

Goal: Fill Out A Job Application

Contributed by
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Introduction

No matter what kind of job you are searching for, there will probably come a time when you are asked to fill out a job application or employment application. In fact, you may be asked to complete a job application even if you have already submitted a resume and cover letter. In this way, the employer has a record of your personal and employment history, verified and signed by you, and can use the application to ensure that there is consistent information from everyone who applies.

If you are applying for a position in-person, ask for a job application then take it home with you to complete it. You can take your time filling it out so it will be neat and accurate when you return to drop it off.

Sometimes retail stores, like Target and WalMart, have hiring kiosks where you complete an on-line version of the application in the store. The kiosk is a computer on-site that is dedicated to job placement.

Of course many companies now post their job applications online. In fact, some employers no longer accept paper applications and require job-seekers to apply at their company website or at the job-match website where they have posted their job openings.

In spite of all this variation, the good news is that job application forms are pretty standard. Once you have worked through this curriculum you will have a written record of your employment and school history and you can copy this information onto any job application -- whether paper or on-line -- as often as needed.

Getting Started

Before you complete a job application, it's important to gather all of the information you will need and have it in one place, ideally on a sample application form (see the example, below, starting on page 10) that you can copy from as needed.

You'll need to begin by assembling the following:

- the names and locations of the schools you have attended (starting with high school through to the current day)
- the dates you attended those schools
- the names and locations of the companies where you have worked (up to 10 years back)
- the job titles, the starting and ending dates of employment, and salaries for each position
- the full address of your previous employers, along with your supervisors' names and contact phone numbers and/or e-mail addresses

You can also prepare yourself by having office supplies, equipment and identification materials ready to go. Here's a basic checklist:

- Pens and highlighter
- Calendar
- Blank notebook for documenting where and when you have applied
- Answering machine and/or voice mail
- Access to a computer and printer (use the computer lab at your library and/or literacy services if you don't have one at home)
- Internet access
- Access to a fax machine
- Copies of certifications, diplomas, licenses
- Social Security card (or immigration papers)
- Driver's license or ID card

Books & Materials

Books

Filling Out Forms -- Uses a hands-on approach to help students understand and fill out common forms. Chapter 5, "Education and Employment" covers the job application form and has a sample form to practice on. Published by New Readers Press.

Challenger, Book 6 -- This book in the *Challenger* series also provides a sample blank job application in Lesson 9 along with a job-search related reading passage and other activities. Published by New Readers Press.

Websites

Craig’s List. According to Wikipedia, Craig’s List receives over one-million new job listings each month, making it one of the top job boards in the world. Go to: www.craigslist.org. First, search for your region, for example “San Francisco Bay Area” and then narrow into a certain area if you wish; “South Bay,” for instance. Under the heading “Jobs,” look for fields that might be interesting, such as "Food/Beverages/Hospitality" or "Nonprofits." The first jobs listed are the ones that have been posted most recently. Jobs posted earlier are listed farther down on the page. It might be useful to focus only on jobs from the last two days. The day and the month are shortened. For example, Wed Apr 29 means Wednesday, April 29.

Other Job Search Websites. Monster.com – www.monster.com, HotJobs – <http://hotjobs.yahoo.com> and CareerBuilder – www.careerbuilder.com are sophisticated job match sites that can help you cut through hundreds of jobs to the ones that fit you the best. To do a standard search, just enter the title of the job you are looking for and the region in which you would like to work and the site will list any jobs that fit your requirements (if they don’t find any, you may need to broaden your search). You can also search by company, by industry, by occupation (they list the most common), and by job type (full-time? part-time? etc.). Another good feature of these sites is that you are given the opportunity to up-load or send your resume to the website so potential employers can search through all the resumes that have been submitted and find you if your background matches the job available.

California Career Zone. This is a career development website hosted by the California Department of Education. If you're not quite sure what kind of job is for you, this site will help you research various options based upon your interests and strengths. Go to www.californiacareers.info.

US.jobs. US.jobs posts thousands of jobs from company websites and state job banks. The site lists both public and private sector jobs. Users can search for jobs by keyword, location, industry, company, and posting date. While you do not need to create an account to search for jobs, creating an account allows you to post your resume, save job searches, and receive updates on new job listings. The site also includes resources for specific types of job seekers, including seniors, students, veterans, and people with disabilities. According to the website, all job openings are unduplicated, currently available, and from vetted employers.

Employment Development Department. www.caljobs.ca.gov This is California's web-based system for linking employers and job seekers. You will log-in with your Social Security Number and date of birth and then will be able to create and store your resume and browse job listings. If you find something you like, you can post your system-generated resume for on-line viewing by employers.

Key Vocabulary

- ♦ available/availability
- ♦ N/A - Not Applicable
- ♦ responsibilities
- ♦ chronological order
- ♦ position
- ♦ salary
- ♦ employee/employer
- ♦ references
- ♦ supervisor

Reading & Writing Practice

■ **Chronological Order.** When you arrange events in chronological order you put them into the order that they happened over time. For instance, someone's personal time-line in chronological order might look like this:

- 1962 - Born
- 1980 - Graduated from High School
- 1985 - Married
- 1989 -- First child born
- 1991 -- Second child born
- Etc.!

However, when you're preparing a job application or a resume, you need to put your job history and your educational history into REVERSE chronological order which means the event at the top of your list will be the one that happened the most recently. The last event will be the one that is in the most distant past.

To practice putting things in chronological order, cut out the following dates (or select 10 dates that are important in your life and write them on slips of paper). Mix them up then arrange them in chronological order, from oldest to most recent. Mix them up again and then arrange them in REVERSE chronological order, from the most recent to the oldest.



January 10, 2002	November 21, 2011
August 31, 2012	May 5, 2004
May 6, 2004	October 21, 2011
September 9, 2008	February 28, 2005
December 20, 2007	January 4, 2008

■ **Part I - Action Words.** As you fill in your work history on a job application, you will be asked to tell what you did at your jobs; what your “duties” or “responsibilities” were. When you describe your work you will want to use “action words,” verbs that make your job history come alive. On the table below there are many different words to describe what a person might do at work. Review these action words and then circle or highlight those that apply to you. Think of your own action words to describe your work if you do not find the words you need here.

Communication Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertised • Called • Discussed • Instructed • Showed 	Cooperation Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed • Consulted • Facilitated • Provided 	Administrative Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administered • Budgeted • Enforced • Hired • Signed • Supervised • Defined • Monitored • Maintained • Developed • Selected 	Managerial Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collected • Delivered • Guided • Inspected • Trained • Worked
Creative Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authored • Created • Established • Formulated • Invented • Wrote • Produced • Drafted • Designed • Compiled 	Results Words <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changed • Earned • Marketed • Reduced 		Problem-Solving Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solved • Discovered • Negotiated
	Clerical Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Filed • Ordered • Sorted • Organized • Summarized 	Verbal Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lectured • Delivered • Chaired • Counseled • Participated 	Manual Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installed • Fitted • Coded • Fixed • Built

■ **Part II - Action Phrases.** The following is a sample list of skills found in a cross-section of careers. Circle or highlight every skill that applies to you. Think about situations in your working life that demonstrate this skill.

administering programs	planning agendas/meetings	updating files
advising people	planning organizational needs	setting up demonstrations
analyzing data	predicting futures	sketching charts or diagrams
assembling apparatus	rehabilitating people	writing reports
auditing financial reports	organizing tasks	writing for publication
budgeting expenses	prioritizing work	expressing feelings
calculating numerical data	creating new ideas	checking for accuracy
finding information	meeting people	classifying records
handling complaints	evaluating programs	coaching individuals
handling detail work	editing work	collecting money

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imagining new solutions	tolerating interruptions	compiling statistics
interpreting languages	confronting other people	inventing new ideas
dispensing information	constructing buildings	proposing ideas
adapting new procedures	coping with deadlines	investigating problems
negotiating/arbitrating conflicts	promoting events	locating missing information
speaking to the public	raising funds	dramatizing ideas
writing letters/papers/proposals	questioning others	estimating physical space
reading volumes of material	being thorough	organizing files
remembering information	coordinating schedules/times	managing people
interviewing prospective employees	running meetings	selling products
listening to others	supervising employees	teaching/instructing/training individuals
relating to the public	enduring long hours	inspecting physical objects
entertaining people	displaying artistic ideas	distributing products
deciding uses of money	managing an organization	delegating responsibility
measuring boundaries	serving individuals	mediating between people
counseling/consulting people	motivating others	persuading others
operating equipment	reporting information	summarizing information
supporting others	encouraging others	delegating responsibilities
determining a problem	defining a problem	comparing results
screening telephone calls	maintaining accurate records	drafting reports
collaborating ideas	administering medication	comprehending ideas
overseeing operations	motivating others	generating accounts
teaching/instructing/training individuals	thinking in a logical manner	making decisions
becoming actively involved	defining performance standards	resolving conflicts
analyzing problems	recommending courses of action	selling ideas
preparing written communications	expressing ideas orally to individuals or groups	conducting interviews
performing numeric analysis	conducting meetings	setting priorities
setting work/committee goals	developing plans for projects	gathering information
taking personal responsibility	thinking of creative ideas	providing discipline when necessary

maintaining a high level of activity	enforcing rules and regulations	meeting new people
developing a climate of enthusiasm, teamwork, and cooperation	interacting with people at different levels	picking out important information
creating meaningful and challenging work	taking independent action	skillfully applying professional knowledge
maintaining emotional control under stress	knowledge of concepts and principles	providing customers with service
knowledge of community/government affairs		

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■ **Part III - Putting Action Words & Phrases to Work for You.** With your tutor, recall all of the different jobs you have held over the last ten years, these could either be jobs where you were paid or they could be jobs where you volunteered. Write down the job title (you can use the form on page 8 for this exercise). Under the job title, write down three action words or phrases (selected from the tables above or others) that describe what you did at that job. Try to focus on what you accomplished rather than just what was required of you. Finally, create three sentences, starting with those action words and phrases, that more fully explain what you did. Use numbers, percentages, and words like "increased" or "improved" etc. to illustrate your achievements. Finally, transfer these sentences to your sample job application (below) under "Employment History."

Sample:	Job Title		
	<u>Administrative Assistant</u>		
	Action Word/Phrase #1	Action Word/Phrase #2	Action Word/Phrase #3
	<u>Filed</u>	<u>Called</u>	<u>Purchased</u>
	Sentence #1		
	Filed documents for an office of 20 employees.		
	Sentence #2		
	Called vendors to follow-up on orders, ensuring on-time delivery in 95% of transactions		
	Sentence #3		
	Purchased supplies, furniture and computers on behalf of the entire office		

Fill out one of these for every job you've held in the last ten years:

What did you accomplish?	Job Title		

	Action Word/Phrase #1	Action Word/Phrase #2	Action Word/Phrase #3
	_____	_____	_____
	Sentence #1		

	Sentence #2		

	Sentence #3		

What did you accomplish?	Job Title		

	Action Word/Phrase #1	Action Word/Phrase #2	Action Word/Phrase #3
	_____	_____	_____
	Sentence #1		

	Sentence #2		

	Sentence #3		

■ **Set-Up an E-mail Account.** Use your library's computer lab to set up your own e-mail account if you do not have one already. Yahoo! – www.yahoo.com and G-mail www.google.com and other places have free e-mail accounts available for your use. Choose one of these and then follow the prompts to create your own e-mail address and a password. Once established you will be able to send and receive e-mail. You will also be able to access your account from any computer with internet access. Once you begin applying for jobs on-line, potential employers will contact you through your e-mail address.

■ **Filling Out A Sample Job Application.** Now it's time to put all of the information about your job history and your education into one place. What follows is a sample job application with most of the questions you will be asked on a typical application. With your tutor, read through the questions and make sure you recognize all the words and understand what is being asked. Highlight any words that are unfamiliar and put those words on flash-cards for practice. Once you've filled in this sample, you can use it as a template for filling out any other job application.

Tips for Completing Job Applications...

- Complete all requested information.** Don't leave anything blank. If you don't know how to answer something, bring the application home and return it when it's completed. Complete every section. Write 'N/A' (not applicable) when an area does not apply to you.
- Be honest.** Lying is not O.K.
- Write clearly and neatly,** using black or blue ink.
- Check for spelling and grammatical errors.** Proofread your job application form before turning it in.
- Follow the instructions** when completing both online and paper job applications. Check the company website or the fine print on the form for instructions before you submit it! The company will regard applications that are submitted correctly in a much better light than those from candidates who don't follow the instructions.
- Attach a resume** (if you have one), but still fill in the application completely. Make sure everything on the application matches your resume.
- Keep a copy** of the completed application form, if possible
- Follow up** a few days to a week later to make sure your application was received. Identify yourself and the position you applied for. Ask if the employer received everything you sent and then ask when a decision might be made and if the employer needs anything else from you.

JOB APPLICATION SAMPLE

PERSONAL INFORMATION:

First Name _____

Middle Name _____

Last Name _____

Street Address _____

City, State, Zip Code _____

Phone Number (_____) _____

E-mail _____

Are you eligible to work in the United States? Yes _____ No _____

If you are under age 18, do you have an employment/age certificate? Yes _____ No _____

Have you been convicted of or pleaded no contest to a felony within the last five years?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please explain: _____

POSITION/AVAILABILITY:

Position Applied For: _____

Days/Hours Available

_____ Monday From: _____ am/pm To: _____ am/pm

_____ Tuesday From: _____ am/pm To: _____ am/pm

_____ Wednesday From: _____ am/pm To: _____ am/pm

_____ Thursday From: _____ am/pm To: _____ am/pm

_____ Friday From: _____ am/pm To: _____ am/pm

_____ Saturday From: _____ am/pm To: _____ am/pm

_____ Sunday From: _____ am/pm To: _____ am/pm

What date are you available to start work? _____

Desired Pay Range/Salary Requirements: _____

One option is to put "will discuss," "open," or "negotiable," if you would rather not put a dollar amount.

Are you currently employed? _____

Hourly Wage or Salary _____

How did you learn about our company? _____

How many hours do you work per week at your current job? _____

How many people do you supervise? _____

EDUCATION:

Remember to list your most recent education first and then go back in time.

School Name (High School, College, Specialized Training, Trade School, etc.)	Location (City & State)	Diploma/ Degree/ Certificate	Classes/ Major	Start Date	End Date	Graduation Date

List as many special skills and qualifications as possible. Read the job description, determine the equipment and skills it requires, and then show you have those qualifications and more.

Other Skills and Qualifications: Licenses, Special Skills, Training, Awards

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY:

Current Or Last Position:

Position Title: _____

Start Date: _____ End Date: _____

Employer (Company Name): _____

Address: _____

Supervisor: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Tasks Performed/Responsibilities/Achievements: _____

Salary: _____

Reason for Leaving: _____

Remember to list your most recent or current job first, then go back in time.

When stating why you left, be as brief as possible, stay positive, and emphasize what you hoped to gain by leaving. Don't disparage your former employer.

Previous Position:

Position Title: _____

Start Date: _____ End Date: _____

Employer (Company Name): _____

Address: _____

Supervisor: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Tasks Performed/Responsibilities/Achievements: _____

Salary: _____

Reason for Leaving: _____

Previous Position:

Position Title: _____

Start Date: _____ End Date: _____

Employer (Company Name): _____

Address: _____

Supervisor: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Tasks Performed/Responsibilities/Achievements: _____

Salary: _____

Reason for Leaving: _____

Describe what you actually accomplished, not just your official duties.

Previous Position:

Position Title: _____

Start Date: _____ End Date: _____

Employer (Company Name): _____

Address: _____

Supervisor: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Tasks Performed/Responsibilities/Achievements: _____

Salary: _____

Reason for Leaving: _____

[Print more copies of this page as needed.]

May We Contact Your Present Employer?

Yes _____ No _____

References don't have to be from a workplace. If you volunteer, you can use members of the organization that you have helped, or, if you are a student, use tutors, teachers, and/or literacy staff members. In all cases, ask for permission first.

References:

Name/Title or Relationship/Address/Phone

I certify that information contained in this application is true and complete. I understand that false information may be grounds for not hiring me or for immediate termination of employment at any point in the future if I am hired. I authorize the verification of any or all information listed above.

Don't forget to sign your application!

Signature _____

Date _____

Independent Practice

■ **Apply for a Job In-Person.** It's time to set out and hit the pavement! If you walk into a place you wish to work, keep an eye out for a 'help wanted' or 'now hiring' sign. Not all places will have an easily visible sign, so it's O.K. to approach someone and ask if they are hiring. Practice saying something like this:

"Hi, my name is _____ and I was wondering if you're hiring or will be hiring soon?"

Usually, an application will follow, but if the person doesn't hand you one, just ask. Sometimes you will be directed to fill out an application online; in which case they will give you the steps for doing so. Remember to make eye contact and, if appropriate, be prepared to shake hands as you introduce yourself. Even if the company isn't hiring, ask if you can submit an application anyway, which they may keep for future consideration when they do begin looking for new employees.

Dress appropriately. You may end up speaking to the manager and it's important to look professional. Just in case you get an on-the-spot interview, be prepared to answer questions about your employment history and education, including questions about why you want to work at the company and why you are qualified for the job.

Milestones

- ◆ **Initial Effort** - Gather the information you need about your job history and education history to fill out your job application. Do the research necessary to track down all of the details that are requested on the form: searching through old documents and pay stubs, and even making phone calls to former employers and schools. Begin lining up your references, asking three to five people if they are willing to recommend you for the jobs you are seeking. Set-up your own e-mail account if you don't have one already.
- ◆ **Making Progress** -- Fill-in the sample job application included here to use as a template for real job applications. Role-play asking for applications in-person. Begin or continue your on-line job-search.
- ◆ **Accomplished** -- Actively look for job applications on-line and in person. Using your job application sample, carefully fill in the forms and submit them. If there is a question you don't recognize or understand, ask your tutor or literacy staff for help. Add that question (and your response) to your sample form so you will have it for future reference. Good luck on your job search!

Contributor's Biography

Valerie Reinke has worked in the field of adult and family literacy for over 20 years at the Riverside City & County Public Library (as it was then called), Orange Public Library, Corona Public Library and the California State Library. She currently works from her home as an independent consultant to libraries.