

Introduction

Earning Income

How much have you thought about what occupation you will seek after leaving school? Not much? That is not unusual. Even if you are among the few who have a plan, you will probably reexamine this plan several times over the coming months and years.

Finding a job is important. Many high school students have part-time jobs, and they may be familiar with the process of finding a job. However, finding a job after technical school or college is different from finding a part-time job while you are still in high school. The usual process for finding a full-time job includes writing a letter of application, preparing a resume, completing a job application, and crossing your fingers, hoping that you will be offered a job interview.

But what sort of occupation is right for you? There are abundant sources of information about various occupations and job openings. The *Occupational Outlook Handbook* in your school library or at www.bls.gov/OCO/ is a great source of information about salaries and job requirements. Similarly, there are many places to look for lists of job openings—from your local newspaper to websites on the Internet.

Ever notice how people in some occupations earn more money than people in other occupations? Ever wonder why some people are wealthier than others? Michael Dell of Dell Computers is worth billions. Google founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin are also worth billions. On the other hand, people who manage gourmet coffee shops earn a whole lot less and are much less wealthy. Why is that? One explanation has to do with the risks that entrepreneurs like Dell, Page, and Brin take when they start their own business. We all know that risks don't always pay off. But, when they do, they can lead to increased wealth.



Another way to become wealthier has to do with an individual's level of education. Economists call education and training "human capital." On average, people who have higher levels of education earn more, sometimes significantly more, than those with lower levels of education. For example, people who graduate from high school earn more than those who do not. People who complete at least some years of college usually earn more than people who never go to college. Because of this, the time and money you spend on your education should be looked upon as an investment in your human capital. Investing time and money in your education may well provide you with good returns in the form of higher income over many years.

If you have held a part-time job, you may have had a rude surprise when you received your first paycheck. You might have figured that the amount of your paycheck would simply be the total of the number of hours worked multiplied by your hourly rate of pay. But of course paychecks come with various deductions from the gross pay amount. Some of these deductions are optional, but many are mandatory. Optional deductions might include contributions to employee-paid benefits, such as a company retirement plan. Mandatory deductions include payments for income taxes and Social Security. Uncle Sam takes a bite!

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The Job Application Process

Employers in recent years have been experimenting with new ways to attract employees. But most employers still tend to follow similar procedures for recruiting and hiring new workers. People who are familiar with these procedures have advantages in the job-seeking process. A good job-application process can involve as many as six steps. These steps are all very important in finding a job.

STEP 1: Looking for Job Openings

There are several sources of information about job opportunities. One important source to consider is CareerOneStop: www.careeronestop.org/. It is the most extensive service available. CareerOneStop is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor in partnership with state-operated employment services. It is a computerized network that links state employment-services offices to provide job seekers with a pool of active job opportunities. Job seekers can search for job openings and submit resumes for employers to examine. Job seekers may research jobs within 25 miles of their homes, within counties, states, and throughout the United States. The job openings and resumes found in CareerOneStop are available on the Internet in many public libraries, colleges, universities, high schools, shopping malls, transition offices on military bases, and elsewhere. Some other Internet job sites include Monster.com and Careerbuilder.com.

Individuals increasingly are using networking as a less formal way of finding out about career opportunities. How might you uncover job opportunities using your personal network? Consider communicating by telephone or e-mail with friends and family members who, in turn, might be able to connect you to a potential employer. Consider business networking sites like LinkedIn.com. Make efforts to contact people who might know other people. Contact organizations that might help. For example, local employers may be members of a local Chamber of Commerce. These employers are often seeking new workers. Your local Chamber of Commerce will usually have information about how you can contact local employers through formal and informal channels. Other networking ideas include joining organizations and clubs, attending business luncheon meetings, and taking classes or seminars where you might come into contact with potential employers.

There are many other sources of information about jobs. Teachers and guidance counselors may know of local sources of employment. Many high schools offer cooperative or work-experience programs. Most post-secondary education institutions, such as technical schools, colleges, and universities, have career placement offices. These offices often post job openings; they may also offer workshops on job-seeking skills and may arrange for recruiters to interview students on campus.

Many communities have public and private employment agencies whose business is to help you find jobs for which you are qualified.

Don't forget to check out the classified "Help Wanted" notices in your local newspaper.

Finally, businesses and government organizations often circulate job openings. These job openings might be posted on bulletin boards which you can read by visiting the employment office of the business or government organization.

STEP 2: The Letter of Application

Job applicants often send a letter of application and a resume to a potential employer. The letter of application introduces you to the employer and allows you to tell the employer what you have to offer. A letter of application includes the normal characteristics of a business letter (typed, centered on page, and standard English). A typical letter expresses your interest in a particular job, links your experience, interest, or training to the job, and explains how you can be reached for an interview.

STEP 3: The Resume

A resume is a summary of your work-related experiences. It presents your name, telephone number, street address, e-mail address, career objective, education, GPA, work experience, abilities, and other information, such as awards, extracurricular activities (club, sports, etc.), offices held in organizations, and any special interests. Make sure your e-mail address is your name or a professional alias rather than a funny, cute, or inappropriate alias. A resume should give the employer a sense of who you are in a neat, concise, and accurate way. If you wish, you can list references (names and addresses) on the resume. References are people who can tell a prospective employer about your work habits, character, and skills. Be sure to ask permission before listing someone as a reference.

STEP 4: The Application

Employers ordinarily ask you to complete an employment application when you inquire about a job. When possible, you should type the application and return it to the employer. Note that many firms now allow you to fill out your application online. Many times, however, employers want you to complete the information on the spot. In this case, here are a few tips:

- ✓ Be sure to bring basic information such as your Social Security number, driver's license, and copies of necessary licenses or permits. Also, be sure to bring your resume and, if possible, a school transcript.
- ✓ Print clearly in the spaces provided. Use a good quality black or blue pen.
- ✓ Fill in all the blanks on the form. Write N/A for not available or does not apply, when appropriate, so the employer knows that you did not skip parts of the form.
- ✓ Be truthful. Give complete answers.

- ✓ Be sure there is no personal or inappropriate information on your social networking pages (e.g. Facebook). Potential employers are checking these sites for information about you.

STEP 5: The Interview

It is typical for an interested employer to contact you and arrange for a job interview. The job interview is a procedure in which you may be questioned about the statements you made in your application. The interview also allows the employer to gather other job-related information from you. Here are a few tips to consider as you prepare for a job interview:

- ✓ Find out detailed information about the company or agency. Often, companies have Internet sites or brochures that provide information on their mission and organization.
- ✓ Make a list of questions to ask about information that you want to obtain, such as work schedules, benefits, and pay.
- ✓ Arrive on time or a little early. Never be late. Go alone.
- ✓ Be neat and clean. Dress modestly and conservatively.
- ✓ Use minimal jewelry or fragrance.
- ✓ Do not smoke or chew gum.
- ✓ Be poised and confident. It is normal to be nervous, but try your best to appear relaxed.
- ✓ Do not appear overconfident or arrogant.
- ✓ Greet the interviewer with a firm handshake.
- ✓ Establish eye contact.
- ✓ Concentrate on clear communication. Speak clearly. Avoid slang or improper language. Listen carefully. Don't interrupt. Be responsive and truthful.
- ✓ Be ready for some open-ended questions. "Tell me about your qualifications for this job" or "Describe the ideal candidate for this position" are two possibilities.
- ✓ Emphasize your strong points. Be ready to be asked about your strengths as well as weaknesses.
- ✓ Be positive, upbeat, and enthusiastic.

STEP 6: The Thank-You Letter

Make sure you follow up with a letter thanking the person/people who interviewed you. Let them know you appreciated their time, and you look forward to hearing from them. In a thank-you letter you can also re-emphasize any skills, strengths, or other qualities you possess that are important to the position. And you can convey additional information you forgot to mention, or address any concerns that were brought up, during the interview.

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Sample Job Application

Below is a typical job application. Examine it to see how easy it would be for you to complete the application today. Answer the questions found after the form.

JOB APPLICATION			
Today's date _____			
PERSONAL INFORMATION <i>(please print clearly)</i>			
Name _____	Tel. # () _____		
<small>Last</small>	<small>First</small>	<small>Middle</small>	<small>Area Code</small>
Email address _____			
Address _____			
		<small>City</small>	<small>State</small>
		<small>Zip</small>	
Date of birth _____		Social Security No. _____	
Are you employed now? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
If yes, where? _____			
In case of emergency notify:			
Name _____		Tel. # () _____	
<small>Last</small>	<small>First</small>	<small>Middle</small>	<small>Area Code</small>
Address _____			
		<small>City</small>	<small>State</small>
		<small>Zip</small>	
AVAILABILITY			
Are you legally able to be employed in the U.S. ? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
What type of position are you seeking? <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time <input type="checkbox"/> Full-time			
M T W T F S S			
Hours	From _____		
Available	To _____		
How will you get to work? _____			
			continued on page 2

EDUCATION

School name and location _____
 Total # years attended _____ Did you graduate? _____ GPA _____
 Degree, major or total hours _____
 High school _____ Yes No
 Trade or business school _____ Yes No
 College/university _____ Yes No

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

1. Company _____
 Address _____ Tel. # () _____
City State Zip
 Position _____ Supervisor _____
 Dates worked from _____ To _____
 Wage _____ Reason for leaving _____

2. Company _____
 Address _____ Tel. # () _____
City State Zip
 Position _____ Supervisor _____
 Dates worked from _____ To _____
 Wage _____ Reason for leaving _____

SKILLS *(Complete if applying for clerical, secretarial or data processing position.)*

Keyboarding Yes ___WPM No Word processing Yes ___WPM No
 Spreadsheets Yes No Data entry Yes No
 Desktop publishing Yes No Internet experience Yes No
 Word processing software *(specify)*

 Spreadsheet Software *(specify)*

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Job Postings

WE ARE SEEKING DEPENDABLE INDIVIDUALS WHO CAN GROW WITH OUR COMPANY. WE OFFER FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME POSITIONS WITH A VARIETY OF SHIFTS AND SCHEDULES. PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH THESE JOBS WILL BE HELPFUL.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Supports managers by answering phones, typing correspondence, and coordinating travel schedules and meetings. Must be able to handle a variety of tasks under deadline. Skills required include word processing and attention to detail.

CASHIER

Conducts customer transactions with speed, accuracy, and efficiency while meeting or exceeding service quality standards. Accepts express transactions from clients, such as deposits, withdrawals, transfers, and checks to be cashed. Sets up, closes, and balances cash at work station. Bilingual skills a plus.

DATA ENTRY OPERATOR

Posts transactions to online computer system. Creates specific reports as requested. Skills required include accurate 10-key data entry and typing.

LINE AND PREP COOK Responsible for preparing quality food in fast-paced kitchen. Skills: Ability to follow

exacting preparation standards; teamwork with other kitchen and wait staff to provide high-quality food and service to customers.

MACHINE OPERATOR

Operates statement-rendering machine. Does minor repair work on machine. Skills: Must have good mechanical aptitude and be able to lift 10-20 pounds.

RESEARCH CLERK

Carries out interdepartmental research. Reconciles a general ledger accounting system to a variety of sources. Determines charges to customers for research inquiries. Verifies errors and makes adjustments. Good verbal and written skills are a must, along with the ability to learn quickly and follow directions. Skills required include accounting, calculator, and personal computer.

WAREHOUSE DRIVER

Responsible for delivering orders. Must have good personality for customer interaction, strong driving record, and knowledge of city and suburbs.

WE OFFER COMPETITIVE SALARIES AND A COMPREHENSIVE BENEFITS PACKAGE, INCLUDING MEDICAL/DENTAL, LIFE INSURANCE, RETIREMENT PLANS, CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE, AND PAID VACATIONS AND HOLIDAYS.

WE ARE AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER.

Interviewer Evaluation Form

Name of applicant: _____

Interviewed by: _____

Position applied for: _____

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Why are you applying for this job?
- What about the job most appeals to you?
- What about the job, if anything, does not appeal to you?
- What are your qualifications for this position?
- What experiences do you have that will be helpful to you in this job?
- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses?
- What would you like to be doing five years from now, and how do you think this job can help you get there?
- Is there anything else I should know about you in considering you for this position?

INTERVIEWER'S EVALUATION

The job applicant: (check all that apply)

- Seemed prepared for the interview
- Appeared confident
- Communicated clearly
- Was able to relate strengths and/or experiences to job needs
- Asked relevant questions

The job application: (check all that apply)

- Was neatly prepared and presented
- Was thorough
- Did a good job of highlighting the candidate's strengths and skills

The things that most impress me about this job applicant are:

The areas in which this candidate might improve are: