



# Unit 1 Tutorials: Introduction to Career Readiness

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# Job Hunting

by Sophia



## WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn details and insights on how to embark on a successful job search.

Specifically, this lesson will cover:

- 1. Understanding How Employers Hire**
  - 1a. A "Safe Bet"**
  - 1b. Becoming a "Safe Bet"**
- 2. Conducting a Successful Job Search**
  - 2a. Strategies**
  - 2b. Job Search Cycle**

## 1. Understanding How Employers Hire

It may seem like employers looking to hire for an open role have an easy job: they simply need to hire the candidate that they believe is the most qualified. In reality, employers dedicate a considerable amount of time to planning the interview process and coordinating a search committee. Candidates are chosen for more than just their qualifications. So if hiring isn't as straightforward as it seems, what exactly does the process look like?

### 1a. A "Safe Bet"

The hiring process starts with an employer envisioning their ideal candidate. In general, employers like hiring "safe bets." Employers want a candidate who will be successful on the job. However, they're also trying to avoid two major concerns:

- 1. The Seemingly Ideal Worker.** When employers hire someone who interviews well and appears to be the ideal candidate, their first perceptions are not always the whole story. Sometimes after accepting the position, the candidate doesn't perform well on the job because of a lack of experience or skill.

#### IN CONTEXT

Marisol was hired by a large Italian restaurant as a server. For many years, she had helped out at her family's restaurant in her hometown by taking orders and bussing tables. The manager thought she'd be a great fit because of the positive energy she exuded during her interview. However, when Marisol started her position she quickly realized the larger restaurant with a more complex kitchen and more

demanding patrons was very different from the casual, laid-back restaurant she grew up with. She was quickly overwhelmed by her new position and quit within a week of starting.



**2. The Dissatisfied High-Performer.** Sometimes the person hired is a great fit and seems to flourish on the job. For this high-performing worker, most tasks and responsibilities are effortless. However, due to the lack of challenges and engagement, this new employee experiences low job satisfaction and leaves the role after only a short stint with the employer.

### IN CONTEXT

Samir worked for several years in a fast-paced retail sales environment, where he was always on his feet and busy. When he decided to go back to school, he realized he needed a less stressful job, and applied for several data entry positions he found online. His intelligence and computer skills impressed the company he interviewed with, so he was hired quickly. However, once he started the new position he quickly realized the repetitive work and the quiet office environment made it difficult for him to stay focused. Because of the poor match, he left the new position within a month.



In the case of both Marisol and Samir, candidates were hired who were not a good match for the job in either skill or personality. Unfortunately, this means that the employers are back where they started, after having wasted a significant amount of resources.

To improve their success rate, employers and hiring managers look to:

1. Hire an employee from within the organization (an internal candidate). Companies take fewer risks by hiring internally because they have a better record of a candidate's job performance.
2. Look for recommendations from people they know and trust. Because employers often hire based on recommendations, effective networking can produce a significant advantage when you are searching for a new job role.
3. Select a recruiting firm or temporary agency to find qualified candidates. These types of agencies do the difficult work of vetting candidates prior to presenting them to a company for a job opening.



### THINK ABOUT IT

While it is ultimately the employer's responsibility to find a qualified candidate for a job, the applicant also has a responsibility to ensure that they present themselves honestly and know what their own goals, wants, and needs are for their job search. What do you think Marisol and Samir could have done to prevent their dissatisfaction with their new jobs? How can you avoid similar pitfalls?

## 1b. Becoming a "Safe Bet"

This inside look into the hiring process helps us realize the importance of becoming a "safe bet" to an employer, rather than applying to whatever positions we are interested in. Understanding the priorities of employers can help you improve your job search and make it more effective. Employers want to feel confident that a candidate is ready to invest their time and grow into the role.



### DID YOU KNOW

Hiring managers may receive hundreds of applications for one job. That's why marketing yourself well and using effective job search strategies are so important to your successful search.

During your search you should be matching yourself with jobs that align with your goals, interests, and future career plans. The jobs that you select and get hired for will ultimately build your resume. If employers can see a collection of roles that align with skills and experience in a relevant industry, they will interpret this as a commitment to big-picture planning.

## 2. Conducting a Successful Job Search

### 2a. Strategies

The most effective job search uses a variety of strategies, some of which are listed in this tutorial. When you use defined strategies, you can evaluate the results of your job search and make changes that will improve your level of success. So, what strategies might job seekers find useful in their search?

Strategy	Description
Clarify Your Goal	In order to market yourself well, you need a clear understanding of what you want that translates into a specific job. Most people think a job search starts with writing a <b>resume</b> or <b>CV</b> , but it actually starts with clarifying your goals to better communicate with employers.
Leverage Your Network	Because most jobs are found through networking, inform everyone in your network of your targeted job and the type of organizations where you would like to work. People in your network may not have a job for you, but asking them for information and recommendations can be helpful.
Write Professional Communications	Knowing when and how to communicate throughout networking and the job search process can feel a little unclear. Learn how to communicate clearly and concisely to leave a good impression on anyone you interact with.
Research Employers	Employers often cite a lack of research into their company as the biggest error an applicant can make in the job search. Strong applicants understand a company's mission, its general operations, and how the role they're applying to fits into that system through research.

Prepare to Apply	Make sure your application materials, such as your resume/CV and <b>cover letter</b> , are tailored to the job you're applying for and effectively promote your relevant skills and experience. This is also the time to update your LinkedIn profile, polish your portfolio, and practice interviewing.
Browse Jobs	Use the resources available to you to browse for jobs. You may choose to target specific companies by reviewing their websites for career opportunities. Search engines such as Google, or job databases like Indeed allow you to search jobs by keyword (job title, job type, location, or other details). Your university, local library or community center may also offer career services.
Follow a Job Search Cycle	The most successful job seekers are those who make their search a full-time job. Landing your next position should be your business and not just a hobby. By using a dedicated and structured approach, you can make sure you keep a continual flow of leads and opportunities in the pipeline. Prepare to market yourself, and set daily and weekly goals for meetings, follow-up, and phone calls.



## TERMS TO KNOW

### Resume

A formal document that lists a candidate's qualifications for a job, including their employment and educational history.

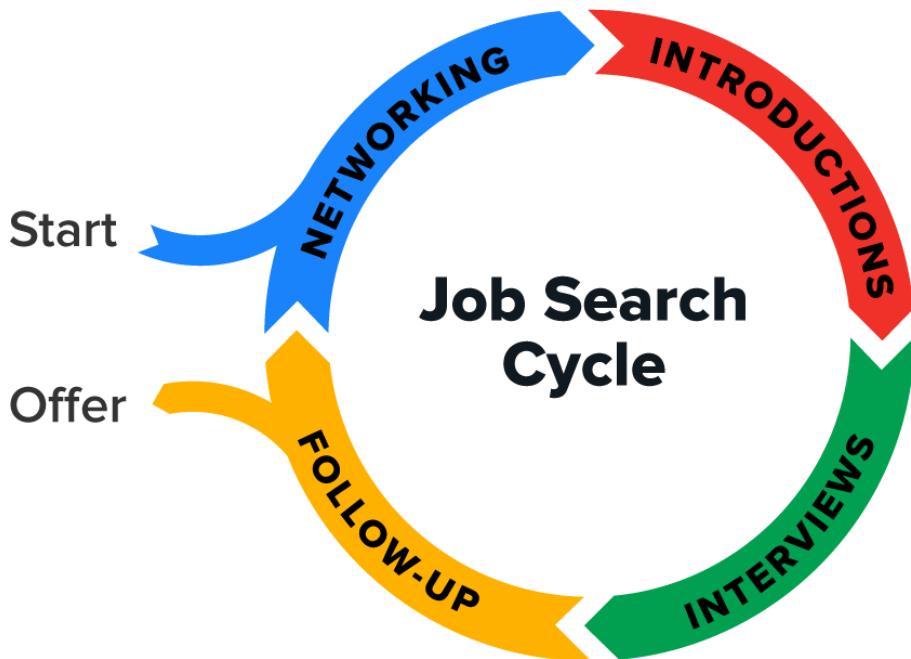
### CV

Also referred to as curriculum vitae; a comprehensive list of a person's academic credentials. This term is sometimes used interchangeably with the term resume, although usually a resume is more specifically tailored to a job being sought.

### Cover Letter

A formal business letter sent along with a resume or CV that introduces a job candidate and expresses their interest in an open position.

## 2b. Job Search Cycle



The Job Search Cycle is a process by which anyone at any level of career readiness can make progress and enhance their ability to secure a job. The steps involved require maximum effort and close attention to detail.



#### STEP BY STEP

- 1. Networking.** Networking helps you meet new people and uncover opportunities for growth and advancement in your career. As you connect with other professionals, you want to consider how you can be an asset to them. Your networking will be the main source for your job leads and career information.
- 2. Introductions.** The contacts that you receive from networking will only develop into relationships if you take the time to interact with your new contacts. Schedule meetings to interview professionals that have influence within your industry or work for companies you have an interest in.
- 3. Interviews.** You need to be able to shine during interviews, which are your opportunity to show an employer the person behind a resume of accomplishments and experience. Although it can be nerve-wracking for many, an interview is really just a conversation and an opportunity to see whether there is a good fit for you as well as the company. If you end up having an interview as a result of a networking contact, be sure that you make your contact proud that they referred you!
- 4. Follow-up.** As you continually target new opportunities, remember to also follow up on existing ones, especially after you interview for a position. The day after your interview, send an email to the individuals who interviewed you to thank them for the opportunity and check in on any next steps. Follow-up can also be useful when you are waiting to schedule a meeting or hear from a contact about a company or job. However, don't give up if you don't hear back. Focus on moving forward, and keep in mind that there will always be competition. You're not meant to get every job that you pursue, but your consistency will be rewarded over time.

**5. Job Offers.** Be prepared for job offers. You want to make sure you have a plan and a detailed idea of the type of job offer you're looking to secure. Your hard work throughout this process should leave you more than satisfied. If you are unsatisfied with your first offer or want more options, repeat the process until you find the fit.

When utilizing such a process for your job search, be mindful of a few important insights:

- **The Importance of Completion.** The cycle must be completed to realize its full potential. All four components of the cycle are equally important. Forgetting to enable just one of the four components could render the others meaningless. For instance, if you complete your networking, make introductions with the right people, and then have a successful interview, you could still lose an opportunity if you don't follow up.
- **Practice Makes Perfect.** The process is ongoing and only gets stronger with time. Practicing these four components will help you improve your skills in networking and communication, which are valuable even outside of your job search. We'll discuss these components in greater detail during a later tutorial.
- **Be Persistent.** Les Brown, a famous motivational speaker, once said, "It isn't over until I win!" An attitude of persistence is required to be successful. Work the Job Search Cycle until you get the job offer that you're looking for. Remember, though, that everyone starts at a different place in their career journey, and the road to a successful job offer may take longer for some people. Even the most effective networker takes time to develop relationships. Stay on course and work the process until you see results.



## SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned about job hunting by considering the hiring process from the perspective of the employer and the candidate. You learned **how employers hire** and why they look for a "safe bet" candidate to fill an open position. A "safe bet" is a candidate who is a good fit for a specific job opening and seems likely to succeed on the job. It is important to **become a "safe bet"** because employers will prioritize hiring candidates who present themselves as a good match. You also learned how to **conduct a successful job search** by learning **strategies** and following a defined process known as the **job search cycle**, which will help you to ensure you are fully focused on your job search and considering all viable options.

Source: THIS CONTENT HAS BEEN ADAPTED FROM Strayer's Career Center.



## TERMS TO KNOW

### CV

Also referred to as curriculum vitae; a comprehensive list of a person's academic credentials. This term is sometimes used interchangeably with the term resume, although usually a resume is more specifically tailored to a job being sought.

### Cover Letter

A formal business letter sent along with a resume or CV that introduces a job candidate and expresses their interest in an open position.

**Resume**

A formal document that lists a candidate's qualifications for a job, including their employment and educational history.

# Job Description Analysis

by Sophia



## WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn about the role a job description plays in the hiring process. You will be introduced to the different sections that a typical job description might have. Understanding the purpose and content of a job description will allow you to leverage your information when you apply to a new employment opportunity. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

- [\*\*1. Job Description Overview\*\*](#)
- [\*\*2. Sections of a Job Description\*\*](#)
  - [\*\*2a. Employer and Position Information\*\*](#)
  - [\*\*2b. Job Insights and Requirements\*\*](#)
  - [\*\*2c. Job Rewards\*\*](#)

## 1. Job Description Overview

A well-developed job description provides information about the company, as well as the role a new hire would play within the company. No two job descriptions are the same. However, all job descriptions should offer enough information to allow a candidate to decide on whether or not they should apply.

Even at first glance, the depth and detail of a job description can tell you a great deal. A job description that has a lengthy list of required skills and qualifications could indicate that the hiring manager is looking for a very specific type of candidate, one that could take a great deal of time to find. Conversely, a broader or more general job description doesn't mean that the employer is open to taking anyone: offering more flexibility in applicant qualifications could be a strategy to find a unique or outside-the-box hire.

As you analyze a job description, there will be different sections that can provide you with insights into the employer's needs and search strategies. They can also help you match your own goals with potential jobs. Knowing your job priorities will help you make informed choices about your candidacy for the role.

### IN CONTEXT

Fatima is looking for a fully remote position in human resources. She feels strongly that she is more productive working from home without the distractions of an office, and enjoys the improved work-life balance remote positions offer. She has decided she will not consider any position that is not fully

remote, so when she uses job search engines she always makes sure to modify the job filter to only search for remote jobs. This greatly reduces the time she spends sorting through potential positions.



## 2. Sections of a Job Description

While conducting your job search, it is important to fully read and understand the details provided by your potential employer. No matter what role you are applying for, you need to demonstrate the value that you will add to the team and to the company.

Thoroughly reading a job description to determine if you are a good match for the role will lower the number of applications that you need to submit to land your dream job. It will also increase your chances of getting interviews, help you prepare for those interviews, and ensure you make an informed decision about whether the job is the right fit for you or not.

By identifying the required responsibilities in the job description, you can then identify employer needs, determine your fit for a position, and create customized application materials (such as your own cover letter and resume) to showcase the alignment of your skill set and experience with the job description.

You will also want to focus on these identified role responsibilities during your interview. Try to show alignment from your past or current experience with the new role. If you do not have direct industry experience, you can identify the new role responsibilities and articulate how your previous role responsibilities are transferable to the job you desire. This will help you to convince the prospective employer that you are a good candidate for the role.

Most job descriptions are organized into three sections: employer and position information, job insights and requirements, and job rewards.

↗ EXAMPLE This sample job description below is labeled to show the types of information it includes. Not all job descriptions will follow this exact format, but the information included will be similar.



[Sample Job Description](#)

# Business Analyst | HG1 Manufacturing

Job title

## Job Type Full-time

based out of Washington DC office, M - F (40 hours per week)

Job commitments, location and scheduled hours

## About Us

HG1 Manufacturing offers warranties on automotive products all over the globe. Our excellent services is only surpassed by our commitment to provide a real connections with our clients.

Details about the employer

## About the Role

The Business Analyst will review data provided by sales representatives, analyzing and revising the data to deliver accurate projections about market and business conditions, anticipated production levels, and other factors.

Overview of the job

## Responsibilities

- Analyzes data, makes recommendations, and presents forecasts to the leadership team.
- Plan and assign projects to other business analyst and record monthly project updates to the leaderships.
- Promote the brands QA standards during internal and external meetings.
- Work with diligence and integrity to uphold the company stand or excellence.
- Perform audits on staff productivity and handle conflicts between team members

Insights on the task and responsibilities of the role

## Required Skills

- At least three years of experience preparing sales analysis and forecasts in a marketing environment required.
- Certification in supply chain inventory analysis.
- On the job work with pivot tables and inventory diagnostics.

The mandatory skills and experience level that a candidate must have to apply

## Education and Experience

- Bachelors' degree in Business analytics or a related field  
or
- 3-5 years of experience performing relevant work

Required education and/or experience level

## Benefits

- Medical, Dental, Vision, Life, Employer HSA contributions
- Retirement Plan, Employer Match
- Paid Time Off, Profit Sharing

Healthcare, Retirement funding and other non salary benefits

## Salary \$62,000 - \$70,000 a year

Income range the employer is offering

## 2a. Employer and Position Information

A **job title** will often explain the role itself, but sometimes further research is necessary. Employers know the title is the first thing an applicant is going to see. If the job title is meaningful and appealing, then the right person will be enticed to apply.

☞ EXAMPLE "Gym Teacher" provides an instant idea of what the job entails, while the title "Consultant" leaves a lot to the imagination. If a job title is very general, be sure to skim the rest of the description, and do some research on the employer before you decide whether or not to apply.

The **job type** listed in the post may include full-time, part-time, hybrid, remote, contract, or other descriptors. The job type can refer to the time commitment, the work location, the job's scheduled hours, or the pay structure. Be sure that you look closely at all of the descriptors listed and determine whether they will fit your requirements.

The employer wants to share meaningful information about their company's **mission** and **vision**, so a job post will usually include a section with this information. You will often see employers add a snapshot of information from the company website, but you should always navigate to the website to learn more about the company anyway. Learning more about a company's mission and vision is helpful when you're trying to decide between similar jobs; you should select the company whose mission feels like the best fit for your lifestyle and personal beliefs.



### TERMS TO KNOW

#### Job Title

Usually describes the job role and context, such as 7th Grade English Tutor.

#### Job Type

Describes details about the job including time commitment, location, scheduled hours, pay structure, and more.

#### Mission

Defines the business purpose or goals and how it goes about fulfilling its purpose and reaching its goals; is often stated in a formal way.

#### Vision

Describes what the company would like to grow into or accomplish in the future; is often stated in a formal way.

## 2b. Job Insights and Requirements

A job posting will also provide detailed information about the role. Included in this description you may read about how the role contributes to the company or community as a whole. You will also read about typical **job duties** an employee would be expected to perform.

Another common section is a list of required **job skills**. Depending on the job, this list might be quite lengthy, and you should assume that the skills are required for the role unless otherwise stated. In other words, if you do not possess the skills listed, your application will not be considered.

Information about **education** and **experience** will also be included, such as any particular degrees or certifications that are necessary for the role, and how many years of experience applicants should have in the job's major functions.



### REFLECT

When you read about the job and its requirements, you should ask yourself:

- Do I feel comfortable performing these tasks?
- Do the main job responsibilities interest me?
- Do I have any previous experience in performing any of these required tasks or responsibilities?
- If I have not performed any of these responsibilities previously, what are some of my strengths that I can apply to these roles to learn these new responsibilities quickly, and be successful in doing them?
- Can I picture myself being successful in this role?
- Does the role align with my career goals?
- What feelings do I have (for example, excited, interested, energized, bored, drained) when I read about this role?
- Will I be professionally challenged in this role so that I can continue to grow in my field?



### TERMS TO KNOW

#### Job Duties

The tasks or responsibilities an employee is expected to perform while on the job, such as data entry or management.

#### Job Skills

What an employee is able to do, such as using a particular software program, driving a truck, or working on a team.

#### Education

Amount and type of formal training or schooling in a particular field, usually yielding a degree, certificate, or diploma that represents its completion.

#### Experience

Amount of time a person has performed a certain skill or task that is relevant.

## 2c. Job Rewards

Sometimes, a job post will include information about pay. A **salary** or **hourly rate** might be listed as a range with a minimum and maximum. You will often see that employers don't list the salary information. However, that doesn't mean it's not available with some additional research or by contacting the company directly.

Job posts will also include a list of **benefits** offered. Benefits may include healthcare, retirement funding, and other non-salary benefits.



### KEY CONCEPT

Don't overlook the benefits package that you could receive from an employer. Healthcare and 401k plans have a lot of value. Even if an employer isn't offering top-level pay, an excellent benefits package might make up for a pay deficit.



## TERMS TO KNOW

### Salary

A yearly amount usually paid in monthly or weekly installments as part of a permanent full-time position.

### Hourly Rate

An amount paid based on the quantity of hours worked, usually for a non-salaried or contract position.

### Benefits

Any compensation given to an employee outside of their pay, such as health insurance, retirement accounts, tuition reimbursement, training opportunities, or parental leave.



## SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned about the importance of analyzing a **job description** when applying to a job. The **sections of a job description** provide information to help you align your goals with the details shared by the employer. The **employer and position information, job insights and requirements, and job rewards** sections should be a good match for your skills, education, and experience. Do your due diligence by researching the company on their website and elsewhere, and reach out to the company directly if you have questions about pay and benefits. But above all, ensure that you complete a full analysis by reflecting on the job opening and your needs, to ensure that there is a strong enough match for you to apply for the position.

Source: THIS CONTENT HAS BEEN ADAPTED FROM Strayer's Career Center.



## TERMS TO KNOW

### Benefits

Any compensation given to an employee outside of their pay, such as health insurance, retirement accounts, tuition reimbursement, training opportunities, or parental leave.

### Education

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### Experience

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### Hourly Rate

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**Job Duties**

The tasks or responsibilities an employee is expected to perform while on the job, such as data entry or management.

**Job Skills**

What an employee is able to do, such as using a particular software program, driving a truck, or working on a team.

**Job Title**

Usually describes the job role and context, such as 7th Grade English Tutor.

**Job Type**

Describes details about the job including time commitment, location, scheduled hours, pay structure, and more.

**Mission**

Defines the business purpose or goals and how it goes about fulfilling its purpose and reaching its goals; is often stated in a formal way.

**Salary**

An amount usually paid yearly in monthly or weekly installments as a part of a permanent full-time position.

**Vision**

Describes what the company would like to grow into or accomplish in the future; is often stated in a formal way.

# Employer Needs

by Sophia



## WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn how to identify the employer's needs and the significance they play when applying to a new job opportunity. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

### 1. Employer Needs

- 1a. Case Study: Sarah's Small Business
- 1b. Why They Matter
- 1c. Analyzing the Employer's Needs

### 2. Analysis of a Job Description

- 2a. Highlighting Exercise
- 2b. Reflection
- 2c. Takeaways

## 1. Employer Needs

As a job seeker, it is vitally important to understand what the employer wants from a candidate for an open position. Getting past the first stage of the application process will be challenging if application documents do not clearly connect your skills to the needs of the employer. A strong resume effectively markets you to the potential employer by sharing how you would be an asset to their team or solve a need for the company instead of simply listing your accomplishments. The job description should give you the necessary information to tailor your resume and cover letter to the employer's needs and wants.

The following case study illustrates a situation in which a job applicant who was otherwise very qualified for a position could have done a better job communicating their qualifications with the potential employer.

### 1a. Case Study: Sarah's Small Business

**IN CONTEXT** Sarah, a small business owner, has a team member retiring in a couple of months. This team member carries a significant workload in the office and completes work that is vital to the company, so it will be important for Sarah to find a strong candidate to step into the role if the company is going to continue to succeed.

Sarah knows that she needs to write and advertise the job description for this role so the search can begin. She spends several hours crafting the language of the job description to be sure the content is fair, accurate, and reflects her company's values. Sarah cares deeply that the new employee shares the mission of the organization, as well as a deep commitment to being on the team. She also needs the hire to step in with vital skills to hit the ground running.



As a job seeker, Jane comes across Sarah's job posting and is intrigued by the job title. She skims through the company information, focusing on the day-to-day tasks of the role and the necessary qualifications. Jane is instantly interested. The pay is attractive, the responsibilities of the role sound exciting, and she meets the qualifications listed. Great! Jane submits her resume, a document that lists her accomplishments, previous experience, and highlights how she has benefited past employers. She has excellent professional experience in a role with a similar job title, and although the projects she has completed are different than those Sarah will need completed, Jane feels confident that her resume shows she is capable. She submits her resume and waits, but unfortunately, Jane receives a message that Sarah has moved forward with another candidate.

Why might Sarah have chosen someone other than Jane? There may be many reasons, some of which are entirely outside of Jane's control. But it may also be worthwhile for Jane to consider how her resume and application demonstrated an understanding of what her prospective employer was looking for in the role. Jane was excited about the role, and felt she could meet the requirements, but she may not have demonstrated sufficient understanding of Sarah's needs, or successfully tailored her application to the specific job description.

## 1b. Why They Matter

For job seekers, a job description is a vital window into the needs and wants of the employer. It outlines the tasks and responsibilities of the role and gives the company a chance to describe its values and culture. The job description is the voice of the employer early in the job search process. To give themselves the best chance, job seekers should analyze a job posting to understand the needs of the employer, and then tailor their application materials to those needs. Doing so will show an understanding of the employer's needs and demonstrate value to the prospective company.

## 1c. Analyzing the Employer's Needs

There are many ways you can approach analyzing a job description and determining an employer's needs. First, review the employer sections of the job description, starting at the very beginning of the job description with the job title. Companies may use different job titles depending on responsibilities, seniority, and strategic plan. A job at Company A may have all the same day-to-day responsibilities but an entirely different job title than Company B. The way an employer titles a role gives clues to their hiring priorities.

Beyond the job title, there will often be an About Us section where the employer will share the mission, vision, and culture of the organization. This is the employer's chance to share information that they think will be important to job seekers, so pay attention to what is said here.

You will also notice a high-level overview of the job. Here, the employer communicates how they see the role and the desired objective of the position. The employer will often state in this section what they will expect the new employee to achieve in the role, and may even discuss personality traits they are looking for in a candidate.

Consider the language used in all sections of the description, as the word choice may signify the culture and values of the company. Is the organization speaking formally or informally? Do they discuss inclusion and diversity up front? Oftentimes, the language contains clues about the employer and their priorities. Be on the lookout for keywords in the description. What does the description seem to focus on? What words are repeated? Identifying the keywords will point to the needs and focus of the employer, and a successful candidate will mirror the keywords in their own application documents.

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## 2. Analysis of a Job Description

It is best practice for a job seeker to tailor application materials to a job posting, and to create their resume and cover letter with the employer's needs in mind. Think about how you will meet their needs and help solve their problems. Analyzing a job description to understand the employer's needs will help job seekers mirror the employer's language and keywords, and connect themselves directly to a solution the employer needs.

### 2a. Highlighting Exercise

Let's practice analyzing a job description. Print out a copy of a job description you are interested in and gather four separate colors of highlighter or marker. Then follow these steps:

1. With one color, go through and highlight all the **action verbs** you see listed.

⤓ EXAMPLE Action verbs are used in job descriptions to indicate the key roles and responsibilities a job entails. For instance, a job might require that an employee analyze data. In this example, analyze is the action verb.

2. With a second color, highlight all the **hard skills** you see listed.

⤓ EXAMPLE Hard skills are the quantifiable abilities that the employer identifies as needed for the position, such as the ability to use a particular type of software or tool.

3. With a third color, highlight the **soft skills** you see listed.

⤓ EXAMPLE Soft skills are characteristics or traits that the company seeks in their new hire, such as the ability to work on a team or manage other employees.

4. And finally, with a fourth color, highlight any words that signal the values or culture of the organization.

⤓ EXAMPLE The value and culture of an organization may be directly discussed in the company's mission or vision statement, such as a goal to improve an aspect of human life. Value and culture may also be

indicated by the benefits a company provides its employees. For instance, a company that values the work-life balance of its employees might offer a sabbatical program or generous paid time off. Whatever the value and culture appear to be, ensure there is alignment with your own beliefs and lifestyle.



## TERMS TO KNOW

### Action Verb

Used in job descriptions to indicate the key roles and responsibilities a job entails. For instance, a job might require that an employee analyze data. In this example, analyze is the action verb.

### Hard Skills

Quantifiable abilities a job posting will list for prospective candidates, such as the ability to use a particular type of software or tool.

### Soft Skills

Characteristics or traits an employer is looking for in a new hire, such as the ability to work on a team or manage other employees.

## 2b. Reflection



## REFLECT

Make a list of words that stood out. What do these words have in common? How often are the words repeated?

Understanding the action verbs that an employer calls out in a job description will give a clue as to the employer's expectations of a candidate. Consider tailoring your resume to demonstrate the same skills (and same action verbs) that the employer cares about.

Similarly, the highlighted hard and soft skills give insight into the needs of the employer and the gap they need to fill. Are you an Excel wizard? Are you an empathetic listener? Employers will be looking for a candidate to demonstrate their ability to meet the listed skills.

Regarding words that signal value and culture, employers will want to hire a candidate who shares these with the organization, so acknowledging the values of the employer in your application documents can go a long way.

## 2c. Takeaways

Some employers and recruiters make a habit of comparing a resume with their job description and looking for overlap in skills, abilities, traits, and keywords. Companies will also use software to automatically search applicants' resumes for certain keywords indicating the skills or experience they are looking for. Sometimes your resume may not be reviewed by an actual person until it has passed the software screening, so it's important to make sure your resume matches the job description as closely as possible.

Highlighting a job description to look for these items helps job seekers know where to focus their attention when compiling their resume. As you complete the highlighting exercise and continue to analyze job

descriptions for employer needs, consider what and why the employer may be signaling a need in the job description. You can use the following questions to guide this analysis:

1. **What is the purpose of this role?** Why does the employer want to hire someone to do this work? What gap exists that the employer needs to fill? Consider whether you are interested in and capable of filling that need.
2. **What are employers looking for in a candidate?** What traits and characteristics are being signaled by the employer? Who would succeed in this role?
3. **What repetition do you see?** What words, ideas, or themes do you see repeated in the job description? Repetition indicates an intentional emphasis that likely means an employer is looking for something specific.



## SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned about the importance of closely analyzing a job description to determine the **employer's needs** when you are considering applying for a job. Your skills and values should be a good match for the information provided by the employer. As you saw in the **case study: Sarah's Small Business**, a job seeker should tailor their application materials to the job posting, because **they matter** to the employer, and help demonstrate if you will be a good fit. **Analyzing the employer's needs** will help you be successful with this step. A thorough **analysis of a job description** might include **highlighting** various elements and **reflecting** on whether the job is a good fit for you. As a key **takeaway**, be sure to communicate to a prospective employer that you are a strong candidate by tailoring your resume to suit the specific job you are applying to. Doing so will show the employer that you have taken the time to pay attention to their needs and wants, and that you are a candidate worth interviewing.

Source: THIS CONTENT HAS BEEN ADAPTED FROM Strayer's Career Center.



## TERMS TO KNOW

### Action Verb

Used in job descriptions to indicate the key roles and responsibilities a job entails. For instance, a job might require that an employee analyze data. In this example, analyze is the action verb.

### Hard Skills

Quantifiable abilities a job posting will list for prospective candidates, such as the ability to use a particular type of software or tool.

### Soft Skills

Characteristics or traits an employer is looking for in a new hire, such as the ability to work on a team or manage other employees.

# Your Fit for the Job

by Sophia



## WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will understand how to align yourself to a particular job opening. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

- [1. Understanding Your Fit](#)
- [2. Case Studies](#)
  - [2a. Case Study: A Good Fit for Darnell?](#)
  - [2b. Case Study: Mariah's Qualifications](#)
  - [2c. Case Study: Juan's Dream Job](#)

## 1. Understanding Your Fit

The job description provides information on whether a position will be a fit for you or not. The posting not only provides information about the experience and education required to be considered for the position, but it also provides clues about the organization's values, culture, and employee expectations.

Take some time to reflect on these questions to help you assess your fit for the role:

Job Description Section	Questions to Ask Yourself to Understand Your Fit
Job Type	Can you commit to the hours, work environment, and location listed for the position? How will this job fit with other commitments you already have in your life?
About Us	What are the organization's values, based on its description of itself? What type of culture do you picture at this organization? Do you think you would enjoy working at this type of organization based on how they describe themselves? What is the organization not saying about themselves (e.g., what does it mean for you if they don't mention a commitment to diversity and inclusion?)
About the Role	Can you picture yourself being successful in this role? Does the role align with your career goals? What feelings do you have (excited, interested, energized, bored, drained) when you read about this role?

Responsibilities	Can you perform the necessary duties for the role? Will you enjoy the tasks of the role? Will you be professionally challenged in this role so that you can continue to grow in your field?
Required Skills	Do you meet the minimum requirements of the role? What transferable skills from experiences outside of the industry might meet the requirements?
Education and Experience	Do you meet the minimum education and experience credentials for the role?
Benefits	Do the benefits align with your everyday needs? Are the benefits an improvement from your previous role or consistent with your expectations? If the benefits are not listed on the job posting, does this change how you feel about the role?
Salary	Does the salary align with the salary research you've conducted for this type of role? Does the salary support your current expenses?

## 2. Case Studies

To better understand how you can use the job description to determine whether a position is a fit for you or not, consider the following three case studies.

### 2a. Case Study: A Good Fit for Darnell?

#### IN CONTEXT

Darnell is considering a Business Analyst job posting at HG1 Manufacturing. Darnell graduated with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration, with a concentration in Data Analytics. He has three years of experience as a Sales Strategy Analyst for a small tech company, where he had exposure to all areas of the business, and one year of experience as a Workforce Management Analyst for a large, global company in the finance industry.



As he scans the job posting, he first looks over the required skills, education, and experience sections, and feels his educational and professional background meet the qualifications for the position. Furthermore, it's important to Darnell that his employer values his contributions, and he feels that the benefits and salary range indicate he will be fairly compensated for his work.

Darnell is feeling confident about applying to this position because it has checked all of the boxes for him—at least so far. He decides to take one more glance at the full description to review some of the sections he initially only skimmed over. When reading information the company shares about itself, Darnell takes pause when he notices that HG1 mentions being a global organization. Darnell has worked at both a small, local company and a large global company, and has found that he really prefers a smaller, local organization. He's open to trying another large organization, but no longer

feels as excited about the position.

Further, he notices that there is no mention of the organization's commitment to diversity and inclusion in any part of the posting. Darnell identifies with the LGBTQIA+ community, and is passionate about his work as a member of his current organization's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee. He is starting to feel some concern that he might not fit in with the culture of this organization.

As he continues to assess the posting, feelings of disappointment replace the excitement he originally had for the role. Darnell reviews the job responsibilities once more and sees that this position would require him to regularly present to the leadership team at the organization. As Darnell has grown as a professional, he has realized that he really dislikes presenting and does not want such a task to be his primary responsibility.

Although Darnell qualifies for the position, and originally felt excited about the tasks, benefits, and salary, he decides not to apply for this role because it does not sound like a fit for him. He also now feels more confident that he needs to seek a smaller organization that values diversity, equity, and inclusion, and that does not require presenting. Darnell continues his job search having better defined his own job goals.



### THINK ABOUT IT

The first thing Darnell did was look at the job's required skills. Your candidacy for a job begins with the requirements of the employers. Most employers immediately remove candidates that don't meet the mandatory requirements.

Ultimately, Darnell was concerned about the size of this employer. There is a significant difference between a global organization and a smaller local employer. Larger employers often have to conduct business in a very process-oriented way. The overall focus is to produce at scale. This makes it more challenging to offer a more personal, team approach to the work. Having enough self-awareness to know what type of job will suit you best is key to your happiness in a position.

Company culture was very important to Darnell. He decided that his values were the priority, rather than the benefits and salary. When you apply to a job, you too should give consideration to your values and morals. Don't be afraid to stand on your principles, and pass on jobs that don't align with your beliefs and interests. Remember, you are evaluating the employer just as much as they are evaluating you.



### REFLECT

Think about the following questions regarding Darnell's story.

- How would you have handled this situation if you were Darnell?
- What dealbreakers do you have for potential employers or jobs?

- If Darnell did choose to interview with HG1, what questions might he have asked to address his concerns about the culture of the organization?

## 2b. Case Study: Mariah's Qualifications

### IN CONTEXT

Mariah is another job seeker who has come across the HG1 Manufacturing Business Analyst role. Mariah holds an associate degree in Marketing and has worked as a Social Media Analyst at a non-profit organization for four years. Mariah feels excited as she reviews the Business Analyst job posting, because she's been searching for a position outside of the nonprofit world.



As she reviews the job responsibilities section, she feels confident in her ability to perform all the required tasks of the position, and she finds the information in the benefits and salary sections attractive. Mariah also believes her personality and values align with the organization based on the information she finds in the About Us section.

As Mariah reviews the required skills for the job, however, she realizes she will not qualify as a candidate for this role because she does not have a certification in supply chain inventory analysis. Mariah feels frustrated, but also understands that she cannot apply for a position if she doesn't hold a required credential. As a next step in her job search, Mariah plans to review additional Business Analyst roles, to see if most positions require this type of certificate. She can then determine whether she should pursue that certificate, or find another company that does not require it.



### THINK ABOUT IT

Despite lacking an appropriate credential, Mariah felt confident in her ability to perform all the required tasks. Confidence is a key factor for success on the job. If you're going to meet with an employer and explain why you're the best candidate for the role, you shouldn't have to also convince yourself. When you have confidence in yourself it shows throughout the job hunting process. That's why it's critical to select roles where you believe you will grow and succeed.

It is difficult to not be able to apply to a job that you're excited about. However, Mariah made the right choice given that she does not have the required credential. Employers have set certain standards for job roles because they want new hires to meet with success. Mariah made the tough decision to move forward and apply to a job that is a better fit. She can also take note of qualifications that she may need or want for her future career plans.

The fact that Mariah became frustrated when she realized that she could no longer apply to the position is understandable. The job hunting process can be difficult at times. There will be roadblocks and challenges.

The path to your goal isn't always a straight line, and you should be prepared for the ups and downs of the process. It is important to stay focused and positive, regardless of your frustrations.



## REFLECT

Think about the following questions regarding Mariah's story.

- Is there a better way for Mariah to search for jobs, so that she doesn't continually come across job opportunities that don't match her experience level or credentials?
- What should Mariah do to stay positive and continue to persevere on her job search?

## 2c. Case Study: Juan's Dream Job

### IN CONTEXT

Juan holds a bachelor's degree in Supply Chain Management, and earned a Supply Chain Inventory Analysis Certificate while working on his degree several years ago. After graduation, Juan was offered an entry-level analyst position at a large healthcare company. He advanced into a Workforce Management Analyst role at his company, and has been in this role for three years. He never pursued his career goal of working in supply chain management because he felt very comfortable in his role and enjoyed his coworkers.



Recently, Juan has found himself losing interest in his daily responsibilities at work, and is seeking a career change that offers him a new challenge, uses the professional experience he's obtained, and allows him to reconnect with his interest in supply chain management and analysis. He knows that he thrives at a large company, and prefers to work in an office rather than remotely.

In his search for a new position, Juan comes across the Business Analyst position at HG1 Manufacturing. As Juan reviews each section of the posting, he grows more and more excited about the role. He reads the About Us section, and is drawn to the scale of a large, global organization. Looking further down the job description, the job responsibilities section confirms his capability to do the job, and he feels that this job could enable him to grow in his professional development through frequent presentations to leadership.

He reviews the required skills, and has experience preparing pivot tables, inventory diagnostics, analysis, and forecasts. Although his experience with these tasks is not in sales, he believes his skills can transfer to the new industry.

Finally, he reviews the education and experience section, and discovers that his certificate, degree, and years of experience performing relevant work match what the employer is seeking. The position seems to be a great fit for Juan because his profile meets the employer's needs, so he excitedly applies for the role.



## THINK ABOUT IT

Juan's ability to embrace change is refreshing. He recognized that he was settled into a routine and was looking for something different. Keeping up with the status quo is easy and comfortable, and it takes courage to strive for more.

The experience level requested in this job wasn't an exact match with Juan's career background. However, he was able to see how his skills could transfer to the role. You don't have to meet every single qualification and detail of the job description exactly. Do as Juan did, and understand the narrative that you want to create and share with employers. An important part of applying to new roles is explaining to employers why you will be a great fit based on your previous experience. When Juan applies for this position, he will need to include an explanation of how his skills and experience match this job opening in a cover letter.

Despite the fact that he has yet to secure the position, Juan has a plan for how this job could help him accomplish his career goals. This is an important and exciting point to share with a potential employer—Juan sees potential for growth in this role. As you envision yourself in a new job role, take the time to consider how it might bring you closer to your goals.



## REFLECT

Think about the following questions regarding Juan's story.

- What are Juan's next steps, now that he knows he wants to apply to this job?
- Are there any concerns that Juan should have about this job? What questions could he ask the employer to ease any concerns about his fit?
- How can Juan best communicate his fit for the new role?
- What do you think about Juan's decision to leave his current job? Would you want to do the same in his position?



## BIG IDEA

As demonstrated by Darnell, Mariah, and Juan's stories, a job description can tell us a lot about how our values, identities, skills, education, experience, personal needs, and more will align or not align with a position.

These stories demonstrate how a person might align with some aspects of the role, but find misalignment in other areas—in other words, a position might be a perfect fit for one professional, but not meet the expectations of another professional with the same general experience.

It is essential to reflect on the various feelings you experience as you review a job posting. Which sections make you feel confident, which cause excitement, and which make you feel nervous or unprepared? It can be helpful to review many job postings for the same type of position to help clarify what you are looking for in a job. Pay attention to what excites you about a position, and what does not. As you continue to review

more descriptions, you'll most likely find that you can make quicker decisions about whether to apply or not.



## SUMMARY

In this lesson, you took a deeper look at how to **understand your fit** for a job using a variety of **case studies**. As you saw in the case studies **A Good Fit for Darnell?**, **Mariah's Qualifications**, and **Juan's Dream Job**, taking the time to deeply analyze a job description can help you gain insights into what an employer is looking for, and then you can compare those needs to your qualifications, experience, and goals by asking yourself the right questions. Often, a job posting will have some areas that excite you and some that disappoint you. The more you review job postings, the better you will get at identifying what you are looking for, and determining whether you want to apply for a role or not.

Source: THIS CONTENT HAS BEEN ADAPTED FROM Strayer's Career Center

# Resume

by Sophia



## WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will consider how your resume plays a critical role in your career development. You will review the basic types of resumes and the key components of each, as you come to understand that a resume is much more than just a list of your former jobs and where you went to school. You will then consider some best practices to ensure that your resume is both professional, and prepared to best communicate your fit to the job. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

### 1. Resume Basics

#### 1a. Types

#### 1b. Components

#### 1c. Examples

### 2. Resume Best Practices

#### 2a. Adding Key Insights

#### 2b. Editing and Proofreading

## 1. Resume Basics

Your resume is the best tool that you have for telling a potential employer about yourself, and indicating your interest in a specific job. It is often the first thing an employer or recruiter will see, so it is important that it contains certain key elements. However, it also needs to be tailored to the job you want. For example, if you are applying for an administrative assistant position, you would want to emphasize computer and communication skills in your resume. On the other hand, if you were applying to be a software engineer, your focus might be more on the languages you can code and systems you have used.

Any resume should include things like:

- Job experience
- Education and training
- Special job-related skills

No matter how much information you have to share, it is important to be **succinct**. Some human resources professionals won't take the time to read through a resume that is too long. You want to try to keep your

resume to one page if possible. Grab the reader's attention and keep the focus on who you are and why you are the best candidate.



## TERM TO KNOW

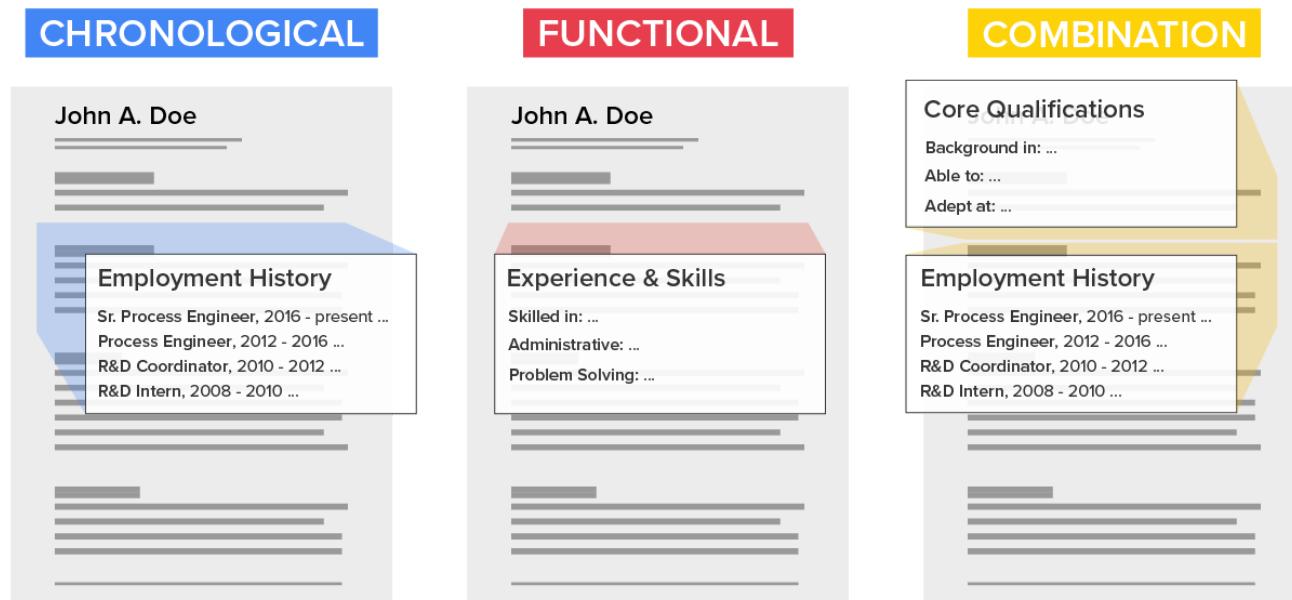
### Succinct

As short as possible to make a point clear.

## 1a. Types

Before you review the content of a resume, it is important to note that there are different types of resumes. The format of your information will vary depending on the type of resume that is best for the job.

Resumes can be chronological, functional, or a combination. A **chronological resume** lists your employment history in order, with the most recent position first. This is the most common type of resume, and the type most often preferred by employers, because the most relevant and recent information is at the top of the document. A **functional resume** focuses on skills and experience and is often used by people who are changing careers or who have gaps in their employment history; these individuals may want to emphasize their most relevant activities rather than their most recent ones. Some applicants use a **combination resume**, which works as a **hybrid** of the chronological and functional resume by providing a chronological work history and a separate list of skills.



- Lists most recent position first
- Preferred by most employers
- Most common resume type
- Focus on skills and experience
- Often used by people who are changing careers or who have gaps in their employment history
- Mix of chronological and functional resumes
- Highlights relevant skills, and chronological work history
- Emphasizes your fit, and gives desired info



## TERMS TO KNOW

### Chronological Resume

A resume that lists your employment history in order, with the most recent position first.

### Functional Resume

A resume that focuses on skills and experience, and is often used by people who are changing careers or who have gaps in their employment history.

### Combination Resume

A resume that combines features of the chronological and functional resume by providing a chronological work history and a separate list of skills.

### Hybrid

Something made by combining two different elements; a mixture.

## 1b. Components

While the format may vary, every resume contains the same key information. You may need to customize a little based on the desired job, but it helps to prepare a basic version of each component so that you are ready to modify and send your resume quickly when it is needed.

The six key components of every resume are:

**1. Name and contact information.** In the header of your resume, include the following information:

- First and last name
- City and state
- Phone number
- Email
- Link to portfolio or LinkedIn networking page

**2. Summary or objective.** In this section, include an explanation of who you are and why you are qualified for the job. A summary describes your work experience while an objective describes your immediate career goals.

Type	Length	Example
Summary	3-4 sentences	<i>"Highly motivated and results-driven professional with 5+ years of experience in project management and team leadership. Proven track record of successfully managing multi-million dollar projects, leading cross-functional teams, and delivering projects on time and within budget. Strong communication, problem-solving, and leadership skills. Seeking a challenging role in project management where I can utilize my skills and experience to drive success."</i>
Objective	1 concise sentence	<i>"Experienced recruiter seeking the opportunity to join a team of experienced HR professionals so I can learn and grow my skills."</i>



If you have a lot of relevant experience, use a summary to describe all of it. Objectives are usually best if you're an entry-level candidate or you're switching careers.

**3. Education.** Only list the education that is relevant for the position. For instance, if the job requires you to have a bachelor's in biology, don't list your high school education—only list your post-secondary education. Here is what you should include in the education section:

- Name of school
- Location of school
- Degree earned
- Area of study
- Relevant certificates, honors, or achievements

**4. Professional experience.** In this section, you should highlight all of your professional experience related to the role. You typically only list the last 10 years of employment history. This helps keep your resume to the desired length of about one page.

List your experience in reverse **chronological** order. That means you write it in order from your most recent to least recent jobs. Make sure to include your employer's name and location, your job title, and years of employment. Then, include bullet points that explain your responsibilities and any achievements during your time there. Write these with the job that you are applying for in mind.

**5. Skills relevant to the role.** In the skills section of your resume, include soft and hard skills that are directly related to the role you want.

**Soft skills** are skills that help you facilitate positive relationships. They are often considered people or social skills, such as the ability to work on a team or manage others.

☞ EXAMPLE Examples of soft skills include:

- Problem-solving
- Critical thinking
- Conflict resolution
- Time management

**Hard skills** are technical skills that you have learned through previous job experiences or education. They are quantifiable abilities a job post will list for prospective candidates, such as the ability to use a particular type of software or tool.

☞ EXAMPLE Examples of hard skills include:

- Equipment operation
- Project management

- Presentation skills
- Technology usage

**6. Achievements or volunteer work.** This section of your resume is optional. Only include these if they help the employer gain a better understanding of why you're a good candidate for the specific role. For example, if you are applying to be a cook, you could list volunteer work you did to help in a local soup kitchen.



## TERMS TO KNOW

### Soft Skills

Characteristics or traits an employer is looking for in a new hire, such as the ability to work on a team or manage other employees.

### Hard Skills

Quantifiable abilities a job post will list for prospective candidates, such as the ability to use a particular type of software or tool.

## 1c. Examples

It is a good idea to start with a solid chronological resume. You can then take any steps needed to draft different versions or formats if necessary. The following images show examples of the different types of resumes with the components we've discussed. You can do a search online to find examples of each kind of resume.

## CHRONOLOGICAL

### Name and contact information

#### John A. Doe

New York, NY 10101 / 123-456-7890 / jadoe@email.com

### Summary or objective

#### OBJECTIVE

An exceptionally organized and friendly dental assistant with 3+ years of experience working with dental offices and clients.

### Professional history

#### PROFESSIONAL HISTORY

##### Gotham Family Dentistry, Dental Assistant

July 2017 - Present

- Clean and prepare treatment rooms
- Prepare patient to be seen for dental treatment
- Answer common patient questions about dental procedures, treatments, and issues.

#### ABC DENTAL

##### Smith Family Dentistry, Dental Assistant

July 2014-June 2017

- Organized client schedules
- Received patients upon arrival
- Handled client billing and paperwork
- By end of work experience, took on key dental assistant roles

### Educational history

#### EDUCATIONAL HISTORY

##### New York Junior College

August 2012 - June 2014

Certified Dental Assistant Program

### Skills and abilities

#### SKILLS

##### Dental Assistant Skills Include:

- DANB certification • X-ray certification • Denture impressions •
- Calming personality and demeanor • Hygenic •
- Minor oral surgery experience

## FUNCTIONAL

Name and contact information

Summary or objective

Skills and abilities

Educational history

### John A. Doe

New York, NY 10101 / 123-456-7890 / jadoe@email.com

#### SUMMARY

Experienced customer service representative with a proven track record of boosting month-to-month sales. Able to predict, evaluate, and meet the specific needs of customers while maintaining an efficient work schedule. Awarded "Employee of the Month" for consistently receiving positive customer feedback. Seeking to leverage my experience in customer service to fill a Sales Clerk position at Blarney's.

#### RELEVANT SKILLS

##### Customer Service

- Receive a +95% on customer service feedback surveys on a consistent basis by providing a friendly in-store environment.
- Enhance the customer experience by providing quality assistance and in-depth product knowledge.
- Educate customers on up-and-coming brands and the latest fashion trends.

##### Sales

- Exceeded sales goals an average of 10% for 5 straight months.
- Upsell customers through the recommendation of products that meet their specific needs.
- Process 30+ customer transactions a day and factored sales, discounts, and promotions into the final price.

##### Customer Service

- Restock and organize new shipments of inventory in a timely manner, cutting an average of 2 days off the merchandising process.
- Develop and create unique displays that attract customers to a desired product.

#### RELEVANT SKILLS

Ulta, Manhattan, NY  
Sales Clerk  
2016-2017

GAP, Albany, NY  
Sales Representative  
2014-2015

GAP, Albany, NY  
Jr. Sales Representative  
2012-2013

#### EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (concentration: finance)  
Honors: cum laude (GPA: 3.7/4.0)  
Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA  
May 2014

## COMBINATION

Name and contact information

Summary or objective

Skills and abilities

Professional history

Educational history

### John A. Doe

New York, NY 10101 / 123-456-7890 / jadoe@email.com

#### SUMMARY

A general bookkeeper with 8+ years experience using both single-entry and double-entry systems for medium-sized businesses. Specialize in performing bookkeeping for multimillion-dollar companies. Possess expertise in numerous pieces of bookkeeping software.

#### RELEVANT SKILLS

##### Finance

- Performed financial calculations such as amounts due, interest charges, balances, discounts, equity, and principal for a multimillion-dollar company.

##### Organization

- Checked figures, postings, and documents for correct entry, mathematical accuracy, and proper codes.
- Performed general office duties such as filing, answering telephones, and handling routine correspondence

#### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

##### General Bookkeeper

Franklin & Rodgers Business Solutions

Scottsdale, AZ

September 2012 - Present

- Accessed computerized financial information to answer general questions as well as those related to specific accounts.

- Identified and eliminated departmental inefficiencies to increase productivity by 15%

##### Administrative Assistant Bookkeeper

Patton Group

Tempe, AZ

June 2010 - August 2012

- Operated computers programmed with accounting software to record, store, and analyze information

- Operated 10-key calculators, typewriters, and copy machines to perform calculations and produce documents

#### EDUCATION

##### B.S. Accounting

Wilhem University, Pheonix, AZ | 2010

##### A.S. Accounting

Wilhem University, Pheonix, AZ | 2008

## 2. Resume Best Practices

When you do find a job of interest and want to submit your resume, there are some best practices that you will want to consider as you focus on your writing.

Best Practice	Description
Use Keywords	<p>As you read a job posting, carefully review the job description to identify key words. These terms can help you better understand what skills the employer might be seeking in an ideal candidate.</p> <p>For instance, if you're applying for a job as a project manager, an employer might list keywords like "time management," "project management tools," "problem-solving" or "negotiation" in the job description. Pay close attention to anything listed in the sections labeled "Requirements" or "Qualifications." If you have the skills that employers are looking for, make sure to add the exact same terms in the experience or skills sections of your resume.</p>

Review Examples	<p>As you work on your own resume, a great way to get inspiration and make sure you are on the right track is to review examples. When you search for resume examples online, you will want to focus on those from the same industry or job type as the job you are hoping to get.</p> <p>As you consider resume samples, it is important that you don't view them as a template or something to be copied. They are meant to serve as models to give you ideas and show you best practices in action.</p>
Use a Readable Font	<p>You should use a basic font like Arial or Times New Roman. Keep your font size between 10 and 12 points. Selecting a clear, readable font will help make your resume appear more professional.</p>
Use Straightforward and Confident Language	<p>Your resume should be written using straightforward and confident language. This means using power words, such as "achieved," "earned," "completed," or "accomplished." You also want to keep things as concise as possible.</p> <p>For instance, you may have a job description that reads:</p> <p><i>"As a realtor at Marks Realty, I managed multiple listings at once across the county, and helped other team members by showing their listings to my clients."</i></p> <p>This example could be shortened and strengthened in the following way:</p> <p><i>"Managed multiple listings and demonstrated teamwork."</i></p>
Recommend Using One-Inch Margins and Single Space	<p>You should use a one-inch margin size on all sides of your resume with single spaces between the lines. You may set your margins with at least half an inch on every side, however, the norm is one inch. You have a bit more flexibility than with business letters and can extend them a little if it helps fit the content on one page. The purpose of using standard margins is to make sure that your resume will print correctly if someone chooses to print it. If the margins are very small, the text might get cut off on a printout. If you have too much white space, you might consider making your lines spaced by 1.15 or 1.5.</p>

## 2a. Adding Key Insights

When you organize your resume, you want to set a road map that leads the employers to the key moments of your career.

It's critical to point out skill sets that are unique to you. Remember, your goal isn't to fit in with the rest of the crowd. You want to stand out in your job search. As you're crafting the content for your resume, reflect on the insightful details that you can add to separate yourself from the competition. Be exceptional and be different; that's what's going to get you hired.

#### ⤵ EXAMPLE

**Before reflection:** *Supported multiple training projects for new hires.*

**Reflection questions:** How do you offer support? How many training projects were there?

**After reflection:** *Developed a new scheduling system that offered support for 6 new hire training projects.*

#### ⤵ EXAMPLE

**Before reflection:** *Worked on the content creation strategy of Blizz Entertainment.*

**Reflection questions:** What was your contribution to the content? What should an employer know about Blizz Entertainment?

**After reflection:** *Developed the user interface for all 23 of Blizz Entertainment's content strategy deployments.*

#### ⤵ EXAMPLE

**Before reflection:** *Researched trends on upcoming design solutions, and training tools.*

**Reflection questions:** Why is this research important? How did you determine what information was important?

**After reflection:** *Actively researched evolving trends in the field of learning, and recommended innovative training tools and techniques to deliver cutting-edge design solutions.*

## 2b. Editing and Proofreading

**Editing** and **proofreading** your resume are the two final steps you need to complete before sending your resume to an employer. Make sure that you take your time with these important tasks! All the hard work that you put in could be thrown away if you have typos and grammatical errors in your resume.

Your resume should be mistake free. It's a tangible example of your work ethic and attention to detail. This snapshot of your professional experiences and skills should have an organized flow. Lead with the relevant and meaningful information first, but make sure it makes sense to your reader as well. Many employers review dozens of resumes, and they're looking for reasons to add yours to the no pile. A minor error can mean the difference between getting the phone call to interview, and never hearing back from an employer.

The following tips will help you with editing and proofreading:

- Use grammar and spell check software
- Read through your resume multiple times on several different occasions
- Read your resume out loud to make sure it flows well
- Ask several other people to help you with editing and proofreading
- Utilize any writing assistance services available to you at your university career center, library, or community center



TRY IT

If you have a resume, take some time to review it using these **proofreading tips**. If you don't have a resume yet, be sure to bookmark this page so you can use it later to review your work.



## TERMS TO KNOW

### Editing

The process of correcting issues with sentence construction, word choice, and tone in your writing.

### Proofreading

The process of correcting misspellings, incorrect punctuation, errors in formatting, and other mistakes.



## SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned about the importance of developing a good resume. You reviewed **resume basics**, including the three **types** of resumes and the seven **resume components** that go into each one. **Examples** of each type with components were also provided. You went on to consider some **resume best practices**, such as **adding key insights** about yourself to your resume that make you stand out as unique, and being sure to **edit and proofread** your resume prior to submission.

By following these best practices, you can make sure that your resume gets the attention of a potential employer. A good resume clearly communicates who you are, and why you are applying for a job. It is your best tool for introducing yourself and showing interest in an open position.



## TERMS TO KNOW

### Chronological Resume

A resume that lists your employment history in order, with the most recent position first.

### Combination Resume

A resume that combines features of the chronological and functional resume by providing a chronological work history and a separate list of skills.

### Editing

The process of correcting issues with sentence construction, word choice, and tone in your writing.

### Functional Resume

A resume that focuses on skills and experience and is often used by people who are changing careers or who have gaps in their employment history.

### Hard Skills

Quantifiable abilities a job post will list for prospective candidates, such as the ability to use a particular type of software or tool.

### Hybrid

Something made by combining two different elements; a mixture.

### Proofreading

The process of correcting misspellings, incorrect punctuation, errors in formatting, and other mistakes.

**Soft Skills**

Characteristics or traits an employer is looking for in a new hire, such as the ability to work on a team or manage other employees.

**Succinct**

As short as possible to make a point clear.

# A Targeted Resume

by Sophia



## WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will discover the advantages of using a targeted resume when applying to new job opportunities. General resumes are not usually able to provide the details and depth that employers are looking for. Job-seekers must put forth a strategic effort to highlight the specific skills and work experience that employers will find attractive. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

### 1. Creating a Targeted Resume

#### 1a. Resume Format

#### 1b. Matching Relevant Skills

### 2. Applicant Tracking System (ATS)

#### 2a. Keywords

#### 2b. Data and Insights

#### 2c. An ATS-Friendly Resume

## 1. Creating a Targeted Resume

Your resume is your first opportunity to make a positive impression with employers. Most employers and hiring managers have looked at hundreds of resumes. It is very easy to spot a resume that has been **targeted**, or tailored to meet the requirements of the role.

Some tips on how to tailor your resume include:

- Showcase information that speaks to the quality of your work.
- Explain how your success in previous job roles will benefit the employer.
- Describe your most important and relevant skills in detail.

Every part of your resume should enhance or elevate your ability to get the job. Don't just add hobbies and awards to your resume that aren't meaningful to employers. Align your list of skills with the needs of the job. Employers will not spend time strategically thinking about how your skills could fit. It's your job to show your undeniable fit for the role.



## TERM TO KNOW

## **Targeted Resume**

A resume that is tailored to meet the requirements of a specific job description, as well as the software that many employers use to quickly scan applicants' information.

### **1a. Resume Format**

Despite what you may have heard, having a colorful, elaborate resume is neither required, nor even preferable, except in a few unusual industries. An effectively formatted resume is concise, and uses a consistent style throughout the entire document, making it easy to read. This ensures that your most important information will be evident at first glance.

Avoid using resume templates. They're both difficult to customize, and difficult for the **applicant tracking systems (ATS)** employers use for managing the recruiting and hiring process. It may take more time to get started, but if you're able to take the time to craft the resume to a specific job, there will be fewer edits in the future.

The length of your resume can impact how much of it is read thoroughly by your prospective employer. Common advice is to try to keep your resume to one page. In some rare cases, a two-page resume is needed, especially for people who have several years of work and educational experience, or who are applying to a senior executive position. A one-page resume is best for those with minimal work experience related to their job target. Regardless of the length of your resume, be sure that it is succinct and clearly written.

The layout of your resume should follow a particular set of guidelines.

- Set up your page margins to a minimum of one-half to one inch on all sides.
- Choose a font that is professional and legible, such as Times New Roman or Arial.
- Select the same font and font size throughout your entire resume.
- Use single spacing throughout.
- Include a blank line between each section of content.
- Use a consistent date format that includes the month and the year, such as 05/2020 – 06/2021 or May 2020 – June 2021.



#### **TERM TO KNOW**

##### **Applicant Tracking System (ATS)**

Software used by recruiters and employers for managing the recruiting and hiring process.

### **1b. Matching Relevant Skills**

Throughout the job hunting process, you will use a number of different strategies to communicate why you are the best candidate for the open role. If the sections of your resume are the bricks that bring together your wall of qualifications, your relevant skills are the cement mortar that provides strength and brings the larger parts together.

As we have discussed previously, it is essential to develop an understanding of what the employer is looking for by carefully reviewing the job description. The next step is to explain how your relevant skills can and will satisfy

the employer's needs. Choosing to share more general skills will increase your chances of being ignored or overlooked by employers.

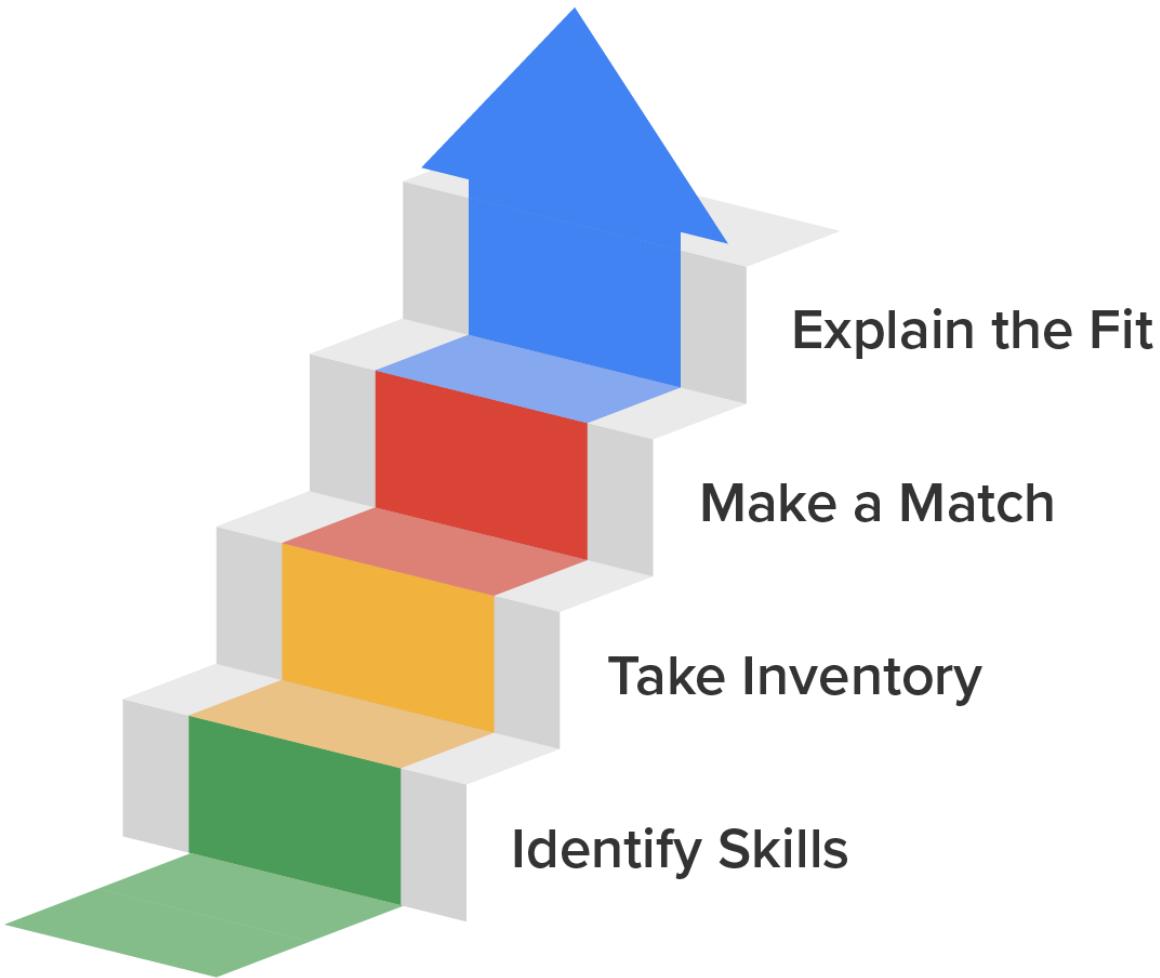
Take a close look at the following examples of job industries, and how relevant skills might be communicated on a resume.

Job Industry	Relevant Skills (as listed on a resume)
Accounting/Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Excellent organizational skills</li><li>• Produce accurate financial statements</li><li>• Reconcile and research differences for quarterly and annual filings</li></ul>
Computing/Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Data importing and analysis</li><li>• Troubleshooting and supporting the use of applications/systems</li><li>• Installing and configuring hardware and software components</li></ul>
Teaching/Coaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop and maintain a positive environment for instruction</li><li>• Encourage and support the growth of students and clients</li><li>• Proofread and edit correspondence, reports, and other documents</li></ul>

It would be foolish to apply to a new job without directly communicating the skills you have that demonstrate your experience and ability to do that job well. An experienced plumber should never be hired to work as an electrician. Both trades fall under the construction industry, but their highly specialized skill sets are not relevant to each other.

Use the following process to ensure your relevant skills are emphasized in your resume:

- 1. Identify Skills.** Use the job description to identify skills that the job requires.
- 2. Take Inventory.** Make a list of your skills and experiences that are relevant to the job role.
- 3. Make a Match.** Align your relevant skills to the job requirements.
- 4. Explain the Fit.** Write down how you can satisfy the employer's needs, and incorporate your argument in your resume and cover letter.



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## 2. Applicant Tracking System (ATS)

We've stressed the importance of customizing your resume for every job you apply to. Here's another reason why that's so important. It's estimated that over 80% of large employers use an Applicant Tracking System (ATS) to sort and filter the large number of applications they receive. To make it through the filter, you must clearly show that you have the skills and qualifications for the position.

An ATS will generally scan your experience section, evaluate your years of experience, and search for keywords throughout your resume.

No ATS processes are identical, but here are a few tips to keep in mind:

- Format your resume appropriately.
- Customize your resume to include keywords from the job posting in your bullet points. Use the exact same language to ensure the ATS recognizes the keywords.

☞ EXAMPLE If the job posting requires candidates to have skills in “building relationships,” your resume should use the exact phrase “building relationships” instead of “build relationships.”

- Ensure that you show how you meet the qualifications for the position. You may have to list bullet points with the same skills under multiple positions to show that you have the years of experience required for the job.
- Try using [Jobscan](#) to scan your resume. After you upload your resume and the job posting, Jobscan will analyze your resume and give you a score to help you see how well you've tailored your resume to the role.



### HINT

Remember, you're creating your resume for two audiences: the ATS and the hiring manager. You need to make sure your resume works for both.



### BIG IDEA

You could spend a lot of time trying to tweak and improve your resume to beat the ATS. To be even more effective in your job search, we highly recommend networking with individuals at the organization, in addition to applying to open positions. This strategy can help get your resume reviewed by the hiring manager, rather than relying solely on the ATS to flag your application.

## 2a. Keywords

Make sure you are using the keywords that are listed in the job description. Many resumes are never delivered to a company because the resumes didn't include the right keywords. Below are keywords that often appear in resumes across different industries. Remember, you should always check to see how the job description you are applying for uses these keywords!

Industry	Common Keywords
Business, Finance, and Law	analyze data, budget management, GAAP, invoicing, etc.
Customer Service, Retail, Human Resources, Tourism	client relationships, hospitality, PeopleSoft, talent acquisition, etc.
Education	biology, counseling, program development, recruiting, etc.
Health Care, Medicine	FDA, nursing, on-call, public health, etc.
Information Technology, Computer Science	algorithms, C++, frameworks, SQL server, etc.
Manufacturing, Transportation	distribution, fabrication, inventory, SolidWorks, etc.
Marketing, Media, Publishing, Graphic Design	Adobe, branding, CRM, project delivery, etc.

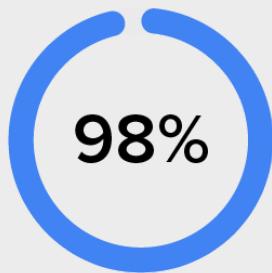


### BIG IDEA

Visit [Jobscan](#) for more examples of keywords, along with other tips on how to use keywords.

## 2b. Data and Insights

## DID YOU KNOW



of Fortune 500 companies use applicant tracking software.



of companies say using ATS improved their hiring process.



of resumes are filtered out by an ATS before being seen by a person.

Source: *Resume Now*

Larger and more well-known employers often have thousands of people apply to just one open role. In order to make their hiring process more efficient, Fortune 500 companies use software called Applicant Tracking System (ATS) to speed up the process. To make it to the interview, you have to be approved by the computer system, before you impress the people behind it.

To be considered for a job, you will likely need to modify your resume to pass a scan from ATS. This process can be complicated. ATS is computer software, and its reasoning is black and white. The selected keywords your prospective employer is looking for are either present in your resume or they are not. There is no gray area. Once the resume has been approved by ATS, your resume still needs to impress the human recruiter or human resources representative.

### 2c. An ATS-Friendly Resume

Compiling an ATS-friendly resume isn't complicated, but it does require a bit of work and foresight. You will need to:

- **Pick the Right Layout.** There is only a limited amount of space on your resume. That space is even smaller when you consider how much of the resume will actually be reviewed by the employer. You need to select a layout that will organize your information well and also offer a professional and concise presentation. Label the sections of your resume with bold headers. The most effective layouts are easy to read and share the information in the right sequential order.
- **Choose an ATS-Friendly Font.** Font options have evolved over time. However, you should select a resume font for the aesthetics. For ATS purposes you want to go with traditional options that are easy to read. We recommend Times New Roman, Helvetica, Calibri, Arial, Tahoma, and Garamond.

- **Use Standard Formatting.** The content that you develop shouldn't be elaborate and flashy. There are ways for your words to stand out, but you don't want to overdo it. Tables and graphics will not be processed well by ATS. Selecting to bold or italicize your content in a meaningful way showcases your information while remaining ATS-friendly.



## SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned about the importance of **creating a targeted resume** that clearly communicates to your prospective employer that you are the right match for their open position. A targeted resume utilizes a particular **resume format**, and effectively **matches your relevant skills** to the job description. You learned about the importance of **keywords** and, through **data and insights**, that a well-written resume is compatible with the **Applicant Tracking System (ATS)** used by many employers. An **ATS-friendly resume** uses a standard format and layout, and ensures that your resume makes it to the next phase of the hiring process.

Source: THIS CONTENT HAS BEEN ADAPTED FROM Strayer University's career center.

## REFERENCES

Lyles, H. (2021, November 17). *What Is an ATS Resume? How To Build a Bot-Proof Job Application*. Resume Now. Retrieved from [resumenow.wpengine.com/job-resources/resumes/what-is-an-ats-resume](https://resumenow.wpengine.com/job-resources/resumes/what-is-an-ats-resume)



## TERMS TO KNOW

### Applicant Tracking System (ATS)

Software used by recruiters and employers for managing the recruiting and hiring process.

### Targeted Resume

A resume that is tailored to meet the requirements of a specific job description, as well as the software that many employers use to quickly scan applicants' information.

# Cover Letter

by Sophia



## WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn how to craft an effective cover letter, which will accompany your resume when you apply for a job opening. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

- 1. Cover Letter Basics**
  - 1a. Tips for Getting Started**
  - 1b. Components**
  - 1c. Examples**
- 2. Cover Letter Best Practices**
  - 2a. Formatting**
  - 2b. Sections**

## 1. Cover Letter Basics

Cover letters are an often misunderstood part of the job search process. A **cover letter** is a one-page document typically submitted with a resume or CV to indicate your interest in a specific position. A well-written cover letter concisely summarizes how your qualifications are an excellent match for the open position.

Cover letters are not always required by an employer, but writing one will make your application stand out. It will take time to write a good cover letter, and doing so will increase the likelihood of an interview. The work you put into your cover letter can also help prepare you for the interview phase of the hiring process. Even if a cover letter isn't required, it can help you stand out as an applicant, because it emphasizes your interest and fit for the position and organization.

It may be tempting to use a generic cover letter for all of your applications, but doing so is one of the most common job-searching mistakes people make. There's no quicker path to the discard pile than with a generic cover letter that isn't tailored to a specific position and organization. An employer wants to be able to read a cover letter and immediately recognize how you're a fit for a specific position at their company—don't make them guess!



### THINK ABOUT IT

Why is writing a cover letter so important?

- Your cover letter is often your first opportunity to catch the employer's attention and differentiate yourself. You do this by explaining what's most important to the hiring manager: how you will bring value to the company.
- A cover letter can explain things that your resume can't, such as a career change, reentering the workforce, or relocation.
- A well-written cover letter showcases your communication skills and writing ability.
- A cover letter also shows that you're serious about the opportunity, because it takes time to research and write a thoughtful, tailored cover letter.



## TERM TO KNOW

### Cover Letter

A one-page document typically submitted with a resume or CV to indicate your interest in a specific position. A well-written cover letter concisely summarizes how your qualifications are an excellent match for the open position.

## 1a. Tips for Getting Started

Now that you know the basics, let's dive in deeper to learn how to write an eye-catching cover letter.

**1. Prepare to Write.** Before you start writing, gather information about the organization to help you better articulate why you're interested in the position:

- Think about what you currently know about the organization. Maybe you have a connection with someone who works there, or you are impressed with their recent achievements.
- Research the employer by reviewing the organization's website, LinkedIn, and social media presence.
- Speak with current or previous employees to better understand the organization's culture, mission, and values.
- When possible, track down the name of the individual making the hiring decision. This information is sometimes included on the job posting itself.

**2. Match Your Qualifications.** The next step is to gain an understanding of how your qualifications align with the requirements of the position:

- Carefully read through the job posting, and note the requirements and qualifications that are listed.
- Reflect on your background. Ask yourself what you have done that is similar to the required duties, including coursework, academic projects, work experience, internships, and volunteer experience.
- Make note of any accomplishments or results you have achieved related to the duties of the position.

**3. Create an Outline.** It is important to organize your information into an outline so that your writing is organized and cohesive. The next section of this tutorial will cover the parts of a cover letter in detail.

**4. Start Writing.** Use the information you collected to write a customized cover letter. It should show how you meet the position's qualifications, and why you are a good fit for the organization.

☞ EXAMPLE Here is a sample cover letter and a sample template for you to use:



**Cover Letter Sample 1**

This cover letter sample uses a paragraph format. If you're ready to write a paragraph format cover letter, our Cover Letter Template will help you get started.

**Commented [JM1]:**

Jaylen addresses the letter to the hiring manager.

If you can't find the hiring manager's name, and/or they do not have a gender-neutral title (ex. Dr.), then "Dear Hiring Manager" works, or you can address them by their first and last name (ex. "Dear Dylan Thompson").

Avoid outdated greetings like "Dear Sir or Madam," "To Whom It May Concern," or gender-specific titles (ex. Mr. or Ms.).

**Commented [JM2]:**

In the opening two paragraphs, Jaylen demonstrates the research he has done on Wovlen Logistics and shows at a high level what he would bring to this role.

**Commented [JM3]:**

In the body of his letter, Jaylen clearly demonstrates how he fits the requirements for this specific role at Wovlen Logistics.

He focuses one paragraph on his technical knowledge, and another on his leadership experience. He provides details about his skills and shares specific accomplishments to show how he's leveraged them to make an impact.

**Commented [JM4]:**

In his closing paragraphs, Jaylen restates his interest in the role and the strengths he'll bring to the organization. He is polite, confident, and asks for an interview. Then he thanks the employer for their time.

# Jaylen Lee

222 Longview Road | Baltimore, MD 21210 | 410.977.5000  
jlee@strayeruniversity.edu linkedin.com/in/jlee

January 25, 2022

Jacqueline Jones, Director of Technology  
Wovlen Logistics  
1027 Hull Street  
Baltimore, MD

Dear Jacqueline Jones,

I am excited to submit my application for the Technical Support Manager role at Wovlen Logistics. I've been closely following your organization's progress since hearing your Chief Technology Officer, Rees Robinson, speak at a virtual conference for logistics professionals last year. Your innovative culture and ambitious goals make this role a one-of-a-kind opportunity.

As you've shared in the job posting, you're looking for someone with technical expertise who can guide and support a team to troubleshoot issues and provide exceptional customer support. My technical knowledge, experience leading an internal customer-facing team, and passion for finding innovative solutions to problems in a fast-paced environment make me an excellent fit.

My technical knowledge stems from my vast experience working in frontline technical support roles. I have built a reputation for resolving even the trickiest service calls with warmth and effectiveness. Motivated by achieving the best results for customers and the company, I reliably met my average call duration goals and my customer satisfaction rating ranked in the top category, "Exceeded expectations."

Furthermore, my current role as a technical support lead at Baier Industries has prepared me for the next level of leadership. In my current role, I've built and guided a high-performing technical support team of 8 technical support representatives. Through an intentional coaching approach, I've worked to know my staff and provide individual training to help them develop into an effective, engaged team. I also partnered with Human Resources to review our technical training for all new hires in our department. Together we redesigned the training modules, which helped start new employees off strong. These efforts have translated into results. Over the last year, my team has increased our average number of clients serviced and client satisfaction scores while decreasing our number of escalated calls.

I have no doubt my skills, experience, and passion would be an asset to Wovlen Logistics as a Technical Support Manager. I'm motivated by your mission to provide tailored, technology-driven solutions to your internal and external customers and the impact I could have on creating a best-in-class customer experience. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this more in an interview.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jaylen Lee



Cover Letter Template

This template provides you with one “formula” for writing a strong cover letter. It explains what to include in each section.

**Commented [JM1]:**

Address the hiring manager by their full name and/or title, if possible. For example, “Dear Colleen Brown” or “Dear Dr. Brown.”

If you can't find the hiring manager's name, then “Dear Hiring Manager” works.

Avoid outdated greetings like “Dear Sir or Madam,” “To Whom It May Concern,” and gender-specific titles like Mr. or Ms.

**Commented [JM2]:**

It can be helpful to think of a cover letter much like an academic paper. In the first paragraph, the introduction, you detail your “claim” and in subsequent paragraphs, you'll add “evidence.” At the end, you'll tie everything together with a conclusion.

**Commented [JM3]:**

Customizing your cover letter to the specific role you're applying to is a must. Use the job posting to get clear about why the role you're applying to is genuinely exciting and a good fit.

**Commented [JM4]:**

Pay attention to the third and fourth paragraphs, where the applicant provides evidence of their most relevant skills and qualifications.

Your contact information (insert same header as your resume)

Date

Hiring manager's name, if known  
Name of organization  
Address  
City, State and ZIP code

Dear **Hiring Manager**,

**Introduction:** 1 paragraph (or 2 brief paragraphs)

Indicate the role you're applying for and why you're interested in the role and/or company. Explain how you learned about the job if you were referred by someone who works there, a recruiter, or another personal connection. List 3-4 qualifications that explain your strongest connections/fit **for this specific position at this specific organization.**

**Body:** approx. 2-3 paragraphs

In each paragraph, introduce one of your attributes (from your introduction) and state why it's relevant to the position you're applying for. Then outline “evidence” of this attribute by offering example(s) from your experience, education, or projects.

Repeat for 1-2 more paragraphs, depending on space and prioritizing your most relevant qualifications and examples. Your goal is to show the hiring manager you have the experience they're looking for and you'd be successful in the role.

**Conclusion:** 1 paragraph

Reiterate your enthusiasm and fit for the role. Thank the employer for their time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Your first and last name

## 1b. Components

Just like a paper you'd write for your academic coursework, a cover letter has three main sections: the introduction, the body, and the conclusion.

The following list briefly describes the purpose of each section, and has suggestions for possible content to include in your cover letter.

**1. The Introduction.** Start your cover letter with a short introductory paragraph that clearly identifies the name of the position you are applying for. In this first paragraph, you want to catch your reader's attention, and encourage them to keep reading your letter.

**2. The Body.** The body of your cover letter should be two or three paragraphs. Use the job posting and the research that you have done on the employer to identify the organization's needs. Then choose three or four of your most relevant qualifications or experiences to highlight, rather than including a comprehensive list of what you have to offer. You may also use the body of your cover letter to explain things your resume can't, such as a career change, reentering the workforce, or relocation.

Begin each paragraph with a sentence that outlines the qualification(s) you plan to discuss in the paragraph. Then, demonstrate your qualifications by including evidence, rather than just making unverified statements about yourself.

☞ **EXAMPLE** Instead of saying "I am an effective fundraiser," share more about the impact of your work, like this: "I am an effective fundraiser. Over the past three years, I have increased community giving by 200%, bringing in \$500K annually."

Close each paragraph by linking your skills and qualifications to their needs.

☞ **EXAMPLE** "As your Director of Institutional Giving, I would apply what I've learned to engage the community, increase your average donation amount, and improve donor retention."

☞ **EXAMPLE** "I have no doubt these skills and experiences would make me a successful project manager at Lilan Incorporated, and I know I'd thrive in your mission-driven, fast-paced organization."

**3. The Conclusion.** Conclude your letter with a final paragraph that reiterates your interest in the position and closes on a positive note. This could include:

- Referencing what the reader will find when they read the accompanying resume or CV.
- Restating your interest in the position.
- Sharing your plans for following-up.
- Thanking them for their time.

## 1c. Examples

We encourage you to view all of the samples included in this tutorial before creating or revising your cover letter. The format and content of each sample will give you new ideas, even if you do not identify with the individual's particular educational or professional experiences.

In each sample, the writer integrates what they know about the company to demonstrate their interest in the organization. They show their fit for the specific position they're applying to by clearly describing what they offer. You'll want to use these strategies in your cover letter, too. They'll help you stand out in the hiring process.

An important note about samples and plagiarism: If you are using samples to help you start your own document, be sure to use your own words and that the information included in your document is unique to your skills and experiences. Employers can use a Google search or plagiarism checker if they are suspicious that the writing is not your own.

☞ EXAMPLE Here are two more cover letter samples for you to reference:



[Cover Letter Sample 2](#)

**TIP:**

Shelby addresses the letter to the hiring manager at Marshall School District.

If you can't find the hiring manager's name, and/or they do not have a gender-neutral title (ex. Dr.), then "Dear Hiring Manager" works, or you can address them by their first and last name like in this example.

Avoid outdated greetings like "Dear Sir or Madam," "To Whom it May Concern," or gender-specific titles (ex. Mr. or Ms.).

**TIP:**

In the opening two paragraphs, Shelby shares her desire to change careers in her field, explains her gap in employment, demonstrates the research she has done on the school district and shows at a high level what she would bring to this role.

**TIP:**

In the body paragraph, Shelby clearly demonstrates how she fits the requirements for this specific role at Marshall School District.

For each statement she makes about her skills, she includes a specific accomplishment to show how she's leveraged her skills to make an impact.

**TIP:**

In her closing paragraph, Shelby restates the strengths she'll bring to the organization. She is polite, confident, and asks for an interview. Then she thanks the employer for their time.

## Shelby Martinez

(801) 555-8493 | smartinez245@strayeruniversity.edu  
linkedin.com/in/smartinez245

January 4, 2022

Mary A. Jones  
Marshall School District  
123 Academic Avenue  
Marshall, GA 12345

Dear Mary Jones:

I am excited to submit my application for the Director of Student Services position in the Marshall School District. I am an experienced high school English teacher seeking to move into education administration. To achieve this goal, I recently earned a master's degree in Educational Administration while caring for my family, and now I am excited about the prospect of returning to the workforce.

Connecting with the district's Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Antonio Garcia, inspired me to work in a district that prioritizes technology and innovation to prepare our students for the future. I am passionate about incorporating those priorities into robust student programming opportunities. Additionally, my leadership, collaboration, and event coordination skills make me an excellent fit for the Director of Student Services position.

In my five years of experience teaching, I gained administrative leadership experience as co-chair of the instruction committee and successfully negotiated and secured a contract with an educational virtual reality vendor to pilot immersive, virtual reality lessons in our school's biology courses. I also demonstrated my collaboration and relationship-building skills when I launched a successful fundraiser campaign as a part of my recent service on the Executive Board of the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA). To raise money for iPads for remote learning, I partnered with our local art shop to host a virtual "Paint at Home" event and organized a group of parent volunteers to promote and sell art kits to district families interested in participating in the event. Finally, I have demonstrated event coordination and planning strengths by leading two educational trips abroad with sophomores and juniors. To plan a successful trip, I managed a budget, worked closely with parents and students, and maintained a database of student records and information.

I have a proven track record of improving the student experience, and I have no doubt my knowledge, experience, and passion would be an asset within the Marshall School District. I welcome the opportunity to discuss my qualifications further in an interview.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Shelby Martinez



Cover Letter Sample 3

This cover letter uses bullet points (rather than paragraphs only) to emphasize the candidate's top qualifications for this specific role.

**Commented [JM1]:**

Jaylen addresses the letter to the hiring manager. If you can't find the hiring manager's name, and/or they do not have a gender-neutral title (ex. Dr.), then "Dear Hiring Manager" works, or you can address them by their first and last name (ex. "Dear Dylan Thompson").

Avoid outdated greetings like "Dear Sir or Madam," "To Whom It May Concern," or gender-specific titles (ex. Mr. or Ms.).

**Commented [JM2]:**

In the opening two paragraphs, Jaylen demonstrates the research he has done on Wovlen Logistics and shows at a high level what he would bring to this role.

**Commented [JM3]:**

In the body paragraph, Shelby clearly demonstrates how she fits the requirements for this specific role at Marshall School District.

For each statement she makes about her skills, she includes a specific accomplishment to show how she's leveraged her skills to make an impact.

**TIP:**

In the body of his letter, Jaylen writes a bullet point to emphasize each of his most important skills or accomplishments for the Technical Support Manager role. He uses the job posting as a guide to help him decide what to include. Doing this helps him grab the hiring manager's attention because everything he lists shows how he meets the employer's needs.

## Jaylen Lee

222 Longview Road | Baltimore, MD 21210 | 410.977.5000  
jlee@strayeruniversity.edu | linkedin.com/in/jlee

January 25, 2022

Jacqueline Jones, Director of Technology  
Wovlen Logistics  
1027 Hull Street  
Baltimore, MD

Dear Jacqueline Jones,

I am excited to submit my application for the Technical Support Manager role at Wovlen Logistics. I've been closely following your organization's progress since hearing your Chief Technology Officer, Reese Robinson, speak at a virtual conference for logistics professionals last year. Your innovative culture and ambitious goals make this role a one-of-a-kind opportunity.

As you've shared in the job posting, you're looking for someone with technical expertise who can guide and support a team to troubleshoot issues and provide exceptional customer support. My technical knowledge, experience leading an internal customer-facing team, and passion for finding innovative solutions to problems in a fast-paced environment make me an excellent fit for your needs.

Here are a few highlights of the skills and experiences I'd bring to the Technical Support Manager role:

- Over 2 years of experience leading an internal customer-facing team of 8 technical support reps
- Technical knowledge and expertise developed working in frontline technical support roles in the logistics industry for over 6 years
- A+ Certification and Network+ Certification
- Reputation for resolving even the trickiest service escalations with warmth and effectiveness
- Recognized for developing a high performing, engaged team; increased average number of clients serviced and customer satisfaction scores year over year
- Improved teams' technical skills to redesign new employee training modules in partnership with Human Resources

Wovlen Logistics' mission to provide tailored, technology-driven solutions to your internal and external customers is inspiring. I have no doubt my skills, experience, and passion would be an asset, and I'm motivated by the impact I could have on creating a best-in-class customer experience as a Technical Support Manager on your team. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this more in an interview.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jaylen Lee

## 2. Cover Letter Best Practices

A cover letter serves as a brief introduction to an employer. It's your opportunity to catch their attention, and to show how you'll bring value to the company.

Writing a customized, quality cover letter for each role you apply to is a must. When you customize your cover letter, you're writing with the employer's needs in mind. They have a problem they need to solve, or a gap they need to fill, and your cover letter describes how you will address it. This means that for every cover letter you write, you should include unique language that targets the specific position you are applying to.

## 2a. Formatting

A well-formatted cover letter uses the following best practices.

Best Practice	Description
One Page or Less	This shows your ability to communicate in an effective, concise manner. It should also have single-spacing (double between paragraphs), one-inch margins, and a simple font (Arial or Times New Roman in 11- or 12-point size).
Formatted Using a Business Letter Structure	If you don't know how to write a business letter, you can review the Cover Letter Samples and use the Cover Letter Template we have provided.
Error-Free	Your cover letter should be free of grammatical and spelling errors. Use a spelling and grammar checker prior to submitting your letter. It also helps to have another person proofread your letter for you.
Formatted to Match Your Resume	Write your letter in the same font as your resume or CV.
Compliant with Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS)	Do not use tables, borders, templates, graphics, shading, or symbols. These make your document difficult or impossible for the ATS to read. Additionally, just like with your resume, you should incorporate the exact keywords from the job posting and show that you have the experience and skills the hiring manager is looking for. Doing so increases the odds of your application making it through the screening process and into the hands of the hiring manager.

## 2b. Sections

Here are the key areas of focus as you draft your cover letter:

Sections	Description
Structure	Make sure that you include a header with your information first. This is where you include your contact information. Like your resume, try to keep the length of your cover letter to one page.

Greeting	Address the cover letter to the hiring manager. If you can't find the hiring manager's name, and/or they do not have a gender-neutral title (e.g., Dr.), then "Dear Hiring Manager" works, or you can address them by their first and last name (ex. "Dear Dylan Thompson"). Avoid outdated greetings like "Dear Sir or Madam," "To Whom It May Concern," or gender-specific titles (ex. Mr. or Ms.).
Introduction	In the first paragraph, you want to introduce yourself and make sure to state the role you are applying for. You can also add a sentence or two to summarize your experience and skills.
Benefits	You want to make sure you help the reader understand why you are right for the role. What benefits are there in choosing you over everyone else? Remember to focus on keywords from the job description. Think about what qualities the employer is looking for and how your skills and experience match up with those. You can even use a list here if it makes sense to showcase the skills you bring to the table.
Interest	This is where you show what you know about the company. Talk about what interests you about the work they do, their culture, history, and reputation.
Closing	The last paragraph should be brief but clearly indicate your enthusiasm for the role and that you look forward to speaking with them soon.
End with a complimentary close and your name.	Avoid anything informal as you close things out. Consider terms like "Sincerely" or "Regards."

Drafting a strong cover letter is a great way to demonstrate your strong communication skills to any potential employer. Organizations want to hire individuals who have strong writing skills and who can share ideas, feedback, and more in a clear and concise way. A good cover letter could be the reason you get an interview. It could also be a reason you are hired.



TRY IT

Using [Indeed](#) as a resource, do a search for your ideal job and identify at least 10 keywords that are used in the job description, then practice writing the opening paragraph of a cover letter using several of those keywords.

When writing the paragraph, think about the qualifications the employer is looking for and how your experience relates to the job.



## SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned the **basics of cover letter** writing. A well-written cover letter is an important part of your job application, and partners with your resume to provide your prospective employer with information about you, your background, and your fit for the job opening. **Getting started** on your cover letter involves research, matching your qualifications to the job posting, and outlining your letter using

the **components** as a guide. It may help you to review the **examples** provided in this tutorial, which will give you a better idea of what your final product should look like.

When you start writing your cover letter, you should consider **best practices** that focus on **formatting** by using a one-page business letter format that matches your resume, address your letter to the hiring manager, and use a grammar and spelling checker, while also paying attention to the different **sections** of the cover letter.

Source: THIS CONTENT HAS BEEN ADAPTED FROM the Strayer University Career Center.



## TERMS TO KNOW

### Cover Letter

A one-page document typically submitted with a resume or CV to indicate your interest in a specific position. A well-written cover letter concisely summarizes how your qualifications are an excellent match for the open position.

# Communication and Networking

by Sophia



## WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn about professional communication and networking practices. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. [Types of Communication During a Job Search](#)
  - 1a. [Informal Communication](#)
  - 1b. [Formal Communication](#)
2. [Networking](#)
  - 2a. [Networking Dos and Don'ts](#)
  - 2b. [Networking Strategies](#)

## 1. Types of Communication During a Job Search

**Communication** is the ability to actively seek and deliver information, articulate ideas, effectively listen, and connect to various audiences, settings, and situations. It is key to your success in relationships, in the workplace, as a citizen of your country, and across your lifetime. For the purposes of this lesson, you will focus on developing your skills in professional communication. In particular, you will focus on communication during a job search.

In the workplace, communication can be thought of as a problem-solving activity in which you may address the following questions:

- What is the situation?
- What are some possible communication strategies?
- What is the best course of action?
- What is the best way to design the chosen message?
- What is the best way to deliver the message?

You will learn how the answers to questions like this can help you determine if you should use informal or formal communication strategies.



WATCH

Check out the following video in which you will meet some of America's most talented improvisational comedians. While they use their communication skills to keep audiences in stitches night after night, they also use them during their day jobs. Communication is a skill that's critical to their success in each setting.



## TERM TO KNOW

### Communication

The ability to actively seek and deliver information, articulate ideas, effectively listen, and connect to various audiences, settings, and situations.

## 1a. Informal Communication

It is important to keep your communication professional in the workplace. A more formal tone and format are often necessary to ensure your meaning is conveyed as intended. Even so, there are times you may find that you can (and should) use a more informal tone or method. The same can be said when you are searching for a job.

### IN CONTEXT

Maria just graduated and was searching for a job. She decided it might be a good idea to get a letter of recommendation from Dr. Harrington, a professor she had worked with several times during college. She had gotten good grades in two of Dr. Harrington's classes and had gotten along with her well. One morning while she was on campus, Maria ran into Dr. Harrington and asked if she would mind providing a letter of recommendation for a job she was applying to. Dr. Harrington replied that she would be happy to write a letter for her and that she would email it to her within the week.



While the communication described in Maria's story was related to employment, it was **informal**. The interaction was an impromptu, casual conversation. There was no set format that needed to be used and no rules for the request. Can you think of any other examples of informal communication that might take place during a job search?

Take note that informal does not mean unprofessional. Even when interacting with others in a more casual way, you need to be mindful and appropriate. Any communication that takes place related to work or employment needs to remain professional... even if it is informal.



## DID YOU KNOW

**Jargon** and slang might be okay for an email to a friend, but would you use those same terms in an email to a potential employer? What about grammatical errors? A few may be acceptable in a card you send to your brother for his birthday, but those same errors on your resume may be the difference between being hired and being passed over.



## TERMS TO KNOW

### **Informal Communication**

Communication that is less structured by workplace norms.

### **Jargon**

Words or expressions that are used by a particular group.

## **1b. Formal Communication**

What type of communication should Maria use if she needs to talk to a recruiter who sent her an email about a potential job? Should she show the same **familiarity** she did with her professor, Dr. Harrington, who she has known for a long time? Given the circumstances, she needs to be more formal in this instance.

**Formal communication** when it comes to your job search often involves defined channels set by the organization. In this case, the recruiter used email to reach out to Maria. The recruiter may ask Maria to reply by email, to call her or to complete some other task. Whatever the instructions are, Maria should follow them carefully to give herself the best chance to get the job.

Some common characteristics of formal communication during a job search are listed in the following table.

Characteristic	Description
Resume Request	This may come in the form of an email or a phone call. You may be asked to send your document in a set format or by a certain due date.
Interview Request	This may also come in the form of an email or phone call. You may be asked to choose from a list of dates/times, or to list your availability.
Interview	This can take place in person, on the phone, or using video conferencing software like Zoom. There will most likely be a set list of questions posed to you, with the opportunity for you to ask questions at the end.
Job Offer	This might be sent by email, or you may receive a phone call. Specifics like salary, benefits, and start date will most likely be discussed.

In each case listed in the previous table, you will want to reply to any messages as directed. Most companies have a formal process when it comes to hiring employees. Make sure you follow their instructions, or you may find you don't get past step one.



### **BIG IDEA**

An individual with excellent communication skills is an asset to every organization. How you communicate during your job search can have a great impact on whether or not you land the job.



### **TERMS TO KNOW**

#### **Familiarity**

Relaxed friendliness between individuals.

#### **Formal Communication**

Communication that is structured and follows workplace norms.

## 2. Networking

**Networking** is one of the most transformational steps you can take in your job search process. It can sound intimidating, but it's really just the process of connecting with people in your field. Besides connecting with people you already know, this section will give you some tips to build new relationships.

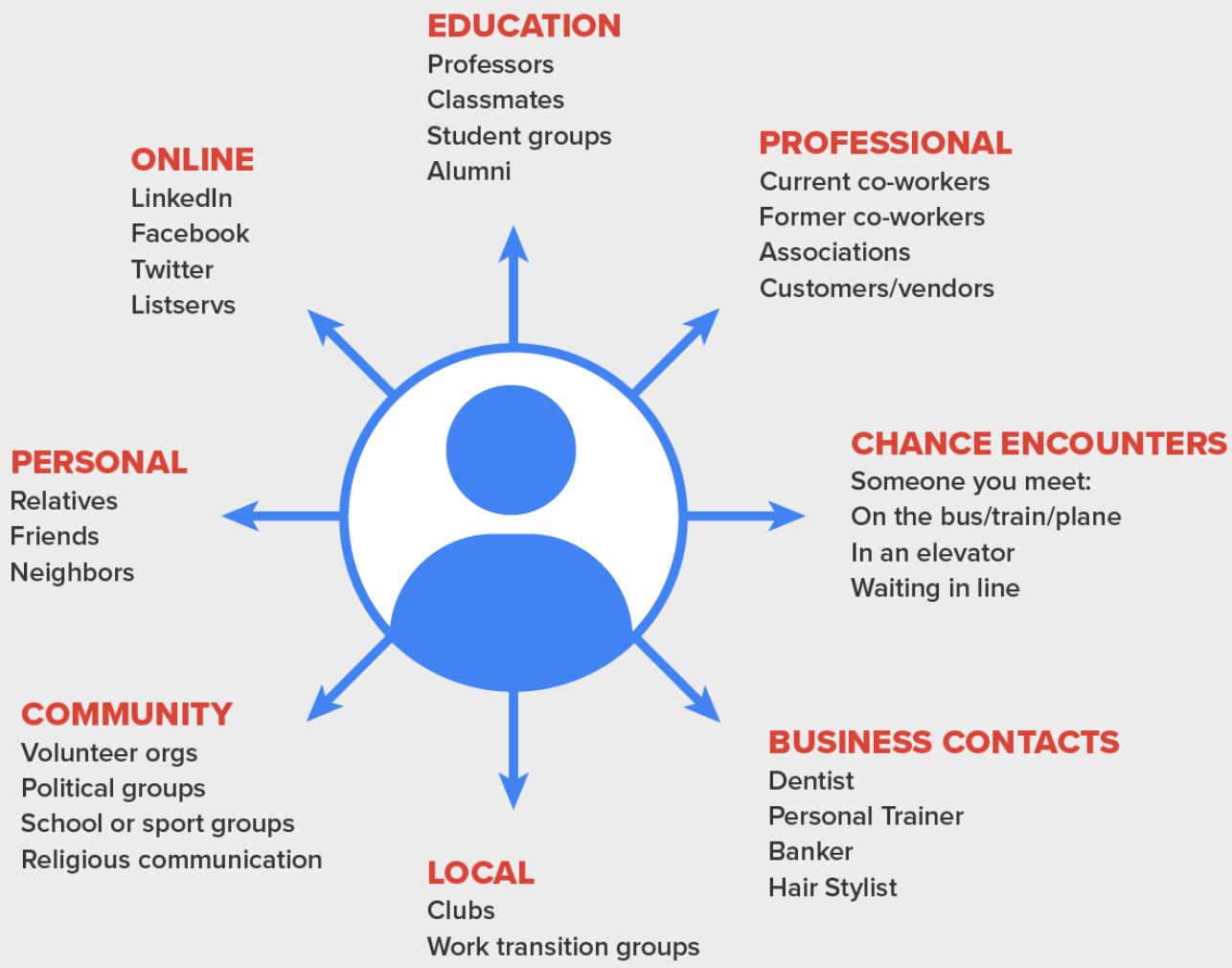
Networking can help you explore a new career field by learning from other professionals. When you build a relationship with someone in another field, you can learn from them. You will discover what it's really like to work in a specific role/organization before you even apply. This is a clever way to use insider information to decide if a career change is right for you.

Networking also allows you to expand the reach of influence that you have. You will be able to learn from others as well as share your expertise. One of the most sought-after benefits of networking is being able to utilize your network to find a job. If you are seeking a job through your network, remember that relationships take time to build and a job offer won't happen overnight. You will want to nurture the relationships you currently have, stay attentive to the needs of your contacts, and think about ways you can assist. If you prioritize giving, others will want to return the favor. Within this tutorial you will learn more techniques on how networking can help you uncover opportunities for growth and advancement.

Start by completing the following exercise below.

1. **Brainstorm Goals.** Think about your current career interests, curiosities, and goals. What could you learn by connecting with other professionals? Write down your ideas and networking goals.
2. **Brainstorm Connections.** Start with who you know. You probably know more people than you realize. Take stock of who you know, and consider the following categories to help you brainstorm:

- Personal: relatives, friends, and neighbors
- Online: LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Listservs
- Education: Professors, classmates, student groups, alumni
- Professional: Co-workers, associations, customers, vendors
- Local: Clubs, work transition groups
- Chance Encounters: People you meet daily
- Business Contacts: Dentist, personal trainer, banker, hair stylist
- Community: Volunteer organizations, political groups, school or sport groups, religious communities



Listing your connections you already have will help you see that you've already begun your network! You might consider making a diagram like this one.

As you interact with people in your everyday life, start telling them more about your networking goals. Be sure to do this in a natural, authentic way, and you never know who may be able to help.

☞ **EXAMPLE** Your dentist asks you, “How’s school going?” Instead of answering, “Busy, but good,” you could share, “It’s been busy, but I’m really enjoying this data analytics class I’m taking. I’m trying to find out how to make a career out of it.” By adding that extra detail, you might learn that your dentist can introduce you to a new connection.



### TERM TO KNOW

#### Networking

The process of connecting with people in your field for professional purposes.

## 2a. Networking Dos and Don’ts

You want to have an open mind about networking. There is no one right or wrong way to network. Everyone can take the approach to networking that works best for their skillset. Use this list of do's and don'ts to help your way of networking.

- Remember that networking has an exponential effect. One connection could lead to a dozen more connections.
- You always want to show people that you value their time.
- When you reach out there should be a reason why you're speaking, calling, or emailing your contact. Perhaps you heard a speech they gave, or something they posted online particularly resonated with you.
- Work to establish a meaningful connection that starts from more than, "Hey, I would love to connect with you."

## 2b. Networking Strategies

There are many ways to network, and you don't need to be an expert to get started. Just give it a try. Create a tangible goal to meet a former colleague for coffee, volunteer at a conference, reach out to a new contact via LinkedIn, or try another strategy that sounds interesting.

As you make networking a part of your practice, you'll build momentum and see which methods work best for you. Use the following networking strategies (informational interviewing, professional associations, career mentoring, and LinkedIn) to expand your network.

**1. Informational Interviewing.** Meeting with someone one-on-one to learn more about their career, organization, or industry can help you clarify your goals. This is a common practice that allows you to meet with people who are currently employed in a career, organization, or industry you are considering. You can, and should, rely on informational interviews as a powerful tool throughout your career.

What are the benefits of informational interviews?

- Help you decide if a certain career, organization, or industry is right for you
- Allow you to gain valuable advice on how to tailor your resume, CV or cover letter to fit organization/industry standards
- Prepare you for an interview in the organization/industry
- Build relationships with professionals

Remember an informational interview is not the same as a job interview. You will not ask for a job, but instead request information about the kind of skills, experience and education that are valued in that field or company. It's also important to request informational interviews before a position in your area of interest becomes vacant. Managers or supervisors may feel uneasy about granting you an informational interview if the organization is actively recruiting for the position.

To prepare for an informational interview, research the industry, organization, and person you're meeting with. Plan a handful of questions you'd like to ask. If you're not sure what to ask, check out our "sample

questions to ask” below.

For your meeting, dress as you would for an actual job interview, and plan to arrive a few minutes early if meeting in person. If meeting virtually, be sure to test your technology, and make sure you have a quiet spot and professional background.

Make sure that you follow-up. After an informational interview, you should always send a thank you note. It is polite and professional to show your gratitude to someone for the time they spent with you.

Here are some sample interview questions to get you started:

Topic	Questions
About the Person You Are Interviewing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How did you enter this field?</li><li>• What has your career path been like?</li><li>• What is your typical day like in this position?</li><li>• What challenges/frustrations do you face?</li><li>• What are your favorite parts of this job? What gives you the most satisfaction?</li><li>• What kind of people are most successful in this field (traits/interests/background)?</li></ul>
About Their Company/Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is the culture/environment like at this organization?</li><li>• Who are your major competitors?</li><li>• Are there opportunities for growth at this company?</li><li>• Where does the organization's funding come from? Is there stability in funding?</li><li>• Who are your customers? Who do you serve</li></ul>
About Their Industry/Field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What type of preparation, credentials and training would I need to enter this field?</li><li>• Is there growth in this field? What is the job potential?</li><li>• If I enter this field, what can I do to make myself marketable and competitive?</li><li>• What is the typical/average salary?</li><li>• Do you have any recommendations if I consider entering this field?</li></ul>
About Your Search	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do you know of any other people who might be helpful for me to talk with?</li></ul>

**2. Professional Associations.** Being involved in a professional association is a great way to expand your network and become known in your field. Learn how to find, join, and make the most of professional associations.

There's often some confusion about what professional associations are and how they can benefit you. These are organizations composed of professionals in the field that host events, trainings, networking opportunities, and more. Every industry has them, and some industries have many opportunities. Members have a lot in common with you and are often working toward the same goals—you can make an instant connection!

Being active in a relevant professional association offers many ways to engage in the field, and is one of the best tactics for making valuable connections.

The benefits of joining professional organizations are many:

- **Become a Known Entity.** Active participation in a professional association is an important strategy for becoming known in your field. You will likely meet and learn from professionals who are farther along their career path, or who may be accomplished experts in the field. As you get to know these professionals, they will also get to know you and you will expand your professional network.
- **Discover Job Openings.** Employers often post job openings on organizations' listservs or websites. Additionally, by networking with association members, you are well-positioned to hear about job opportunities that may never be posted anywhere, and are filled instead through word-of-mouth.
- **Develop Skills.** Association conferences, brown bags, as well as newsletters and listserves are an opportunity to learn about new trends and products from key leaders in the field. As an active member in an association, you can develop new skills such as project management, public speaking, budgeting, meeting facilitation, event planning, and writing.

Once you join a professional organization, become an active member. Professional organizations shouldn't just be a line on your resume or CV. To make them worth the membership fees, you need to participate.

Here are some suggestions for active involvement:

- **Communicate.** Add your email address to the organization's distribution list, so that you are notified about organization events.
- **Look for In-Person Opportunities.** Attend monthly board meetings, roundtable events, or brown bag presentations the organization sponsors.
- **Participate.** Ask a question at a roundtable discussion, or offer your perspective at a brown bag event.
- **Become a Leader.** Volunteer to serve on the board or one of the board committees. Propose a presentation at the organization's annual conference or other continuing education forums.
- **Join a Committee or Present at a Conference.** A common misconception is that professional associations don't need volunteers for their board or committees. Another is that the criteria for having a presentation accepted at a conference is stringent. Usually just the opposite is true – associations are

often looking for energetic new members to join, and conference organizers often scramble to find enough presenters to fill out their conference schedule. It is much easier to join a committee or get a presentation accepted at a professional association conference than many people realize. (Remember to include any presentations you give on your resume/CV.)

**3. Career Mentoring.** Connecting with a mentor provides you with insight and guidance from someone who's further along in their career. Here are some suggestions for where you can search for a potential mentor:

- **At Work.** If you are already in the field, consider asking a colleague one or two levels above you, or even a peer who is admired and respected by leadership. Your company might also offer a mentorship program.
- **In Class.** You might have a classmate who is already in the field, or maybe a classmate has excellent presentation skills and you want to learn from them. Don't hesitate to ask if they'd be interested in mentoring you.

**4. LinkedIn.** Using LinkedIn allows you to maintain relationships with former colleagues and to build new ones. Learn how to network with LinkedIn, including how to connect with alumni. You will learn a lot more about the advantages of LinkedIn in our next tutorial.



## SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned about communicating and networking. There are two types of communication, **informal** and **formal**. You may find yourself needing to use both **types of communication during a job search**. It's important to understand that in such circumstances, both informal and formal communication tactics utilize a professional tone and jargon.

Communication is vitally important to **networking**, and in this lesson you reviewed a list of **networking dos and don'ts** as well as some **strategies** for using information interviewing, professional organizations, career mentoring, and LinkedIn to grow your professional network.

Source: THIS CONTENT HAS BEEN ADAPTED FROM the Strayer University Career Center.



## TERMS TO KNOW

### Communication

The ability to actively seek and deliver information, articulate ideas, effectively listen, and connect to various audiences, settings, and situations.

### Familiarity

Relaxed friendliness between individuals.

### Formal Communication

Communication that is structured and follows workplace norms.

**Informal Communication**

Communication that is less structured by workplace norms.

**Jargon**

Words or expressions that are used by a particular group.

**Networking**

The process of connecting with people in your field for professional purposes.

# Using LinkedIn

by Sophia



## WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn about the advantages of using LinkedIn as a professional resource.

Specifically, this lesson will cover:

### 1. LinkedIn

#### 1a. Building Your Professional Identity

#### 1b. Developing Your Profile

### 2. Maximize Your Presence

#### 2a. Making Connections

#### 2b. Joining LinkedIn Groups

## 1. LinkedIn

In the last decade, the use of social media has grown exponentially, and has had a significant influence on the way that we live our lives. Industries have invested time and money to market on social media. Employers have a strategy to spread awareness, and to leverage social media to promote the quality of their work. You should be doing the same. Everyone interested in advancing in their career should not only have a profile on LinkedIn, they need to get active on the platform.



### DID YOU KNOW

As of July 2022, LinkedIn has 830 million members in over 200 countries and territories around the world (LinkedIn Corporation).

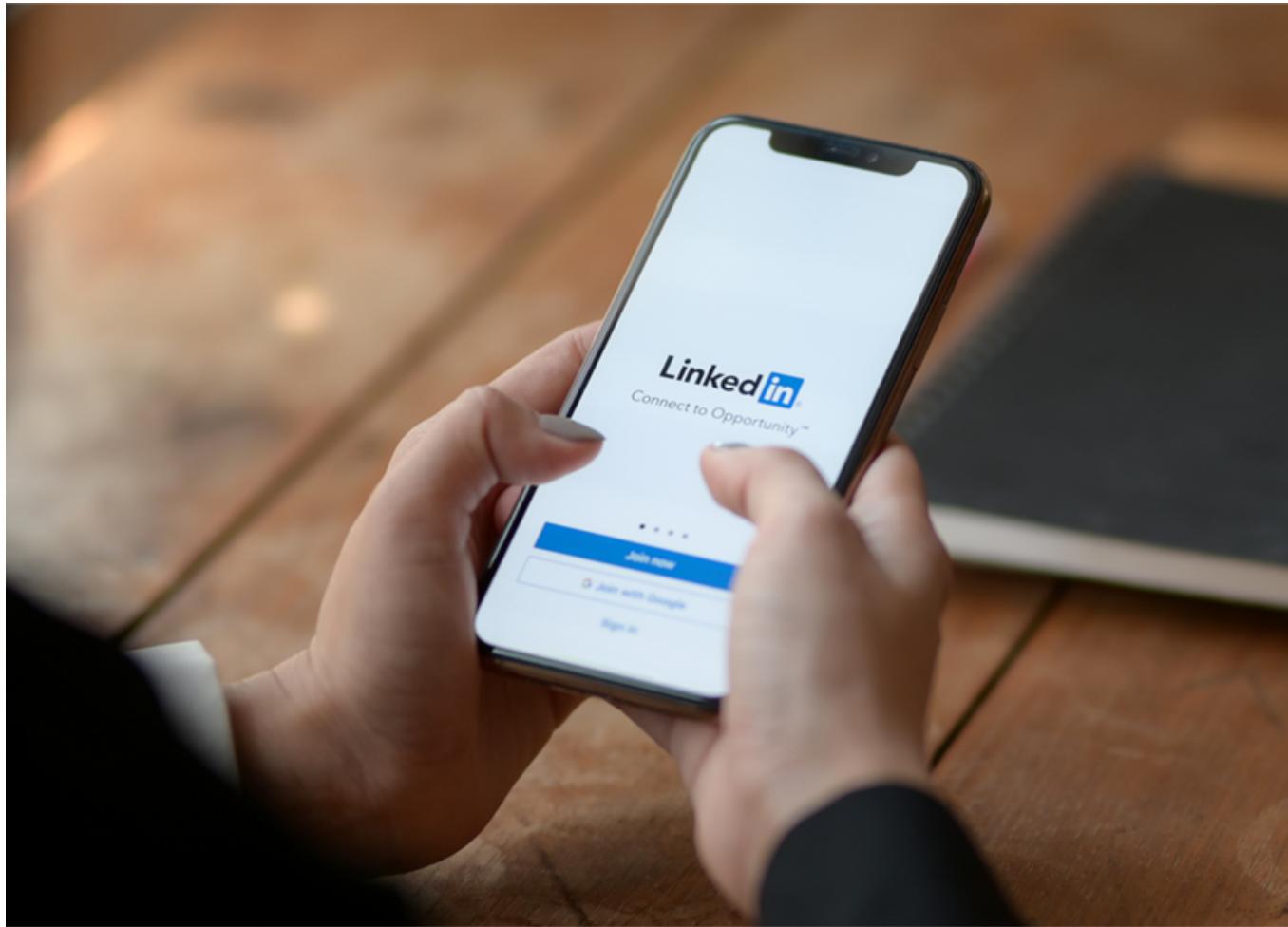
A LinkedIn profile is a powerful way to engage with employers and network among other professionals. The resume and cover letter are the traditional way of sharing your skills and experience with employers. However, social media has become a more popular form of communication. Employers often request LinkedIn profile links from job seekers.

A well-developed LinkedIn profile gives employers more information and insight about you. It taps into the network of connections and professional associations that a candidate knows. It includes recommendations and verifiable connections that give employers more confidence about a potential candidate.

LinkedIn is a powerful tool, but many of us aren't using it to its fullest extent. In addition to connecting with colleagues, classmates, and professionals in your field, here are some additional ways you can make the most

of LinkedIn:

- Build your professional brand online. Unlike a resume, LinkedIn doesn't restrict the space to share your accomplishments, experience, and skills. You can show your personality!
- Personally message industry professionals to connect, ask questions, and build relationships.
- Keep your connections up to date on what you're doing. Share your work! You can post articles, presentations, and more.
- Review professionals' profiles to learn about career and educational paths.
- Research organizations and explore job postings.



## 1a. Building Your Professional Identity

The LinkedIn profile that you create should be tailored to your professional goals. When anyone views your profile they should be able to understand your intended career path. Think about the audience that you're trying to impress. Are you trying to succeed in the high-tech e-commerce industry? Or are you a career changer who is looking to signal a new set of priorities for your career? You can tell your story and build your professional brand identity. This is extremely beneficial when interacting on the LinkedIn platform. What are you aspiring to be? Hiring managers shouldn't have to guess. Your profile should explain who you are, and the plan you have for your career.

The aforementioned insights will come from your LinkedIn profile's ability to add personality to the information you share. Share your on-the-job successes through a story in your summary, or write about your future plans to become a CEO. Your profile can share excitement and set a tone in a way that your resume and cover letter never could. The keywords and phrases that you add can evolve as your career pursuits change.

When you assemble the details of your profile, there should be a theme that aligns with your career interests. You should add experiences, volunteer work, internships, and part-time positions, but be sure to leave off experiences that don't align with the career trajectory you envision.

Not all the sections that you add to your LinkedIn profile are required. Consider adding sections that will be more meaningful and appropriate for your level of career experience. For example, you have the ability to add projects and request endorsements for your skills. If you have entry level career status and haven't completed any projects, you should not feel obligated to add information that you don't yet have.

## 1b. Developing Your Profile

A well-built LinkedIn profile can communicate your strengths and relevant skills. To do this effectively, you will need to learn the details of each profile section. If you're starting a new profile from scratch, there is a lot of work to be done. However, it's also a great opportunity to build a career resource that will work for you while you sleep. Your LinkedIn profile will be viewed by connections and employers even when you're not online.

Here is a description of the different sections of a LinkedIn profile:

- **Photo.** It is easier for new connections and old co-workers to recognize a familiar face. You get more out of your profile when you add a photo to your profile. Wear a professional and interview-ready outfit, step in front of a plain background and smile.
- **Headline.** Share your main professional interest and what career plans you have in the future. This section will be the part of your profile that people will read first.
- **Summary.** This is a more detailed description of your skills and experience as it relates to your career field. Showcase what you specialize in and explain what makes you unique.
- **Experience.** List all the employment opportunities that you have held. LinkedIn has a nice search feature that will add the logo of employers that are recognized. Include both part-time and full-time roles. Remember, employers and hiring managers will be reviewing this to determine if you have the right amount/type of experience.
- **Organizations.** Clubs that you have joined during or outside of school should be added to this section. You can list professional organizations as well. If you have held any office positions, be sure to describe how you contributed to each organization.
- **Education.** In this section you will want to add any learning experiences that you were able to complete. If you're currently in school you want to communicate that as well. Do not add your elementary school, but high school, college and summer programs are all applicable options.
- **Volunteer Experiences and Causes.** Just because you weren't paid doesn't mean the experience wasn't valuable. Working for free can show your passion for a cause, and demonstrate your selflessness, two qualities that employers appreciate.

- **Skills and Expertise.** Display skills that are relevant to your career goals. LinkedIn will offer up a few options that can be endorsed by your connections.
- **Honors and Awards.** Share information about when you achieved success. Explain what you did to achieve the victory. There should also be some meaningful takeaways from the wins you list in this section.
- **Courses and Projects.** List classes you have taken and projects you have completed that show off the knowledge that you have acquired throughout your academic career.
- **Recommendations.** Once your profile is nearly complete, ask managers, professors, or classmates who've worked with you closely to write a recommendation. This gives extra credibility to your strengths and skills.



TRY IT

Use [LinkedIn's Help Page](#) to learn the basic features and functions of LinkedIn.

## 2. Maximize Your Presence

To maximize your reach on LinkedIn, you want to be able to connect and engage on the platform often. With more connections, you increase the chances of knowing a person that could connect you to your next job. Think of this dynamic like a politician running for office. The more people and votes you connect to, the more influence you will have. All connections are valuable because each one is a conduit to more people. However, it's important to know the different types of connections on LinkedIn.

- **1st degree connections:** People (in your network) who have accepted your invitation to connect, or whose invitation you have accepted. These are people that you can message directly on the platform.
- **2nd degree connections:** People (outside your network) that are connected to one of your 1st degree connections. This means you haven't connected to the person directly, but you both share a mutual connection on the platform. You cannot directly message these people until they become a connection.
- **3rd degree connections:** There are three degrees of separation between you and these people (outside your network). These are the people connected to your 2nd degree connections.

### 2a. Making Connections

Build your network by connecting with current and former co-workers, classmates, and professors. People that you have spoken with or interacted with in recent memory should be easy connections. However, if you and a potential new connection haven't engaged in conversation in years, it may be wise to send a message along with your invitation to connect.

☞ EXAMPLE To reconnect with someone you haven't spoken to in a while, you can work from the sample message below. The message doesn't have to have that much detail. Just add a bit of information that will help the recipient recall where they know you from.

*Hello Jessica Smith,*

*It feels like just yesterday when we were in Mr. Wright's Art Studios class. I would enjoy the opportunity to connect with you and hear how you're doing.*

Thanks,  
(Your name)

Don't feel obligated to reconnect with every new connection. Remember that every exchange should be mutually beneficial. You also don't have to make all your new connections in one sitting or even one day. The process is ongoing.

Each time you engage on your LinkedIn profile, try to add a few connections. Once you have 10+ connections, that platform sends you recommendations of profiles that you might know.

Another great way to make more connections is to visit the LinkedIn page of schools that you have attended. Most colleges and universities have created LinkedIn profile pages for alumni members to interact with each other. On the profile page you can click on the alumni tab. Here you will see the alumni that are currently following the page, and can add your name to the list of followers.

## 2b. Joining LinkedIn Groups

When you join a group on LinkedIn, you're making both internal and external connections. The number of groups on LinkedIn is growing everyday. It costs essentially nothing but your time to join and engage with groups on the platform.

You will want to join the larger more mainstream groups that are relevant to your job industry. However, don't forget about the smaller, more specific groups that align with your career interests. The platform wants to encourage engagement among group members. Once you're a member of a group, you're able to message the other members of the group directly to make even more connections.



TRY IT

Learn more about using groups on LinkedIn by navigating to [LinkedIn Groups Membership - Overview](#).



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you took a deep dive into the largest professional social network in the world, **LinkedIn**. You learned how to **build your professional identity** using a LinkedIn profile. Each part of your LinkedIn **profile** plays a specific role in **developing** a presence on LinkedIn and making advantageous connections. You reviewed tips for developing your professional profile with a photo, headline, summary, details about your education, skills, recommendations, and more. To **maximize your presence** on LinkedIn, you should plan to use the platform regularly and to **make connections** with people you know. Additionally, **joining LinkedIn groups** is a powerful way to meet new people and express your interest in a new career.

Source: THIS CONTENT HAS BEEN ADAPTED FROM Strayer University's Career Center.

## REFERENCES

LinkedIn Corporation. (n.d.). About LinkedIn. Retrieved from [about.linkedin.com/](http://about.linkedin.com/)

# Research and Preparation

by Sophia



## WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn about the importance of researching the companies and industries you are interested in as you prepare to apply for job openings. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

### 1. Research

#### 1a. Industry Knowledge and Trends

#### 1b. Case Study: Linda's Employer of Interest

### 2. Interview Preparation

#### 2a. Land a Job Interview

#### 2b. Show What You Know

## 1. Research

One of the most common interview mistakes that employers cite is a candidate's lack of research into their job or company. Do not skip this step. Proper research will help you answer the hardest interview questions—those with no “right” answer, such as “why do you want this job?” and “why do you want to work for our organization?”

When researching an organization, look beyond the employer’s website by searching for third-party information from reliable news sources and other publications. Don’t forget to use your network and informational interviews to ask questions. Information about a company, especially inside information, is incredibly valuable. The more information you have, the better decisions you can make.



### THINK ABOUT IT

Seek information that you can use to support your interest and fit for the position and company.

- What products or services does the company offer that are particularly appealing to you?
- What strategies and goals could you help them accomplish?
- How does the population they serve fit your experience and career goals?

Review the job description carefully and think about the accomplishments you can share with the employer to provide evidence of your ability to meet each of the stated requirements. This is crucial to help an employer understand how you fit. You also need to understand the ins and outs of your desired industry.

### 1a. Industry Knowledge and Trends

Information is currency, and news travels fast. You need to keep a pulse on the industry you want to work in so that you can set yourself apart as a job candidate and employee.

As a job candidate, you can talk to employers about how you're learning and enhancing your professional development with up-to-date information. By becoming an early adopter to new **trends**, you will build credibility as a leader and innovator in your industry.

Before you decide who to interview with, you can make predictions based on your industry knowledge. When you do your own research and networking, you'll be better equipped to determine which employers are on the rise. Additionally, having the right knowledge and information can help you avoid a company that has concerning red flags.

Getting industry knowledge through observations and research is helpful. Sharing your knowledge about innovations and trends will have your colleagues interested in hearing more. People always want to stay connected to those who are in the know. If you're able to develop a reputation that is positive it will assist with:

- **Networking**, which leads to more contacts.
- **Hearing about new opportunities**, which makes job offers more likely.
- **Growth**, as knowledge is available to those who can go out and find it.

The best way to keep up with industry trends and relevant knowledge is to seek out new information, by creating systems that bring new information to your desk. One of the easiest ways is through social media. Following employers on Facebook, LinkedIn or Instagram will provide news updates that are brought to your feed. However, remember that while updates from social media provide information, it may not be as well-sourced as a reputable news organization. Be careful what you do with the information—every source has some amount of bias.

Another great way to get information is to subscribe to email lists and industry publications. Employers often email bi-weekly newsletters to share information about their company.

Once the information begins to flow your way, organize it. You want to filter through the junk email, and only read important news that is **pertinent** to you. Take note of important events and topics that are being discussed by multiple sources. If an employer is offering any training or webinars, take advantage by participating to expand on your knowledge.



## TERMS TO KNOW

### Trend

A general direction in which something is developing or changing.

### Pertinent

Relevant or applicable to a particular matter.

## 1b. Case Study: Linda's Employer of Interest

## IN CONTEXT

Linda has always wanted to have a job working with numbers. At a young age, she realized that she had a natural gift for math and calculations. Seeing numbers and formulas result in data-driven solutions made her smile.



When Linda reached high school, she became more familiar with accounting. The idea that she could use data to tell stories and help businesses improve their bottom line seemed like a great future career.

Linda soon determined that wanted to become a CPA (certified public accountant). Her goal was to graduate with a Bachelor's degree in accounting, and to get hired at one of the Big Four, which is the nickname used to refer to the four largest accounting firms in the United States, as measured by revenue (Deloitte, Ernst & Young, PricewaterhouseCoopers, and Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler). Linda learned about these four major companies when she began doing her research about accounting employers.

Linda graduated at the top of her class, and received job offers from each of the Big Four. Through networking at college/employer events she developed strong connections with accountants who were currently working at each of the Big Four companies. All of her contacts spoke well of their employers. However, Linda was starting to have her doubts. How could all the employers be so great and wonderful?

So Linda decided to do her own research on each of the Big Four as employers. She looked into blog posts from current and former accountants. She read ratings on Glassdoor, a website where current and former employees anonymously review companies. She read press releases to learn about what each company was doing with its wealth and success.

Linda's research indicated that three of the Big Four were notorious for employee turnover due to long work hours and negative work-life balance. She also learned that many former Big Four employees left to start their own smaller accounting firms. At these smaller firms, the salaries were a little smaller, but the employees were happier and more fulfilled. Linda's research into her potential employers played a large role in her important choice.



### THINK ABOUT IT

Linda had a plan from the start of her career pursuit. However, she was flexible and showed the ability to adapt once she received new information. Success isn't always a linear progression. Often you will have to make adjustments to a plan that you have in place.

Bigger doesn't always equal better. Larger employers can look more appealing because they have money and resources to spread awareness about their success. But smaller employers also have their own

benefits. Like Linda, you will need to look closely at any new job opportunity to make sure it is not too good to be true.

Remember that your instincts are important! Everyone was telling Linda how great it was to work for one of the Big Four. However, her instincts were telling her to dig a little deeper. When she did, it led her to uncover new insights that impacted her decision-making. None of us are going to make perfect decisions all the time. We can, however, increase our success rate by trusting our own instincts and conducting research to answer our questions.



### REFLECT

Think about the following questions regarding Linda's story.

- What pitfalls did Linda avoid by doing her own research?
- Is it always better to work for a bigger, well-known employer that's offering more salary? Why or why not?
- What would you decide to do if you were in Linda's situation?

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## 2. Interview Preparation

Consider the amount of time that you will spend over your lifetime working a full-time or even part-time job. Your life is tremendously impacted by the amount of job satisfaction that you have. In order to find a job that will satisfy your needs, fulfill your dreams, and fit your lifestyle, you must conduct research and learn about the employer that you're dealing with. The proper amount of research will help you decide if you want to work for the employer, as well as how to impress the employer.

You can use your research to answer important questions, such as:

- **How do I do well in the interview?** Learn about the priorities of the employer, and tailor your questions to exhibit your ability to deliver on the employer's goals. Think about the best ways to share experiences that are relevant to the role.
- **This job posting sounds interesting, but how do I know if I'll like the job?** Through LinkedIn and networking, you can interface with current employees of the company. This will give you insider information on what it's like to work for that employer. If you're not able to connect with a person directly, check social media, blogs, and news forums. There is usually a great deal of information and reviews on websites like Glassdoor.com.
- **How do I get hired?** Ask the right person the right questions. The best source of information is talking to people doing the work you want to do, at the companies where you want to work. Leverage your network, and schedule informational interviews to find out how current employees attained their positions. Ask these professionals for advice on ways that you can also find success in the industry.

### 2a. Land a Job Interview

Before you can begin to prepare for a job interview, you need to land one. Years ago, that meant scouring the classifieds in a newspaper, but today that has changed. With sites like LinkedIn and Indeed, you can browse and search thousands of job postings at once, anywhere in the world. Online job postings were a big shift in how people looked for jobs, and now there are even more ways to find out what is available. You will need to be able to navigate all the options to find the role that is right for you.



### BIG IDEA

Finding the right job means taking the time to understand where to look. The more efficient and innovative you can be in your job hunt, the sooner you will be able to send in your application, and hopefully get the call for an interview.

Online job boards are now considered to be a traditional way to search for openings. Sites such as Indeed were created so that employers could post their jobs for potential employees to browse. What started as a few sites has ballooned into many. Take some time to explore and find the sites that you like best. You may even discover there are specific sites for your industry. Just like many other things in life, people find they prefer some job board sites over others. It may be how the jobs are organized, or the search **parameters**. No matter the reason, you will be most productive if you utilize the ones that work for you.



### TRY IT

Are you interested in working for a particular company? If so, find their career page. Often, you can sign up for alerts that will let you know when new jobs are posted.

For example, if you visit the website for Amazon.com, you will find a link at the bottom of their page. This link is often found at the bottom of the page, or in a menu if you click on the “About” link on some pages.

Using your technology awareness to locate this link on a site is an important skill as you search for jobs. It's important to know that some job openings are not advertised. Organizations have many types of job vacancies that are less likely to either be advertised or to be filled by outside applicants. For example, vacancies that are at a senior level, or are contract positions with the potential for more permanent job opportunities, are less likely to be posted on public job boards. Additionally, organizations sometimes already have an internal hire in mind, but regulations require them to post the job opening publicly anyway.

There are a couple of ways you can make sure that you are aware of the vacancies that are hidden from the public. Networking is one way to be aware of roles that may not be posted on public job boards. Networking is all about using your initiative and communication skills to connect with people from an industry, organization, or career path. The more people you know, the more likely you are to be aware of jobs that are available.



### TERM TO KNOW

#### Parameter

A selected characteristic or option.

## 2b. Show What You Know

During an interview, showing that you're prepared is a great way to make a strong first impression with employers. Most hiring managers have met with dozens of interview candidates. It is easy to spot the people who have familiarized themselves with the company and the details of the job role.

Before the interview, you want to gather all the information from your research, and think about different ways you can strategically show what you know during the interview. Remember, during an interview you are there to impress the employer with your skills and abilities. Being able to share the knowledge that you've learned shows employers that you are serious about the opportunity.

Do what you can to learn about the individuals that you're interviewing with. Check into their background by looking on LinkedIn and searching the company's website. It's possible there could be some points of intersection—where they attended school, contacts you might have in common—and this can be a great way to strike up a conversation.

Before you interview with a company, review the company's press releases and find out if they have been in the news lately. Community events, newly launched projects, and changes in leadership are all things that you should be aware of before you enter the interview room. Positive events are possible reasons to mention your interest in working for the employer.



## SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned about the importance of conducting thorough **research** while looking for a job. You should use all of the resources you have available to learn about the company and industry you are interested in, including current **knowledge and trends**. You learned from **Linda's story** that listening to your instincts is a good way to make sure you have all the information before making a big decision about working for a particular company. When it comes to **interview preparation**, your research will help you **land a job interview** by using your network to find and apply for the right job. Finally, when you do interview for your dream job, your research will help you **show what you know** about the company's mission, current initiatives, and employees.



## TERMS TO KNOW

### Parameter

A selected characteristic or option.

### Pertinent

Relevant or applicable to a particular matter.

### Trend

A general direction in which something is developing or changing.

# Types of Interviews

by Sophia



## WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn about different interview styles and questions asked in interviews.

Specifically, this lesson will cover:

### 1. Interview Styles

#### 1a. In-Person Interviews

#### 1b. Panel Interviews

#### 1c. Virtual Interviews

### 2. Types of Interview Questions

#### 2a. Behavioral

#### 2b. Situational

## 1. Interview Styles

There are several different types of interview styles that can vary as widely as the company or interviewer that uses them. We will discuss three types: in-person, panel, and virtual. It's important to remember that any in-person or virtual interview can be conducted by an individual or a panel. Regardless of the type of interview you will participate in, you should try to find out beforehand who is conducting the interview, and in what format, so that you can be prepared.

### 1a. In-Person Interviews



Interviews are traditionally conducted face-to-face with an employer. There are many benefits to a face-to-face interview. Being in the room with your potential new manager can give you a better sense of who they are and how they act on the job. It's also the employer's chance to get a sense of your interpersonal skills.

The interview begins the moment you walk into the building. Treat everyone you encounter like they're in charge of the hiring decision. Anyone that you interact with could be asked to give feedback on your professionalism.

**1. During the Interview.** Answering questions in person might make you feel nervous. Instead, you should view it as a conversation where you share why you're the best candidate for the job. Take the opportunity to learn more about your prospective employer. Talk about work-related stories that show how you're an asset.

When you feel nervous during the interview, don't be surprised. Even the most experienced professionals get nervous during an interview. It's simply your body's reaction to doing something you care about. What's important is to not let your nerves overwhelm you. Take deep breaths to keep yourself poised and calm.

**2. Body Language.** Remember that posture is important. Sit up straight and don't slouch. When you speak to others, give them your full focus and attention with plenty of eye contact. These key body language cues show respect, and indicate that you're comfortable communicating professionally in the workplace.

**3. What to Wear.** The term "dress for success" may be overused, but it can't be overlooked. You should arrive at any in-person interview dressed in professional and appropriate interview attire. If you have

questions about what that means, select an outfit that is professional, classic, and simple. This could be a suit jacket and slacks, along with a shirt and tie or a sweater and button-down. You may also wear a blouse and dress pants or a dress that is knee length or longer.

**4. What to Bring.** Always bring a copy of your resume. Yes, it's possible and likely that the interviewer already has a copy of your resume. You're also there to impress. What better way to show that you're always prepared?

You should also bring a list of questions that you have for the employer. Typically, the last question an employer will ask is "Do you have any questions for me/us?" The answer should always be "Yes." Having a set of prepared questions at the end of an interview showcases your ability to focus on the smaller details. It also signals to the employer that you have taken the time to prepare. It is a bonus if you can add in a question that relates to a topic that was mentioned during the interview.

## 1b. Panel Interviews



Sometimes interviews are conducted by more than one person. Such interviews are considered **panel interviews**. Navigating panel interviews can be stressful, but they offer a tremendous opportunity to turn a room full of people into your biggest supporters.

Concentrate on giving equal amounts of attention to all the participants. Engage with the whole room. You will need to adjust the way you answer questions to do so, especially with your body language.

During a panel interview, the employer is able to see how you handle communicating in a group situation. Panel interviews give you a great deal of insight into the company's culture, because you're meeting with a group that represents the company.

**1. During the Interview.** Enter the room and introduce yourself to each person individually. Do your best to learn their names and the role they play at the company. When you're answering questions, try to acknowledge everyone in the room during your response.

Take note of how the interview team members relate to each other. Are they laid back and casual? Do they look happy to be at work? By observing these interactions you can adjust to the tone of the room.

**2. Body Language.** Make eye contact with everyone as you're talking. Don't get too locked into the person that asked the question. Try to address each person for about 10 to 20 seconds during your response to questions.

**3. What to Wear.** Just like for an in-person interview, you should arrive dressed in professional and appropriate interview attire that is professional, classic, and simple.

**4. What to Bring.** Have questions prepared for the entire group. If there is a main interviewer, have direct questions for this individual. Use your questions to learn about the company and the people interviewing you.

Those copies of your resume that you brought will come in handy. Make sure that each member of the interview panel has a copy of your resume in front of them. This will make it easier for them to follow along and to get to know you better.



#### TERM TO KNOW

##### Panel Interview

An interview conducted by more than one person representing the employer.

### 1c. Virtual Interviews



This interview format is becoming more popular as employers become more comfortable with webcam technology. There are a lot of benefits to virtual interviews for both the employer and the candidate. It saves a considerable amount of time, and is less expensive. Additionally, virtual interviews always give you, the candidate, a home-court advantage. You have the opportunity to decide what the employer sees and what they don't see.

Even if an interview is virtual, you should still take it just as seriously. All the same concepts apply when it comes to being a professional, and communicating why you're the best candidate for the job role.

**1. During the Interview.** Imagine yourself on a movie set. There are cameras focused on your performance. You need to project when you talk to ensure that the audio is clear. No one is in the room with you, but you still have to engage with the employer openly. Be energetic! Just like actors on a movie set, you must stay in character the entire time the cameras are rolling. You're playing the role of a job candidate that is perfect for the open position.

**2. Body Language.** Keep your eyes on the prize, or in this case the camera. There is only one place to look during a virtual interview. Make sure to angle yourself to the camera so that you're upright and smiling. You also want to adjust your camera so you can be seen from the shoulders up.

When you're on camera, your body language is more pronounced because you are the only participant in the picture. Limit involuntary movements as much as possible. A good tip is to keep your hands folded in your lap so you don't fidget too much.

**3. What to Wear.** Just like the other interview styles, you should arrive dressed in professional and appropriate interview attire that is professional, classic, and simple.

**4. What to Bring.** Make sure that all the technical setups (laptop, desktop, camera, mic, audio, background) have been tested, and are working properly on the day of your interview. If possible, have a phone number or email contact in case you have technical difficulties. If something does go wrong, do not panic! Employers are generally very understanding if there are technical issues, provided that you did everything you could to prepare. For example, you might need to download a new application or platform to complete the interview. Ensure that all files and programs are downloaded and updated well before your interview is supposed to start.

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## 2. Types of Interview Questions

### 2a. Behavioral

Employers use the interview to try to learn about the type of employee you're going to be. **Behavioral interview questions** are going to be about your past. A typical behavioral interview question could start off as, "Tell me about a time when..." and the employer expects you to provide an example that gives insight into your ability to perform well on the job. This open-ended question gives allows you to provide the example or story of your choosing.

It's difficult to predict the exact questions that you're going to be asked during an interview, but it is possible to have examples and stories ready that depict your skills and abilities in a way that is relevant to the company. In a future tutorial, we'll talk specifically about how to detail your answers. For now, put your focus on having a repertoire of stories that grab the attention of employers for the right reasons.

#### ⇒ EXAMPLE

**Question:** Give an example of a challenge you faced at work, and how you handled it.

**Answer:** In this line of work, there are always a few challenges. I have learned that remaining calm and focused is always the best way to begin. I was working in retail, when we had a customer who was caught stealing merchandise on camera. It is company policy not to confront customers directly when there is suspected theft. I was able to think quickly, and asked the customer if I could assist them with finding anything. The customer said "no," but then replaced the stolen item when I left his presence.

**Key Points:** This answer shows that you know that staying calm and focused is a good rule of thumb. It also emphasizes that you understand and know how to follow company policy. Finally, it highlights your ability to think quickly.



#### TERM TO KNOW

##### Behavioral Interview Questions

Questions asked during an interview about your past experiences or choices.

### 2b. Situational

**Situational interview questions** are hypothetical. They pose “what if” scenarios that could happen after you are hired. Employers want to understand how you’re going to react. These types of questions are often used for entry-level jobs in which candidates don’t have much relevant work experience to share during the interview.



### KEY CONCEPT

Keywords to help identify situational interview questions are If, You, and Would. For example, a situational interview question might be, “What would you do if an upset customer walked into your office crying?”

When answering situational interview questions, it is important to talk in detail about what you would do, and provide a rationale behind your proposed actions. This offers an employer a chance to determine if they agree with your choice, and also to understand your thought process. Your goal should be to align with the employer as much as possible. However, if the thinking behind your decision is clever and makes sense to the employer, they could be impressed even if they are not 100% in agreement with your answer. Believe it or not, employers don’t have an expectation that job candidates are perfect, and will make all the right decisions. Remember, they’re focusing on *your potential* to make the right choice.

### ⤓ EXAMPLE

**Question:** If you’re promoted to a manager role, what will your first steps be to get the team connected?

**Answer:** Taking on a manager role would be a very exciting opportunity, and making sure we connect as a team would be my top priority. I would meet with my team to find out more about their passions and goals. Next, I would provide a timeline to review findings and to give feedback. Once I have a better idea of what the group is looking to accomplish, I would present potential solutions to the team.

**Key Points:** This answer emphasizes that you are a team player who cares about what those who report to you think and feel. It shows that you would be a manager who would communicate openly and clearly.



### TERM TO KNOW

#### Situational Interview Questions

Hypothetical questions that pose “what if” scenarios, or address issues that could arise in the future.



### SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned about how job interviews are conducted. There are three basic **styles of job interviews** that are commonly conducted by prospective employers: **in-person interviews**, **panel interviews**, and **virtual interviews**. Each interview type has unique characteristics, but in all cases you should be prepared by dressing professionally, bringing the appropriate materials, and being ready to ask and answer questions. You also learned about different **types of interview questions**. Questions may be **behavioral** in nature, asking you about your past experiences and choices, or they may be **situational**, which are hypothetical questions posed to a candidate to see how they might handle a tricky situation.



### TERMS TO KNOW

#### Behavioral Interview Questions

Questions asked during an interview about your past experiences or choices.

**Panel Interview**

An interview conducted by more than one person representing the employer.

**Situational Interview Questions**

Hypothetical questions that pose “what if” scenarios, or address issues that could arise in the future.

# Answering Questions Effectively

by Sophia



## WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn how to answer questions during an interview. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

- 1. Get Ready and Execute**
  - 1a. What You Need**
  - 1b. Elevator Pitch**
  - 1c. Skills in Action**
- 2. Communicating Your Skillset**
  - 2a. Transferable Skills**
  - 2b. Relevant Skills**

## 1. Get Ready and Execute

You will need to have several key items for most job interviews. Earlier lessons have already explored some of these items, such as resumes and cover letters. You will want to have these materials prepared before interviewing for a position, as you want to be as ready and relaxed as possible before your interview begins.

### 1a. What You Need

If you have an interview, it means you have likely already sent in your resume and cover letter. Even so, it is wise to have printed copies of these materials with you during your interview. The employer may request another copy, or they may not have their copy handy and need a new one. You want to be prepared for any scenario.

Documents are not the only thing you will need for an interview. You need to have the right attitude, and to be prepared for some common questions. Your goal is to walk into the interview with confidence, ready to leave a lasting impression that will lead to either the next round of interviews or, better yet, an offer for employment. Your attitude of confidence will be enhanced the more you prepare for your interview. Your answers should tell the interviewers interesting and unique details about yourself and your experience, and they should also highlight what you know about the company and industry.



TRY IT

You should prepare extensively prior to your interview by practicing answers to some common interview questions. Try answering these questions aloud in front of a mirror:

- Can you tell us a little about yourself?
- How did you hear about the opportunity, and what do you know about the role?
- Why should we hire you?
- How do you handle conflicts while on the job?

## 1b. Elevator Pitch

A personal **elevator pitch** is a prepared, 30-second speech you give when you introduce yourself in a work-related capacity. It gets its name because it is short... about the length of time you would have to speak to someone during an elevator ride.

⇒ EXAMPLE *"I have spent the last 10 years as an eighth-grade teacher. I love my students and my work, but feel I have done all I can in the classroom. I want to make a greater impact by mentoring and coaching other teachers so that they can be their best for their students. I see a move into professional development delivery as the best way to do this."*

Here are some rules for drafting and delivering your elevator pitch:

1. **Be concise.** Remember, you want to be able to deliver your speech in 30 seconds.
2. **Be confident.** You want to come across as capable and ready to take on any new challenge.
3. **Be general.** Thirty seconds does not allow for much in the form of details. You want your pitch to be widely applicable, as it is often used when no particular job is the focus.
4. **Be distinctive.** Even when you are brief, you want to be use keywords that make you stand out from others.
5. **Share your goals.** You want to close with what you hope to achieve in the future.



TRY IT

An excellent elevator pitch comes down to being prepared. The more you practice your elevator pitch, the more comfortable you will become with it!

Spend 20 minutes in front of a mirror practicing your personal elevator pitch, and update it every year or so. Doing so will lead to better conversations and more meaningful connections.



TERM TO KNOW

### Elevator Pitch

A prepared, 30-second speech you give when you introduce yourself in a work-related capacity.

## 1c. Skills in Action

Once you have prepared and practiced, you are ready for the actual interview. You are confident talking about yourself and what makes you a great candidate. You are also aware of how things like body language can impact how others see you.



TRY IT

Employers and HR professionals often ask similar questions, because they can tell them a lot about a potential employee. Here is a list of common interview questions. You can find additional lists online that are specific to your industry or job. By preparing to answer these before an actual interview, you will come across as more confident and prepared when you do it for real.

- Why are you leaving your current role?
- What drew you to our company?
- What is your greatest strength?
- What is your biggest weakness?
- Do you prefer to work alone or as part of a team?
- What are your strengths, and what areas need improvement?
- Why are you interested in working here?
- Where do you see yourself in ten years, professionally speaking?
- Can you explain any gaps you have in your employment history?
- What three skills are you hoping to improve?
- Are you willing to work remotely/relocate/travel for this job?
- Tell me about a time when you had a conflict with another person on the job.
- How did you hear about us?
- Tell us about your educational/training background.
- Why are you the best candidate for this job?
- What is your availability on weekends and holidays?
- How would you deal with an upset customer?
- What salary are you hoping to receive?
- What motivates you on the job?
- What are your career goals?
- What questions haven't we asked you?
- What questions do you have for us?



BIG IDEA

You may have had many interviews in your life, or maybe you are just starting your career journey and have little experience with the process. Either way, it is important to consider all of the key elements each time you speak with someone who is considering hiring you. You only get one shot at an initial interview, and you want it to showcase the best version of yourself.

## 2. Communicating Your Skillset

You have a set of skills that you have developed from your life experiences, your work history, and the decisions that you have made. When you interview for a new role, it is your job to help the hiring manager understand how your skills and experience are a perfect fit for the job. You can do this by understanding your transferable and relevant skills. Master communicating these skills, and employers will gain meaningful details about your career.

## 2a. Transferable Skills

Honing your **transferable skills** is not just valuable when applying to a new job. These skills hold their value because they're always in high demand from employers. Knowing what your transferable skills are is the first step.



### REFLECT

Review the list of transferable skills below, and consider the skills that match up with your abilities.

1. **Initiative.** Employers want you to be able to complete a task without having to spend time micromanaging your work. When you take initiative, you take charge of your job, and don't need a lot of direction to make the right choices. Your initiative says a lot about your confidence to do the job well, and demonstrates that you're ready to progress in your career.
2. **Leadership.** You don't have to be the owner or a CEO to show that you're a great leader. Do people at work come to you for advice? Do you lead projects successfully? If your co-workers value your opinion and are willing to follow your direction, you have the qualities of a leader.
3. **Teamwork.** Being able to work well with others is one of the most valuable transferable skills. When you collaborate well, you raise the level of success of the entire team. Team players are indispensable to an employer.
4. **Communication.** Your ability to communicate plays a role in every job task. No company can be successful if its employees aren't able to communicate. The ideas that make the company work need to be communicated effectively. Keep in mind that communication flows both ways—it's not just about talking, but listening too.



### TERM TO KNOW

#### Transferable Skills

Skills that hold their value from one job to the next.

## 2b. Relevant Skills

**Relevant skills** are the skills that relate to the job posting. More important than almost anything else is demonstrating that you have the skills in the job description. We've already discussed how you should tailor your resume and cover letter to match terms used in the job posting. You should also do your best to bring up these skills during your interview. The key here is finding a succinct way to connect phrases and ideas from the posting to the conversations you have with your prospective employer.

On your resume, you should use the exact language from the posting itself whenever possible, especially if you are listing how you match up with skills in your experience section. The idea is to list specific skills in your

inventory section and then repeat them – with or without the exact language – and add examples in your work history section. You can do the same thing in your interview by keeping a list handy of the skills from the job posting and doing your best to highlight experiences you have that demonstrate those skills.

⇒ **EXAMPLE** Here are a few examples of terms from a job posting and the skills they denote.

- “Reporting observations of the patient” → Oral communication skills
- “Completing forms, reports, logs, and records” → Written communication skills
- “Prepare rooms” → Organizational skills
- “Answering patients’ requests” → People skills



#### TERM TO KNOW

##### Relevant Skills

Skills that are directly relevant to the job, and which are listed in a job description.



#### SUMMARY

In this lesson, you explored how to answer questions effectively in an interview. Once you have an interview scheduled, it’s time to **get ready and execute** your interview plan. You learned **what you need** in addition to your resume and cover letter: a practiced **elevator pitch**, examples of your **skills in action**, and the confidence to answer any question that comes your way.

**Communicating your skillset** doesn’t have to be complex, but it does need to highlight your **transferable skills** from other positions. You should also be prepared to follow through on your resume by explaining how you have mastered the **relevant skills** listed in the job posting.



#### TERMS TO KNOW

##### Elevator Pitch

A prepared, 30-second speech you give when you introduce yourself in a work-related capacity.

##### Relevant Skills

Skills that are directly relevant to the job, and which are listed in a job description.

##### Transferable Skills

Skills that hold their value from one job to the next.

# Interview Practice

by Sophia



## WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn more about interviewing for a job. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

- 1. Details That Get You Hired**
  - 1a. Planning Your Response**
  - 1b. Answering Interview Questions Effectively**
- 2. Mock Interviews**
  - 2a. How to Practice Interviewing**
  - 2b. Mock Interview Resources**

## 1. Details That Get You Hired

When you prepare to interview, don't just set your sights on doing well. Strive to achieve exceptional results. To be exceptional means you stand out from the crowd. An exceptional candidate is the one who is offered the position!

In order to be exceptional, you need to have a plan and know the steps to answering interview questions. If you already believe in your ability to answer interview questions well, it's likely that you have participated in an interview, performed well, and gotten hired for the job. Congratulations! However, each job is different, and your skills and experiences are going to need to evolve. You must embrace the fact that you need to prepare and practice.

If you don't have faith in your ability to answer interview questions, fear not. Progress can be made. Everyone has the ability to improve on the interview skills that they currently have. We all perform better when we have studied and prepared.



## THINK ABOUT IT

- Your performance on an exam is determined by how much you have studied the class material.
- When playing a sport, you need to know and understand the play call in order to execute properly. This requires lots of practice.
- When making a sale to a customer, you must know the details of the product or service you're selling.



To interview exceptionally, you will need to:

1. Plan and prepare your responses
2. Learn how to improve your answers
3. Practice to enhance your interview performance

Each person has their own unique style when it comes to answering interview questions. Your goal should not be to adopt a style or technique that works for someone else. You want to be as prepared as possible for any interview opportunities. Have the self-awareness to understand what you do well as an employee. Identify the skills you have and highlight them with confidence. It's easier to speak with confidence when you believe in something. Have faith in your own ability to do the job well, then communicate effectively to employers and make believers out of them.

## 1a. Planning Your Response

Before we get into the process of planning your response to an interview question, it is important to talk about time. When you're on the so-called "hot seat," and experiencing the sense of urgency that takes place during an interview, remember to slow down and remain poised. People often get nervous and anxious during an interview. In the excitement, everything feels like it is happening faster. Or waiting in the lobby for five minutes may feel like an hour when you are nervous and your heart is beating fast. When you are nervous you may talk too much, too fast, or not enough.

STOP FOR A MOMENT... THINK... AND RESPOND.

Your mind works better when you are calm, and the time that you take to gather your thoughts and respond to questions is not as long as you think it is. Especially when your answers have a positive impact on the employer.

Employers ask questions for different reasons, and it's very valuable for you to know what the employer is trying to understand about you when certain questions are asked. Take the time to evaluate each question that you're asked, and search for the hidden meaning.

Consider the following interpretations as a way to know what to look for while evaluating questions. If you are able to understand the core meaning of an interview question, you will be more laser-focused on how to respond with a complete answer.

What they say...	What they could mean...
What do you know about our company?	<i>Are you interested enough to learn about our business, and have you done your research?</i>
Where do you see yourself in five years?	<i>Do you find the work you do meaningful, or could you be someone that is a risk to leave the company shortly after they are hired?</i>
What is your greatest weakness?	<i>Can you handle feedback? Do you have self-awareness? Are you currently addressing the areas where you need to improve?</i>

Let's go more in-depth and review a full interview response.

#### ⇒ EXAMPLE

What they say...	What they could mean...
Describe a time when you had to deal with a conflict between you and one of your co-workers.	<i>The employer wants to understand if you're a team player, and how you handle interpersonal relationships.</i>

To answer this question well, you will want to give your best solution to the challenge or situation. You also want to share your philosophy on the issue or topic. Remember that people tend to recall the first thing and last thing that they hear. The facts in the middle are more difficult to retain. Starting off with a strong response is good, and the way you close out your answer will leave a lasting impression.

Here's a sample response to the above question:

*During my employment with WRF industries, I was asked to lead the staff meeting because our director had to unexpectedly attend to other business. During the meeting, one of my co-workers (Ron) became a distraction for the group. As I was presenting the meeting agenda and topics, he was mumbling words under his breath. Rather than directly address Ron's behavior in the meeting, I waited until afterward, and asked to speak with him alone in the conference room.*

*When we spoke 1:1, I made sure to speak in a calm voice. Instead of attacking his actions, I asked Ron how he was doing, and what I could do to improve my presentation style when addressing the team. I remembered that Ron was my co-worker, and believed that I would have more success treating him as my equal than trying to critique his behavior. Ron expressed that he was under a lot of stress at home. He was feeling a lot of pressure to make more money and advance in his career. When he walked into the staff meeting and saw that I was leading the meeting, he became jealous. I told Ron that I was just filling in today, that his work contributions were very valuable, and that I had always admired his ability to interact and bond with clients. Ron actually apologized for his comments during the staff meeting without me bringing up the topic. Befriending Ron in this way was the right move. We developed a better relationship after that meeting, and it improved our collaboration on future projects.*

## 1b. Answering Interview Questions Effectively

Responding to an interview question would not be difficult if a one-word answer was the right response.

*Employer: Do you believe that you would be a good fit for this role?*

*Interviewee: Yes!*

*Employer: Great, you're hired!*

If only it were that simple. Your goal is not to just respond. Your goal is to impress and amaze the employer. Set a stretch goal. Your interview performance should be so amazing that the employer won't let you leave the

building until you accept their offer. Think about what type of responses you would have to give in order to receive that type of reaction.

Take a moment to think about how a person could astound and amaze during an interview.

- What would they need to say?
- How would they need to act?
- What would the employer need to hear from the candidate?

Think about what makes a good response, and what makes a great response. The interview should feel like a two-way conversation. You are trying to share unique pieces of information that highlight your special abilities to do the job well. You are also hoping to learn from the employer the value that this role will bring to your career. Great answers include:

- Expressing the knowledge you have of the employer's need(s)
- Addressing the specific business need(s)
- Showcasing your experience and the skills that will allow you to address the challenges of your potential new role

The table below demonstrates additional key drivers that push your answers from good to great.

Tip	Example
Ask the employer if they agree with your response. When you ask for feedback it can make the interview process more conversational.	"Is that typically how you handle situations here at XYZ company?"
Reiterate what you know about the role in your answer.	"From talking to your team, and from everything that I have read about the company..."
Show enthusiasm, charm, and interest	"That's really exciting to me! I've been hoping to get a chance to do...."
Share information that shows your self-awareness and empathy	"I realized that I work more effectively when I create a to-do list."  "I wanted to speak with her/him directly so that I could understand their perspective."
Give insights that share the results of your work	"The company noticed a dramatic improvement..."  "I believe that I could learn on the job quickly and make an impact."

## 2. Mock Interviews

Throughout this challenge we have discussed the importance of preparation, and how insights and details can enhance your interview performance. We can now take what we have learned and put it into practice. Mock interviews can be extremely helpful when preparing for an interview. A mock interview is when you simulate the interview process, by having someone ask you interview questions. You then receive feedback on your responses, and how well you presented. When set up correctly, a mock interview can offer you important takeaways and feedback to improve.



### 2a. How to Practice Interviewing

Being focused and locked in is how to really benefit from your mock interviews. Take it seriously, and respond as though the employer of interest is asking intense questions.

- **Select questions that are relevant to the job industry or employer job description.** It's quite possible to pose questions in your mock interview that will be asked in the actual interview. Do your research and consider what type of information the employer is looking for. You should be able to hit on a few questions, or at least have a general idea of the type of questions that are coming.
- **Be aware of your non-verbal communications.** When practicing during mock interviews, take note of your movements, eye contact, and gestures while speaking. Sit or stand at attention, and ask your mock interviewer to monitor what you do, in addition to what you say.

- **Make your answers concise.** If you talk too much you will detract from the effectiveness of your response. Share your answers within a time frame of one to three minutes, depending on the question that you're asked.
- **Eliminate filler words.** Actors, politicians, and news anchors all speak clearly and directly, because they take out the words that aren't meaningful. These professionals also regularly practice their public speaking skills. You should follow suit. Take inventory of the number of times you say these filler words (um, like, uh) and cut back on the use of these words.

The more you practice, the more you will improve. Most importantly, you will become more confident. More confidence equals less stress and nerves. Mock interviews help you enhance your self-presentation. When you practice, your mind revisits information, and the synapses in your brain can access the information faster during interviews.

## 2b. Mock Interview Resources

Work with someone that can lead the interview conversation the same way an employer would. Choose from family members, professors, or career counselors. Perhaps you know someone that works in human resources, or an individual that has experience conducting interviews? The feedback and insights that you receive after a mock interview should come from someone that you trust.

Use this rubric as a way to gain feedback from your interviewer.

 PDF
**Mock Interview Evaluation Form**

Mock Interview Evaluation Form	EXCELLENT	GOOD	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	NOTES
<b>NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION</b>				
Maintained eye contact	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Used positive body language (facial expressions, gestures/posture)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Conveyed enthusiasm and interest	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Refrained from fidgeting or nervous movements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Demonstrated professional appearance and appropriate attire	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>VERBAL COMMUNICATION</b>				
Avoided filler words (Umm, like, I mean, you know)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Provided clear and concise responses with appropriate vocal tone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Emphasized strengths and highlighted unique skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Used proper grammar, avoided slang, abbreviations & acronyms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Provided specific examples with results and accomplishments to illustrate relevant experiences or skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Paused to organize thoughts prior to responding to difficult questions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Person-to-person mock interviews are not the only resource. You can use technology to participate in mock interviews, and practice as much as you need. Platforms like Handshake, Interview Stream, and Big Interview

offer mock interview services that allow you to select relevant questions and record your interview sessions. The platforms mentioned do come at a cost, but you can often find access through a school or public library. There are also free options on YouTube. By searching under the term “mock interview practice,” you can find videos that set up an interview scene and moderate questions for the mock interview.



## SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that you will need to be an exceptional candidate to get hired, and that starts with your interview practice. It is the **details you provide that will get you hired**. You should **plan your responses** to interview questions prior to being interviewed, and follow a set of protocols for **answering interview questions effectively** that ensures you are answering the question, and providing the necessary details for your prospective employer. Participating in **mock interviews** is a useful way to practice your skills, and you learned **how to practice interviewing** in this lesson using some **mock interview resources**.

# Starting a New Job Successfully

by Sophia Tutorial



## WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn what happens after you accept a job offer. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

### 1. Preparing for Your New Role

#### 1a. Research

#### 1b. Contribute

#### 1c. Connect

### 2. Tips for Starting a New Job

#### 2a. First Impression

#### 2b. Keeping Focused

## 1. Preparing for Your New Role

Turning your attention to your new job role is exciting. There will be a lot of change, including meeting new people, learning new job tasks, and growing as an individual. Along with the newness can also come stress, so in this section we will discuss some ways to prepare yourself for your first day in your new role.

### 1a. Research

In previous tutorials, you learned the importance of researching a company before you apply for an opening. It is also important to dig a little deeper once you are hired. You will want to learn more about things like:

- Leadership of the organization
- Leadership of your department
- History of the organization
- Mission and values
- Key Contacts (HR, tech support, etc.)
- Benefits
- Dress code
- Social media presence
- Expectations of your role

You may have already learned about some of these items, but now that you have been hired, you may be able to find more information. For example, you may have access to org charts that show who leads each department, or you may have reviewed their mission and values, but now you want to truly understand how they are put into action.

One item that could really help you with this process is an employee handbook.

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK	
<h2>I Table of Contents</h2>	
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	
1	Introduction
2	Striving for a Better Tomorrow
3	Vision   Mission   Values
4	Code of Ethics
6	Conflicts of Interest
<b>COMPENSATION &amp; WORK SCHEDULE</b>	
7	Employee Classifications
	Classifications
	Benefit Categories
8	Attendance
9	Pay
	Deductions
	Errors
10	Rest and Meal Periods
	Non-exempt
	Rest periods
	Meal periods
12	Time Tracking
	Overtime compensation
	Scheduling
<b>GENERAL EMPLOYMENT</b>	
14	Etiquette and Access
	Office Etiquette
	Company Equipment
	Facility Access Badges
15	Company Protocol
	Corporate Credit Card
	Social Events
	Dress Code
	Confidentiality
	Disciplinary Process
	Records
	Fraternization
17	Employee Protocol
	Personal Items
	Non-business / Social Visits
	Recording Devices
18	Professional Conduct
	Right to Inspect
	Smoking
	Substance Abuse
	Travel and Entertainment
20	Employee Suggestions

You will want to use your productivity skill to set aside the time needed to review this document. It will contain answers to many of your questions, and contacts that you can use to ask other questions that arise. Taking this time will help you feel more confident and prepared on day one.



### BIG IDEA

Employers want to hire someone who makes a good impression during the interview process, and they also want to see initiative once hired. Preparing for your new role means more than just “showing up.” Learning all that you can about your new position before you start will go a long way in demonstrating that you are ready for your new role.

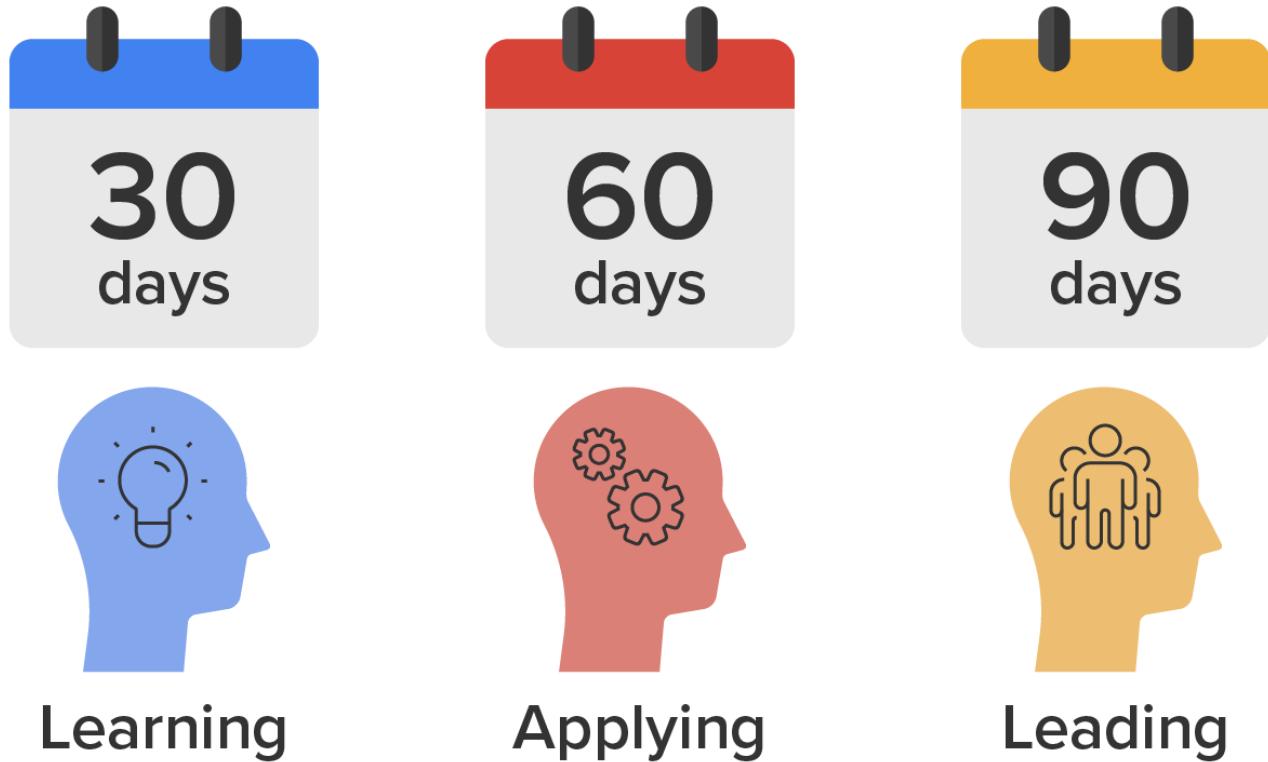
### 1b. Contribute

A 30-60-90-day plan lays out a clear course of action for you during the first 30, 60, and 90 days of any new job. By setting concrete goals and a vision for your abilities at each stage of the plan, you can make the

transition into a new organization smooth and **empowering**.

You want to create this plan within the first week of your new job. By doing this, you provide a roadmap for yourself and your supervisor. Both of you will understand the expectations for your performance, and will have clear points to check in on your progress. Knowing what you should be doing reduces your stress, and it can help your supervisor support you in specific areas.

Here's a sample template for a 30-60-90 day plan, but there are many others. The topics and sub-topics listed here are general and will vary according to the employment or volunteer position, but it may help you to think about your job in terms of the same general process of learning, applying, and leading:



	First 30 Days: Learning	First 60 Days: Applying	First 90 Days: Leading
Computer Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Obtain SSO password.</li><li>• Understand email.</li><li>• Organize files.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learn collaboration tools.</li><li>• Work with company software.</li><li>• Implement productivity tools.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Design or purchase new technologies.</li><li>• Find more efficient ways of working.</li><li>• Become adept at all company systems.</li></ul>
Work Streams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Attend status meetings.</li><li>• Study flowcharts.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Apply processes to your work.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Redesign processes.</li><li>• Lead improvement teams.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speak with fellow staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggest process improvements.</li> <li>• Know the impact of external, related processes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create new process tools.</li> </ul>
Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn the product portfolio.</li> <li>• Read about design specs.</li> <li>• Research competitors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take on a design project.</li> <li>• Apply new design knowledge.</li> <li>• Redesign components.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead design teams.</li> <li>• Produce design standards.</li> <li>• Renew the company's product portfolio.</li> </ul>
Optimizing Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep a training checklist.</li> <li>• Compile notes.</li> <li>• Know the performance review process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schedule regular touchpoint meetings.</li> <li>• Suggest changes based on your experience.</li> <li>• Contribute new work and development tools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead project teams and task forces.</li> <li>• Attend leadership meetings and industry conferences.</li> <li>• Volunteer in other areas of the company.</li> </ul>



### TERM TO KNOW

#### Empowering

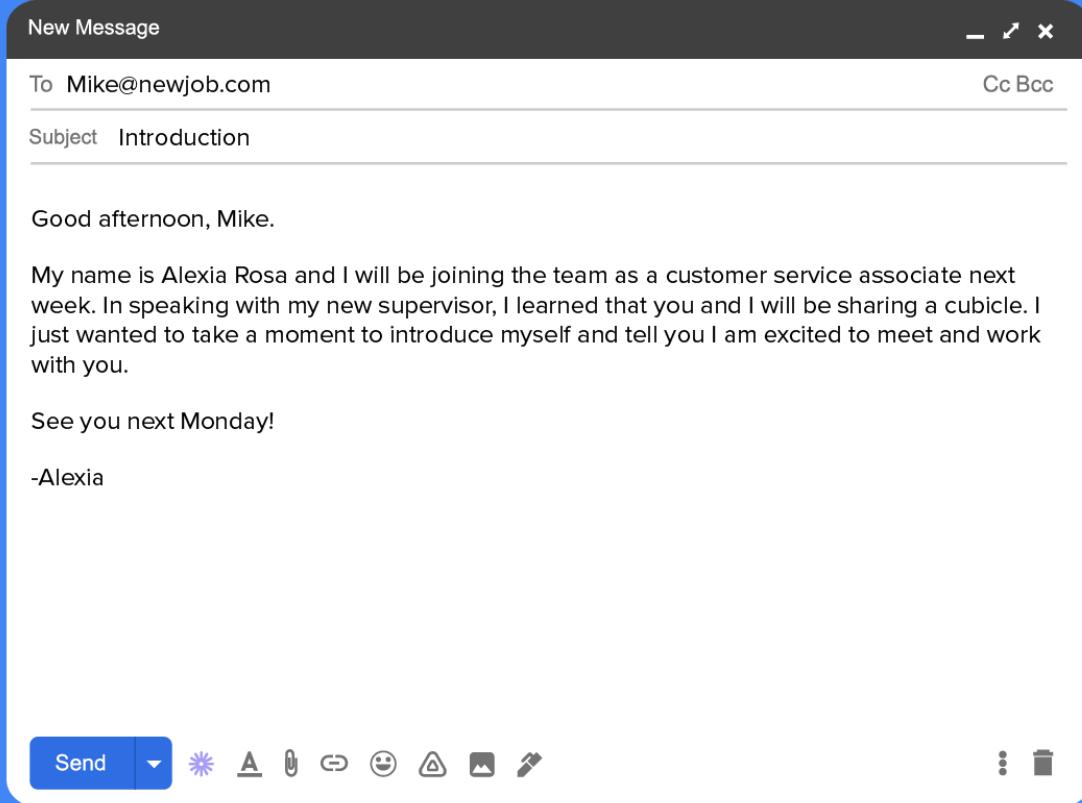
To make stronger or more confident.

## 1c. Connect

As you research and create your plan to contribute, you will also want to think about who can help you along the way. When you walk into the new office or have your first day on a new job site, who will you look to for support? You can get an idea of who these people might be before day one. You may even be able to introduce yourself virtually before you meet face-to-face.

After you gain some insight into who may be a good connection, you can reach out to them via email or phone to let them know when you will begin, and that you are excited to start. If it makes more sense to wait to connect until you are in person, you still want to know who you should seek out in the first few days.

☞ EXAMPLE You might send an email like this to a new co-worker prior to your start date:



Once you have made your initial connection, you will want to maintain it by doing things like:

- Asking questions
- Asking for help
- Offering to help
- Asking to go to lunch

You want to get to know these new co-workers, and you want to take the time to help them get to know you. You need to use your initiative skill to take the initial steps to make these connections, and afterward, you need to be diligent and work to keep the lines of communication open.

## 2. Tips for Starting a New Job

Starting a new job is exciting. You're going to potentially meet a lot of people, and obtain new information very quickly. The process can be overwhelming if you try to do too much too soon. Seek advice from your new co-workers and colleagues even before you start. There is a great deal of information and insightful tips that you should be aware of before your first day as an employee.

### 2a. First Impression

You control the narrative about how you're perceived on the job. A new job is often an opportunity for a fresh start. Even if you are remaining with the same employer, but transitioning to a new role, you can create a new reputation under a new label. It sounds funny, but you should start with the end in mind.

- **What do you want to be known for on the job?** There are many positive and negative actions that contribute to your reputation. The most influential factor is consistency. Showing up to work each day, and completing the task that you're assigned, is what is expected of you. How you selectively choose to go above and beyond the general responsibilities of your role will be what you're known for. Volunteering for tasks that are outside your scope of work, focusing on a specific sector of business that you do exceptionally well, or proposing and creating solutions for your team or department, are all ways that you can create a positive perception. It will become your reputation if you do it consistently over time.
- **How can you improve your work performance?** You could forget the mistakes that you made at previous jobs, but how would that help you improve? Instead, examine your mistakes and evaluate what you would do differently.

#### IN CONTEXT

Jane had a very difficult time keeping up with her email at her last job. Each time she tried to catch up, there would be an avalanche of emails after a weekend, or after she took a day off from work. Recently, Jane accepted a similar role that offers a better salary and more responsibility.



Now that Jane is embarking on a new position, she can make changes to improve. Jane invested in herself by taking training on email tips and productivity. This was also one of the areas of improvement that she mentioned during her interview. Not only did she make good on her promise to strengthen one of her weaknesses, she will be more organized on the job. It will give her added time to complete other program initiatives.



#### THINK ABOUT IT

Jane had to be very self-aware to be able to recognize that her email habits were causing her significant issues at work. By recognizing the problem she was having, and articulating it to her new employer, she was able to set a concrete goal and improve her skills for managing email.

All of us have weaknesses when it comes to work, and they can be compounded by stress or feeling overwhelmed with our workload. Jane was able to recognize a growing problem and do something about it, instead of allowing herself to continue being so overwhelmed that her productivity and job satisfaction suffered.



#### REFLECT

Think about the following questions regarding Jane's story:

1. What areas of self-improvement can you identify from your last position?

2. How will you either communicate these to your new employer, or work on improving your skills so your new job won't be impacted?

3. What would you have done about your email problem if you were Jane?

- **What is the next job opportunity that you want to prepare for?** Thinking about where you want to be in the future is great for adjusting your trajectory at the start. In most new roles, you're going to be introduced to a lot of people. There will be welcome emails and new hire trainings. You are on a tour of your new employer for the first couple of weeks. If you have aspirations to one day be a senior vice president of marketing, it would be a savvy move to schedule introductory meetings with members of leadership that work in the marketing department. You instantly put yourself on their radar for the future. These types of internal informational interviews lay the groundwork for your next career transition.

## 2b. Keeping Focused

Staying focused at work is a skill. We often take it for granted that once we start our day, we can just flip a switch and fully engage in our responsibilities. There are distractions and competing priorities that fight for our time. Once you get past the new hire orientation, you will meet your new co-workers, and fill out your W-4. It's very important to remember why you were hired for the job. This should be your main priority. Focus on what you need to accomplish and get results.

Once the president-elect is named The President of the United States, there is an established precedent for selecting accomplishments that the president will satisfy within the first 100 days. This is an initial benchmark that all presidents are judged on at the start of their term in office. You don't need to have an incredible list of what you're going to do in your first 100 days on the job. However, you should set goals that will allow you to measure progress and self-evaluate your performance. Having these goals to work towards will help sharpen your focus.

Knowing the distractions that you're facing will give you an opportunity to remove or limit the interruptions. It's great to take a break to recover and refuel yourself while working, however, you want to understand the difference between a break and a hard stop. When you are focused, your breaks are scheduled, or happening at a cadence that doesn't diminish productivity. Popular distractions include: cell phones, watching TV, surfing the internet, and more. These are the types of distractions that drain your time and energy to work.



### SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned how to **prepare for your new role** at a company once you are hired. Doing **research** about the company's leadership, history, mission, values, key contacts, benefits, dress code, social media presence, and expectations will help you prepare for your important first day; your employee manual and other documents from human resources will help you find this information. Next, you should prepare a 30, 60, and 90-day plan that outlines how you will **contribute** to the company, and that is unique to your new role. Your plan will empower you to succeed and grow as you acclimate to the company. It's also important to **connect** with your new coworkers by introducing yourself and starting your relationships off on the right foot. You reviewed some **tips for starting your new job**, which

helped you to see that **first impressions** are of the utmost importance, and **keeping focused** at work will help you to maintain that good first impression as you grow in your new position.



## TERMS TO KNOW

### **Empowering**

To make stronger or more confident.

# Productivity on the Job

by Sophia Tutorial



## WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn how to be a productive worker on the job. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

### 1. Productivity Strategies

#### 1a. Time and Priorities

#### 1b. Work Environment

### 2. Plan of Action

#### 2a. Strategies

#### 2b. Focus

## 1. Productivity Strategies

Prioritizing how you use your time is a key area of focus when it comes to productivity.

### 1a. Time and Priorities

If you have ever watched ants hard at work, you might have noticed how efficiently and effectively they get a job done. Whether it's building a new nest, or carrying food to the colony, ants inherently understand how to manage their priorities, resources, and time. In the human world, this skill is called productivity, and when it comes to your life and career, productivity is absolutely essential for your success.

Productivity is not just about being busy for the sake of being busy, though. It's about working in the best way possible to get the job done. If you are a productive employee, you can manage tasks to meet deadlines, and share project plans, schedules, and task lists with others so that everyone knows how the work you do fits into your team's vision. And, when something doesn't go as you hoped, you can create a new plan to fulfill your changing needs.

Productivity is the skill of strategizing, organizing, and planning your time and priorities in order to accomplish the tasks that you need to finish to achieve your goals. In fact, keeping your focus on long-term goals is an effective way to **activate** the **drive** needed to be productive.

It's all about working smarter, not working harder. When you have lots of things to do, practicing your productivity skill lets you use your limited time and energy to complete your tasks without wasting effort.

At work, at school, and even in your personal life, being productive is your secret weapon! And anyone can learn to organize, plan, and manage their time to stay productive every day.



**IN CONTEXT** Imagine that your house is a mess after the holidays, and you decide to spend a Saturday cleaning it up.

You start by putting a few dishes in the dishwasher. Then, out of the corner of your eye, you see that the living room floor is littered with toys. You go into the living room and begin to pick them up, when you remember that there is a mountain of laundry by the washing machine. So, you hustle back to the laundry room. On the way there, your phone buzzes. Your friend Lee has texted you a picture of a dachshund dressed as a hot dog. You text back, and then notice that the trash is overflowing.

Three hours later you realize you are exhausted, but you still have a messy house. You were busy the whole time, but don't have much to show for it. Why not? Because being busy is not the same thing as being productive.

Every time you set a goal, make a plan, organize something, or prioritize an assignment, that's your productivity skill in action. Practicing productivity may be as simple as getting the kids out the door to school each morning, or managing a complicated work project successfully.

It doesn't matter if you're a stay-at-home parent, a healthcare worker, or a business executive, everyone can achieve more by using their productivity skills to perform their best. The goal is to recognize what you're

already doing well, and to get better and better at it. Productivity takes practice!



## TERMS TO KNOW

### Activate

To trigger something or set it in motion.

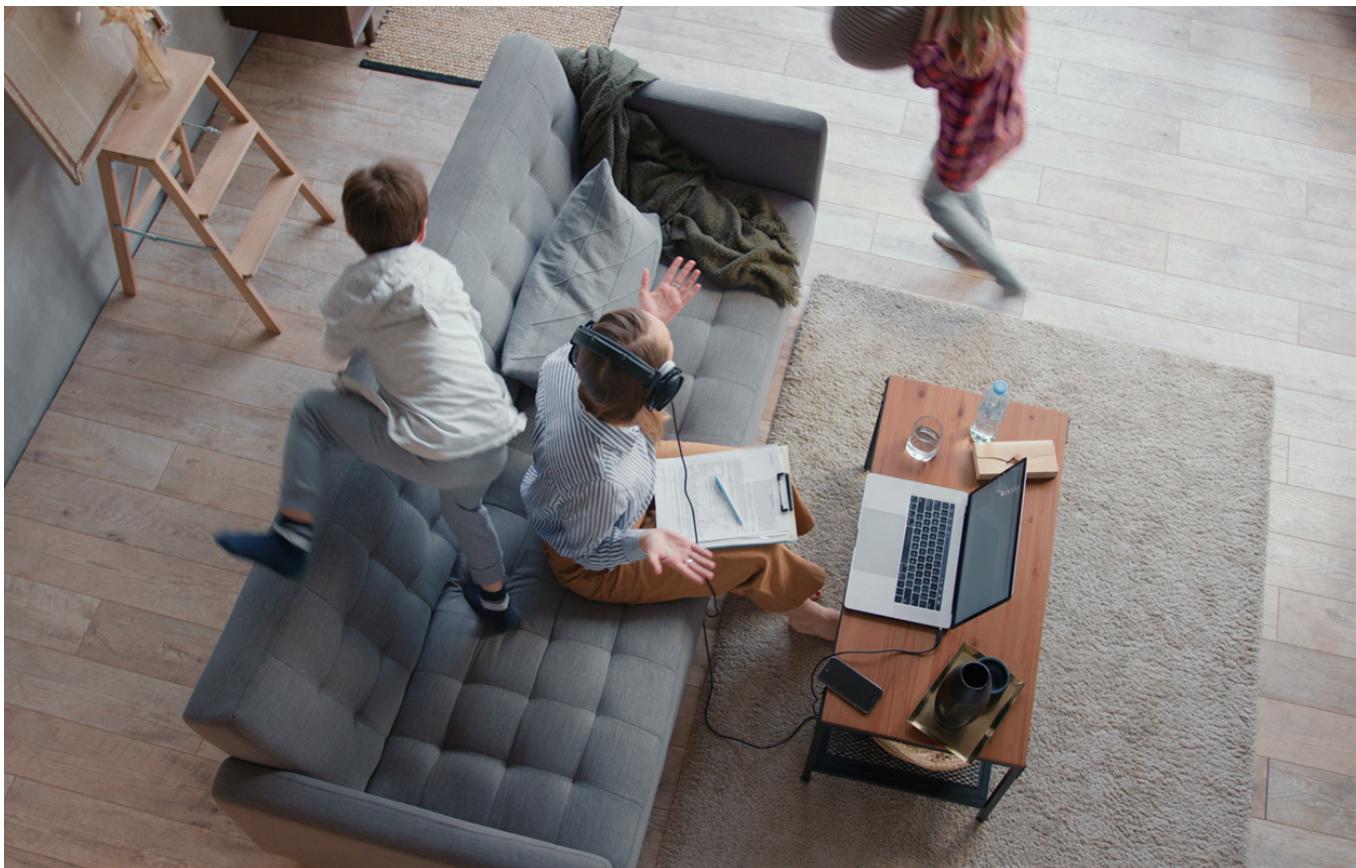
### Drive

The motivation to reach a goal.

## 1b. Work Environment

Think of the amount of time you spend at work. Then, think about how important it is to use that time well so that you can be as productive as possible. Success in the workplace requires laser focus on what matters, and the ability to tune out distractions in order to deliver results. Employers value—and reward—employees who use their time wisely to get the results a company desires. They also value employees who can adjust and still deliver in a flexible work arrangement (**remote or hybrid**).

There was a time not long ago when most people worked in an office, school, or other worksite. Remote and hybrid work was not thought to be viable. The thinking on this has changed over recent years, and the COVID-19 pandemic has forced many companies to re-evaluate their remote/hybrid work policies.



In a remote or hybrid work arrangement, you want to be as productive as you would be on a job site. To ensure that you are set up for success, you will want to consider two key items when it comes to working from home.

Specifically, you need to make sure you have all the materials required, and that you have a work environment that is free from distractions.

The table below illustrates some key examples of items that you may need to consider in each category.

Key Item	Examples
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do you have a computer and printer that are reliable?</li><li>• Do you have a desk and chair? Are they ergonomic?</li><li>• Do you have a phone line that is dedicated to work?</li><li>• Do you have reliable Internet access?</li></ul>
Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is your office free from distractions? Does it have a door?</li><li>• Will you always have access to your office space, or do you share it with others?</li><li>• Is your space large enough to meet your needs?</li><li>• Is the lighting adequate if/when you have video meetings?</li></ul>

The chart above shares some common concerns, but it is not an exhaustive list. Your list will depend on your job and your needs. The key to making sure that you can be productive no matter where you work is to make sure that you consider critical issues, and adjust as needed.

### IN CONTEXT

Jasmine was an admissions counselor for a large online university. She worked in an office until COVID-19 hit. She and her colleagues were sent home to work on very short notice. She had never worked from home, but was excited to shorten her commute and save money on gas.



However, after her first two weeks, Jasmine was exhausted and barely getting anything done. She had been working from her kitchen table, and her Internet was always going in and out. She also had two kids at home doing online school, and her husband was also working from home.

To improve her situation, Jasmine took some time to read about the best practices for working from home. She decided to make her spare bedroom into an office. She already had a small desk and chair that she could use, and she would be able to close the door to keep her kids and husband out when she needed to concentrate or had a meeting. She also decided to turn off the Wi-Fi on her phone and iPad during working hours to cut down on devices using the internet. In the coming weeks, she found herself more relaxed, and she had a much easier time completing her work.



THINK ABOUT IT

Luckily, Jasmine was able to make some changes fairly quickly to make herself more productive and happy. The changes benefited her, but they also benefited her team and her supervisor, as she was able to maintain the same focus that she had in the office. Her skills and ability to do her job had not changed, but her environment had. Jasmine's agility skill proved to be useful in this case. By being able to pivot and change how she was working in her new setting, she was able to maintain her usual level of productivity.



## REFLECT

Think about the following questions regarding Jasmine's story.

1. What steps would you need to take to work from home effectively?
2. What would you have done if you were Jasmine?
3. Do you prefer working from home, in an office, or some combination of the two? Why?



## TERMS TO KNOW

### Remote

A work model that allows someone to work outside of a traditional office environment.

### Hybrid

A work model that combines work in a traditional office setting with work from a remote setting.

## 2. Plan of Action

Understanding what is considered to be productive is great, but productivity does not happen all by itself. You will need to utilize some strategies and techniques to be as productive as possible. You will also need to stay focused on the task at hand to make the most of your time and achieve your desired results.

### 2a. Strategies

You can use many powerful techniques and strategies to stay productive. Here are some simple ways you can improve your productivity right now!

- Avoid distractions! This can be hard because our brains are wired to want them.
- Understand the importance of practice as you master new techniques.
- Schedule breaks to keep your brain fresh.
- Keep your space organized—both the physical area of your desktop, and the virtual space of your laptop or phone.
- Be flexible, when necessary, to reach your goals. For example, don't count on the Wi-Fi working on your flight to complete a time-sensitive task. If you know that you need documents, then download or print them ahead of time for greater flexibility.
- Make checklists for repetitive tasks, such as writing weekly reports or submitting timesheets.

- Do work that's important! Being productive without a connection to a goal can feel like you're spinning your wheels, or being busy for the sake of being busy. Ask yourself: When is my deadline? Why does this matter to me? What values or goals does this task align with?



TRY IT

You can find more tips and tricks to help you be productive online. [This article from Hive.com](#) is just one example. Take some time to review it, and consider searching for more on your own.

Another option you can consider is using a Personal Productivity Matrix. The sample matrix below is divided into four quadrants:

- **Quadrant 1: Handle.** These are urgent tasks needing immediate attention that help you meet your short-term goals.  
Example: *a health emergency*
- **Quadrant 2: Plan.** These are tasks that help you reach your long-term goals, and you can do them in advance.  
Example: *studying for a test*
- **Quadrant 3: Reconsider.** This is busywork that tends to interrupt your day.  
Example: *an unexpected phone call*
- **Quadrant 4: Limit.** These are tasks you should only do once all other tasks are complete.  
Example: *browsing the Internet*

Check out the infographic to learn more:

## 1 HANDLE

**What goes here:** Urgent tasks that could help you reach your short-term goals and require immediate action (last-minute projects, deadlines, emergencies).

### Examples:

- last minute request from boss
- complete long-term assignment due today
- attend emergency doctor visit
- prepare resume for job interview this afternoon

## 2 PLAN

**What goes here:** Tasks that will help you reach your long-term goals and can be addressed in advance (studying, networking, career planning).

### Examples:

- study for exam next week
- organize neighborhood carpool for child's school pickup
- reach out to potential career mentors
- create family meal plan for coming week

## 3 RECONSIDER

**What goes here:** Tasks that interrupt your time and stop you from reaching your long-term goals (busywork, other people's crises).

### Examples:

- check email for 3rd time in the last half hour.
- spend 30 minutes helping friend pick out an outfit
- cancel exercise class to cover for colleague who overslept

## 4 LIMIT

**What goes here:** Tasks that you can spend time on once you've worked on more important tasks in the HANDLE and PLAN categories (social media, gaming, entertainment).

### Examples:

- browse social media
- play video games
- watch TV
- shop for unessential items

## 2b. Focus

As you consider the strategies above, it is easy to also remember that a big part of productivity is focus. You only have so much time every day, and you have to treat it like a limited resource. The world is full of things competing for your attention: work, family and friends, school tasks, movies, games, music, TV, and more!

In addition to technology, which can lead to countless distractions, taking on too many complex tasks when multitasking is also **counterproductive** when it comes to getting things done. In fact, research shows that multitasking reduces efficiency and effectiveness, because the brain cannot focus on more than one thing at a time very well (American Psychological Association, 2006).

Using your productivity skill means figuring out which things you need to focus on right now, and then directing your attention toward those things long enough to get them done. When you are not focused on your goal, it wastes time and effort, and that can leave you exhausted and even demoralized.



### THINK ABOUT IT

To stay focused on what you're trying to accomplish, try asking yourself the following question:

Does the thing you are doing right now actually help you accomplish what you need to?

If the answer is no, then it might be time to put that thing aside until you've met your goal. Checking items off of a to-do list is rewarding because it causes your brain to release the "feel-good hormone"—dopamine. So by concentrating on a series of attainable goals, you can actually make yourself feel better, which encourages further productivity.

Productivity is great to adopt on its own, but it doesn't actually stand on its own. Improving your productivity skills will help you to hone your other essential skills too. For instance, being productive and prioritizing your time helps you to communicate the right information at the right moment, and to be more agile in the workplace by responding to change with a plan forward. Moreover, productivity can help you be a more results-driven employee, by giving you an order of tasks to focus on.

We live in a world that's fast-paced and getting faster. No matter where you want to go, productivity will help you do more of the things you do best!



### TERM TO KNOW

#### Counterproductive

Getting in the way of achieving an intended goal.



### SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that when it comes to **productive strategies**, you need to look at the **time** that you have, and what your **priorities** are. If you work in a more flexible **work environment**, you need to make sure that you have the materials you need like a computer and the internet. You also need to make sure that the space where you work is free from distractions and well-suited for the work you do. To determine a **plan of action**, you explored productivity **strategies** like doing the toughest thing first and using checklists, and you learned more about their benefits. You went on to contemplate why it is important to remain **focused** as you work.

## REFERENCES

American Psychological Association. (2006, March 20). *Multitasking: Switching costs*.  
[www.apa.org/research/action/multitask](http://www.apa.org/research/action/multitask)



### TERMS TO KNOW

**Activate**

To trigger something or set it in motion.

**Counterproductive**

Getting in the way of achieving an intended goal.

**Drive**

The motivation to reach a goal.

**Hybrid**

A work model that combines work in a traditional office setting with work from a remote setting.

**Remote**

A work model that allows someone to work outside of a traditional office environment.

# Effective Time Management

by Sophia Tutorial



## WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn how to manage your time on the job. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

### 1. Tools and Techniques

#### 1a. Time Blocking

#### 1b. Calendars

#### 1c. Checklists

### 2. Understand Yourself

## 1. Tools and Techniques

An essential component of strengthening your productivity skill is being able to manage your time. As discussed in the previous lesson, you need to be able to prioritize your tasks, and, in order to do that, you must know your goals. When you have specific goals in mind, you can figure out how much time will be required to achieve them.



### DID YOU KNOW

Although the way you approach scheduling your tasks will depend on their deadlines, it is also important to consider the kinds of tasks you need to complete, because that can make the difference in prioritizing them.

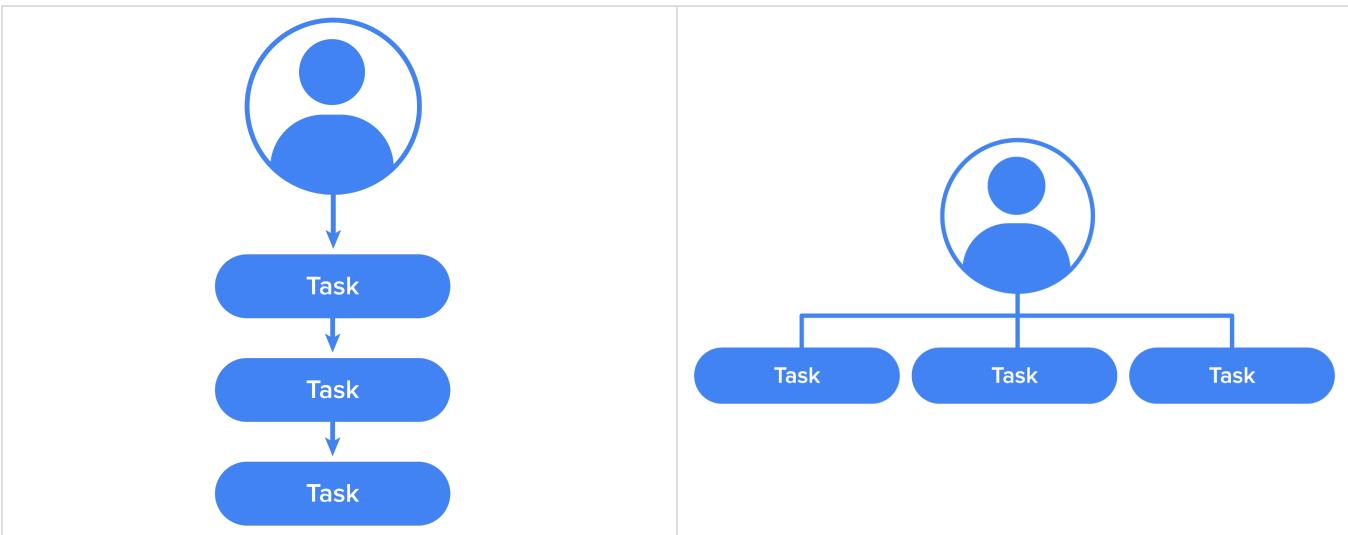
There are two main types of tasks:

1. **Sequential tasks.** These cannot be started until other tasks are completed.

2. **Parallel tasks.** These do not depend on other tasks for their start dates.

Sequential Tasks

Parallel Tasks



### THINK ABOUT IT

To figure out whether your tasks are sequential or parallel, you should ask yourself the following questions:

- *When can you start, and when is the deadline?*
- *Does something need to be completed before you can start the task?*
- *How long will it take to complete the task?*

Keep in mind that there is more to time management than listing out the order of work. You need to be able to create a detailed plan, and there are tools and techniques that can help you do that.



### TERMS TO KNOW

#### Sequential Tasks

Tasks that cannot be started until other tasks have been completed first.

#### Parallel Tasks

Tasks that do not depend on any other factor for their start date.

## 1a. Time Blocking

Time blocking is a time management method that divides your day into blocks of time. Each block is dedicated to accomplishing a specific task, or group of tasks, and only those specific tasks. This helps you stay focused on one thing or set of tasks at a time. And from the previous lesson, you know that this focus is important.

#### IN CONTEXT

Jesse recently began to work remotely from home. He struggled to keep his personal life separate from his work. He was stressed and wanted to take some steps to create better boundaries. He decided to set up blocks of time each day for certain activities.



Task	Time Block
Morning items (get ready, feed dog, check personal email, and review news on phone)	7 a.m.-9 a.m.
First half of workday	9 a.m.-12 p.m.
Lunch	12 p.m.-1 p.m.
Second half of workday	1 p.m.-4 p.m.
Evening items (feed dog, dinner, gym, and other activities—this will vary)	4 p.m.-10 p.m.

The chart above is very simple, but even this level of detail can help keep Jesse on track during the day. You could create something similar and customize it so that it works best for you. You will read more about how important it is to make sure your tools work for you in section two.

## 1b. Calendars

One very helpful tool when it comes to time management is a calendar. You could use a paper calendar, or any number of online options like Outlook Calendar or Google Calendar. No matter what type you use, it can be a useful visual to see how you have blocked off your time. When used optimally, you can see your day, week, or month at a glance, and use your agility skill to revise and edit quickly, as needed.



The image above is a digital calendar app. You can see that the person using this has blocked out time for each event. Calendars like this often have features like different colors for different categories to help you organize anything you add.



TRY IT

Use your technology skill to find a calendar tool, or just open one you already use. As mentioned earlier, there is the option of Outlook or Google, but there are also others that you can review on [this blog post from Calendly](#). Take some time to add events for the coming week. Look around the app, or do some research online to find out more about the available features to try.

Whether or not you already use a calendar, it is worth the time to learn how you can optimize your use of tools to manage your time. Remember, a paper option could work as well. Again, it is about knowing what will work best for you.



PEOPLE TO KNOW

Stephen Covey was an American educator, author, businessman, and keynote speaker. The company Franklin Covey was founded based on his work. The company sells numerous items, and provides various services, but they are known for their calendars and planners.



### 1c. Checklists

Another technique that you can use to manage your time effectively is creating checklists. You don't need anything fancy for this strategy. You can easily write down your tasks on a piece of paper, and check them off as you go. Some calendars have a task list tool that you can use with events you create on the calendar.

Just as your goals need to meet certain criteria, the items on your checklist should also have standards to help you get the best results. The AIMS acronym can help you keep some important elements in mind when deciding how to prioritize and schedule tasks.

A Action-Centered	I Incremental	M Measurable	S Scheduled Realistically
Identify specific actions to meet your goals	Break actions down into smaller (manageable) activities	Include criteria that you will use to measure if each task has been completed successfully	Be realistic in your expectations about the time it will take to complete tasks

(Dumitrescu, 2017)

The key to successfully using a checklist is to understand that each task takes time. Some days, you may be able to complete 20 tasks with success, while other days, you may only have a list of four items that you can realistically complete. You can find a list of some popular checklist apps on [this blog post from Toggl](#).

## 2. Understand Yourself

As stated above, the techniques and tools that you use should depend on how you work best. You need to think about yourself as you arrange your days and determine times for each task. Some questions to consider when you are determining what system to use are:

- **Are you a visual person?**
  - Do you like to color code?
  - Do you use bold font?
- **Do you work better with paper or digitally?**
  - Which app will you use?
  - Will a paper calendar work, or a digital planner?
- **Do you need/want to share your items with others (family or colleagues)?**
  - How can you share it with them?
  - Will they be able to edit or add new items?
- **What kind of access will you need for whatever tool you use?**
  - Do you need it at home? At work?
  - Should you put the app you use on your phone, computer, or both?
- **Are you motivated by being able to cross off things out as you complete them?**
  - Do you want a simple checklist, or does deleting items from a calendar as you complete them work for you?
- **Are you a morning person or a night person?**
  - Should you tackle your toughest items first thing, or wait until later in the day?
  - When is the best time to schedule breaks each day?



WATCH

As you think about the tool(s) that you may want to use and the best approach for each day, consider what is shared in the video below. “Eating the Frog” is an approach that helps to push back against procrastination. If you eat the frog, you take it on, and overcome it sooner. You need to determine if this approach will work for you or not.

In addition to understanding what to tackle first, the list above shared the importance of making sure that you schedule some quiet time when you don’t need to be focused on any particular task. As you may recall from a previous lesson, long periods of productivity with no breaks can actually lead to burnout, which is **counterproductive**. Taking time to rest will not only let you recharge, but it will also give you the opportunity for spontaneous thoughts that can promote creativity.



DID YOU KNOW

It matters what type of activity you engage in during your breaks from completing complex tasks. Doing things that require a lot of mental energy (*like checking your emails*) during a break will not give your mind the rest that it needs, whereas activities that do not require much thinking (*like listening to music or taking a walk*) can elevate your mood, reduce stress, and improve performance and productivity.

Take a look at [this list](#) of activities that you can do during breaks to increase your productivity. Remember our example of Jesse? He was struggling to balance work and home. By expanding on his initial schedule, he could make sure to find some time during each part of his day to take a break. You might want to keep that in mind when planning your own schedule. As you select the best tools to help you with time management, consider the benefits of including **downtime** in your schedule so that you can avoid exhaustion and increase productivity. Pay attention to what techniques work for you, and what doesn't, so that you can find strategies that fit your goals and priorities.



## TERMS TO KNOW

### Counterproductive

Getting in the way of achieving an intended goal.

### Downtime

Time during which a person relaxes and does not engage in any work-related activity.



## SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned about **tools and techniques** that you can use to effectively manage your time on the job. You learned that **time blocking** is a strategy that many people use to schedule their days, by reserving time for what needs to be done using a paper **calendar** or calendar app. Another effective strategy is creating a **checklist** of tasks you need to do. Whether those tasks are parallel tasks or sequential tasks, you will have a record of what needs to be done, and a way to keep track of what you've completed. Above all, if you are looking to improve your time management skills, it's essential that you **understand yourself** so you can provide yourself with the needed structure to fulfill the obligations of your new job.

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[www.entrepreneur.com/article/334237](http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/334237)



## TERMS TO KNOW

### Counterproductive

Getting in the way of achieving an intended goal.

**Downtime**

Time during which a person relaxes and does not engage in any work-related activity.

**Parallel Tasks**

Tasks that do not depend on any other factor for their start date.

**Sequential Tasks**

Tasks that cannot be started until other tasks have been completed first.

# Teamwork on the Job

by Sophia Tutorial



## WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn strategies for performing your new job effectively. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

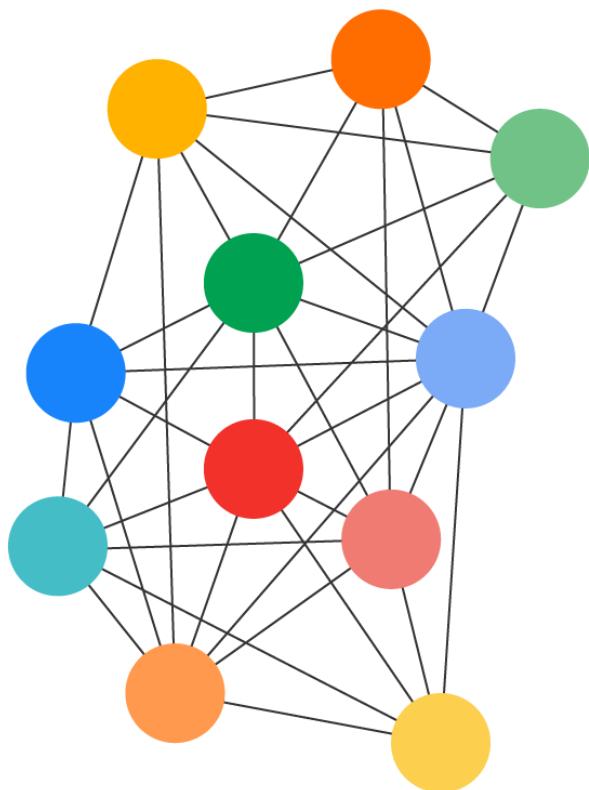
1. Teamwork and Productivity
2. Diverse Teams
3. Win-Win Outcomes

## 1. Teamwork and Productivity



### BIG IDEA

When a team works well together, productivity goes up.



## Productivity Boost

**“Investing in the connections among team members both increases productivity and reduces risk.”**

Margaret Heffernan,  
Beyond Measure

When it comes to your world of work, being good at what you do is only half the battle. You also must be able to connect to and work effectively with others. This is where your relationship-building skill comes in. The better you are able to collaborate as part of a team, the more likely the entire group will be able to achieve their goals in an efficient and effective way.



You can **collaborate** in a variety of ways, both at work and in your personal life. Maybe you play on a basketball team or you have a group assignment for school. At work, you might be part of a team tasked with finding a solution to a problem. No matter the reason for the collaboration, it takes everyone doing their part to be as productive as possible.

↗ EXAMPLE When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020, many kids were sent home to attend their classes virtually. For some kids, this was impossible because they did not have internet access at home. In response, some internet providers offered free services to those in need. Schools and these providers worked together as a team to make sure that kids could complete their work and continue to learn from home.



#### TERM TO KNOW

##### **Collaborate**

To work together with others to achieve a common goal.

## 2. Diverse Teams

Employers who want a high-performance workforce will seek out employees who are able to form strong bonds with their coworkers, clients, and staff. Increasingly, they are also looking to create a diverse workplace. By working with those who may have different experiences or viewpoints, you can grow as an individual. As a

team, you can ensure that any solutions you come up with will have a broad appeal, and will work for more people.



### DID YOU KNOW

The workplace is made up of many different people from all walks of life, and practicing your relationship-building skill will help you create bonds that will not only bolster your job performance, but can also catapult you to new opportunities in the future. Listen to the following podcast and you'll discover how building solid relationships at work can pay dividends for your success.

There are many benefits for both employees and employers that come when you work as part of a **diverse** team. The list below shares just a few of these positive outcomes.

- A wider variety of generated ideas
- An increase in problem-solving capabilities
- More productivity from both individuals and teams
- Higher likelihood of achieving desired results
- Happier and more satisfied employees

Some collaborations involving diversity are on the lighter side. Consider the times you might have seen two musicians working together who surprised you. One recent example is Billy Ray Cyrus and Lil Nas X working together to record *Old Town Road*.



Billy Ray Cyrus and Lil Nas X (*New York Post*)

While Billy Ray is known as a country artist, Lil Nas X is known as a hip-hop artist. They come from two different genres of music. They each brought their own style to the song, and in doing so, they created something unique that appealed to a larger audience than either had alone. The song spent 19 weeks in the top spot on the billboard charts (BBC News, 2019).



#### TERM TO KNOW

##### Diverse

Involving individuals from a variety of backgrounds.

### 3. Win-Win Outcomes

The better a team is at practicing their relationship-building skill, the more likely they are to enjoy working together and to have stronger collaboration. Research has shown that relationships with co-workers were identified as the top driver of employee engagement. The quality of workplace relationships has a significant impact on many other workplace factors like job satisfaction, productivity, company loyalty, and more. It's no surprise this skill is in high demand. Practicing your relationship-building skill throughout your life and career will allow you to exchange ideas and develop solutions in the modern workplace.

An effective team chooses to focus on what matters, and may choose to defer their personal preferences about less significant details so that a larger objective can be obtained. For example, a team working on a fundraising event may decide to **forego** personal debates about the location of the event, and focus instead on how to reach as many potential donors as possible. This becomes a win for the team and a win for the cause. Keeping the goal(s) in mind as you work as a team is key to a **win-win** scenario like this.



### THINK ABOUT IT

When was the last time you had to work as part of a team? It can be a personal or professional experience.

Did the team work well together? Why was it a success, or why were your goals not achieved?

If you have honed your relationship-building skill, it means you genuinely enjoy being around—and collaborating with—other people. You understand the value of different points of view, you ask others for their thoughts and ideas, and you always give coworkers credit where it's due. You build strong relationships, and you are supportive of colleagues. You make time to connect with them, even when you don't necessarily need to for a specific project. These are the people that everyone wants to work with, and being in demand is extremely helpful as you advance your career.



### TERMS TO KNOW

#### Forego

To do without something.

#### Win-win

A situation where every party involved benefits in some way.



### SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned some strategies for excelling while working as part of a team at your new job. Effective **teamwork** and improvements in **productivity** go hand-in-hand. You should be prepared to work closely with other people toward common goals at work. Working on a **diverse team** means that you will need to take the time to understand others' viewpoints. However, there's no reason why you can't make it your goal to achieve **win-win outcomes** with your teammates. Personal feelings need not be involved when everyone has the same goal: to help the company succeed.

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### TERMS TO KNOW

**Collaborate**

To work together with others to achieve a common goal.

**Diverse**

Involving individuals from a variety of backgrounds.

**Forego**

To do without something.

**Win-win**

A situation where every party involved benefits in some way.

# Emotional Intelligence on the Job

by Sophia Tutorial



## WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will develop strategies to increase your emotional intelligence on the job.

Specifically, this lesson will cover:

- 1. What is Emotional Intelligence?**
- 2. Strategies for Raising Emotional Intelligence**
  - 2a. Improving Your Self- and Social Awareness**
  - 2b. Building Relationships through Communication**
  - 2c. Practicing Critical Thinking**
- 3. Your Unique Journey**

## 1. What is Emotional Intelligence?

**Emotional intelligence** is the ability to perceive, understand, control, and regulate one's emotions, and to empathize with others. It means handling relationships with good judgment in a variety of contexts. Emotional intelligence is closely related to your self-awareness and social awareness skills.

You practice emotional intelligence every day as you apply your knowledge and skills to navigate all the feelings a day can bring. But how can you be sure that you're in control and using good judgment? How do you decide which emotions to pay the most attention to? In the next section, you'll learn some productive ways to get in tune with your emotions, and interpersonal skills that can help at home, school, and work.



### TERM TO KNOW

#### Emotional Intelligence

The ability to perceive, understand, control, and regulate one's emotions, and to empathize with others.

## 2. Strategies for Raising Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is never static. We learn strategies for dealing with situations every time we encounter something new. Just like the employability skills of a competitive workforce, developing strategies for boosting emotional intelligence is important for professional success (Golhar, 2018). In this section, you'll look at a few of

these strategies in detail. As you read, think about how you can customize them to fit your life, or how they compare to strategies you've used in the past.

## 2a. Improving Your Self- and Social Awareness

You already know what it looks like when you're being self- and socially aware. But what are the best ways to manage that awareness? Here are a few thoughts:

- **Keep a positive attitude.** As the saying goes, attitudes are contagious. When you are mindful of keeping a positive outlook, that energy gets passed along to other people, and it even shows in your work. Each day, find ways to remind yourself to be an optimist. Meditating just a few minutes a day, for example, can help you get in touch with your positive emotions.
- **Make observations.** We all know people who we admire and would like to emulate. Why not follow in their footsteps? When you see someone with keen awareness skills, make note of what they say and do. Watch how they leverage their strengths and acknowledge their weaknesses, and learn from them. Consider keeping track of your observations in a journal.
- **Accept feedback gracefully.** Have you ever received a performance review at work? What about a letter grade from a college or university? If you answered yes to either of these questions, then you know about feedback. Constructive feedback is one of the most effective tools you can use to improve your performance at school, work, or home. Feedback gives you another lens through which to see yourself. When you act on the sound advice of others, without taking offense, it leads to personal growth and improvement.

With strong self- and social awareness skills, you know your personal strengths and limitations, value self-knowledge, and continually seek to improve yourself. You are aware of your behavior, and its impact on others. Focusing on improving these skills at home, school, and work can help you recognize areas where you're already strong, and where you need to improve to reach your goals. Even simple questions like, "When do I feel my best/worst?" and "What do others appreciate most about me?" can go a long way in helping you grow more self- and socially aware.

Here are some examples of what developing your self- and social awareness skills might look like in action.

Know Your Personal Strengths and Limitations, Value Self-Knowledge, and Continually Seek to Improve Yourself		
In Action	Developing the Skill	Example
Home	Know when to give or take control of a specific problem.	"I know I can't fix the leaky faucet, so I'll let my wife handle it."
School	Sign up for courses based on the skills you need to achieve your long-term goals.	"This business class will help me take my career to the next level."
Work	Volunteer to help with projects that aren't in your comfort zone, but that you wish you knew	"I was always interested in learning more about graphic design. Is there any way that I can help out"

more about.	your team?"
Seek training in an area you need to improve upon.	"I'm not great at writing grant proposals... yet!"

### Be Aware of the Impact of Your Behavior on Others

In Action	Developing the Skill	Example
Home	Recognize what you said or did to upset a friend or family member.	"I realize that because I didn't manage my time well, we were late to the party. I'm sorry."
	Understand that little actions can make a big impact.	"I know you were having a rough day, so I made your favorite dinner."
School	Be polite when engaging with your peers in a class discussion.	"I never looked at it that way before. Great point!"
	Be an equal contributor to group projects.	"I'll be responsible for checking the results on weeks 4, 8, and 11."
Work	See how your actions in a meeting make others react.	"Judy, you sort of flinched when I said that. Do you not think it's a good idea?"

### Solicit Feedback and Use It for Self-Improvement

In Action	Developing the Skill	Example
Home	Feel comfortable asking questions	"What would have made a better birthday present?"
School	Be open to revisions that your professor suggests.	"I revised that paragraph like you suggested, and I think it made the piece much stronger."
	Ask peers to review work before submitting it.	"Would you mind reading my paper over? I'll take a look at yours, too!"
Work	Use performance evaluations as a chance to learn about where you might be struggling.	"She's right... I overextend myself by committing to too many projects. I need to manage my time better."
	Ask managers for advice about upcoming promotions.	"I know that Rashad is retiring next year. What steps should I take to be considered for that position?"

## 2b. Building Relationships through Communication

Emotional intelligence strengthens your relationships with the people around you. When you are in control of your feelings, and you express yourself in direct and constructive ways, those around you are in a much better position to receive your message. Communication is at the heart of every healthy relationship. Here are some tips to encourage free and open communication, and to raise your emotional intelligence:

- **Be assertive, neither passive nor aggressive.** How you say something is just as important as what you say. If your communication style is too **passive**, your message might be lost or misinterpreted. If your communication style is too **aggressive**, it can cause confrontation, and cloud the judgment of everyone in the conversation, including you.

So which style of communication is best? In professional environments, try to be **assertive** when you interact with others. When you're assertive, you state facts and opinions directly and confidently, while keeping your emotions in check. You stay focused on issues, not people, and you hold your opinion and the opinions of others in high regard. One way to assert yourself, and to stay emotionally balanced, is to mentally acknowledge what you're feeling in certain moments and to figure out a way to respond positively. After the “temperature” of a moment or situation has subsided, reflect on whether you reacted appropriately or reached the outcome you had intended.

- **Explain, don't defend.** Everyone has misunderstandings, and everyone makes mistakes. What matters is what you do to remedy the situation. When you uncover an error or have a disagreement, address the situation by taking these first steps:



#### STEP BY STEP

1. Avoid the natural tendency to defend your actions.
2. Acknowledge and restate what people are feeling, including yourself, to stabilize and calm the situation.
3. Gather facts that can help identify and explain the problem.

When you take inventory of your feelings and the facts to describe a course of action, you move away from blaming yourself or others, and move toward effective problem-solving. Here's an example that shows how these steps might work:

#### IN CONTEXT

Latif is an architect who designs residential homes. He works for a consulting agency. During a meeting with a client, the client noted a mistake in one of Latif's drawings. The length of the kitchen was off by six feet due to a math error. Latif's heart raced, because he knew the building supplies and appliances were already ordered. The client was visibly upset, so Latif took a deep breath and began with the following: “Ah, you're right, I can see the kitchen is coming up short. Clearly, I made a mistake. Let me update the drawing, and I'll call our suppliers this afternoon to see what can be done. I realize you're concerned about the added cost and completion date, but I'm confident that our suppliers can help us work toward a solution.”



Latif's client needs to know that Latif is confident, in control, and making good decisions. This is

especially true when something goes wrong. Latif showed poise through his honesty and clear communication, as he also made plans to resolve the issue.

- **Be an active listener.** Active listening is an important part of good communication. When you're patient and attentive, you are less inclined to jump to conclusions about what a person is saying. You reveal your emotional intelligence to people when you refrain from interrupting them, and instead reflect their ideas back to them, and ask relevant questions. For example, instead of rushing to quickly respond to what someone in a conversation, take a breath, and rephrase what the person has said to you. This enables you to process what has been said, and it shows that you have been paying attention. Another positive side effect of this strategy is that it can help to build trust between those communicating.
- **Be approachable and social.** Do you have an outgoing personality, or would people describe you as the shy type? Regardless of your level of inhibition, it's important to be social and **approachable** with people as you go about your daily life. You'll feel more connected to people and situations if you share your thoughts, feelings, and ideas openly and tactfully. When you're friendly and easy to talk to, you can learn a lot from people, and everyday problems get resolved with less effort and toil. Try these tips if you need help asserting yourself during conversation:
  - Observe and emulate the behaviors of likable people.
  - Practice making small talk with someone you don't know very well.
  - Avoid judging yourself or others during conversations.
  - Don't be afraid of silence or pauses.
  - Be an active listener.
  - Give compliments appropriately.
  - Find the joy in communication.



### TRY IT

Water cooler chat is when colleagues break from work and take time to socialize with one another. This often happens around a water cooler, at a coffee station, or in a break room. Choose one of the skills from above, and practice using it the next time you find yourself in a social setting.



### TERMS TO KNOW

#### **Passive**

Letting something happen while offering little or no resistance.

#### **Aggressive**

Ready to confront; argumentative.

#### **Assertive**

Showing confidence without aggression.

#### **Approachable**

Friendly and easy to talk to.

## 2c. Practicing Critical Thinking

Part of emotional intelligence is using good judgment when you solve problems through **critical thinking**. People with the highest emotional intelligence are those who can creatively reason through issues, while focusing their emotions in all the right places. Below are just two ways emotional intelligence can help you define and solve problems.

- **Stay motivated.** People with emotional intelligence are often motivated intrinsically rather than by external factors. They don't need prompting to improve a circumstance they're in, or to create an entirely new one. If faced with a problem, they relish in solving it rather than avoiding it. Find what motivates you so that you'll have the energy and faith you need to take action when the time comes.
- **Lead by example.** Leadership is about making educated and ethical decisions despite the circumstances. It is not only reserved for supervisors. For example, if you navigate tough issues, help other people, meet your deadlines, and take part in continuous education, you're doing the types of things that strong leaders do. Any time you set a good example for others through your actions, you are acting as a leader in your field.



### BIG IDEA

Critical thinking is an important component of the problem-solving skill. It's closely tied to self- and social awareness, as you have to think about how your actions may affect others.



### DID YOU KNOW

Ethical leadership and community engagement are good business. In 2019, electronics retailer Best Buy was named America's most sustainable company by Barron's financial magazine (Reilly, 2019). The retailer collects and recycles unwanted products in an effort to reduce global waste. They also further vocational education by teaching young adults basic technology skills. While other electronics retail giants have folded, Best Buy has shown a commitment to ethical decision-making that is vital to their growth.



### TERM TO KNOW

#### Critical Thinking

Skillful analysis and evaluation of an issue or circumstance.

## 3. Your Unique Journey

Developing your emotional intelligence takes time. It's shaped by your education and life experiences. The strategies in this lesson are just a few of the methods you can use to grow your emotional awareness. We each learn about ourselves in different ways, so it's important to know which strategies work best for you.



### REFLECT

In this lesson, you've seen a number of strategies for boosting your emotional intelligence. Which strategies do you use already? Are there any you'd like to develop further? Can you think of situations where the

strategies will come in handy?

If you need help implementing the strategies from this lesson, consider taking these steps. Remember, we all need help to grow!

1. Ask a trusted friend or coworker for insight into your emotional awareness.
2. Identify areas for improvement and create a plan to address them.
3. Track goals and priorities surrounding your development.
4. Schedule time to get regular feedback on how you're progressing.
5. Hire a professional coach or mentor for guidance.



## SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned **what emotional intelligence is**: your ability to perceive, understand, control, and regulate one's emotions, and to empathize with others. You also learned some **strategies for raising your emotional intelligence** and **improving your self- and social awareness**, such as working on how well you receive feedback and trying to keep your attitude positive. By **building relationships through communication** and **practicing critical thinking** on the job, you will be able to skillfully navigate working with others in your new role. As you proceed on **your own unique journey** in the workplace, you will find all sorts of challenges, but if you keep your focus on your desire to grow and learn as a productive member of your work community, you will undoubtedly find success.

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## TERMS TO KNOW

### Aggressive

Ready to confront; argumentative.

### Approachable

Friendly and easy to talk to.

### Assertive

Showing confidence without aggression.

**Critical Thinking**

Skillful analysis and evaluation of an issue or circumstance.

**Emotional Intelligence**

The ability to perceive, understand, control, and regulate one's emotions, and to empathize with others.

**Passive**

Letting something happen while offering little or no resistance.

# Terms to Know

## Action Verb

Used in job descriptions to indicate the key roles and responsibilities a job entails. For instance, a job might require that an employee analyze data. In this example, analyze is the action verb.

## Activate

To trigger something or set it in motion.

## Aggressive

Ready to confront; argumentative.

## Applicant Tracking System (ATS)

Software used by recruiters and employers for managing the recruiting and hiring process.

## Approachable

Friendly and easy to talk to.

## Assertive

Showing confidence without aggression.

## Behavioral Interview Questions

Questions asked during an interview about your past experiences or choices.

## Benefits

Any compensation given to an employee outside of their pay, such as health insurance, retirement accounts, tuition reimbursement, training opportunities, or parental leave.

## CV

Also referred to as curriculum vitae; a comprehensive list of a person's academic credentials. This term is sometimes used interchangeably with the term resume, although usually a resume is more specifically tailored to a job being sought.

## Chronological Resume

A resume that lists your employment history in order, with the most recent position first.

## **Collaborate**

To work together with others to achieve a common goal.

## **Combination Resume**

A resume that combines features of the chronological and functional resume by providing a chronological work history and a separate list of skills.

## **Communication**

The ability to actively seek and deliver information, articulate ideas, effectively listen, and connect to various audiences, settings, and situations.

## **Counterproductive**

Getting in the way of achieving an intended goal.

## **Cover Letter**

A formal business letter sent along with a resume or CV that introduces a job candidate and expresses their interest in an open position.

## **Critical Thinking**

Skillful analysis and evaluation of an issue or circumstance.

## **Diverse**

Involving individuals from a variety of backgrounds.

## **Downtime**

Time during which a person relaxes and does not engage in any work-related activity.

## **Drive**

The motivation to reach a goal.

## **Editing**

The process of correcting issues with sentence construction, word choice, and tone in your writing.

## **Education**

Amount and type of formal training or schooling in a particular field, usually yielding a degree, certificate, or diploma that represents its completion.

## **Elevator Pitch**

A prepared, 30-second speech you give when you introduce yourself in a work-related capacity.

## **Emotional Intelligence**

The ability to perceive, understand, control, and regulate one's emotions, and to empathize with others.

## **Empowering**

To make stronger or more confident.

## **Experience**

Amount of time a person has performed a certain skill or task that is relevant.

## **Familiarity**

Relaxed friendliness between individuals.

## **Forego**

To do without something.

## **Formal Communication**

Communication that is structured and follows workplace norms.

## **Functional Resume**

A resume that focuses on skills and experience and is often used by people who are changing careers or who have gaps in their employment history.

## **Hard Skills**

Quantifiable abilities a job post will list for prospective candidates, such as the ability to use a particular type of software or tool.

## **Hourly Rate**

An amount paid based on the quantity of hours worked, usually for a non-salaried or contract position.

## **Hybrid**

Something made by combining two different elements; a mixture.

## **Informal Communication**

Communication that is less structured by workplace norms.

## **Jargon**

Words or expressions that are used by a particular group.

## **Job Duties**

The tasks or responsibilities an employee is expected to perform while on the job, such as data entry or management.

## **Job Skills**

What an employee is able to do, such as using a particular software program, driving a truck, or working on a team.

## **Job Title**

Usually describes the job role and context, such as 7th Grade English Tutor.

## **Job Type**

Describes details about the job including time commitment, location, scheduled hours, pay structure, and more.

## **Mission**

Defines the business purpose or goals and how it goes about fulfilling its purpose and reaching its goals; is often stated in a formal way.

## **Networking**

The process of connecting with people in your field for professional purposes.

## **Panel Interview**

An interview conducted by more than one person representing the employer.

## **Parallel Tasks**

Tasks that do not depend on any other factor for their start date.

## **Parameter**

A selected characteristic or option.

## **Passive**

Letting something happen while offering little or no resistance.

## **Pertinent**

Relevant or applicable to a particular matter.

## **Proofreading**

The process of correcting misspellings, incorrect punctuation, errors in formatting, and other mistakes.

## **Relevant Skills**

Skills that are directly relevant to the job, and which are listed in a job description.

## **Remote**

A work model that allows someone to work outside of a traditional office environment.

## **Resume**

A formal document that lists a candidate's qualifications for a job, including their employment and educational history.

## **Salary**

An amount usually paid yearly in monthly or weekly installments as a part of a permanent full-time position.

## **Sequential Tasks**

Tasks that cannot be started until other tasks have been completed first.

## **Situational Interview Questions**

Hypothetical questions that pose "what if" scenarios, or address issues that could arise in the future.

## **Soft Skills**

Characteristics or traits an employer is looking for in a new hire, such as the ability to work on a team or manage other employees.

## **Succinct**

As short as possible to make a point clear.

## **Targeted Resume**

A resume that is tailored to meet the requirements of a specific job description, as well as the software that many employers use to quickly scan applicants' information.

## **Transferable Skills**

Skills that hold their value from one job to the next.

## **Trend**

A general direction in which something is developing or changing.

## **Vision**

Describes what the company would like to grow into or accomplish in the future; is often stated in a formal way.

## **Win-win**

A situation where every party involved benefits in some way.