

# Resume Writing and Interviewing Skills



Career Preparation



**Howard  
County**  
Public School System

Dear Students,

This packet includes important and helpful tips on creating a resume and preparing for an interview. At some point in your life, each of you will have an interview—whether it's for a part-time position, college, technical school, the military, or full-time employment in your intended career field.

Please read through this packet for it will better prepare you for such an interview. Each of you will participate in a mock interview and be expected to write a resume. This not only is a graduation requirement, but it's a great opportunity to improve your career preparation skills.

Remember to dress professionally and come prepared (i.e., bring your resume and employment application). Community members will be the interviewers, and they will give you valuable feedback. Please thank them for their time and insight.

If you have any questions regarding resumes, interviews, and/or careers, please contact your school counselor.

Thank you,

The HCPSS High School Counselors



# Resume Writing and Interviewing Skills

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# Developing Your Resume

## Eleven Resume Guidelines

1. Keep it short—one page if possible, two pages at the most.
2. Include your name, address, phone number, education, and work experience. You may also want to include job objective, awards/honors, clubs/activities/sports, volunteer experiences, and/or contact information for three references (\*Always ask for permission before using a person's name as a reference).
3. Be neat—print resume on resume paper.
4. Spell out words. Do not use abbreviations. Example: Student Government Association, not SGA.
5. PROOFREAD and SPELLCHECK your resume. Do not solely rely on the computer. Have someone check over your resume before submitting it.
6. Be honest about your skills and work experience.
7. Be concise. Use action words and phrases when describing your experience.
8. State accomplishments and results, not just duties.
9. Include dates of participation. Data should be organized in time sequence with most recent education and experience first (reverse chronological order).
10. If you plan to play collegiate sports include pertinent data and statistics.
11. If you are using bullets, italics, bold, or any other formatting, you must be consistent. Do not put bullets under one area, then not bullet the rest.

## How to Write Bullet Statements for Resumes

Describe your work experience and accomplishments in a way that captures the reader's interest and leads to a job interview. Use all of the elements for emphasis.

**ACTION VERB**  
(how?)

**OBJECT OF THE ACTION**  
(what?)

**OUTCOME**  
(for whom?)

Omit the subject (who?) of your statement. It is understood to be "I."

Begin with an **action verb**, sometimes modified by an adverb for added emphasis.

*Edited...*  
*Managed...*  
*Directly supervised...*  
*Worked closely...*

Avoid phrases such as "Responsible for" or "Helped."

Describe the **object** of your action using numbers, amounts and other adjectives whenever possible.

*...small concession stand...*  
*...twelve students...*  
*...weekly cash register reports...*  
*...soccer camp members...*

Add the **outcome** or purpose of your action to emphasize results. Use number amounts whenever possible.

*...to support development of players*  
*...increasing revenue by 30% in only three months*  
*...to improve service delivery*  
*...attained 3.50 GPA for the last two quarters*

Put these elements together to tell the reader what you have done in your previous jobs, especially those things beyond the basics of your job that will make you stand out from other applicants.

Some examples might be:

*Filed medical records for a small doctor's office to simplify billing procedures.*

*Trained and managed six new employees at Six Flags theme park concession stands.*

*Supervised a soccer camp consisting of twelve students to support the development of future high school athletes.*

*Wrote 7-page booklet, "How to Overcome Test Anxiety," for middle school students to increase future academic success. Received an award from English department for superior writing quality.*

## Resume Words with a Punch!

Below are action words that provide punch to your resume statements. Grouped in skill areas below, these words provide readers a clearer understanding of skills used. The words you choose for your resume can help you catch the attention of a potential employer. It is important to use action words to highlight or describe your current (or previous) job duties. Your resume should not contain any sentences. For example: "Trained new employees" instead of "I trained new employees." Here are some words you can use in your resume:

<p><b>Clerical</b> classified collected compiled filed inventoried maintained memorized operated ordered organized performed prepared processed proofread quantified reconciled recorded reorganized retrieved revised scheduled tabulated translated validated</p>	<p><b>Creative</b> acted arranged created customized designed developed directed enhanced fashioned invented modified originated sketched upgraded</p>	<p><b>Helping</b> arranged assessed assisted clarified coached counseled demonstrated educated encouraged facilitated guided hosted initiated mediated motivated negotiated represented served solved suggested volunteered</p>	<p><b>Research</b> analyzed compiled critiqued determined developed evaluated examined inspected investigated organized researched reviewed summarized</p>	<p><b>Communication</b> answered authored contacted convinced corresponded critiqued directed displayed drafted edited encouraged influenced informed interpreted lectured negotiated persuaded presented promoted publicized recruited suggested taught testified translated wrote</p>
<p><b>Teaching</b> clarified coached communicated devised encouraged evaluated facilitated guided instructed persuaded presented taught tutored trained</p>	<p><b>Financial</b> appraised audited balanced budgeted calculated collected computed earned forecasted generated marketed negotiated priced projected reconciled</p>	<p><b>Management</b> administered analyzed approved assigned chaired changed coordinated delegated directed evaluated improved managed monitored organized planned produced recommended resolved</p>	<p><b>Supervision</b> assessed delegated demonstrated encouraged influenced mediated oversaw remedied reported solved supervised tested</p>	<p><b>Technical</b> assembled built calculated computed designed devised maintained operated programmed remodeled repaired upgraded</p>

# Resume Template 1

## Name

Street Number and Address  
City, State Zip Code  
Phone number  
Email address

## OBJECTIVE

To obtain...

## EDUCATION

Dates List all schools you attend(ed) **[most recent school first]**  
Give date of graduation

## WORK EXPERIENCE

Date Company name **[most recent first]**  
*Job Title*

- Duties performed
- Skills learned

## SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Date Activity/Sport/Club **[most recent first]**  
*Title or Position, if applicable*

- Duties performed
- Skills learned

Date Activity/Sport/Club  
*Title or Position, if applicable*

- Duties performed
- Skills learned

## COMMUNITY SERVICE

Date Activity **[most recent first]**  
Title or Position, if applicable

- Duties performed
- Skills learned

## HONORS AND AWARDS

Date Honor/Award **[most recent first]**

Date Honor/Award

## STRENGTHS

List what you perceive to be your strengths

## REFERENCES

Available upon request

# Resume Sample 1

**Madison DiLeo**  
1 Mermaid Lane  
Ellicott City, MD 21042  
410.555.1212  
[msplash@hardworker.net](mailto:msplash@hardworker.net)

## OBJECTIVE

To attend University of Maryland, College Park, Fall 2015  
Major: Business Management

## EDUCATION

2011-Present Howard High School, Ellicott City, Maryland  
Will graduate June 2015

## WORK EXPERIENCE

2011-2014 Howard County Family YMCA  
*Junior and Senior Counselor*

- Planned group activities for school-aged campers
- Assisted administrative staff with morning procedures
- Prepared staff manuals
- Organized files on each camper

Summer 2013 Taco Bell

*Sales Associate*

- Interacted with up to 400 customers, processing sales of up to \$2,000 daily
- Resolved problems by collaborating with customers and staff
- Prepared daily pick-up orders for up to 100 customers
- Utilized computerized cashiering system for financial transactions

## SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

2011-Present Viking Service Club

- Participate in the Fall and Spring Clean-up Project
- Serve as a tour guide for the Freshmen Orientation Day
- Direct parents around the school on Back to School Night

Lacrosse Team

*Goalie*

- County Champions 2011 and 2012
- Varsity team: 2 years
- Junior Varsity team: 1 year

## COMMUNITY SERVICE

2012-Present Manor Care Health Services

*Volunteer for Adopt-A-Grandfriend Program*

- Listen to and share own experiences with the elderly
- Assist with group activities and holiday parties

## STRENGTHS

- Focused with attention to details
- Possess a high level of stamina
- Work well as a team-member
- Cultivate the best in others

## REFERENCES

Available upon request

# Resume Template 2

(no work experience)

**Name**

Street Number and Address

City, State Zip Code

Phone number

Email address

## OBJECTIVE

To obtain ...

## EDUCATION

Dates List all schools you attend(ed) **[most recent school first]**  
Give date of graduation

## EXPERIENCE

Date Name experience **[most recent first]**

- Duties performed
- Skills learned

Date Name experience **[most recent first]**

- Duties performed
- Skills learned

## INTERESTS

- List interest
- List interest

## SKILLS

- List skill
- List skill

## STRENGTHS

List what you perceive to be your strengths

## REFERENCES

Available upon request



# Resume Sample 2

(no work experience)

**Madison DiLeo**  
1 Mermaid Lane  
Ellicott City, MD 21042  
410.555.1212  
msplash@hardworker.net

## OBJECTIVE

To obtain a part-time position as an administrative assistant

## EDUCATION

2011-Present     Howard High School, Ellicott City, Maryland  
Will graduate June 2015

## EXPERIENCE

2010-Present

### *Pet Sitter*

- Provide pet sitting services such as dog walking, feeding, and yard care

### *Child care*

- Provided child care for several families after school, weekends, and during school vacations

## INTERESTS

- Computers
- Guitar
- Ice skating
- Car repair
- Spanish

## SKILLS

- Proficient with Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint
- Proficient with the Internet
- Can type 70 words per minute
- Enjoy hands-on projects
- Intermediate fluency in Spanish and Italian
- Enthusiastic team player

## STRENGTHS

- Focused, and excellent follow-through
- Possess a high level of stamina and attention to detail
- Work well as a team-member
- Positive, remaining “upbeat” in all situations

## REFERENCES

Available upon request

# Cover Letters

## WHAT IS A COVER LETTER?

When you apply for a job and submit a resume, you should also include a cover letter. A resume gives a concise snapshot of your experience for specific positions whereas a cover letter allows you to share more details about your background to a specific employer's company. So, you may send the same resume to various potential employers, but the cover letter should be created specifically for that company. Cover letters should include the following parts: a heading, inside address, salutation, body, closing, your signature, and your typed name.

### Before writing the letter:

1. Research the business/agency/organization. This will not only help you in writing a relevant cover letter but it will also be useful if you get an interview.
2. Read the job description carefully. Check for the noted and assumed needs and determine the most important skills, qualifications, and experience the employer is looking for and make sure your skill set matches.
3. Write a targeted cover letter for each employer. This means customizing each cover letter you write, so it specifically relates your skills to the job you are applying for.
4. Find the name of the manager in charge of the department you want to work in. Call the Human Resources department if you are having trouble finding the name. Make sure you have the correct spellings of names.

### Writing the Letter:

1. **Format the heading** elements correctly.
  - Include your address at the top (in the right hand corner - approximately 1 inch down from the top of the page).
  - Skip down 4 lines and enter the date.
  - Skip down 4 more lines and enter the Contact Person, then the name and address of the company.
  - Write to a specific person, not "To whom it may concern", or "Dear Sir/Madam," whenever possible.
2. **Write the body** of your letter with three or four paragraphs.
  - In the first paragraph, tell the employer why you're writing to them in two or three sentences. State the position you are applying for and specify why you are interested in working for the employer.
  - In the next one or two paragraphs, outline your qualifications and match them to the requirements

of the position. Try to make two or three solid points using specific examples from your own employment history. Showcase how you are an asset to the company rather than explain your own personal employment goals.

- In the final paragraph, include a positive statement or question that will cause the employer to want to take action. Make this closing paragraph between 2-4 sentences. Direct the employer to the enclosed resume and make your availability known for an interview. It's very important to finish off by thanking the employer for their time and consideration.
3. **Conclude with "Yours sincerely,"** or "Regards," and leave four blank lines to sign your name in blue ink. Type your name after the four blank lines.
  4. **Proofread.** This is essential.
    - Be sure you have spelled everything correctly. Don't trust Spell Check!
    - Make yourself the active subject of every sentence (e.g. In this experience, I developed/reinforced/learned/etc."). But that doesn't mean every single sentence should start with "I..." so vary your syntax accordingly.
    - Break down any contractions (e.g. "I've" to "I have").
    - Avoid informal writing. You want to sound professional, objective, and educated.

### Tips:

1. Keep the letter to one page -- the purpose of the cover letter is to get the hiring manager to read your resume! If the letter is spilling onto a second page, it's time to tighten your points and edit the fluff.
2. Your tone should be upbeat, professional and informative. The employer wants to know what you can do for them, so sell yourself and your skills in a positive way. This is not the time to be humble—present confidently, but do not project arrogance.
3. Avoid clichés and meaningless or wordy expressions.
4. Your cover letter should complement, not duplicate your resume.
5. Your cover letter is often the first contact with an employer. Make sure it creates a good impression.
6. Take the time to target your cover letter to the job you are applying for. Be sure to tailor your letter for each position/company.
7. Before you send your cover letter out, proofread, edit, and revise it.

# Cover Letter Template

**[Your Name]**  
**[Street Address]**  
**[City, ST ZIP Code]**

Date

**[Recipient Name]**  
**[Title]**  
**[Company Name]**  
**[Street Address]**  
**[City, ST ZIP Code]**

Dear **[Recipient Name]**:

In the first paragraph, tell the employer why you're writing to them in two or three sentences. State the position you are applying for and specify why you are interested in working for the employer.

In the next one or two paragraphs, outline your qualifications and match them to the requirements of the position. Try to make two or three solid points using specific examples from your own employment history. Showcase how you are an asset to the company, rather than explain your own personal employment goals.

In the final paragraph, include a positive statement or question that will cause the employer to want to take action. Make this closing paragraph between 2-4 sentences. Direct the employer to the enclosed resume and make your availability known for an interview. It's very important to finish off by thanking the employer for their time and consideration.

Sincerely,

**[Your Name]**

Enclosure

# Cover Letter Sample 1

Joseph Viking  
12 Hebron Drive  
Ellicott City, MD 21042

[Date]

Barbara Smith  
Project Manager  
TK Consulting  
5 Beethoven Street  
Baltimore, MD 21231

Dear Ms. Smith:

Your ad for an entry-level position caught my attention as I prepare to begin my professional career upon graduation this spring from Elizabethtown College.

I say “professional” because I have worked steadily throughout college, gaining valuable experience that equips me to present your company with advantages others may not offer.

For example, as a resident assistant for a 250-person coed dorm, I acquired strong leadership and interpersonal skills. I am now able to think quickly in emergency situations and in those requiring quick assessment of many factors in order to make appropriate decisions. Dealing with the diverse concerns of students, parents, and faculty, I have become adept at operating with the proper mix of authority, diplomacy, and tact.

While working in this demanding position, I achieved a 3.75 cumulative grade-point average. My double major, communications and political science, provided me with a thorough foundation in principles that affect businesses every day.

I would welcome the chance to discuss openings at your firm. If you will contact me at 410.555.1212, we can schedule a meeting.

Thank you for your consideration.

Joseph Viking

Enclosure

# Cover Letter Sample 2

Joseph Viking  
12 Hebron Drive  
Ellicott City, MD 21042

[Date]

Nick Kiendl  
Director of Operations  
Stephens, Ltd.  
26 Pine Street  
Baltimore, MD 21230

Dear Mr. Kiendl:

As a recent graduate in industrial engineering, I am interested in joining Stephens, Ltd. My interest in your firm was sparked during a series of projects I completed as part of my engineering training. I know you need talented people, so let me tell you why you should consider me for an interview.

**Pursuit of excellence:** I graduated in the top 5 percent of my engineering class.

**Project experience:** Through class assignments and part-time jobs, I demonstrated the ability to be a productive member of technical project teams.

**Understanding your methods:** The same production process you utilize for clients was highlighted in two projects and one research paper I completed for my degree.

For more detailed information on my experience and skills, please see my enclosed resume.

I would deeply appreciate the opportunity to visit Stephens, Ltd., a firm I have admired for several years. I look forward to hearing from you to schedule a time to meet. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Joseph Viking

Enclosure

**APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT  
PERSONAL INFORMATION**

**PRE-EMPLOYMENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

Name (Last Name First)			Social Security #	
Present Address	Apt. #	City	State	Zip
Permanent Address	Apt. #	City	State	Zip
Are you 18 or older? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Home Phone #		Cell Phone #	

**DESIRED EMPLOYMENT**

Position Desired	Date you can start	Salary Desired
Are you employed now? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	In so, may we inquire of your present employer? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Ever applied to this company before? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Where?	When?
Ever worked for this company before? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Where?	When?
Reason for leaving		
Name of last supervisor at this company		
Who referred you to this company? <input type="checkbox"/> Employment Agency <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper Advertisement <input type="checkbox"/> Friend <input type="checkbox"/> Walk-in <input type="checkbox"/> State Employment Office <input type="checkbox"/> College Placement Service <input type="checkbox"/> Other		

**EDUCATION**

School Level	Name and Address of School	# of Years Attended	Date You Graduated	Subjects Studied
Grammar School				
High School				
College				

**GENERAL**

Subjects of Special Study or Research Work
Special Training
Special Skills

**FORMER EMPLOYERS**LIST BELOW LAST THREE EMPLOYERS, STARTING WITH THE **MOST RECENT.**

Name of Present or Last Employer			
Address		City	State    Zip
Starting Date	Leaving Date	Job Title	
Weekly Starting Salary	Weekly Final Salary	May we contact your supervisor? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Name of Supervisor		Title	Phone
Description of Work			
Reason for Leaving			

Name of Present or Last Employer			
Address		City	State    Zip
Starting Date	Leaving Date	Job Title	
Weekly Starting Salary	Weekly Final Salary	May we contact your supervisor? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Name of Supervisor		Title	Phone
Description of Work			
Reason for Leaving			

Name of Present or Last Employer			
Address		City	State    Zip
Starting Date	Leaving Date	Job Title	
Weekly Starting Salary	Weekly Final Salary	May we contact your supervisor? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Name of Supervisor		Title	Phone
Description of Work			
Reason for Leaving			

# Tips for Interviewing



## DRESSING FOR SUCCESS

### Do's for Males

- Dress conservatively — a pair of slacks, button down shirt, tie and sports coat or a suit (when necessary) are preferred. Most times, a shirt and tie are adequate. Dress shoes, not sneakers, are best.
- Wear clean clothes without wrinkles.
- Your appearance should be clean and neat.

### Do's for Females

- Dress conservatively and modestly. A nice dress skirt and blouse or a pair of slacks and a blouse with a blazer are preferred. Closed-toe shoes are best.
- Hemlines should be appropriate – no more than three inches above the knees.
- If you wear pantyhose, neutral colors are preferable: no fishnets, wild colors or patterns.
- Limit the amount of jewelry worn.
- Your appearance should be clean and neat.

### Eight Fashion Faux Pas

1. Wearing wild nail polish or nails with designs. Opt for neutral color if you must have it. Make sure nails are neat and trimmed.
2. Wearing jewelry that jangles or is distracting. No nose rings, tongue rings, lip piercing, or more than one pair of earrings in your ears. Understated is best.
3. Open toed or run-down shoes or sneakers. Borrow or buy a new pair of dress shoes just for interviews.
4. Short or tight skirts. Hemlines should be appropriate – no more than three inches above the knee; skirts should not reveal too much.
5. Leather jackets, pants or skirts for males or females. They are not conservative enough.
6. Turtlenecks. Men should wear a shirt with a collar and a tie. Women should wear a nice blouse.
7. Colorful or printed handbags or briefcases. Leave the Gucci bags at home.
8. Strong cologne or perfume. Many people are allergic. It is best not to wear any so that you do not risk offending your interviewer.

## TOP RULES FOR INTERVIEWING

**Do your research.** Research the school or company you are interviewing with — the more you know the better. Also, take time to familiarize yourself with the company's competition.

**Be prepared.** Bring extra copies of your resume, a pen, and paper. Know your resume!

**Look sharp.** Dress appropriately and professionally.

**Be on time.** Never arrive late or too early to an interview. The rule of thumb is to be 10-15 minutes early. If you are on time, you are late! The day before the interview, you should make sure you have precise directions to the interview location.

**Turn off your cell phone!!!**



## TOP RULES FOR INTERVIEWING, continued

**Give a firm handshake.** A weak handshake could make or break a job offer.

**Show enthusiasm.** Even though you may be nervous, try to be calm and make sure you make direct eye contact with your interviewer. Lean forward to show interest.

**Be confident.** Do not be afraid to make yourself sound great. You are selling yourself to the interviewer!

**Listen.** Make sure you have heard and understood what the interviewer is asking you. If you are unsure, ask him/her to repeat what they said.

**Answer the question asked and give specific examples.** There is nothing worse than being vague. Concentrate on giving examples of your accomplishments. Accomplishments demonstrate your potential.

**Choose your words wisely.** Never talk negatively about previous work experiences. It can give your prospective employer a bad impression of you.

**Ask questions.** Your questions indicate your interest in the job (or college). Employers appreciate your curiosity and interest.

**Be yourself.** Interviewers want to get to know the type of person they are considering hiring for the job and how they are going to act on a day-to-day basis. Pretending to be someone you are not is going to show through to the interviewer quite noticeably! Leave slang, gum, and bad manners at home.

**Express thanks.** At the end of the interview, express thanks and appreciation for the interviewer's time.

**Follow up.** A personal handwritten thank you card, email, or a letter lets the interviewer know that you are interested. If more than one person interviewed you, write to each person.

## DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?

Employers want to hire someone who possesses the following characteristics, abilities, and background:

1. Motivation
2. Maturity
3. Personality
4. Hobbies and interests
5. Attitude
6. Appearance
7. Character
8. Loyalty
9. Reliability
10. Tact
11. Decisiveness
12. Ability to communicate
13. Common sense
14. Willingness to work
15. Perseverance
16. Alertness
17. Ability to look ahead
18. Prior work experience
19. Leadership skills
20. Ability to work as a team member

Be prepared to respond to questions with specific examples that clearly illustrate these characteristics.



# More Tips for Interviewing

## TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

It is often difficult to “sell” yourself and respond to “Tell me something about yourself.” A great way to respond is by using transferable skills. Unlike job-related skills (e.g., used a cash register), these skills can be applied in every occupation. Below is a list of transferable skills. Check off 5-8 words that apply to your school activities, volunteer work, and/or current or previous jobs.

Budget-minded Help people Motivate others Repair Tutor	Coordinate activities Invent Use computers Seek out help Volunteer
Explain Locate information Planner Speak in public Word processing	Creative Delegate Raise money Think ahead Write reports
Calm Eager Goal-oriented Organized Reliable	Competent Flexible Helpful Polite Optimistic
Conscientious Friendly Initiative Punctual Trustworthy	Dependable Kind Orderly Quick-learner Versatile

Here is an example of how you identify a skill and then use it in a statement to answer the question, “Can you tell us a little about yourself?”

**Skill:** Trustworthy

**Statement:** I am a trustworthy individual.

**Example:** I have been baby-sitting for the last four years. Parents are comfortable leaving me for long periods of time with their children. I care, play and cook for their children.

## COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following are sample questions that are typically asked of interviewees. Some questions are designed to get specific details while other questions are designed to get a feel for your personality and character. It is a great idea to decide how you would answer these questions beforehand.

*Tell me about yourself.*

*What are your favorite classes? What are your least favorite classes? Why?*

*What qualifications do you possess to work in this position?*

*Do you enjoy working in a group or independently?*

*What are your goals for the next five years?*

*In what school activities have you participated? Which do you enjoy most?*

*Do you participate in after-school activities? If so, describe them.*

*What motivates you?*

*What are your greatest strengths? What are your biggest challenges?*

*What do you think it takes to be successful in your work?*

*What kind of projects, events, or assignments interest and excite you?*

*Give me an example of a time when you had to apply good judgment in a challenging situation.*

*Tell me about your current (or last) job. What are the reasons you are leaving (or left)?*

*Why do you want to work for \_\_\_\_\_?*

*Why do you think you are a good fit for this position?*

*How has your high school experience prepared you for work?*

*What are the most important rewards you expect in your career/life?*

*How do you work under pressure? Please give me an example of a time when you had to work under pressure and explain how you handled the situation.*

*How do you think a friend or teacher who knows you well would describe you?*

*What would I see if I went to your Facebook page and how might it influence my decision to hire you?*

## **COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**, continued

*What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfactions? Why?*

*If you were interviewing a candidate for a position, what qualities do you believe he or she must have in order to be selected?*

*When you have free time, how do you spend it?*

*What is one thing about yourself that you would most like to change?*

*What are your salary requirements?*

*Give me an example of something you had to learn that was difficult.*

*Do you have any questions for me? (\*Your answer should always be “yes” and followed up with your questions!)*

## **QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK DURING THE INTERVIEW**

At the end of a job interview, the interviewer may ask, “Do you have any questions?” The interviewer will expect you to have intelligent, well-thought-out questions that indicate you have some knowledge of the job for which you are applying. Also, it reveals how well you listened to the interviewer. Do your research and ask appropriate questions. Here are some examples.

*Would you describe the duties I would be performing?*

*What would be the time frame for filling this position?*

*If hired, who will be my supervisor?*

*How would I be trained or introduced to the job?*

*With whom would I be working with and what are their duties?*

*How would my performance be evaluated? Who would evaluate me and when?*

*Can someone in this position be promoted? If so, to what position?*

*Of your most successful employees, what characteristics do they possess that helped them to be successful?*

*What is the customer service philosophy of your company?*

*What is the best part about working here?*



## **INTERVIEWER CHECKLIST**

1. Appearance – overall grooming, dress, posture, and appropriateness
2. Sociability – overall warmth and friendliness
3. Handshake – firm and confident
4. Eye contact – ability to look directly at you during interview
5. Composure – overall confidence in responding to questions
6. Conversation – ability to speak clearly, using proper language, grammar, and tone
7. Responses – the questions were answered honestly, seriously, and completely, ability to “sell” him/herself with appropriate responses
8. Courtesy – ability to show respect and interest
9. Job application – neatly written and complete
10. Resume – clear, concise, positive, typed, technically correct
11. Interviewer comments:

# Sample Thank You Note

Send a handwritten thank you note the same day or the day after the interview. (It is not required to send a thank you note for the mock interviews.) If more than one person interviewed you, each person should receive a thank you note.

Dear Ms. Lee,

Thank you for the opportunity to interview with your company. I enjoyed learning more about your company and appreciate the time you and the members of your team spent with me.

After interviewing with you, I am even more excited about the possibility of using my skill sets and experience to further the vision and mission of your organization.

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact me at 410.555.1212 or [mmasterson@hardworker.net](mailto:mmasterson@hardworker.net).

Sincerely,

Molly Masterson

# Your Personal Life and Employment



## SECURITY CLEARANCE

A security clearance is needed when you apply for a job that entails having access to classified (or private) information. This will be the case if you apply for a position with the Federal government or as an authorized Federal contractor. Security clearances are required for a range of jobs, from upper management to custodial staff. You may never think or plan on working for the Federal government, but fifteen years down the road, you may find yourself applying for such a position. The decisions you make now will definitely impact how you are viewed by employers in the future.

Depending on the level of clearance, the following may be investigated:

**Credit check.** Stay on top of your finances. You will need to have a good credit score in order to pass the clearance. Late payments, having a high income to debt ratio, applying for too many lines of credit, and defaulting on loans all contribute to a low credit score.

**Background check.** Agents will contact employers, coworkers and even neighbors to inquire about you. They will also look into your education, organizations you are a part of or have belonged to, and where you have lived.

**Polygraph.** You may be required to take a polygraph test. An agent will ask you a series of questions in which you have to answer. The agent monitors a machine that indicates whether or not you are telling the truth.

To better your chances of getting a security clearance, do not burn bridges when you leave a company. Be in good standing when you leave your college or places that you live, maintain a good credit score, and most importantly do not get in trouble with the law.

## DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

A simple Internet search of your name will lead you to your internet identity or digital footprint. Through such a search, you will find information about yourself in various formats such as words, pictures, audio, and/or video. It is critical that on a regular basis you are aware of your digital footprint because it very well could impact your future. Not only do family and friends check out your digital footprint, but potential or current employers, colleges, and police look at this as well. To better protect yourself, consider the following:

**Carefully choose what you post online.** Your digital footprint should portray you in a positive light that you create and control. Before posting information, ask yourself, “If my mom were to see this, am I comfortable with her seeing me in this picture?” or “If my manager at work were to read this, am I comfortable with him knowing this information about me?” If your answer is no, then do not post it.

**Postings are permanent and not so private.** Anything you put online can be copied, saved, and shared with others. Also, despite great efforts to set your privacy settings on social networking sites, there are ways to break through these settings. Again, be selective in what you post and check and update your privacy settings frequently.

**Monitor, monitor, monitor.** You may have control over what you put online about yourself, but you do not have control over what others post about you. For this reason, it is important to do frequent online searches of your name. By doing so, you will stay updated on what information has been posted about you.

**Ask for help.** If you find damaging information about yourself online, seek out help. A trusted adult, the web service provider, and/or the social networking site can all assist you in trying to have the hurtful information removed.

Do not risk losing a job (or potential job), getting in trouble with your college, or breaking up a friendship. Take the appropriate steps in protecting yourself—be aware of your digital footprint.



## SOURCES

<http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Cover-Letter>

<http://jobsearch.about.com/cs/coverletters/ht/coverletter.htm>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Security\\_clearance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Security_clearance)

Hansen, K., & Hansen, R. S. (2001). *Dynamic cover letters: How to write the letter that gets you the job* (Revised edition). Berkeley: Ten Speed Press.

Cover letter templates/samples: Microsoft Word 2007 (1996). Entry-level cover letter. McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

Microsoft Word 2007 (1996). New college grad cover letter, cold. McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.



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