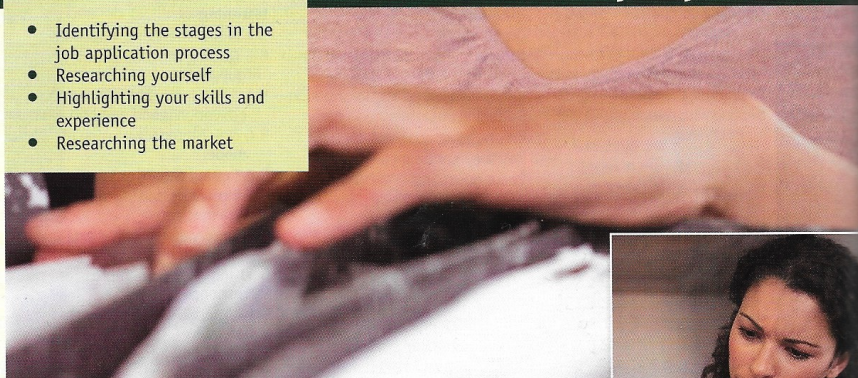


# UNIT 1

## Research and preparation

- Identifying the stages in the job application process
- Researching yourself
- Highlighting your skills and experience
- Researching the market



### Identifying the stages in the job application process

Most of us spend between 60–80% of our waking hours working, so it's important to find a job that brings true satisfaction. If you haven't found it yet, then don't give up. Keep looking until you find a job that you love doing.

- 1 a** Teresa Fernandez, a recent graduate, is applying for a job in marketing. Match the extracts from documents and conversations (a–h) to the stages in the job application process (1–8).

- |                              |                                     |                          |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Sending a cover letter     | 4 Responding to interview questions | 7 Researching the market |
| 2 Sending a CV/resume        | 5 Making interview small talk       | 8 Researching yourself   |
| 3 Sending a follow-up letter | 6 Reading a job advertisement       |                          |

a

#### MARKETING ASSISTANT, Bristol circa \$25K pa

We are a leader in the international logistics business, with operations in over 20 countries. We are seeking a young, dynamic professional to join our marketing team. You will have a good first degree in marketing or a related subject, and ideally some experience of working in the marketing department of a large company. Above all, you must have a positive attitude, strong creative skills, and an ability to work well in a team. Full training will be provided. There are excellent opportunities for promotion within the department.

b

'Teresa?'

'Yes. Hello.'

'Good afternoon. My name's Alan Cassidy. Sorry to keep you waiting.'

'That's all right. I've been enjoying your company brochure. It all looks very impressive. It's nice to meet you at last.'

'Thanks. Have you travelled far to us today?'

'Quite far. I'm currently based in London, so I came on the train this morning.'

I am a recent psychology graduate with first-hand experience of marketing, customer service and sales. I would like to apply for the position of Marketing Assistant, as advertised in *The Guardian*.

I find the prospect of working for your company very attractive because it will enable me to put my deep theoretical knowledge of human nature into a very practical context in a successful international firm.

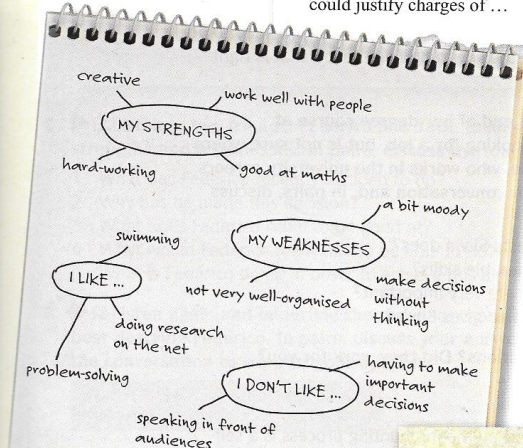
c

d

I am writing to thank you for giving me the opportunity of an interview today. Everyone in your office was friendly and made me feel very welcome.

As we discussed during the interview, I believe my skills and experience would enable me to make a very useful contribution to your team. On my journey home I gave more thought to your question about pricing. I checked your prices against how much your competitors are charging for equivalent services, and calculated that with your strong reputation for quality, you could justify charges of...

e



f

'What would you say are your main weaknesses?'

'Well, I didn't use to be very well-organised. Nothing very serious, but for example I used to forget my friends' birthdays or try to rush university assignments to get them done at the last minute. But in the last few years I've learnt some nice tricks to help me organise my life – simple things like writing down all my tasks for the day and not relaxing until I've done everything I need to do.'

g

#### 2004–2007 Kingston University

- BSc (Hons) Psychology (2.1)

#### 2008

##### Customer service assistant, Packaging Palace

- Resolved customer complaints
- Created customer loyalty programme
- Liaised with management on pricing strategy

h

'Good afternoon. Faster Forwarding Logistics. How can I help you?'

'Hello. My name's Teresa Fernandez. Could I speak to Mr Cassidy in Marketing, please?'

'I'm afraid he's in a meeting. Can I take a message?'

'I'm not sure. I was calling to see if there are any vacancies in your marketing department. I'm a recent psychology graduate, and I'm very keen to work for a company like yours, because of your excellent reputation.'

'Actually, I think there is a vacancy. There was an advert in *The Guardian* last week. Have you seen it?'

'No, I must have missed that. Do you have a copy of the advert that you could send me?'

'Of course, but you'll have to be quick: the closing date is tomorrow.'

**b** Put the stages (1–8) in Exercise 1a into the most logical sequence.



**c** Read the extracts again. Which extracts mention:

- 1 details of Teresa's work experience? C \_\_\_\_
- 2 details of Teresa's studies and qualifications? \_\_\_\_
- 3 the job salary? \_\_\_\_
- 4 Teresa's weaknesses? \_\_\_\_
- 5 evidence of Teresa's skill with numbers? \_\_\_\_
- 6 where the vacancy is advertised? \_\_\_\_
- 7 evidence of Teresa's research skills? \_\_\_\_
- 8 teamwork? \_\_\_\_
- 9 a compliment from Teresa about the company? \_\_\_\_
- 10 evidence of Teresa's research into the company? \_\_\_\_

**d** Do you think Teresa has a good chance of getting the job? Why (not)?

## Researching yourself

Before you look for the perfect job, write a CV or apply for a job, you need to do some research. Researching yourself is the key to finding the job that is right for you.

- 2 a** ▶ 1.1 Silvia Carnali is approaching the end of her degree course at university. She has decided to start looking for a job, but is not sure where to begin. Silvia asks her friend Sophie, who works in the university careers office, for some advice. Listen to their conversation and, in pairs, discuss the following questions.

- 1 What is the first thing Sophie suggests Silvia does?
- 2 How does Sophie identify her transferable skills?
- 3 Does Sophie think personality tests are very important?
- 4 What is the final piece of advice Sophie gives Silvia?

**b** Have you tried any of Sophie's suggestions? Did they work for you?

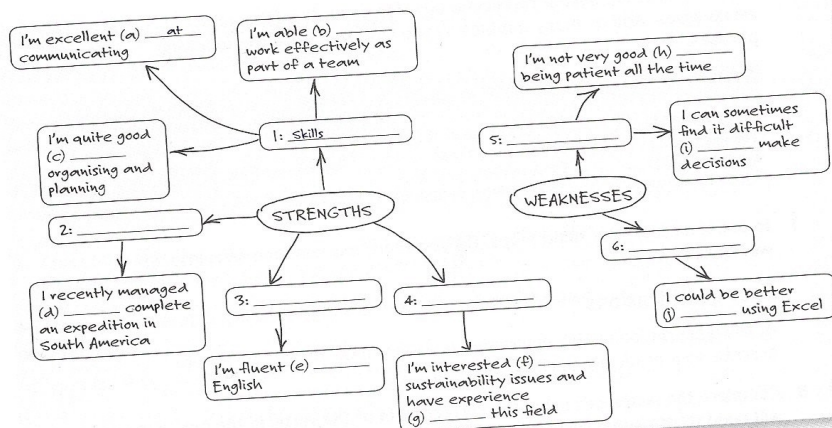
### Your strengths and weaknesses

The first thing you need to do when starting the job-hunting process is a self-assessment of your own strengths and weaknesses. This process will help you identify the skills, qualifications, experience, knowledge and personal characteristics that employers are looking for.

- 3 a** After talking to Sophie, Silvia produced a 'mind map' to highlight her strengths and weaknesses. Complete the sentences (a-j) in Silvia's mind map on the following page using the prepositions *in*, *to* or *at*.

**b** Complete the headings (1-6) on the mind map using the words in the box.

Achievements	Experience	Knowledge
Languages	Personal characteristics	Skills



**c** ▶ 12 Listen to two friends, Federico and Jack, talking about Federico's strengths and weaknesses. In pairs, discuss the following questions.

- 1 What has Federico recently decided to do?
- 2 Why has he made this decision?
- 3 What does Federico claim to be good at?
- 4 What would Federico really like to be able to do?
- 5 What is Federico doing in order to achieve this aim?

**d** ▶ 12 Listen again and underline the personal characteristics in the box that best describe Federico. In pairs, discuss your answers using evidence from the conversation to support your opinion.

creative	disorganised	flexible
impatient	reliable	successful

**e** Match the personal characteristics (1–6) to the questions (a–f).

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| 1 creative   | a Do you always do what you say you'll do?                |
| 2 decisive   | b Are you good at getting other people to agree with you? |
| 3 flexible   | c Are you good at making your mind up quickly?            |
| 4 organised  | d Are you able to plan ahead successfully?                |
| 5 persuasive | e Are you able to cope with last-minute changes?          |
| 6 reliable   | f Are you good at coming up with imaginative solutions?   |

**f** Make the personal characteristics in Exercise 3e negative by adding a prefix (*dis-*, *in-* or *un-*).

- |                     |         |         |
|---------------------|---------|---------|
| 1 <u>uncreative</u> | 3 _____ | 5 _____ |
| 2 _____             | 4 _____ | 6 _____ |

**g** In pairs, take turns to ask and answer the questions in Exercise 3e. Discuss your individual strengths and weaknesses, giving specific evidence.

- A: 'Do you always do what you say you will do?'  
 B: 'Yes, I'm very reliable. I'm always on time to work, classes and meetings, and when I can't make it, I let people know ahead of time.'

- h** Draw a mind map similar to Silvia's, showing your strengths and weaknesses. Add as many bubbles as you like. Try to use the following phrases.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Positive characteristics	Negative characteristics
I'm excellent at ...	I'm not very good at ...	I am ...	I can sometimes be ...
I'm able to ...	I could be better at ...	I try to ...	Occasionally I am ...
I'm interested in ...	I'm reasonably good at ...		I can be a little bit ...
I recently managed to ...	I would like to be able to ...		

- i** In pairs, discuss your mind maps. Do you share any common strengths or weaknesses?

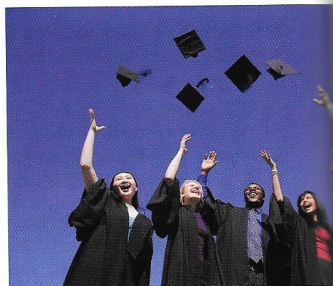
### Your qualifications

At all stages during the job application process you will need to be able to describe your academic qualifications clearly.

- 4 a** Complete the sentences using the correct form of the verbs in the box. You will need to use some verbs more than once.

award complete graduate hold obtain read

- I graduated with a BA in Sociology from the University of California in Los Angeles in 2007.
- I \_\_\_\_\_ Economics at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). I then \_\_\_\_\_ a Master's in Security Studies at the University of Birmingham, which included a semester at New York University at the Centre of European Studies.
- I \_\_\_\_\_ with a BA in Hotel & Catering Management from Hong Kong Polytechnic University. I also \_\_\_\_\_ an MBA in Marketing, which I \_\_\_\_\_ last year.
- After \_\_\_\_\_ from the School of Oriental Languages and Communication with a BA (Hons) in Mandarin Chinese and English in Maastricht (The Netherlands), I was \_\_\_\_\_ a scholarship to \_\_\_\_\_ International Relations at the College of Europe, Warsaw.



- b** Complete the sentences using the prepositions *at*, *from*, *in* or *with*.

- I started my career at Johnston Group after graduating \_\_\_\_\_ Hanyang University \_\_\_\_\_ a BA and MA \_\_\_\_\_ Chemical Engineering.
- I graduated \_\_\_\_\_ 2008 \_\_\_\_\_ an MSc in Criminology and Criminal Justice \_\_\_\_\_ Tokyo University.
- I also obtained a BSc \_\_\_\_\_ Computer Science \_\_\_\_\_ Moscow State University \_\_\_\_\_ 2005.
- I read Modern Languages \_\_\_\_\_ The National University of Singapore.

- c** In pairs, discuss the following questions.

- What qualifications do you have?
- Where did you go to university?
- When did you graduate?
- What types of career are common for people with your qualifications?
- Which of your qualifications is most likely to impress a future employer?



## Highlighting your skills and experience

Employers will ask for transferable skills or competencies – the skills, knowledge and behaviour they consider necessary for a particular job. Reviewing your previous experience will help you to identify your transferable skills and recognise jobs that you are qualified for.

### 5 a In pairs, discuss the following questions.

- 1 What general skills and knowledge do most employers look for in job applicants?
- 2 Apart from specific qualifications and technical expertise, what skills and knowledge have you got that make you employable?

### b Match the transferable skills (1–8) to the examples of professional behaviour (a–h).

1 analytical skills	a I have a justified belief in my ability to do the job. I am able to express my opinion or provide advice when necessary. I am good at making decisions.
2 creativity	b I actively seek feedback on my performance and carefully consider feedback. I demonstrate an interest in and understanding of my own and other cultures. I understand my own strengths and limitations.
3 self-confidence	c I am good at getting a good deal. I am good at developing and managing relationships with others. I am able to persuade, convince and gain support from others.
4 communication skills	d I am able to formulate new ideas to solve problems. I am able to think ahead to spot or create opportunities. I set aside thinking time to come up with alternative ways of getting things done more efficiently.
5 independence	e I can work with sustained energy and determination on my own. I can find ways to overcome obstacles to set myself achievable goals. I strive towards my own targets and refuse to settle for second best.
6 interpersonal skills	f I am good at data analysis. I am excellent at interpreting data to see cause and effect and am able to use this information to make effective decisions.
7 negotiation skills	g I am able to express myself effectively. I am able to make my opinions totally clear and am rarely misunderstood. I produce clear, well-written reports that can be easily understood.
8 self-awareness	h I am good at working cooperatively. I am good at working and communicating within a team to achieve shared goals. I am a good listener.

### c Write your own examples of behaviour for the following transferable skills. Compare your answers with the suggestions in the answer key.

- 1 flexibility I am not rigid in my approach to work.
- 2 leadership skills \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 organisational skills \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 teamworking skills \_\_\_\_\_

### d Identify three key transferable skills of your own, which you have used at work or university. In pairs, tell each other about your skills, giving examples of your behaviour.