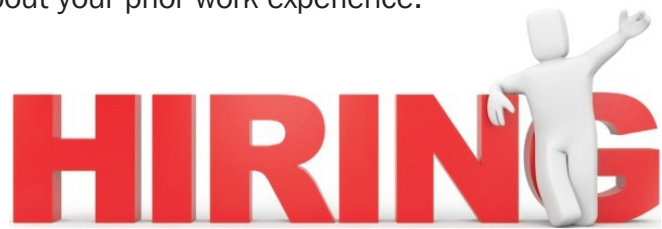


Apply for a Job

SO, SUMMER VACATION is around the corner, and you want to get a job. You will quickly discover that all job applications ask about your prior work experience.

What do you do if you are a student and have not worked before? Do you just leave that area blank and hope for the best, or are there other options?

Actually, as a student with ambition, you have terrific options.



Objectives:



1. Identify personal strengths and weaknesses.
2. Conduct a job search using various media.
3. Complete a job application.

Key Terms:



strengths
weaknesses

Apply for a Job

High school students have many opportunities to get hands-on experience with businesses by working as interns or participating in work-based learning programs. Small businesses, in particular, benefit from these programs because their resources are minimal and they can afford to be more flexible. Interning is a great way to get your foot in the door of a company for which you would like to work someday. A work-based learning program can provide not only post-graduation opportunities but also experience to list on résumés and applications.

PERSONAL STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

The first step in applying for a job is to know yourself, your skills, and your talents. The next step is to identify a good job match in terms of a suitable workplace and position.

Identifying Personal Strengths and Weaknesses

The identification of personal **strengths**, personality traits and skills in which one has confidence and excellence, and **weaknesses**, personality traits and skills in which one does not have confidence or excellence, allows an applicant to analyze the best potential job placement.

You can use any of several methods to identify and assess your strengths and weaknesses. One suggestion is to generate a side-by-side list where you can create a self-analysis of personal strengths and weaknesses. Another is to utilize a program, such as Career Cruising (see Web Links at the end of this unit), that asks a variety of work-based questions and produces results on work strengths and weaknesses. You can also ask your teachers what they have observed about you.

Finding Suitable Workplaces and Positions

Once you have identified your strengths and weaknesses, the next step is to determine which workplace and which position may best fit your profile.

Strong personal and social skills may lead to positions in sales or customer service. Strong mathematical and analytical skills may lead to positions in bookkeeping or banking. Strong hands-on and physical skills may lead to positions involving physical labor, such as landscaping or mechanics.

Keep in mind that industries and positions are different. Banks, for example, are obviously part of the financial industry, but they also require job functions in human relations, sales, marketing, facilities, and security. Hospitals are part of the medical industry, but they also require many of the same job functions as banks. You must find your right combination of workplace, industry, and position and match it to your interests and abilities.

JOB SEARCH USING VARIOUS MEDIA

When conducting a job search, it is vital to scrutinize in all the major places where job openings are listed, such as print media and the Internet, and to take advantage of other job resources, such as informal networking.

Newspapers

Classified advertisements in local and national newspapers list current job openings. These should be



FIGURE 1. Despite the push for Internet job searches, local newspapers are still a viable job source.

reviewed. Your local library and career resource center will usually have a variety of newspapers.

Web Sites

Web sites exist to help in the employment search. There are many to choose from. *Snag a Job* at <http://www.snagajob.com> and *Monster* at <http://www.monster.com> are among the best known.

Word-of-Mouth

Word-of-mouth searches involve acquaintances who may be able to recommend a job opening. Sometimes it helps to create a handbill with your contact information and the type of position for which you are looking. You can then hand out copies and even give some to your parents to hand out. There are many resources in your own neighborhood.

COMPLETE AN APPLICATION

When completing a job application, obtain two copies; read the instructions; be complete; list all applicable experiences; have the application reviewed by a third party; and, finally, keep application notes for future reference.

Two Copies

Obtain or make at least two copies of the application form to allow for entry errors. Use one copy for practice and the other for submission.

Read the Instructions

Read all the application instructions carefully. The application may ask that you use blue ink or black ink or print in all capital letters. Follow the application directions precisely. Generally,



FURTHER EXPLORATION...

ONLINE CONNECTION: Conducting a Job Search

The purpose of this activity is to identify five suitable jobs based on a self-analysis of your strengths and weaknesses and to complete applications for two of them.

Use [CareerOneStop](http://www.careeronestop.org/studentsandcareeradvisors/studentsandcareeradvisors.aspx) at <http://www.careeronestop.org/studentsandcareeradvisors/studentsandcareeradvisors.aspx> to inventory your strengths and weaknesses. Once your profile is complete, browse classified ads in local newspapers or online to identify jobs that interest you and match your qualifications. Find five job openings that best suit your strengths and weaknesses and your ability to travel for work. Complete applications for two positions.

when filling out a job application by hand, using blue or black ink is preferable to using a pencil or marker.

Be Complete

Respond to all the queries on the application form, and leave no blank spaces. If a category does not apply, write “N/A” (not applicable) rather than leaving the space blank.

List All Applicable Experiences

Be creative when listing previous employment experience. Consider listing jobs such as babysitting, newspaper delivery, or volunteer work, as certain skills and strengths (e.g., timeliness, attention to detail, human relations skills) are utilized in these jobs.

Have the Application Reviewed by a Third Party

Have a friend with work experience or a teacher review the application thoroughly. This is important so that any errors or omissions can be caught before you submit the application to a potential employer.

Keep Application Notes

Consider carrying a completed application in your wallet as a reference for future application submissions. Having dates, phone numbers, and other personal data accessible will make applying for the next job easier and keep your information consistent.



Summary:



The first step in applying for a job is to know yourself, your skills, and your talents. The next step is to identify a good job match in terms of a suitable workplace and position. When conducting a job search, it is vital to scrutinize in all the major places where job openings are listed, such as print media and the Internet, and to take advantage of other job resources, such as informal networking.

When completing a job application, obtain two copies; read the instructions; be complete; list all applicable experiences; have the application reviewed by a third party; and, finally, keep application notes for future reference.

FIGURE 2. Job applications are sometimes complicated but become easier to complete with practice.

Checking Your Knowledge:



1. Why is it important to identify personal strengths and weaknesses before applying for a job?
2. List three specific guidelines for completing a job application.
3. If one of your strengths is interpersonal skills, name one industry and one job position for which you would be a good fit.
4. How can you use word-of-mouth to help you find a job?
5. What are some ways to gain work experience while you are a student?

Expanding Your Knowledge:



Visit your local career resource center, and ask about the work-based learning programs or intern/job shadowing opportunities. These programs or opportunities are fun ways to gain work experience and are great tools for confirming your career interests.

Web Links:



Career Cruising

<http://www.careercruising.com>

Hourly, Part-Time, and Summer Employment

<http://www.snagajob.com>

All About Work

<http://www.nhlink.net/employe/>

Employment Applications

<http://jobsearch.about.com/od/jobapplicationforms/a/employmentapplication.htm>