

# Applying for an internship

## Learning Focus

- Talking about your education and job experience
- Presenting your skills, abilities and achievements
- Writing a resumé
- Writing a cover letter

## Self Study

- The role of tenses in career talk
- Using the right adjectives when marketing yourself
- Talking about your achievements
- Understanding job adverts

## Video Interview

Watch Berlin student Rebecca Lorenz applying for an internship at *Exhilarate*, the New York-based sports event agency. Will she win over Nan Robinson, the charismatic boss?

## Warm-up

Have a look at the job advert below. Would you be interested in doing an internship at *American Fields*? If so, what makes it interesting for you?

Study Abroad

Degree Abroad

Intern Abroad

Language Schools


**American Fields: internship opportunities**

 Visit our website
  Contact American Fields

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### American Fields' internship program

American Fields is based in the U.S. and known worldwide for its innovative food products. We're looking for talented undergraduates from a wide range of backgrounds who are interested in taking part in an international internship program. Good English is a must. Preference will be given to applicants with a second foreign language, if possible Spanish.

Your tasks would include

- analyzing market trends
- identifying and evaluating business opportunities
- working in teams to develop plans for new products and new programs

Our internships are full-time, paid positions. You would be working in a young and energetic team. We can adjust start and end dates to academic schedules but you must be prepared to commit yourself to at least two months of full-time work.

Email us your details to [internships@americanfields.com](mailto:internships@americanfields.com)

## Listening: Finding an internship

- 1 How would you go about finding an internship? What has been your experience of looking for an internship?
- 2 Match the terms on the left with their definitions on the right.

- 1 transcript
- 2 application
- 3 degree
- 4 major
- 5 resumé
- 6 compensation

- a a student's main subject at college or university
- b the payment for work performed
- c a written request for sth such as a job
- d an outline of the main events in a person's career development
- e the qualification that you get after completing your studies at university
- f a university's list of the courses a student has taken



**3** Form collocations by matching each of the adjectives on the left with one of the nouns on the right. One noun will be left over.

negotiable  
customized  
corporate  
valuable

company  
skills  
letters  
office  
deadlines

**4** The student organization *International Student Network* is hosting a panel discussion on how to find your dream internship. Listen to the following people describing their experiences and tick the correct boxes.

02  )

Marc

Jennifer

Marion

Brian

Simon

Found his/her internship online

✓

Found his/her internship through connections

Created his/her own internship

Was paid for the internship

Received no compensation for the internship

Speaker provides no information about pay

Talks about his/her job interview

**5** Listen to the interviews with three of the speakers again and fill in the gaps.

**Marc**

1 I'm ..... in accounting and so I began ..... on a number of websites in that field.

2 I was about to give up my ..... when I found the perfect ..... . It even ..... and included housing.

3 I ..... the application and was going to ..... it ..... I had on my computer.

03  )

**Jennifer**

4 I ..... from Lake County Community College in May with a ..... Office Management.

5 One week later I found myself sitting in the ..... of booksonline.com meeting with Shirley – my .....

04  )

**Marion**

6 Then I ..... to six of them, stressing my personal qualities – you know, .....

7 I can only recommend using your own imagination and creativity. It is one way around the ..... and really .....

05  )

**6** Listen to Brian and Simon talking about their experiences. What was stressful about the recruitment process they took part in?

06  )

**7** Discuss the following questions:

- What motivates students to do an internship abroad?
- What are a company's motives in employing interns?



Differences in U.S. and British English

**American English**

- resumé
- to graduate from high school
- to go to college
- to do an internship
- cover letter

**British English**

- curriculum vitae (CV)
- to do your A-levels
- to go to university
- to do a work placement
- covering letter



## Reading: **Recruiters' pet peeves**

- 1 Imagine that you work as a recruiter in the Human Resources department of a major company. Every day dozens of applications arrive on your desk. You must make quick and efficient decisions. What criteria would you use?



- 2 Read the article and compare your criteria with those mentioned in the text.

## Recruiters' pet peeves

Several thousand recruiters from a variety of industries across the U.S. and Canada were recently interviewed in a study made to determine why resumés get thrown into the “excluded” pile.

Recruiters receive hundreds of resumés a day and can often spend only 5-10 seconds on each. Understandably, they want to narrow down the range of applicants and the best strategy to do this is through the process of elimination. The human resources professionals confessed that they look for reasons to exclude resumés, not include them, and that resumés are generally excluded on the basis of the recruiters' *pet peeves*.

There was a high degree of consensus as to what these pet peeves are. They start with spelling errors, typos and poor grammar. Poor formatting was also frequently named as a source of

frustration. “Many applicants don't seem to be aware that their resumés will be read on computer screens,” said one manager. Recruiters are also annoyed by information that is poorly organized or by personal information that is not relevant to the job. They particularly want to know what a candidate's focus is and what his or her achievements are. Applicants who do not meet these expectations should not be surprised if their application lands in *File 13*.

Many candidates seem to think they can use the same resumé for applying to any job. One recruiter compares this to buying any old suit off the rack and then rushing to church for your wedding. “Candidates should tailor each resumé to fit the job they're applying for”, she says. “Every company and every position is different, so you have to highlight the details of your experience that are most

relevant to each company.” For example, a young woman applying to an online travel organizer sent a brief application directing the reader to her own very professional website. On the website she had documented her own recent trip to a number of Asian countries along with her personal qualifications. A design student applying to a famous fashion company enclosed photos of clothes she had created herself with her application. And then there is a story about a young man who desperately wanted to work for a famous IT company. He appeared in the office of the HR officer and said he was prepared to wait until he could deliver his resumé to her in person. After six hours he finally got an interview.

Of course, unusual approaches should always be used with discretion. The important thing is to make your application stand out from the dozens or hundreds of others that the recruiter will be dealing with.

## Discussion: **Making your resumé stand out**

- 1 In view of the fact that there is so much competition on the job market, what can you do to prevent your resumé landing in *File 13*?
- 2 Apart from the traditional cover letter and resumé, what other media can be used to apply for a job?
- 3 What would the people listed in the box on the left expect from a promising candidate's application?

The manager of an advertising agency • A bank manager • A fast food chain looking for a franchisee • An NGO looking for a PR director

**Skills**

- 1** You have already heard Simon talking about his internship. Read his resumé below. Has he followed the criteria mentioned so far?

**SIMON MICHAEL HULL**

**PERSONAL DATA** Address: Himmelgeister Str. 49  
40225 Dusseldorf  
Germany

Email: smhull@yahoo.com  
Phone: (0049) 211 634927  
Mobile: (0049) 171 2516304

Date of Birth: February 10, 1986  
Nationality: German

***Seeking a marketing internship in a multinational company in the United States*****EDUCATION****University of Applied Sciences Duesseldorf**

- BA in Business Studies – Expected date of graduation: September 2011
- Current grade average: 1,7 (corresponds to A-)
- Degree Program Highlights: International Business Economics, Intercultural Management, General Business Studies, Accounting and Taxation, Business Spanish, International Marketing, Regional Studies

**Goethe Gymnasium, Düsseldorf** (secondary school) – Graduated in May 2005

**Kalamazoo, Michigan** – High school year, awarded a high school diploma in 2003

**TRAINING****Mühlenfeld GmbH****2006–2008**

- Two-year training program at a major paper manufacturer
- Gained experience in the following departments: Purchasing, Personnel, Marketing, Production, Accounting
- Certificate Industrial Business Management Assistant (Industriekaufmann)

**Henkel GmbH****Summer 2009**

- Internship in the Marketing department
- Carried out customer survey by phone, collected and processed data

**ThyssenKrupp GmbH****February–June 2010**

- Temporary Job in the Purchasing department
- Assisted the IT officer in setting up new supplier database, checking and updating customer databases

**OTHER EXPERIENCE****President of student organization in the Business Studies department****2009 to present**

Represent students in faculty meetings and advise first semester students during Orientation Week activities

**Student assistant to Dr. Herbert Schmidt, Professor for Accounting****2008 to present**

Hold tutorial sessions and assist with research

**Community service as paramedic (alternative to military service)****2005–2006**

Drove an ambulance, assisted doctors, and worked in a hospital

**Counselor at Stony Ridge Summer Camp, Indian Bay, Michigan****July–August 2004**

Taught tennis and swimming and worked as a cabin leader for the age group 10–12

**SPECIAL SKILLS**

- Near-native proficiency in English (CEF C1)
- Good knowledge of Spanish (CEF B1)
- Basic knowledge of French (CEF A1)
- Proficient in Word, Excel, PowerPoint

**INTERESTS**

**American football** – Played for four years on local team

**2000–2004**

**Saxophone** – Have played the saxophone since I was ten, played in university big band for two years

References available upon request



- 2** Skim Simon's resumé again. Does he have any special skills or job experience which can be used as his unique selling proposition (USP)? In what way do you think his skills and experience would be valuable for *American Fields*, the company which has offered him an internship?



## Vocabulary

- 3 When writing or talking about your job experience, it is important to use action verbs, because they show the employer which skills and abilities you bring to the workplace. Form collocations by matching each set of action verbs on the left with a noun on the right. Sometimes there is more than one possibility.

### Action verbs

carry out  
deal with  
take care of  
handle  
analyze  
compile  
implement  
improve  
manage  
operate  
participate in  
prepare  
research  
set up

### Nouns

a plan  
campaigns  
customers  
database  
day-to-day office  
work  
decision-making  
machinery  
presentations  
reports  
research  
statistics

### Collocations

participate in decision-making

- 4 Now think of your own work experience and write at least five sentences describing the jobs and assignments you were responsible for during your training program or internships.

Writing a resumé

➡ Over to you, page 15

## Quiz: False friends

### Career terms

Tick the best answer to avoid making typical German mistakes in your resumé.

- 1 Which of the following ways of expressing dates is not possible in English?

- a ☐ I was born on 10 February 1986  
b ☐ I was born on 10 of February 1986  
c ☐ I was born on 2/10/1986  
d ☐ I was born on February 10, 1986

- 2 Which is the best equivalent for the German term *Höhere Handelsschule* in American English?

- a ☐ secondary school  
b ☐ higher trade school  
c ☐ grammar school  
d ☐ college

- 3 How would you translate the German expression *berufliche Ausbildung* if you're talking about white-collar jobs?

- a ☐ apprenticeship  
b ☐ training program  
c ☐ work placement  
d ☐ internship

- 4 Which terms best describe the German university subject *BWL*? Pick two.

- a ☐ economics  
b ☐ business administration  
c ☐ business management  
d ☐ business economics

- 5 How can the German word *Zivildienst* be translated?

- a ☐ not possible as it doesn't exist in other countries  
b ☐ civil service  
c ☒ community service  
d ☐ civilian service

- 6 How would you describe good English language skills?

- a ☐ English: excellent in speaking and writing  
b ☐ fluent English  
c ☐ English at its best  
d ☐ near-native proficiency



- 1 This is Simon's letter of application to *American Fields*. He tried to adapt it to the internship which was advertised on the company's internet site. Read the advertisement on page 6. In his letter did Simon refer to all the points in the advert?

**Simon Michael Hull**  
Himmelgeister Str. 49  
40225 Dusseldorf  
Germany  
smhull@yahoo.com

Mr. Rodney Smith  
American Fields  
1000 Minnehaha Drive  
Minneapolis, Minnesota  
55039  
USA

April 15, 2010

Dear Mr. Smith:

**A** .....  
I would like to apply for the position of intern as advertised on your website. I believe that my background, training, work experience and education has prepared me for this job.

**B** .....  
I have always been interested in the food market and especially in the market for organic foods. As you probably know, Germany has one of the largest markets for organic foods in the world and as my parents have been running an organic supermarket for the last ten years, I have a good knowledge of the natural foods business. I am certain that this knowledge could benefit American Fields. In addition to that, I am a very conscientious and diligent worker. My organizational skills would be an asset to your company. Thanks to an extended stay in the U.S., my English is fluent and I also speak good Spanish.

**C** .....  
During my two-year training period at Mühlenfeld, a paper manufacturer, I was able to familiarize myself with the various departments of a company. This experience convinced me that I would like to pursue a full-time career in business, if possible in the food sector, after graduating from university.

**D** .....  
I am enclosing my resumé and I would be happy to provide references upon request.

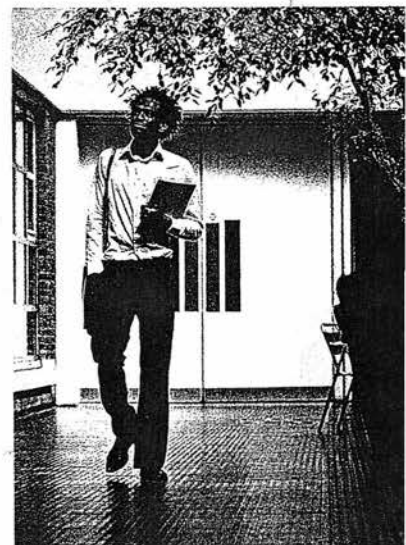
I can be reached by phone at (0049) 211 634927 or on my mobile at (0049) 171 2516304. I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

*Simon Michael Hull*  
Simon Michael Hull

Encl.





**2** A letter of application can be divided into four main sections. Read Simon's letter on page 11 again and label each section with one of the following functions:

- Background
- USP (= unique selling point) or what makes him special
- Further steps
- Reference and reason for application

**3** Applying successfully for a job or internship is all about selling yourself. Using meaningful adjectives helps you to emphasize your strengths. Here is a list of adjectives which are frequently used in applications. Sort them into the grid.

#### How to say that

#### Adjectives

you have objectives

you are good at what you are doing

you are good with people

you like getting things done

you think outside the box

adaptable • ambitious •  
analytical • conscientious •  
communicative • critical •  
determined • flexible • good with  
numbers • innovative • inspiring •  
methodical • motivated •  
reliable • well-organized

**4** If you were to apply for an internship at *American Fields*, which strengths would you mention in your cover letter?



Choose five of your strongest personal qualities and skills. Then think of a situation in which you showed each of these strengths. Describe each situation in a sentence.

Share this with a partner. Explain why you think the situations you described show a special strength of yours.

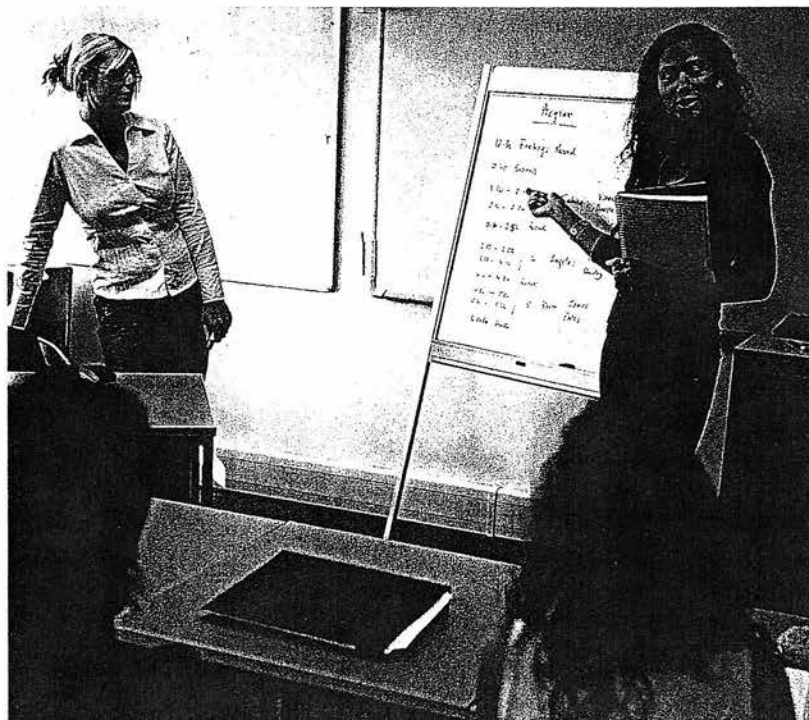
Writing a cover letter

➔ Over to you, page 15



## Role-play: **Selling yourself**

You have five minutes to present yourself as if you were going to apply with a video. Include what you have done and achieved so far in terms of education, training and work experience. Act this out in pairs or groups of three.



#### Presenting yourself

I graduated from ... in ...  
I did a training program at ...  
I received a certificate in ...  
I gained a lot of hands-on experience during my ...  
I have attended lectures in ...  
I am majoring in ...  
I expect to receive my degree in ...

## What do employers want to hear when asking "What are your weaknesses?"

### What they really want to know is:

- 1 What risks are they taking by hiring you?
- 2 How do you react when such a question is thrown at you?
- 3 Do you have a weakness which cannot easily be corrected?
- 4 Do you have a weakness which would have a truly negative impact on your performance in the job?

So don't tell them that you have had severe difficulties with your spelling since second grade at school because it shows that this weakness of yours cannot be corrected.

Tell them instead about a weakness you are working at overcoming, e.g. that you have difficulties with speaking in public but that you have attended several presentation seminars which have helped to improve your confidence.

What employers react to most positively is when you are honest about a minor weakness which you have been able to turn into something positive. So for example you could tell them that your desk sometimes becomes quite disorganized but now you force yourself to tidy it up in the evening so that everything is organized when you start again the next morning.

## Web research: **Job opportunities on the net**

Think about an area you would like to work in as an intern abroad or a foreign company you are interested in. Then get on the Internet and search for a suitable position. Print out the job description and bring it to the next session.

## Writing: **Drafting your resumé**

After you have found a suitable offer for an internship on the Internet, write your own resumé in English. Make sure that all the points listed are relevant for the job. Also take the issues discussed in the unit regarding a good resumé into consideration.

Below you will find a list of selected action verbs. Try to integrate as many as possible when drafting your resumé.

accomplish	consolidate	evaluate	network	shape
achieve	consult	form	observe	simplify
advise	co-ordinate	found	organize	solve
analyze	correct	generate	perform	streamline
arrange	correspond	guide	plan	strengthen
attain	create	identify	prepare	structure
be responsible for	design	improve	present	succeed
build	develop	increase	promote	suggest
calculate	discover	introduce	realize	support
collect	distribute	launch	redesign	teach
combine	double	lecture	report	train
complete	draw up	manage	research	
compose	edit	maintain	schedule	
condense	establish	negotiate	set up	

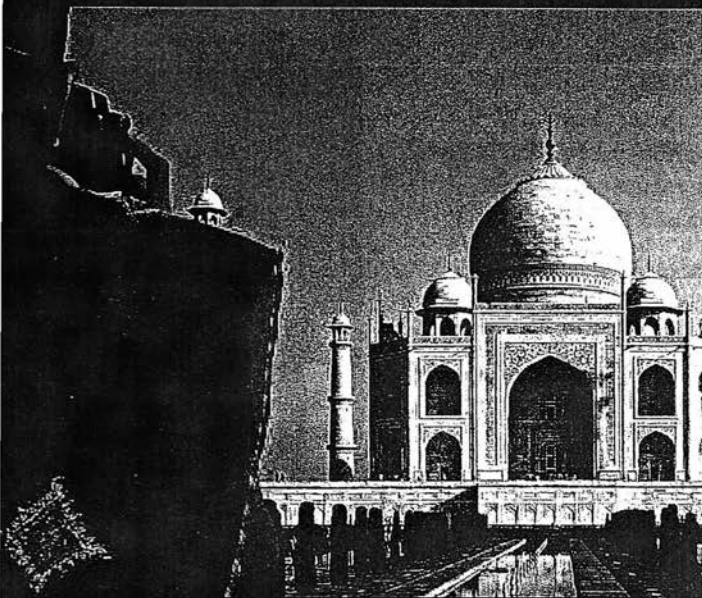
Bring your resumé to the next class for feedback.

## Writing: **Composing a cover letter**

Now write the accompanying cover letter. Make sure that you refer to all the requirements listed in the job advert. Make sure you use at least five action words from the list above. Bring your cover letter to the next class for feedback.



# Company Case



## A challenging internship

**Was it naïve of Sabine to choose India as a country for her internship?**

**What factors might account for the sudden change in her mood?**

**Was there anything Sabine could have done before her internship to make her stay easier?**

**What can she do now to help herself out of the crisis?**



**You are an organization which places interns in companies abroad. How could you best prepare them, so as to reduce the likelihood that they will go through similar crises? Brainstorm ideas and then use them to draft a flyer to be sent to interns headed for a foreign country.**

Sabine was an International Business Studies major who was required to do an internship abroad as part of her degree. When her fellow students began to apply for jobs in the U.S. and Canada, she hit upon what she considered a unique idea. Why shouldn't she look for an internship in India?

On [www.internshipsinindia.org](http://www.internshipsinindia.org) Sabine found a start-up tour operator in Chennai targeting foreign business travellers. They were looking for an intern to research the travel needs and behavior of Europeans in India and generally help with marketing to this group. The internship even paid a salary that was very generous by Indian standards. Sabine applied and was accepted immediately.

In June she flew to Chennai and was greeted by Mr. and Mrs. Shembekar, the owners of the company. She discovered that they had arranged for comfortable accommodation for her in their own neighborhood. After a couple of days to acclimatize, she began work and was greeted warmly by her new colleagues. The work was interesting and she was praised by the Shembekars for her contributions.

During the first two weeks Sabine was exhilarated by the sights and sounds of the city and life in this exotic culture. She was usually surrounded by people, especially by the Shembekars and their extended family, so she did not feel lonely. In the third week she realized that her mood had changed dramatically. The heat was getting to her and she had begun to long for Western food. Soon after she began suffering from insomnia. The sight of the beggars in the streets depressed her no end and even at work she had inexplicable crying jags. It became more and more difficult for her to function and she was seriously considering calling the whole thing off and going home.

## Research yourself: **SWOT analysis**

- 1** A personal SWOT analysis is a powerful technique to identify your skills, talents and abilities. Knowing this makes your job search more focused and successful. SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

Take a large piece of paper, divide the paper into four quadrants and label each area like the page below. Then look at each area and consider the questions.



### **Strengths\***

What can you do especially well?

What do other people consider your strengths?

- Work experience
- Education
- strong technical knowledge
- specific skills
- personal characteristics

### **Weaknesses\***

What skills do you need to develop or improve?

What do other people consider your weaknesses?

- Lack of work experience
- Education: Low marks, wrong major
- weak technical knowledge
- Skill deficit
- negative personal characteristics

### **Opportunities\*\***

What current trends could be to your advantage?

What skills do you have that your competition lacks?

- Positive trends in your field
- Networks

### **Threats\*\***

What current trends could put you at a disadvantage?

What is your competition doing?

- Negative trends
- Competitors

\* **Strengths and weaknesses** form an innate part of who you are and your characteristics. They are within your control.

\*\* **Opportunities and threats** are normally external and beyond your control. Opportunities refer to conditions which could be helpful to achieving your objective. Threats refer to conditions which can negatively impact your objective.

- 2** What to say when asked about your weaknesses in a job interview? On page 15 you will find an excerpt from a book called *Best Answers to the 100 Most FAQs in Job Interviews*. Study the excerpt, then look at your SWOT analysis again and note ideas about how you could deal with your potential weaknesses in a job interview. Practice *presenting yourself* with another student.