

Welcome to [Apprentice.io](https://www.apprentice.io)!

Welcome to apprentice.io! We're excited to have you here. This packet contains information that past apprentices have found helpful. We recommend looking through it now and referring back to it later. Think of this packet as your Hitchhiker's Guide during your apprenticeship.

This packet is available at <https://github.com/thoughtbot/apprentice-onboarding>. Feel free to file a pull request to improve any aspect of it, no matter how tiny.

We encourage learning. We run workshops (learn.thoughtbot.com), which are free for you. You can and should take advantage of these. We also have a partnership with Bocoup, where you can take any of their workshops (training.bocoup.com) for free as well. We have Friday meetings at 3(ish)PM where designers/developers (in separate meetings) get together to improve their skills. It is impossible to overemphasize how much learning we want you to do.

We also recognize that you want to be employed at the end of your apprenticeship. Your entire third month is focused on finding a job. Chad Pytel will meet with you at the beginning of your third month to discuss your options and help you find employers. While you will still be learning, the emphasis is more on employment. We prefer that the first two months, conversely, are focused on learning and not finding employment.

We encourage you to propose changes to the apprentice process, including hiring, onboarding, and anything else that you think could be better. Everyone at thoughtbot is constantly trying to be better, and we welcome feedback. As an apprentice, you have much better insight into what could make the process better for you than does someone who's been working here for five years.

Feedback is always, always appreciated on everything at thoughtbot. If you have feedback on the overall apprentice program, please let Gabe Berke-Williams, the head of the apprentice.io program, know.

Meeting people

Your mentor's name is: _____

We are a friendly bunch, and we'd like to get to know you! Go on coffee walks: we often have "coffee walks" at 3-ish, where people go for a walk (coffee optional) and chat.

If you're having a bit of trouble matching names to faces, check out <http://thoughtbot.com/about>, which has pictures and names of everyone at the company (except apprentices).

Laptop setup

Your mentor will help you get your laptop set up. We recommend the laptop script available at <https://github.com/thoughtbot/laptop>.

On your first day, fork the Trail Map (github.com/thoughtbot/trail-map) and edit it with your mentor to find trails that match your goals. It can be any trails, but stick with them. Also, submitting pull requests back to the main repo will strengthen the trail map for everyone.

Logins

We use many different websites at thoughtbot, and everyone should have accounts for them. Having access will make it much easier for you to participate in thoughtbot's internal conversations.

The list of services is below. By the end of your first week, you should have access to all of them.

Google apps

URL: <http://google.com/a/apprentice.io>

You should have received an email with your email (NAME@apprentice.io) and email password.

We use the calendar extensively - add someone else's calendar to keep track of what other people are doing.

Dropbox (<http://dropbox.com>)

You have access to the "Library" Dropbox folder. This folder contains workshops, books, papers, and other resources that we've purchased in the past and now share with everyone at thoughtbot. It's an easy way to learn something for free.

Tumblr (<http://tumblr.com>)

Our company blog (<http://robots.thoughtbot.com>) is actually hosted on Tumblr. In order to make a blog post, you need a tumblr account. When you have an account, ask anyone at the company to give you access to the blog. We *strongly* encourage you to make a blog post! Even things that you think are silly, like a git tip that takes 3 lines and that you're *sure* everyone else knows, is worthy of a blog post. Often our most popular blog posts are the ones that we thought were the silliest. For example, <http://j.mp/LP72NP> is pretty dumb but got 18 comments.

We also have a semi-secret blog of Campfire quotes at <http://tinyrobots.thoughtbot.com>.

37Signals Suite (Basecamp/Backpack/Campfire)

37signals runs a suite of applications that we use. You should have received a 37Signals invitation in your apprentice.io email. Ensure that you have access to the following:

- Campfire: <http://thoughtbot.campfirenow.com/>
- Backpack: <https://thoughtbot.backpackit.com/>
- Basecamp: <https://basecamp.com/1719045>

If any of those sites give you an error, talk to your mentor. Once you have access to Backpack, check out this onboarding page: <https://thoughtbot.backpackit.com/pages/2661936-employee-onboarding>. There's probably overlap, and we'd love feedback!

Campfire

We use Campfire *constantly*. Use a desktop Campfire client like Propane (<http://propaneapp.com/>); it's much better than the web interface. It will ask you to register it when you start it, but you can ignore that and it will work fine.

Campfire has rooms with a specific purpose:

- Everyone: discuss things that interest everyone. You should be in this room whenever you are working.
- Code: discuss your code. When asking a question, pasting your code is encouraged.
- Design: discuss design topics or cool design that you've encountered.
- Watercooler (a/k/a WC): this is where we post animated GIFs and lolcats. Don't post lolcats in other rooms. Sometimes you'll be told "WC!" - that means you should take it to Watercooler.
- Most of the other rooms are specific to projects and are named after the project.

Designers and developers should check out the Code and Design rooms - everyone's welcome in every room.

Basecamp

Basecamp is where we put ideas that we want to discuss, like product ideas or a new Git workflow.

Backpack

We have things like general company policies and non-technical discussion and announcements in backpack. If you have a question about anything HR related, look in backpack first.

You should use your homepage in Backpack (there's a link in the Backpack sidebar) to track your progress.

Dotfiles

Dotfiles are the files in your home directory (referred to as "~") that start with a dot, like "~/.bashrc". They are used to configure various programs, e.g. "~/.vimrc" sets some global options for "vim". Take a look at thoughtbot's dotfiles (<https://github.com/thoughtbot/dotfiles>), and feel free to fork them. We also encourage you to check out your coworkers' dotfiles for inspiration. For example, Josh Clayton has an extensive configuration for tmux in his dotfiles: <https://github.com/joshuaclayton/dotfiles>

Learning

Development Discussions

We have weekly development discussions most Fridays from 3-4pm in a conference room upstairs. We discuss topics like how to design object oriented systems and the style guide. Development apprentices especially are strongly encouraged to attend.

Design Discussions

We hold these at 3(ish) PM on Fridays when there are enough designers. It's a place to show off what you've been working on as well as a mini-critique. Designer apprentices are strongly encouraged to attend.

Boston.rb

The boston ruby group (bostonrb.org/calendar) meets every Tuesday, alternating Project Nights (where people hack together) and presentations. It's a great place to learn something, as well as to practice your public speaking by submitting a talk. Speaking at boston.rb is great practice since it's a smallish, friendly audience, and it gives your resume a nice bump.

This page is intentionally left blank. Please write down interesting things you've learned, tips, and areas where apprentice.io could improve. We encourage feedback on apprentice.io and [thoughtbot](https://thoughtbot.com).