



# **CAREER READINESS WEEK**

## **CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

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# I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## **Project: Career Development Week in CTAE Classes**

Career Readiness Week is an education outreach opportunity dedicated to recognizing the critical role that Career and Technical Education (CTAE) plays in preparing students for careers beyond the classroom. In response to the evolving demands of the professional world, the implementation of Career Readiness Week in classrooms equips students with essential skills for a successful transition into the workforce (Bottoms, 2022).

## **Problem:**

While schools teach students crucial thinking strategies and time management on top of their core class, the basics of what it takes to start a life after high school are overlooked, and students often graduate without the necessary skills for professional success. A gap exists in their knowledge of professional dress, resume writing, interview etiquette, and workplace scenarios (Haddad, 2022). Career Readiness Week aims to bridge this gap by immersing students in a comprehensive program that addresses these skills.

## **Scope:**

Career Readiness Week spans across all CTAE classes, engaging students in a comprehensive course (Bottoms, 2022). The outreach program includes lessons on:

**PROFESSIONAL DRESS**

**RESUME DEVELOPMENT**

**INTERVIEWS &**

**NAVIGATING WORKPLACE SCENARIOS.**

By focusing on these four critical components, Career Readiness Week aims to dramatically improve students' overall employability, preparing them for a seamless transition into the professional world (Solberg et al., 2013).

## EXPECTED BENEFITS:

1

Enhanced  
Professionalism

2

Polished  
Resumes

3

Interview  
Preparedness

4

Practical Work  
Experience

## PROJECT GOALS:

**Introduce and reinforces the importance of professional dress codes in work settings.**

**Facilitate hands-on resume writing workshops to refine student skills and create impactful resumes.**

**Review how to prepare for a job interview and conduct mock job interviews to advance skills and build confidence.**

**Simulate workplace scenarios to provide insights into professional dynamics, workplace scenarios, while maintaining a code of ethics.**

## Human Resource Management Plan:

The ensured success of Career Readiness Week is possible through roles and responsibilities within each CTAE class that has already been defined. As a student driven initiative, teachers will choose capable senior CTAE students who have completed the course pathway to lead Career Readiness Week. If the position is accepted, senior students will then collaborate in a volunteered capacity to deliver engaging and informative sessions to underclassmen.

## Budget:

Career Readiness Week is completely supported by the schools and volunteers participating, including resources for professional attire demonstrations, resume printing, mock interview materials, and rooms for realistic workplace scenarios. The program is designed to maximize impact while being completely accessible and affordable for its participants.

Career Readiness Week aims to empower high school students with the skills and confidence needed to navigate the professional world successfully. By addressing the identified gaps in their knowledge, the course strives to mold a generation of graduates who are not only academically proficient but also well-prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the workforce.

**This initiative is done entirely by volunteers, ensuring students can access resources without associated costs.**



## II. INITIATING

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### **A. Statement of the Problem:**

Career Readiness Week is a program initiated by students to bridge the gap in career-oriented skills taught to high school students. While the education system excels in academic subjects, 75% of high school graduates often feel ill-equipped when it comes to real world skills (Haddad, 2022). These areas of inadequacy include professional dress, writing resumes, mastering interview, and navigating workplace scenarios. This lack of knowledge creates obstacles for students as they transition into the workforce with 30% of them facing uncertainty regarding their career path or further education (Haddad, 2022). These statistics clearly highlight the need for an approach that addresses student's requirements for a comprehensive career skills curriculum within schools.

### **B. Project Scope:**

The Career Readiness Week course offers CTAE students a grasp of skills that can be utilized in various career environments and scenarios. The curriculum encompasses a range of lessons each focusing on an aspect of their personal career growth (Bottoms, 2022). By ensuring that this program is accessible to students, it is able to fill the gaps in the education system. Producing individuals who're well prepared for the demands of the professional world.

### **Rationale:**

Previous high school students believe an education beyond textbooks is imperative for career-related success and are continually voicing that a change to better prepare students for a world outside of academics be incorporated in the education system. The rationale for initiating Career Readiness Week is rooted in the commitment to student development, acknowledging the pivotal role practical skills play in ensuring students' success in their chosen careers. By identifying and addressing the problem at its core, the program aims to empower students to navigate and build a stronger generation of career-driven individuals.

## EXPECTED BENEFITS:

Enhanced Professionalism	Polished Resumes
Students will gain new insights into the importance of professional attire and demeanor in relation to their career success (Compton, 2007).	Participants will learn how to craft compelling resumes that showcase their skills and experiences in order for them to stand-out to employers.
Interview Preparedness	Practical Work Experience
Join interview tips and mock interviews will simulate real-world scenarios, enabling students to confidently navigate conversations.	Workplace scenarios will challenge and foster student adaptability and problem-solving skills.

## OTHER BENEFITS:

1. **Practical Proficiency:** Students will gain hands-on experience in dressing professionally, crafting impactful resumes, and acing interviews.
2. **Confidence Building:** Exposure to workplace scenarios will boost confidence, preparing students for real-world challenges.
3. **Employability Enhancement:** By honing their professional skills, participants will become more attractive candidates to prospective employers.
4. **Long-Term Impact:** Career Readiness Week is not just a short-term solution; it's an investment in the future success of high school graduates.

Career Readiness Week marks the initiation of a transformative journey for students that address the identified problems head-on. This action sets the stage for a more comprehensive and practical approach to education (Bottoms, 2022).

# III. PLANNING AND ORGANIZING

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## A. Project Goals

### 1. Introduction to Professional Dress Codes:

- Goal: Familiarize students with the importance of professional attire in various workplace settings.
- Strategy: Conduct workshops and demonstrations illustrating appropriate dress codes for different professional environments.

### 2. Hands-on Resume Writing Workshops:

- Goal: Equip students with the skills to craft compelling resumes that effectively highlight their abilities.
- Strategy: Engage participants in interactive sessions where they develop and refine their resumes with helpful guidance.

### 3. Mock Job Interviews:

- Goal: Enhance students' interview skills and build confidence in professional communication.
- Strategy: Review job interview preparation skills and organize simulated interviews to provide constructive insights into student performance.

### 4. Simulation of Workplace Scenarios:

- Goal: Immerse students in realistic workplace situations to foster adaptability and problem-solving skills.
- Strategy: Develop scenario-based activities replicating common challenges in professional settings, encouraging teamwork and critical thinking.



## B. Human Resource Management Plan:

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To ensure the success of Career Readiness Week, roles and responsibilities will be clearly defined for all involved parties.

### 1. Faculty Involvement:

- Role: Choose capable students to lead the program and provide academic oversight for the student execution of Career Readiness Week.
- Responsibilities: Choose senior course pathway completers and ensure alignment with current CTAE curriculum.

### 2. Industry Experts:

- Role: Share practical insights and expertise in professional attire, resume building, and interview techniques.
- Responsibilities: Lead lectures on how to successfully enter the industry and provide personal experiences.

### 3. Senior Students:

- Role: Serve as mentors and peer guides for their younger counterparts.
- Responsibilities: Assist in the total organization of the outreach programs activities, course curriculum, and scheduling while providing guidance throughout the week.

## C. Schedule:

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- i. Milestones needed to accomplish.
- ii. Timeline to reach each milestone.

The Career Readiness Week timeline specifies important milestones to reach each day.

### 1. Professional Dress Workshops (Day 1):

#### DAY 1

Introduction into the types of professional dress and how personal image is affected by clothing choice. Utilizes demonstrations and hands-on activities.

### 2. Resume Writing Workshops (Day 2):

#### DAY 2

Instruction on resume layout and relevance. Workshops for students to develop and refine their resumes.

### 3. Mock Job Interviews (Day 3):

#### DAY 3

Overview of interview tips and etiquette. Simulating interviews in order to provide constructive feedback for students.

### 4. Workplace Scenario Simulations (Day 4):

#### DAY 4

Various workplace scenarios to be enacted with a focus on teamwork and problem-solving. Challenges students' ethics.

### **D. Quality Management Plan:**

To ensure the success of Career Readiness Week, key metrics were identified and continuously monitored throughout the program. Metrics included:

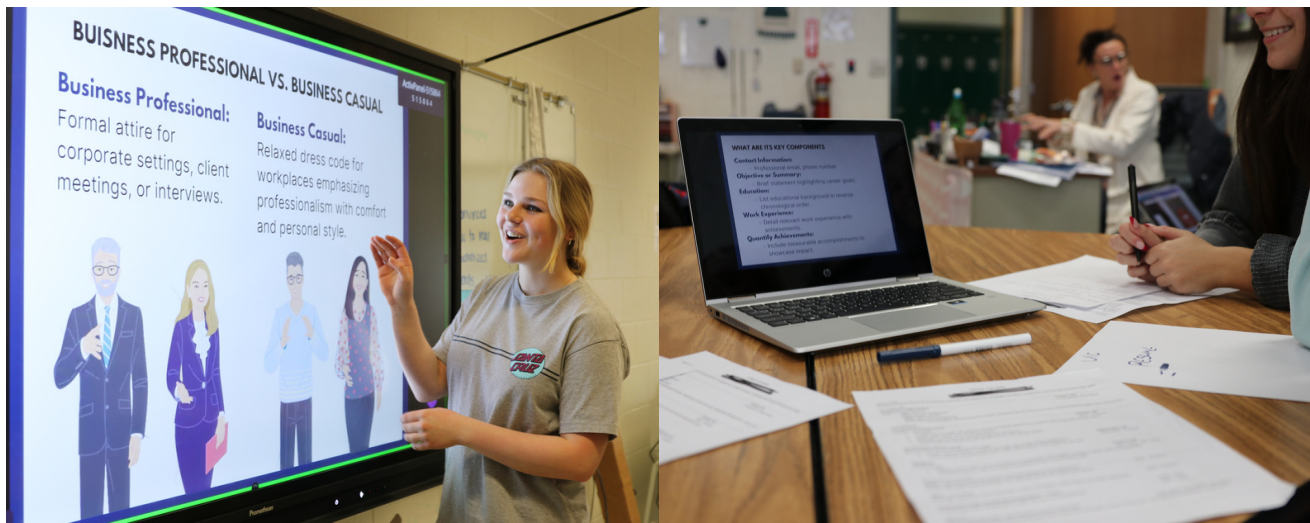
- Participant engagement levels.
- Quality of resumes produced.
- Feedback from mock interviews.
- Teamwork and problem-solving effectiveness in workplace scenarios.

### **E. Risk Management Plan:**

Potential challenges such as scheduling conflicts, resource limitations, or unexpected participant disengagement were identified in advance. Response strategies included introducing the course into classrooms to eliminate scheduling conflicts, allocating resources and modifying course work prior to the session, and addressing student engagement expectations at the beginning of the lecture.

### **F. Proposed Project Budget:**

Career Readiness Week is completely supported by the schools and volunteers participating, including resources for professional attire demonstrations, resume printing, mock interview materials, and rooms for realistic workplace scenarios. The program is designed to maximize impact while being completely accessible and affordable for its participants. This initiative is done entirely by volunteers, ensuring students can access resources without associated costs.



# IV. EXECUTION

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## **Project Plan Implementation:**

### **Professional Dress (Day 1):**

The program began with an engaging introduction to professional dress in the workplace. Reviewing the importance of adhering to dress guidelines and how personal appearance can play a major role in initial perceptions. Students will gain new insights into the importance of professional attire and demeanor in relation to their career success (Compton, 2007). This lesson defined the different types of workwear, specifically business professional vs. business casual, informing students of the different workplace settings where each attire would be appropriate. Participants are actively engaged in selecting appropriate attire for various scenarios, promoting a deeper understanding of career expectations.

### **Resume Writing Workshops (Day 2):**

The program then provided an instructional lecture on resume crafting. The lesson began by explaining how resumes are a major determinant on whether an individual is hired. Students were then led in a hands-on resume writing workshop. This process allowed students to find gaps in their resumes that they were encouraged to fill during the remainder of their high school career. After this workshop students understood the importance of this self-marketing tool and the how quality of their crafted resumes will set them apart.

### **Job Interviews (Day 3):**

On this day, participants received an overview of interview preparation tips, etiquette, and effective conversation skills (M.G. Higgins & PJ Gray, 2017). The lesson went over key aspects such as body language and how to respond to commonly asked questions. Simulated job interviews then took place, with senior students playing the role of interviewers (Pang, 2010). Constructive feedback sessions were followed by each interview, providing valuable insights and areas for improvement.

### **Workplace Scenario (Day 4):**

The final day involved different workplace scenarios that were reenacted through interactive team building games among groups, enabling students to put into practice their new skills in a practical setting. Teamwork, adaptability and problem-solving skills were emphasized. Real life challenges were represented in the scenarios utilizing participants knowledge on workplace dynamics and upholding ethics.

# V. MONITORING AND CONTROLLING

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## A. MONITORING:

### 1. Participant Engagement:

Throughout the execution of Career Readiness Week, continuous monitoring of participant engagement levels was conducted and showed an increase in participation levels as the week continued. Feedback sessions after each module provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of the program. Students shared that some sections of the content felt overwhelming, but overall, they felt better prepared for their future following high school.

### 2. Schedule Adherence:

Each day of Career Readiness Week followed a clearly defined schedule. For instance, the first day began with a lesson on professional dress and led into a related activity. This routine was followed on each day of the program, ensuring that each topic received the necessary attention and was completed within the allocated time.

### 3. Documentation

Detailed records of each session, including participant engagement, feedback, and any adjustments made during the execution were documented. Over 77 high school students participated in the program, a majority of who gave positive feedback- and were excited to work towards completing their personal CTAE pathway to have the chance to be a senior volunteer for the program in the years to come.

## **B. CONTROLLING:**

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### **1. Addressing Challenges:**

The main challenge encountered during the execution of Career Readiness Week regarded where the program would be located. Originally the lessons and workshops were to be conducted in the media center/library, however due to unpredicted construction on the building the program ran into issues securing a slot in the library to carry-out the initial plan. In response, senior students met with CTAE teachers to discuss carrying out the program within their classes. Due to the fact this program was built to teach career-based skills, the program was approved to take place inside classrooms. In the end this problem ended up resolving other issues the program had in ensuring student participation in relation to student schedules.

### **2. Feedback and Iterative Adjustments:**

Regular feedback sessions with participants, mentors, and industry experts provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of each module. While most feedback appeared positive, there were a few students who addressed a concern that some of the courses seemed overwhelming. In response adjustments to the program were made, allowing students to participate in breakout sessions to discuss material with their peers- senior volunteers running the event met with each group and answered student questions (Solberg et al., 2013).

### **3. Quality Assurance:**

Before beginning a new course, seniors started the class by asking students questions of material taught the previous day. This action helped ensure student progress, understanding and retention. In addition to this, volunteers reviewed student resumes to determine the effectiveness of the workshop, providing constructive feedback in order to fill any gaps within the resume itself or general understanding. These adjustments to the program enhanced overall quality.

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#### 4. Communication Channels:

To ensure effective communication amongst the senior volunteer team, the communication platform *GroupMe* was utilized. This app gives specific permission roles to all involved- allowing the project overseer to moderate chat if necessary. In addition, regular team meetings and check-ins provided a place for the team to discuss progress, address concerns, and share insights. This collaborative approach was crucial in the effectiveness of various components of Career Readiness Week.

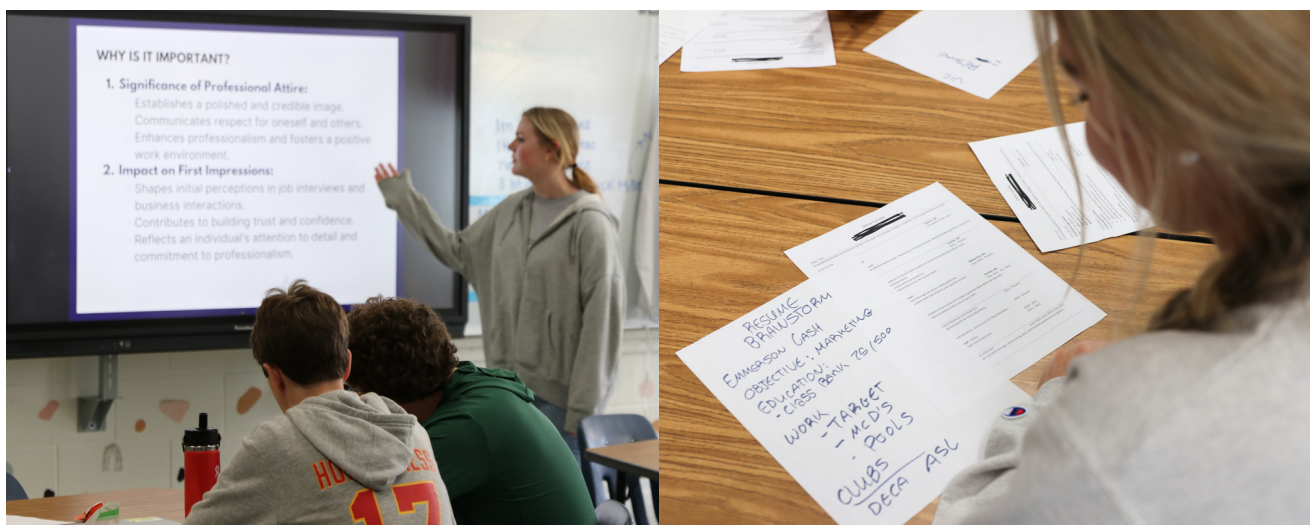
#### 5. Contingency Planning:

Seniors discussed a proactive contingency plan to address unforeseen circumstances that may interrupt the execution of the program, such as technical difficulties. Backup resources were prepared, and teaching material was thoroughly reviewed and printed in case of an internet outage or resource disturbance.

#### 6. Documentation of Adjustments:

All adjustments made during the monitoring and controlling phases were documented. They are as followed:

- Program Relocation.
- After Lesson Breakout Sessions.
- Adjusted Learning Materials.
- Additional Networking Opportunities.



# VI. CLOSING THE PROJECT

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## **A. Evaluation of Key Metrics:**

### **1. Participant Feedback:**

Following the conclusion of Career Readiness Week, a comprehensive evaluation was conducted, gathering feedback from participants on their overall experience (Solberg et al., 2013). The response to the program was mostly positive as students expressed their enjoyment of learning a life-long skill. The most enjoyed aspect of the program was the resume writing workshop- where students got to record their personal achievements on paper, leaving the majority feeling accomplished or aware of areas to improve.

### **2. Quality Metrics:**

Key quality metrics, including the effectiveness of professional dress workshops, the impact of resume writing sessions, success in mock job interviews, and the ability to navigate workplace scenarios met its predetermined standards. Students left the outreach program with quality skills and feelings of increased confidence in their ability to obtain a career after high school, all of which were the main objective of the program.

### **3. Participant Engagement Levels:**

As the week progressed, student engagement increased. This incline in participation was a direct result of addressing student expectations at the beginning of the program. Moreover, the ability to adjust the course as needed helped too, as students found breakout sessions a great way to communicate their own accomplishments and career related experiences to their peers.

## **B. Lessons Learned:**

### **1. Identification of Success Factors:**

While the beginning lesson of each subject played a major role in defining important terms, structures, and professionalism, the biggest success factor was undoubtedly the hands-on activities. The resume workshops, mock job interviews, and teamwork scenarios kept participants actively engaged leading to increased information retention, understanding of the material, and overall enjoyment of the program.



## **2. Areas for Improvement:**

Similarly, areas for improvement include student outreach, increased number of guest speakers, and refine information that students may find overwhelming. Through this approach Career Readiness Week will not only expand in size but also in material quality and effectiveness.

## **C. Recommendations for Future Projects:**

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### **1. Program Enhancements:**

Based on the lessons learned and feedback received, specific recommendations for enhancing Career Readiness Week for future years include refining information heavy modules, adjusting the duration of sessions to continue active student attention, and incorporating additional career skills to further enrich the learning experience, creating a 5th day.

### **2. Sustainable Practices:**

Recommendations focus on establishing sustainable practices that can be integrated into the regular curriculum. These recommendations include the implication of recycling used materials after lessons and continuing volunteer studies on current career requirements, adjusting the curriculum as needed to stay up to date.

### **3. Collaboration Opportunities:**

The continuation of this career development project could drastically grow collaboration with external partners, industry experts, and past program alumni. In addition to these suggestions, future volunteers should advocate to the county or state representatives to have this program implemented as a requirement in CTAE classrooms throughout all high schools.

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# VIII. APPENDIX

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## **Student Feedback Responses**

(33 Responses)

### **1. After completing the course, do you feel better equipped in career related skills?**

- Yes (30)
- No (3)

### **2. What part of the course did you enjoy most?**

- Team Activities (8)
- Resume Workshops (14)
- PowerPoint Lectures (5)
- Workplace Scenarios (6)

### **3. How many stars would you rate this program?**

- 1 Star (2)
- 2 Stars (1)
- 3 Stars (6)
- 4 Stars (9)
- 5 Stars (14)

### **4. Would you like to potentially lead this program as a senior?**

- Yes (10)
- No (9)
- Maybe (14)

## 5. What did like about this course in contrast to regular curriculum classes?

1	THIS IS RELEVANT TO ACTUAL LIFE!!
2	It prepares me for a job
3	It was more fun.
4	I learned a lot
5	It was lead by people my age?!
6	Idk
7	It is relatable
8	It really showed how much I've accomplished over my high school education, and it shows how i can use my accomplishments when i got to get a job
9	It's real life
10	It was sooo good being able to learn from people my age for once
11	not boring
12	it wasn't taught by old people
13	it was helpful
14	Idk
15	i have a job interview coming up and this actually helped soooooo much
16	i didn't fall asleep
17	i think it was ok, but idk what makes it different
18	it actually applies to life unlike every other class I take
19	I liked that it was more personal and relatable
20	I got to talk about things I LIKE DOING like football
21	It's the same
22	I liked that i was able to work and compete in games
23	It's the same
24	I liked that it was led by my friends!!!!!!!!
25	I liked that it was a real skill I can use.
26	I KNOW THE GIRL WHO TAUGHT MY CLASS
27	It was eh
28	I liked being able to talk to the seniors, as a freshman i'm not usually around them- they are nice and helpful
29	it was fun!!
30	I like how hands on it was and that they didn't just talk the whole time
31	it felt relevant
32	it was entertaining
33	it was really engaging

## 6. Any changes or ideas to better enhance the program?

1	I think the resume section is kinda overwhelming, but after the breakout section it felt easier to grasp.
2	No
3	I think it's fine as is
4	I think it's mostly easy to grasp, but I wish we could have spent another day on our resumes.
5	I think the powerpoints could be better
6	Not really
7	I think that it's fine as it is
8	i think there should be one for day for the resume writing
9	No
10	I think you guys should make this a year-long class
11	i don't really know
12	i think a little humor in the powerpoints would be funny
13	simplify the resumes.. or like make it a two day project
14	Idk
15	i think y'all should get a reward for your letterman for leading it
16	i think we should celebrate at the end with food
17	i don't like group activities
18	Nothing, the breakout session really helped
19	I think some of the lectures were a little long
20	I think it should be one more day to recap
21	I don't really care to do things that aren't for a grade
22	I think it should cover specific types of jobs
23	No
24	I think this is so fun, y'all should let us do career booths
25	I like it how it is.
26	How do I get chosen to do this??
27	I'd rather not do it
28	I think the break out sessions really helped. I wish I had more time to do my resume.
29	I think y'all should do food prizes for the competitions
30	I think the groups after the lecture was helpful
31	nah
32	I needed more time on my resume
33	I think it's good as is