punctual	Over the last two terms, I attended school every day and was on time each morning.



Getting Started

When filling in an application form, or writing a CV or personal statement, you will need to explain your strengths. You will need to give examples of when and how you have used these strengths in your life. Many people find this a difficult thing to do.

The next two activities in the booklet will help you identify the skills you have gained and think of times you have used these skills in your life.



What did you do?
What did you get from it?
How will it help you?

Volunteering and fundraising I have done

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Work Experience

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Presentations or performances I have done

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Course-relevant experience

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Awards outside of school?
e.g. Duke of Edinburgh

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Foreign languages spoken

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Represent school/college?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Visits to universities and employers

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Member of a team

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Leadership positions

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Workshops attended in or out of school
e.g. Getting Ahead Employability Conference

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Foreign trips/exchanges I have been on

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Hobbies/interests outside school

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Student Council?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Competitions I have taken part in

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



Skills Match:

It can be difficult to show how you have a particular skill or quality. This activity should help!
Please put a tick next to the activities you do.

Team Work	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Member of a sports team
<input type="checkbox"/>	Member of a drama production
<input type="checkbox"/>	Band/choir member
<input type="checkbox"/>	Employed to work in a team
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fundraising/charity work, etc.

IT Skills	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Can use several 'Office Applications'
<input type="checkbox"/>	Can code/programme
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have created own website or app
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strong social media presence

Problem Solving	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Plans next steps
<input type="checkbox"/>	Asked to take leadership
<input type="checkbox"/>	Can cope with unexpected

Confidence	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Put myself forward for responsibility
<input type="checkbox"/>	Enjoy meeting new people
<input type="checkbox"/>	Enjoy working with people
<input type="checkbox"/>	Believe in my capabilities
<input type="checkbox"/>	100% attendance/punctuality
<input type="checkbox"/>	Unafraid to ask for help when needed

Trustworthy	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Collects funds for charity
<input type="checkbox"/>	Asked to help in sensitive situations
<input type="checkbox"/>	Look after child or vulnerable person
<input type="checkbox"/>	Asked to stand in for someone
<input type="checkbox"/>	Handles cash at work

Reliability	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Held responsibility for a long time
<input type="checkbox"/>	Always on time
<input type="checkbox"/>	Consistent standard of work
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do what I say I will
<input type="checkbox"/>	100% attendance/punctuality
<input type="checkbox"/>	Often asked to help

Leadership	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Leading a group in an activity
<input type="checkbox"/>	Team Captain or Vice Captain
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chair or Committee

Ambitious	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Proactive or a 'self-starter'
<input type="checkbox"/>	Researched job or course already
<input type="checkbox"/>	Decisive
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have clear goals

Sensible	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Plan ahead
<input type="checkbox"/>	Budget
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mature
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clear sense of right and wrong
<input type="checkbox"/>	100% attendance/punctuality
<input type="checkbox"/>	Unafraid to ask for help when needed

Communication	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Debating Club member
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have made presentations or Public Speaking
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have made 'business' calls
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have sent 'business' emails/letters

Responsibility	
	Prefect or School monitor
	Head or Deputy Head Boy or Girl
	Chair or Member of a Committee
	Team Captain or Vice Captain
	Baby sitting
	Class or team representative
	Member of the school council

Numerate	
	Maths qualification
	Budget
	Worked with money
	Award or prize for Maths

Hard Working	
	Excellent grades
	Volunteer
	Part time job
	Out of school activities

Work Experience	
	Part time job
	School organised work experience
	Self organised work experience
	Fund raising for charity
	Being a carer
	Baby sitting

Literate	
	Widely read
	Reading a book right now
	Well written applications/CV
	Good vocabulary appropriately used

Business Awareness	
	Keep up with current affairs
	Member of Enterprise or Business Club
	Have own business
	Work on family/friend's business
	Part time job



TOP 5 TIPS: for making the most of your strengths

1. Think about what the person receiving the application is looking for. Have you included all this information?
2. Think about your experiences in and out of school. How do they link to the opportunity you are applying for?
3. What do friends, teachers and family say you're good at?
4. Be clear about your skills and qualities and how they will help you.
5. Always show how you have your skills with examples of when you have used them.



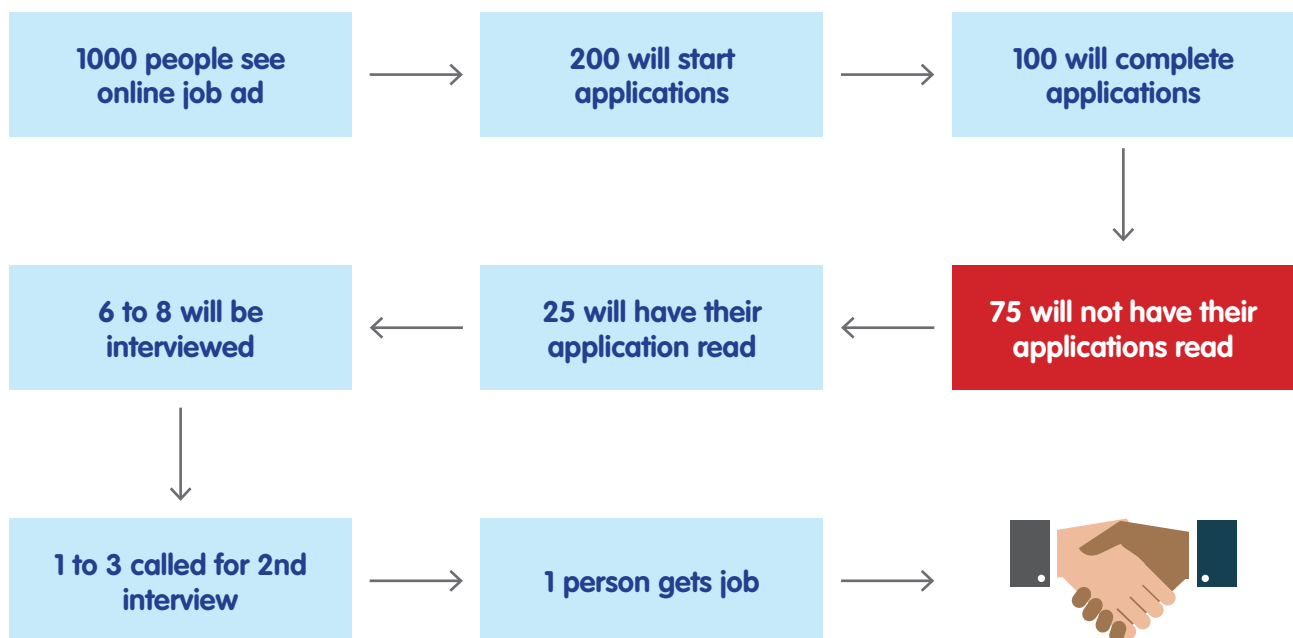


**Applying for
the Future**

Throughout your life you will need to apply for different opportunities; a university place, a job, a bursary. Whatever opportunity it might be you will one of many people, possibly thousands, applying for the opportunity. So it's important you know how to do a good application!

This section will give you an overview of a typical application process – including how to make that first contact, how to write a CV, how to fill in an application form or write a personal statement.

Why a Good Application is Important



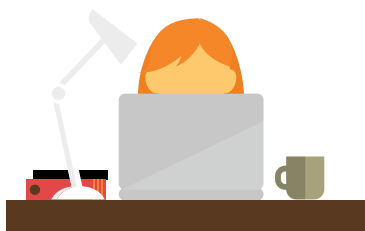
Making Contact

Before you apply for an opportunity, you may have to contact the person offering it. That might be by email, telephone or in person.

This will be the first impression you make so it's important that you give a good one. Below are some guidelines to follow when making that first contact by email, telephone or in person.

Always try to find out the name of the person you need to approach before you make contact – addressing/using someone's name will always give a good first impression.

By Email



When emailing, make sure that you email the right person and you give them all the information they have asked for.

DO

- Accurately type the recipient's email address.
- Make sure you put something relevant in the subject line.
- Give your full name and contact details.
- Attach all the documents they ask for. For example, if they request a cover letter, make sure you write and attach one!

DON'T

- Don't use slang or 'text message' language (e.g. at = @, tomorrow = 2mro, the = d).
- Don't use a silly email address such as 'mizz_dynamite' or 'bowwowboiiii'. Instead set up another email account with something sensible, like your name.

In Person



You may be asked to visit the employer to pick up an application form or to meet a manager, etc.

If meeting someone make sure that you prepare as you would for an interview (see the 'Interviews' section of this booklet) – dress smartly, research the organisation, have questions to ask, be enthusiastic, be on time (if they have asked you to get there for a certain time).

If picking up an application form you should still dress smartly.

By Telephone



You may be asked to telephone to request an application form or arrange an interview. Sometimes you may have a telephone interview.

Whatever the reason the same dos and don'ts for making a professional telephone call apply:

DO

- Be prepared; know who you want to talk to and the name of the organisation.
- Be organised; have the details of the opportunity in front of you and a pen and paper to take notes.
- Be confident; know what you are going to say.
- Speak clearly, politely and be interested in what the other person says. Give them your name clearly. Tell them why you are calling at the beginning of the call.
- Make sure your phone has enough battery power!
- Plan what you want to say – write it down first.
- Note down information they give you while speaking to them and check it's correct. For example, the date, time and address for an interview.
- If asking for an application, give your details clearly.
- Give full and precise answers.

DON'T

- Don't make a call from a noisy, busy place.
- Don't use slang words, e.g. "Cheers mate".
- Don't interrupt the other person, let them finish before answering.



Below is an imaginary Work Experience Placement. What else do you need to know? In the space provided write down the questions you should ask the employer when you call them.

Address 10 Crown Street, London EC1 4TT

[illegible]

Applications: CVs and Application Forms

There are two methods of applying for a job or course – a CV or an Application Form.

CV stands for 'Curriculum Vitae' which is latin for 'course of life'. A CV is designed to show the employer the qualifications, experience, skills and qualities you have. A CV is used to assess your suitability for a job or course. It is important you include all your skills and strengths.

Application Forms do the same job as a CV. The difference is everyone will answer the same questions and they will be judged on the answers they gave. Application Forms can be anything from a couple of pages long to twenty pages! You may have to complete an Application Form for college, university (UCAS form), a job or another opportunity.

Employers can be sent hundreds of applications for a single job, universities thousands for course places. If your application is messy, has mistakes, or does not make sense it will be ignored, no matter how good your qualifications and experience.

You want a CV or application form that shows your suitability for the job or course — do this well and your application should get you an interview!

CV dos...

1. A CV should contain the following information:

- Your personal details (Name, Address, Telephone numbers, Email Address).
- Personal Statement (briefly summing up your CV, around 3 or 4 lines long).
- Education/Qualifications.
- Work Experience.
- Skills/Qualities.
- Hobbies/Interests (keep very brief unless it has a direct link to the job).
- References OR line stating 'References available on request'.

2. Keep your CV simple and precise – no more than two A4 sides long.

3. Recent qualifications/work experience should come first.

4. Make sure your CV is as relevant as possible to the job you are applying for – emphasise particular qualifications or experiences that relate to the opportunity you are applying for.

5. Give clear examples of your skills and qualities. Using headings and bullet points can help. If needed, print on good quality white paper.

6. Take your time writing it – most people will spend at least a day writing a good CV.

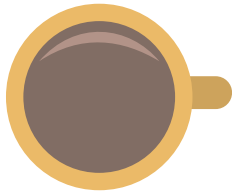
7. Check spelling, punctuation and grammar. Ask a couple of people to read and check your CV for you.

8. Make sure you get permission from your references before including their details in your CV.

9. Give clear examples of your skills and qualities. For example, anyone could say 'I work well in a team' but saying 'I work well in a team – at school I have worked on several 'group' projects. I also play for the school football team where communicating with my team mates is important' actually shows you have experience of team work.

10. Make sure any gaps in education or employment are explained.

See the STAR system on page 28 for help on structuring your points.



CV don'ts...

1. Don't handwrite your CV. 99% of employers won't even look at a handwritten CV.
2. Don't include unnecessary information. Employers don't need or want to know your gender, age, race, height, a photo, etc.
3. Don't photocopy your CV – always print out a new one.
4. Don't put anything bad or negative about yourself on the CV; remember this document is supposed to show off your strengths, not your weaknesses.
5. Don't try to be 'funny' or 'zany'.
6. Don't put your Primary School on your CV.
7. Don't have vague statements like 'I have good computer skills'. Give details of your actual skills such as 'I can use Microsoft Word and Excel'.
8. Don't lie. If you have to lie to get a certain job or opportunity then it is not the right one for you.

Most of the Dos and Don'ts are similar for Application Forms. For an Application Form though make sure you:

1. Read and research

- Before completing any of the form read through it carefully. Check for specific instructions on how to fill in the form. This may include instructions about the colour of the ink, whether it is to be handwritten or typed and whether you are to use a specific font.
- Read each question and think about your answer. If there is something you are not sure about, research it or ask someone for help.

2. Complete the form accurately

- If completing a hard copy – make a photocopy and practise on this – use the original only when you are sure you know exactly what to write in each section.
- If completing online – write your answers on a separate document and save as you go just in case of IT problems! When you have written your answers paste them into the online form.
- Answer all the questions – if a section doesn't apply to you put 'N/A' (not applicable), do not leave it blank (unless it says to do so in the form's instructions).
- Make sure the overall presentation is good – keep fonts/handwriting size the same throughout.

3. Send off the form

- Read through the form one last time, if you are happy with all of your answers, click send!
- If possible, download or print a copy of your completed form so you can refer to it before you go for an interview.

Whether a CV or an Application Form, make sure you send it in before the deadline!

Now you know what makes a good CV, can you spot all the mistakes on a bad one?

Below is a CV for Shamsul Khan. She's looking mainly for office work but is happy to do some sales and retail positions. Her CV has at least 10 mistakes, can you spot them?

Cirriculum Vetai

Name: Shamsul Khan

Date of Birth: 21/02/2002

Address: 14 Forest House
New Road
London
E1 4DJ

Email: SK_sheek92@hotmail.com

Profile:

I am hard working, well organised and have recently aced an Intermediate GNVQ in Business. I can chat well, am an enfusiastic team member and work well in a tight spot.

Education:

2005-11: St Mary's and St Michaels RC Primary School

2011/2016	St. Paul's Way Community School	GCSEs:	
	Shelmerdine Close	English Language	6
	London	English Literature	4
	E3 2AT	French	5
		Computer Science	6
		Mathematics	7
		Science	4
2016/17	Tower Hamlets College	BTEC Intermediate GNVQ in Business	
	Poplar High Street		
	London		
	E14 OAX		

Employment History:

2017	Two weeks work experience at the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, Canary Wharf Responsibilitys include stocktaking, ordering stationery, helping visitors, filing and photocopying. It was really boring but I did it anyway.
2018	Saturday Sales assistant at Sainsbury's Whitechapel Responsibilitys include serving customers, dealing with queries, arranging stock and using a computerised till.

Positions of responsibility:

In charge of charity fundraising for Year 10, where I raised £500 for Children in Need
Captain of the football team Year 11, I organise after school practice sessions

Skills and attributes:

Speak French. Good at computers

Interests:

Athletics, football, playing geetar and going to da cinema

Referee 1:

Mr J Morris
Sainsburys

Referee 2:

Mr J Bradley
St. Paul's Way Community School

Curriculum Vitae

Name: Shamsul Khan

Telephone: 020 7247 9856

Address: 14 Forest House
New Road
London
E1 4DJ

Email: shamsul.khan@yahoo.co.uk

Profile:

I am hard working, well organised and have recently achieved an Intermediate GNVQ in Business. In both school and work I have worked well in teams, developing my communication skills. Working in a busy supermarket has also proven I can cope in pressurised situations.

Education and Qualifications:

2016 - 2017	Tower Hamlets College Poplar High Street London E14 OAX	BTEC Intermediate GNVQ in Business
2011 - 2016	St. Paul's Way Community School Shelmerdine Close London E3 2AT	GCSEs: English Language 6 English Literature 4 French 5 Computer Science 6 Mathematics 7 Science 4

Employment History:

2017 (January to present)	<u>Saturday Sales assistant at Sainsbury's Whitechapel</u> Responsibilities include serving customers, dealing with queries, arranging stock and using a computerised till. Skills used/learned: customer liaison, problem solving, working as part of a team, taking the initiative, numeracy, communication
2018 (June)	<u>Two weeks work experience at the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, Canary Wharf.</u> Responsibilities include stocktaking, ordering stationery, helping visitors, filing and photocopying. Skills used/learned: working as part of a team, customer liaison, and time management.

Positions of responsibility:

In charge of charity fundraising for Year 10, where I raised £500 for Children in Need
Captain of the football team Year 11, I organise after school practice sessions.

Skills and attributes:

Moderate conversational and written French. Computer skills – including knowledge of word processing and spreadsheet packages.

Interests:

Athletics, football, playing guitar and going to the cinema.

Referee 1:

Mr J Morris
Sainsbury's
Brady Street
London
E1 5DS
020 8555 2487

Referee 2:

Mr J Bradley
St Paul's Way Trust School
125 St Paul's Way
London
E3 4FT
020 7987 1883



Your CV

Using the guide below take a critical look at your CV and see if it can be improved. Use the application dos and don'ts on pages 16 and 17 to help you.

Language

Spell check performed? Capital letters used correctly? Positive language used?

e.g. 'I am an excellent administrator' rather than 'I think I am...'

☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Acceptable ☐ Adequate ☐ Needs Improvement

Areas for improvement

Layout and Structure

No more than 2 A4 sides long? Easy to read and clear (text not crammed on the page)? Neatly aligned?

Clear headings and logically organised?

☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Acceptable ☐ Adequate ☐ Needs Improvement

Areas for improvement

Style

Same fonts used throughout? Larger font used for headings? Bold or italic used to draw out key points? Bullet points used for lists? Are your name and contact details clear?

☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Acceptable ☐ Adequate ☐ Needs Improvement

Areas for improvement

Information

Are your personal details clear? Qualifications and work experience listed with the most recent first? Skills and interests stated?

Examples of skills/abilities? Referees or 'on request' included?

☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Acceptable ☐ Adequate ☐ Needs Improvement

Areas for improvement



CV Template

If you don't have a CV you can use the template below to help write one.

NAME:

ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE:

EMAIL ADDRESS:

**EDUCATION
(SCHOOL/6TH FORM):**

QUALIFICATIONS:

WORK EXPERIENCE:

SKILLS:

**HOBBIES
& INTERESTS:**

REFEREES:

Covering Letters

Always send your CV with a covering letter unless the job advert tells you not to.

A covering letter is used to tell the employer which job you are applying for. In a covering letter you should introduce yourself and highlight the two or three areas from your CV that are most relevant to the job you're applying for.

The covering letter now often takes the form of a 'covering email', the email you send with your CV to an employer. The same rules apply.

HOW TO WRITE A COVERING LETTER

- Take your time.
- Clearly state which job you are applying for if it is an application for a specific job. Include where you saw the job advertised and the reference number if there was one on the advert.
- If you are just sending your CV to a company to find out if they may have a suitable job for you state what areas of the company you are interested in and what you are good at.
- Word process your letter and print on to good quality white paper.
- Check your spelling and punctuation and make any necessary corrections.
- Make sure you include your address, telephone number and email address just in case the letter becomes separated from your CV.
- Check that you have spelt the name of the person you are writing to correctly.
- Be positive about yourself. Make sure you include your key strengths.

Example Covering Letter:

Ms P Hamilton
Personnel Office
Newbury and Mann LTD
1-16 The Street
London
SE5 5GT

Mr Jason Spirios
14 New Road
London
E1 4DJ

27/08/2018

Dear Ms Hamilton

Re: Position of Junior Clerical Assistant

I would like to apply for the position of Business and Administration Apprentice as advertised on www.standard/jobs (reference number 123456). I enclose a copy of my CV.

I am sixteen years old and have six GCSE passes, including English and RSA Typing Stage II.

I have had two weeks work experience at 'SC Engineering' in the accounts department. My role included typing, filing, photocopying and booking meeting rooms. I also have a Saturday job at a local newsagents which involves stocking shelves, serving customers and using the till.

I have just left school and am looking for a full time apprenticeship that will allow me to gain experience while attaining a qualification. I believe that I have the experience and the qualities that you are looking for. I also believe that the position would give me a chance to develop my own skills further.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind Regards

Jason Spirios

Personal Statements

What are Personal Statements?

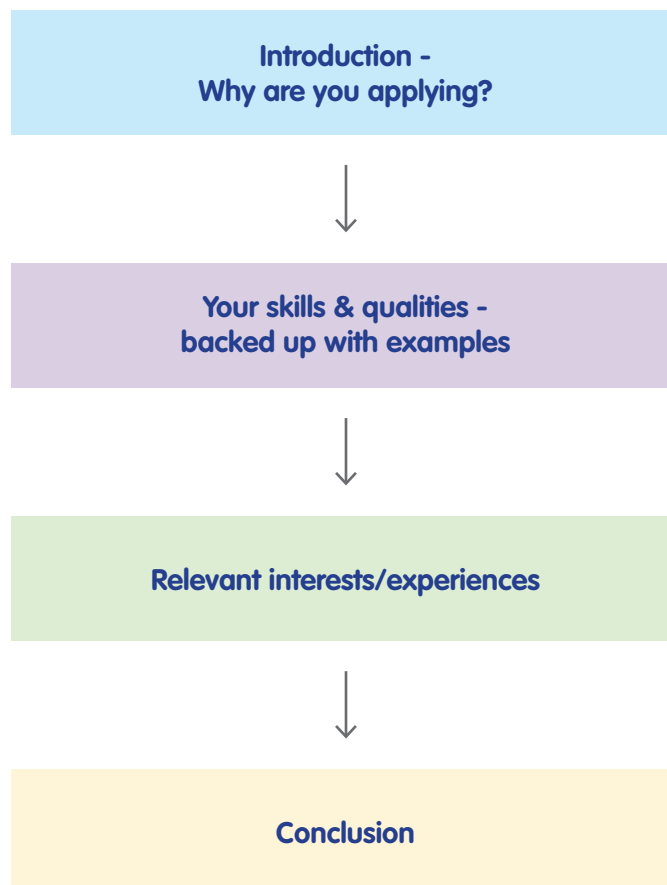
- A personal statement is a description of you. It is similar to a CV. A personal statement shows your skills, qualities and experiences and how they make you an ideal candidate for a job or course.
- Personal statements are usually required on application forms for jobs and courses.
- They are a key part of the UCAS application form – the form you use to apply for university.
- They can also appear on CVs or a Cover Letter.

Why are they used?

A CV is essentially a list of your strengths and qualities, a personal statement is like an essay. A good personal statement can show your ability as a writer, your personality and your attention to detail. That's why employers like them.

Personal statements may be anything from 50 to 1000 words long. When you have to write one, you will be told how long it needs to be.

Here's a basic structure of a good Personal Statement:



TOP 5 TIPS:

For a good application

It should be:

1. Professional
2. Positive
3. Relevant to what you're applying for
4. Concise and to the point
5. Accurate and free from mistakes



Interviews

Within the next few years you will be interviewed for something you want – a university place, a job, a college place or another opportunity.

Many people find interviews hard. Even the most confident people will become nervous at the thought of an interview.

It is important to be well prepared for an interview. The more prepared you are, the more confident you will feel and the better you will come across during the interview.

Remember, the interviewer is not trying to trick you. They understand that you will be nervous, so they will do their best to help you relax so that you can do your best. The interviewer wants to know about you so it's in their interest to make you as relaxed as possible.

This section will give you lots of ideas to help prepare for an interview, including what to expect and how to behave during an interview, and what to do afterwards.



TOP 5 TIPS: **for a successful interview**

1. Make sure you look smart. Check hair, shirt/blouse tucked in, tie, shoes etc.
2. Make sure you know the time and place of your interview and how to get there.
3. Make sure you have a copy of your CV / Personal Statement and read through it thoroughly before the interview.
4. Make sure you have relevant supporting information. (E.g. Certificates, Portfolio).
5. Plan and practice questions you might be asked/you want to ask.

Preparing for an Interview

Research

- Find out as much as possible about the job/ opportunity. Go through any information that you've been sent - the job description, the course outline, the organisational structure, the university prospectus, etc. If there's anything you don't understand then email or call the interviewers to ask.
- Use the internet to research the company/ organisation – their website, newspaper/magazine articles on them, etc.

Rehearsal

- Re-read the information you supplied about yourself (the CV/Application Form you sent).
- Go through your research and notes. Think about possible questions and how you would answer them.
- Think about what you want to say and what you want the employer to know about you.

Answering Questions

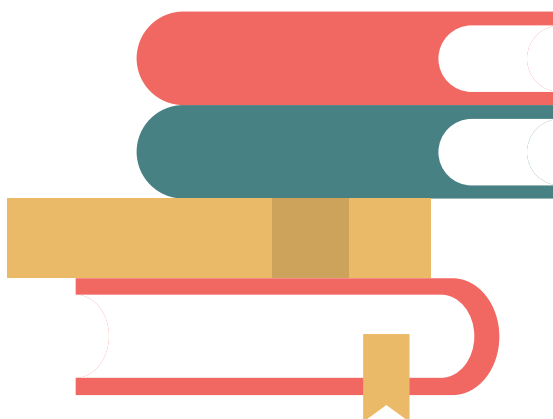
Interviewers ask questions for one reason – to find out more about you! Your answers should explain the skills and qualities you have and why they make you suitable for the opportunity.

Before an interview, think about the questions you may be asked. You can practice answers for these questions but **DON'T MEMORISE ANSWERS** as these exact questions may not be asked.

Instead, think about what your skills and qualities are and how they match the job or course specification. Then, think about how you can explain and give examples of your those strengths in your answers. On the next page is a structure you can use for your answers – STAR.

Important!

- Check date, time and location of interview.
- Know the name/position of the person to ask for when you arrive.
- Plan your route there and give yourself plenty of time for the journey (just in case of transport problems). Do a 'dummy' practice run just to make sure you know the way there.
- Plan what you will wear; dress smartly and sensibly.



STAR System

The STAR system is a system you can use to show how you have a particular skill or quality.

It can be used to structure part of a personal statement, or a point on a CV. It is particularly useful when answering a question in an interview.

STAR helps you answer a question clearly and evidences how you have a particular strength or skill.

Many employers look for candidates using the STAR system, so use it if you can, it is a good idea to use it.

Situation: School / Company / Activity

Task: Overview of what you were doing

Action: Actions / changes you made

Result: Outcome / what you learned



Without STAR – POOR ANSWERS!

"I used my initiative to improve my Spanish language skills."

"I used leadership skills in a group project in school"

With STAR – GOOD ANSWERS!

"I took an A Level in Spanish last year. I was keen to do well and get a good grade. Using my initiative, I downloaded a free language app so I could practice my grammar and vocabulary in my free time. I have also started watching Spanish and Latin American films with English subtitles. The extra work paid off and I received an 'A' grade."

"My GCSE in Business Studies required a piece of group work – we had to set up a small business designing, producing and selling greeting cards. When two members of the group clashed over what design to use I showed leadership by calming the situation, gave each team member a chance to give their arguments and then suggested we make the decision by a team vote. A design was chosen that the team got behind, we worked together well and we sold more than our target amount of cards."





Common Interview Questions

Below are two common interview questions. Write an answer for each using the STAR system. Your answer should show you have one of the following skills and qualities: a good team player, ambitious, willing to learn and develop.

Give an example of when you have worked in a team.	
SITUATION:	
TASK:	
ACTION:	
RESULT:	

How do you handle stress and pressure?	
SITUATION:	
TASK:	
ACTION:	
RESULT:	

On the Day of the Interview

Before you arrive...

However right or wrong, people do still make judgements within the first few seconds of meeting someone, so the image you present could get you off to a great start. Here are a few ideas:

- Make sure you get a good night's sleep before the day of your interview so you are at your best and do not yawn during the interview!
- Presentation is very important. Dress appropriately, looking smart and businesslike.
- Pay attention to the small details of your appearance such as: tidy hair, shirt/blouse tucked in, tie, shoes etc.
- Allow plenty of time to travel to the interview. Arriving on time will help you remain calm and collected.
- Only take with you what is needed for the interview.
- Make sure you have a copy of your CV and personal statement with you and you have read it through!

Meeting the interviewer!

- Breathe deeply a few times before going into the interview. This will help you to relax.
- Remember the last time you were successful / happy / proud of yourself - imagine feeling that way at the end of the interview.
- When meeting the interviewer give a pleasant, natural smile and a firm handshake.
- Sit comfortably and rest hands on knees (not in pockets) - sit up straight in the chair.
- Be natural, smile and relax. Avoid too many hand gestures.
- Make eye contact, but not constantly! If eye contact is difficult look just past the interviewer's shoulder.
- Look interested and indicate that you are listening. Nod occasionally!

During the interview...

The interview is basically a chance for you and the employer / admissions tutor to get to know one another. You will probably feel nervous but this is normal - nerves show you care.

Body language will have a strong influence on what the interviewer thinks about you and the answers you give. It is important that your body language matches what you are saying, so don't underestimate its value. Here are a few tips:

DO

- Prepare as much as you can - it will help you feel more confident.
- Listen carefully to the questions.
- Take time to recall examples and explain your thinking.
- Stick to facts and real events.

- Explain YOUR thoughts, motives, decisions and actions.
- Try and enjoy the interview!

DON'T

- Don't brag it! Don't exaggerate or lie!
- Don't forget that the interviewer may seek proof of what you say!
- Don't talk over the interviewer.
- Don't ramble!
- Don't be over friendly.

At the end of the interview...

Your interviewer may have been involved in lots of interviews that day and has probably asked the same questions, and heard the same sort of answers, lots of times that day.

At the end of the interview you will get a chance to ask your own questions. This is a chance for you to get across any skills or experiences that you think would be good for the job but they haven't asked you about. It helps you **STAND OUT** from the other people who have been interviewed.

Here are some examples of questions you could ask, but it's always good to ask something related directly to the job or the employer. Here are a few tips:

- What training is provided for your employees?
- Is this a new position? If so, why was it created? If not, why was it vacated?
- Can you tell me about the team I'll be working with?
- What would a typical day involve?
- What have you enjoyed most about working here?
- What is the next step in the process?

DON'T ASK SOMETHING THAT THE INTERVIEWER HAS ALREADY TOLD YOU IN THE INTERVIEW!

After the interview...

As soon as you've finished the interview...

- Review what occurred. What went well/badly?
- What did you learn from this interview that could help you do even better in another interview?

If you were successful, well done! If not, ask for feedback from the interviewers. They don't have to give it to you but if they do it's always useful.

Common Interview Mistakes

Poor 1st Impression

- Late for the interview.
- Poor personal appearance.
- Lack of interest and enthusiasm.
- Limp, 'fishy' or 'wet' handshake.
- Lack of manners or courtesy.
- Little or no eye contact.
- Poor voice, diction, bad grammar, and using lots of slang.

Answering Questions Badly

- Showing little or no interest in the opportunity or company/university.
- Being secretive about your past.
- Having no plans or goals for your career or the future.
- Giving vague answers to questions.
- Only talking about one topic or interest.
- Appearing stressed or show an inability to cope with pressure.

Attitude

- Moaning about past employers.
- Showing intolerance and/or strong prejudices.
- Expecting advancement at an unreasonable rate.
- Being overbearing, aggressive or arrogant.
- Only interested in the money.
- Indicate that you are 'shopping around' for jobs/ opportunities.
- Inability to take criticism.
- Lack of confidence and poise; appearing awkward.
- Laziness, lack of energy or being indecisive.
- Lack of maturity.
- Being cynical.
- Failure to express appreciation for interview's time.





Practice Interview

Although every interview is different, certain questions often come up. Below are some examples of common questions asked in both job and university interviews.

Use these questions to practice your interview technique. Use the STAR system (Page 27) to structure your answer. On the next page is a feedback form your practice interviewer can use to help you improve in the future.

Tell me about yourself?

What hobbies/interests do you have?

What are your strengths/weaknesses?

Tell me about your current studies?

What would you consider to be your greatest achievement to date?

What would be your dream job and how will you get there?

Why did you apply to this company/university?

Describe a situation when you were put under pressure.

What qualities do you possess which makes you suited for the job/course?

What positions of responsibility have you held and what have you learned?

What are your aspirations for the future? How will this job/course help?

Do you have any questions for us/me?

What do you think you can offer this company/university?

Why did you select the subjects you are currently studying?

Why should we choose you?

What features of this job/course do you find attractive?

What are your views on 'x' (linked to course subject or job)?

What is the last book/article you read?

What else, apart from study, interests you about university?

How will you benefit from a university education?

Describe your subject. Why is your subject important?

If you are taking a gap year, what are you going to do and why? If not, why not?

Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

How would your friends describe you?



(e.g. personal presentation, impact)

☐ Excellent ☐ Very Good ☐ Good ☐ Acceptable ☐ Needs Improvement

(e.g. fidgeting, eye contact)

☐ Excellent ☐ Very Good ☐ Good ☐ Acceptable ☐ Needs Improvement

☐ Excellent ☐ Very Good ☐ Good ☐ Acceptable ☐ Needs Improvement

☐ Excellent ☐ Very Good ☐ Good ☐ Acceptable ☐ Needs Improvement

(e.g. clarity, length of answers, confidence in speaking)

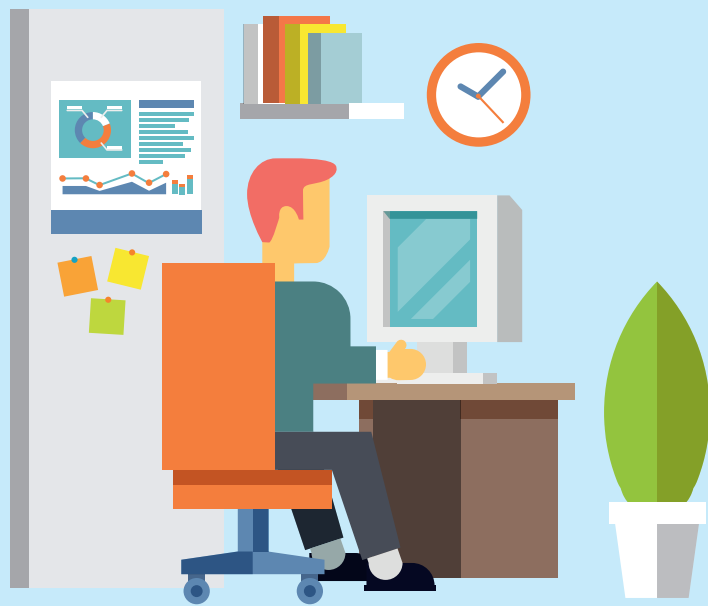
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☐ Excellent ☐ Very Good ☐ Good ☐ Acceptable ☐ Needs Improvement

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Notes

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Work Experience

Work experience is a fantastic way of developing your skills and confidence while strengthening your CV or application.

Many employers feel that young people do not understand what is expected of them in the work place. Having work experience to include in your CV or application form will increase your chances of getting an interview.

Some university courses require students to have had work experience otherwise they will not give them a place. Admission tutors look for work experience in your UCAS personal statement.

This section will help you find work experience and make sure you make the most of the opportunity.



Finding Work Experience

Think About What You Want to Do

What job do you want to do in the future? Maybe you could get work experience in that industry or field?

What do you enjoy? What are your interests? You'll learn more in a job you're passionate about.

Talk to family, friends and teachers – what do they think? Do they think a specific job/career/industry would be suited to you?

Find Suitable Employers

Ask family, friends and teachers! Do they have contacts you can ask about possible work experience?

Look up businesses, organisations and charities online. Look at employer websites, LinkedIn, Twitter – get people's contact details!

Who are the key/big employers in the industries you want to work in?

Approach...

See pages 14 & 15 about approaching an employer by phone, email or in person.

Explain clearly what you are looking for! They might not know what you mean by 'work experience'. How long do you want? A day? Two weeks? A month?

Follow Up

Don't wait forever for them to get back to you! If you haven't heard from them in a week, contact them to find out what is happening. Follow up!

[illegible]

What do you think is the main difference between school and work? Discuss this with your group. Once you have all agreed on the most important difference, write it down below.



Making Work Experience Work!

1. If you don't have anything to do, ask for work.

2. Add experiences/achievements to your CV and/or Personal Statement.

3. Own up to mistakes you make.

4. Research the company/organisation you will work for.

5. Volunteer for as many different tasks as possible.

6. Note down the things you do for future reference.

7. Contact employer to introduce yourself.

8. Plan your journey to your placement.

9. Ask for feedback.

10. Don't play with your phone/make calls/send texts when you are working.

11. Meet and talk to colleagues!

12. Show your employer what skills you have and what you can do.

13. Find out if there is a dress code and what it is.

14. Be enthusiastic.

15. If using a computer, don't use the internet without permission.

16. Check before giving your work experience employer as a reference on an application.

When should you follow each piece of advice? Before, During or After your placement? Each piece of advice is numbered – write the number of each piece of advice in the appropriate section below.

Before Work Experience

During Work Experience

After Work Experience

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



Your Goals for Work Experience

Your Work Experience placement is a great opportunity for you to develop new skills, to learn about what work is like and to find out what kind of person you are.

Even if you have a placement in a company or organisation you don't think you will be interested in, it is still a valuable chance to do something you would never do in school.

So how can you get the most from your placement? One of the most important things you can do is set yourself goals.

Write at least five goals for your work experience placement – Think about what you want to learn, the experiences and skills you want to get whilst on work experience. For example, learn to be more independent, learn what is expected of you at work, learn specific skills needed for a specific job.

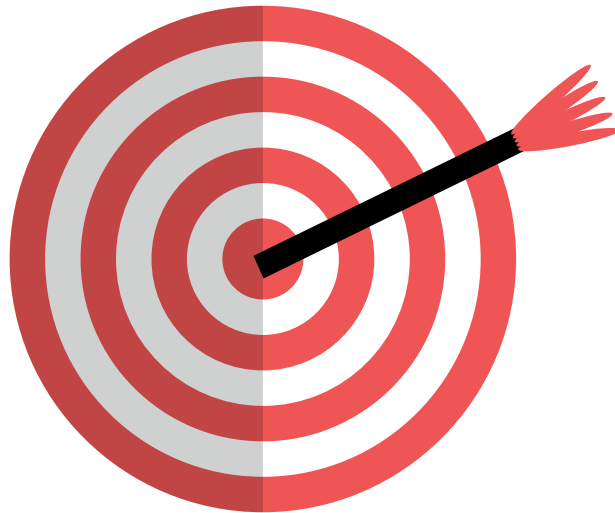
1.
2.
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Notes



TOP 5 REASONS: for doing work experience

1. It will help you develop key soft skills.
2. It will make you different to other candidates.
3. It will give you more things to say on an application or in an interview.
4. You will get to try a job or role out – and decide if you want to do it in the future.
5. It might lead to a proper job offer!



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