

Looking for work can be a job itself.
How do you get work experience when all those jobs out there seem to be requiring that you already have work experience?

APPLICATION 101

First things first: If you haven't already done so, you need to obtain a Social Insurance Number (SIN) in order to work in Canada. To get one, visit your nearest Service Canada Centre. See the [SERVICE CANADA WEBSITE](#) for a list of required documents & the locations of their offices.

Next: Prepare or update your resume so that it represents you well. Hiring Managers are busy, and they don't have the time to interview every applicant. Your resume is the first impression you will be making with your prospective employer. An unorganized, messy resume that may even have typos will knock you out of the application process right away. So, let's make sure that your resume shows the best picture of yourself.

NEW TO THE JOB MARKET? NO EXPERIENCE? NO PROBLEM.

It's absolutely okay for a teenager to have no experience. Everyone's got to start somewhere. Instead of listing previous workplaces, you can list **volunteer work** you may have done, **babysitting**, **job shadowing**, **courses that are related to the position you are applying for** (i.e. your leadership class, your excellent mark in your Foods 10 class, your participation in the Music program), **academic achievements** such as honour roll, or you can even refer to **relevant extracurricular activities and hobbies if you have gained any transferrable skills** (i.e. your years of playing hockey or taking figure skating lessons if applying for a job as Skating Instructor, First Aid Certificates, etc.).

Your goal is to show your prospective employer why you would make a good addition to their team and that you will add value to their business. Just saying, "I am interested," is not good enough. This is not just about your needs; instead, you must make the employer see that you would actually help them fulfill their need as well.

Useful sites:

<https://resumegenius.com/blog/resume-help/resume-examples-for-teens>
<https://www.thebalancecareers.com/tips-for-getting-your-first-part-time-job-2058650>
<https://www.monster.ca/career-advice/article/teen>

Everything you need to know to score a job interview



- **Research job postings** that match your interests.
- **Make a list of keywords you find in the job posting.** What are the requirements or skills the hiring manager is looking for? When writing your resume and cover letter, you want to focus on those required qualifications. Connect your application to the specific job you are applying for.
- **Make sure you are using a professional email address.** Shootandscore22@hotmail.com may sound cool, but it doesn't send the right message to a prospective employer.
- **Proofread!** Then proofread again, or even better, ask a parent/ friend/ your career advisor to proofread. Make sure that there are no grammar or spelling mistakes, and that your application is well organized.
- **Add a cover letter!** Even if the job posting does not explicitly require one, it is generally a good idea to send a short cover letter along with your resume. This is your chance to "present your case" aka convince the hiring manager to invite you for an interview!

CUSTOMIZE!

Customize your resume and cover letter for each job you are applying to. Yes, you read that right!

Generally, there is no “One fits all” when it comes to job applications.

Different job postings are asking for different qualifications, are listing different job duties and are using different keywords.

Safest strategy for making your application stand out is to tailor your resume exactly to the job you are hoping to land.



RESUME

- ✓ As a current high school student, you want to put your education information at the top of your resume. If your grade average is strong, include it. You also want to list any academic awards, honor rolls, or other achievements. Did you take any classes that may have prepared you for this job?
- ✓ If your work experience is still limited, put your emphasis on any other forms of work-related experience, i.e., volunteering, career experience programs, workshops you've participated in.
- ✓ Highlight leadership experience: Employers want leaders. If you were a captain for your sports team or the president of a student club, make sure to mention it.
- ✓ Consider adding a “Skills” section on your resume to include any skills you have that are related to the job. For example, you might list your typing skills, computer skills, language skills, or soft skills (personal traits such as self-motivation, punctuality, or proven problem-solving skills).
- ✓ There's nothing wrong with using a template – as long as you ensure to personalize it to reflect *your own* skills and experiences.



COVER LETTER

How to write a cover letter, you ask? Goal of the cover letter is to introduce you to the Hiring Manager with the intention to attract their interest so that they want to learn more about you by reading your resume next.

Dos

- ✓ Respond to the job requirements by focussing on keywords
- ✓ Show that your personal qualities and experiences are a good fit and that you can bring value to the company.
- ✓ Get to the point without repeating yourself. Key is to keep your letter on one page, not more!

DON'Ts

- ✓ Include too many “I-statements”. Remember, it's not all about you. Your application is about what you bring to the company.
- ✓ Repeat everything you've put on your resume. You just want to give the reader an idea of what's to come.
- ✓ Include references. Standard is to provide references upon request. The employer will let you know if they want to move forward with your application and will ask you for references. However, plan ahead and talk to people you want to use as reference.

COVER LETTER LAYOUT

Always include your full legal name and contact information at the top of your cover letter. If you are preferring to be called by another name, you can add that in brackets. You don't necessarily list your street address (it could be a disadvantage if you live further away from the workplace), but you do want to include your phone number and email. *It's self-explanatory that, of course, you will be checking your email inbox at least once a day, right?!*

The Greeting: Start the cover letter by respectfully addressing the recipient by name. If you can't find out the name of the person in charge, you could write "Dear Hiring Manager", or "Dear Madam or Sir".

First Paragraph: Mention where you found this job opportunity and explain your interest in it. Briefly talk about your specific qualifications/ experiences related to this job opportunity. If you are referring to someone you know working at the company, make sure you have the person's permission to do so (and that the person is reliable and well-liked at their workplace).

Main body (one or two paragraphs): *Things you could mention:*

- *Teamwork/ leadership skills that show you work well with other people.*
- *Skills that show you can learn on the job*
- *Work experience programs you took at school, or volunteer work that demonstrates your strengths and interests*
- *Involvement in sports or community clubs*
- *Interests relevant to the job, or that show you are mature and professional.*



Nobody wants to read a long list of your activities and achievements. You need to figure out how these things relate to the job and the qualifications the successful candidate should have. Evaluate your marketable skills. Apply the outcomes and experiences of your education and extracurriculars to create "action statements" about things you have done, i.e.: Organized and led student council meetings, presented our club's purpose to the local Rotary Club to raise funds for xx, led a successful blood drive at my school.

The end: Thank the prospective employer for taking the time to review your application and ask for an opportunity to further discuss your application in person/ in detail. End with a formal closing, such as "Sincerely" or "Kind Regards", and your full name.

VERIFY LEGITIMACY OF THE JOB POSTING

- ❖ Check with your parent/ guardian before applying for a job.
- ❖ Check the company website to verify that the contact person listed in the ad actually works for the company.
- ❖ Trust your instincts. If something feels weird or questionable, there's a chance that something is wrong or potentially dangerous. Stay away from it.

WHERE TO LOOK?

Use all tools available to find a job.

- Check common job search engines, such as Indeed.ca. However, this is rather frustrating as there aren't a lot of part-time jobs for teens posted.
- Check with your school's Career Resource Centre.
- Visit local companies' and the City's websites to look for job postings.
- Dress professionally, take your resume, walk into local stores, and ask the manager for job openings.
- Tell all your friends and family members that you are looking for a job.

INVITED TO AN INTERVIEW

– NOW WHAT?

Now that you got this far, don't waste your chance by not doing your homework. Don't just show up – make an impression.



1. Understand how you can make a difference for the company. This part requires you to do some research on the company and your potential tasks.
2. First impressions go a long way. There are studies that the interviewer forms an opinion about the candidate within the first 20 seconds. So make those 20 seconds count. ****Dress for success.** ****Show up 5 to 10 minutes early for your interview.** ****Wait for them to offer you a chair.**
3. Go alone! You don't need your friend or your mom to hold your hand. You also don't need to bring your grande frappuccino to the interview, this is not a coffee date.
4. Be polite and respectful. Don't put anything on the interviewer's desk, this is not your home.
5. Watch your body language. Sit up straight in your chair, no slouching! Keep your arms open at your side or on the arms of the chair. Crossed arms are a sign of defensiveness or low self-esteem. Don't fidget. It's distracting and can indicate boredom or nervousness.
6. Be focused and confident.
7. Come prepared to talk about yourself. Short stories about yourself that can be applied to the job you are interviewing for can be very powerful. But your statements must be organized and point-on. And, of course, they must relate to the question. Don't talk *too* much.
8. Bring questions! At some point the person you'll talk to will ask you "Do you have any questions for us?" Make sure that you have at least two or three questions for them. It's likely that at least one will be answered during the interview, without you even asking. So, make sure that you have a question left at the end. Having no questions shows a lack of interest.
9. Ask when you can expect to hear from them
10. Thank the interviewer for their time and for inviting you. It's also a good idea to follow up with a thank-you email.

COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTION

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- *Tell me about yourself!*
 - *Why do you want to work here?*
 - *What skills/ experiences do you have that qualify you for this job? What makes you think you'd be good at this job?*
 - *Why are you looking for a job?*
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- *What would you do in a conflict situation (i.e., with a co-worker)?*
 - *Tell me about a time when you had to deal with an upset customer/ teammate.*
 - *Tell me about a time when you had too many things to do, and you were required to prioritize your tasks.*
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What are your strengths/ weaknesses? (Name three each). *****Try to find a weakness that can be turned into a positive character trait or find something you have learned through that weakness/ made you stronger. It's okay not to be perfect; they want to see self-awareness and that you can deal appropriately with any deficits.***

- ***What is your greatest accomplishment so far?*** *****Don't gloat but tell them a story where you persevered/ achieved something you worked hard for.***
 - ***Give me an example of a time when you tried to accomplish something important to you and failed.***
 - ***Give me an example of when you showed initiative and took the lead.***
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One word about SOCIAL MEDIA

Before you now roll your eyes, think twice – and most importantly, think before you post!

Many teenagers have public profiles. Easy for any hiring manager to check you out after receiving your application. So, ask yourself, would you be comfortable with what a potential employer could see on your social media profile?

If you have posted about your volunteer work with the local non-profit helping the homeless, good on you! If you have posted about your second place at the most recent dance recital, congratulations. If they will see photos of you and your “Save the Ocean” group cleaning up the shoreline, wonderful! Anything else, think twice if you should delete any inappropriate/ potentially embarrassing post.

REFERENCES

Start selecting your references early in your job finding process. Talk to the people you are considering and get their permission before using their name as a reference.

- Choose people who have known you for well over a year.
- Choose people who can speak about your work performance as well as your personality, i.e., a teacher who knows you well, your counsellor, a coach, your volunteer supervisor.
- Choose at least one person who could speak about your character/ personality, i.e., an adult family friend, coach (Do not use a parent or relative).

KNOW YOUR SCHEDULE!



When applying for jobs know what days and hours you are available to work. Be prepared because your potential employer will ask about your availability. The more flexible you can be, the better because it will be easier for the employer to schedule you for shifts. Are you available on weekends? Can you work late on a school night? How will you get to your job site?

Also, there's no point in applying for a job posted for 15 hours/ week, if you already know the maximum time you can put in is 8 hours.

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Silke Kaufmann, Post-Secondary & Career Advisor.

Dr. Charles Best Secondary School, Coquitlam.

**If you have any question, please don't hesitate to reach out during office hours or email

skaufmann@sd43.bc.ca

Good luck!!!