

SECTION 2 Questions 15–27

Read the text below and answer Questions 15–20.

Professional Credentials: Advice for Immigrants

As an immigrant to North America, you will need to ensure that employers and organisations such as colleges and universities properly recognise your international credentials. These may be trade certificates, but also educational qualifications such as degrees or diplomas, that you have completed or partially-completed.

It is common for hiring personnel to have little or no training in evaluating an academic background earned outside of North America. But at the same time, employers see formal education as very important when hiring. Education is a hiring requirement for 60% of employment opportunities, but 40% of human resources staff say that if they do not know a lot about the value of documents attained elsewhere, they will not recognise them.

Research has shown that sometimes immigrants start with a lower salary level than people who have completed their training in North America. You may want to apply for employment opportunities with companies whose staff understands your situation or, more importantly, who know where to send you to get your North American qualifications. If you need to complete your training in North America, apprenticeships leading to skilled trades are in high demand. Apprenticeship training is a hands-on program where about 10% is in a classroom setting at community colleges, and 90% of the training is on-the-job. The training involves working for an employer and earning income during the training period. Sometimes there is a limit of 5 years for training. You may be able to use this training toward college or university credits or education. There is a good potential for long-term job security after completion of apprenticeship training.

If you earned your papers outside of North America, you will need to get them translated if you want to work or study. It is important for you that your education is assessed by an accredited assessment service when you are applying for jobs, and particularly if the job posting has an education requirement. As well, it is recommended that you include a copy of the report with your cover letter. It is suggested that you provide this information early and do not wait until the time you actually meet with the employer. Getting job interviews is more than 50% of the whole process of securing employment; and with an evaluation report, you want to make sure that employers are screening you 'in' rather than 'out'.

Establishing yourself in North America is a difficult process, but companies do consider integrating immigrants into the workforce important to the workplace mosaic. Employers are making significant progress in improving diversity at work.

Read the text below and answer Questions 21–27.

How to Prepare for a Presentation

The first time your boss suggests that you formally present something to your department or a client, your reaction may be to panic. But remember that being asked to present is a compliment. Someone believes that you have valuable information to share with the group, and wants to listen to your ideas.

You need to decide exactly what you will say during the allotted time. Condense your topic into one sentence. What do you want your audience to remember or learn from your talk? This is your 'big idea'. Remember that you are dealing with the short attention spans of individuals who tend to have many things on their minds.

Think of three main points you want to make to support your overall topic. Develop a story to demonstrate each of those concepts. This could be something that happened to you or someone you know, or something you read in a newspaper or magazine.

We have all heard the saying *A picture is worth a thousand words*. Think about how your presentation can be more interesting to watch. Props are a wonderful way to make your talk come alive. You could do something as simple as holding up a toy phone receiver when talking about customer service or putting on a hat to signal a different part of your talk.

Think of a dynamic and unusual way to start your presentation. This might involve telling anecdotes that relate to your topic. Never begin with, 'Thank you for inviting me here to talk with you today.' You will put your audience to sleep right away. Start off enthusiastically so they will listen with curiosity and interest. After your energetic introduction, identify yourself briefly and thank the audience for taking the time to listen to you.

Plan your ending, and finish in a memorable way. Your listeners remember best what they hear at the beginning and end of a speech, so conclude with a game in which they can participate, or tell a humorous story and your audience will leave laughing.

Don't try to memorise your talk or read it word-for-word. It will sound stilted and boring. Instead, practise your dynamic introduction and conclusion until you can deliver them effortlessly. If you do this you'll feel a burst of confidence that will help you sail through the whole of the speech.