

Interview T.I.P.S.

Training to Improve Presentation Skills

Student Handbook

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Introduction

This lesson will give students an opportunity to discuss and apply guidelines to help them become proficient at filling out job application forms.

When you apply for a job, you are usually required to fill out a job application form. Most employers review your application before they choose to see you. The application form assists employers to form an important first impression of you.

Objectives

- Students will be able gather information for a job application.
- Students will be able to prepare a job application.

Learning Exercise

Complete the following sentence in any way you like:

“I believe filling out job applications is...”

Section 1:

THE APPLICATION

“To learn, you have to listen. To improve you have to try.”

-Anonymous

Learning Exercise

Did you know?....

That these questions are or are not legal to ask on a job application?

Legal

1. Are you a U.S. citizen?
2. How many days of work have you missed in the last year?
3. Describe any extracurricular activities you participated in during high school/college.

Illegal

1. What is your father's name?
2. Are you single, married, engaged separated, or divorced?
3. What is your spouse's name?
4. Have you ever received worker's compensation?
4. Is your general health excellent, good, fair or poor?
5. Do you plan future education?
6. How long have you lived at your current address?

You will receive related instruction for this information in the subsequent lesson entitled "Job Interview."

Note: If a question on a job application is not applicable to you, put N/A in the blank. Never leave a blank space on a job application.

Personal Information

Every application will ask for personal information. This is the area where you tell them who you are and how to contact you.

- Full name
 - Use your complete name
 - No nicknames
- Address
 - Give your complete address
 - If you do not have a permanent address or phone number, get permission to use the address of an acquaintance that is reliable and readily available. Be sure to ask permission before listing another person's information on your application.
- Phone numbers
 - Use your permanent home phone number.
 - List your cell phone if requested.
 - List a phone number that has voice mail.
- E-mail address
 - List the email address if requested.
 - Only list an email address if the address is checked regularly. If you do not check email regularly, mark N/A in the space for email address.

Position Desired

This is the area where you list the title of the job for which you are applying. If you do not know the job title, put the category or type in this area.

In addition, list part-time or full-time, and the date you can start.

Education and Training

This part of the application requests information on education and training. Have available the names and addresses of the schools you have attended and the dates you attended.

- High School or GED
- College or University
- Career/Technical or Vocational School
- Military

Job-Related Skills

This is the area used to list special skills that you have that related to the specific job.

Consider:

- Types of equipment/tools you use
- Computer skills and certifications (if any)
- Certifications, Licenses (CDL, etc.)
- Special training
- Other languages you speak

Learning Exercise

What are five skills you possess?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Students do not have to complete all the blanks. The point is to think about your strengths and skills. (Consider things you do everyday. Manage children, manage money, manage time, problem solving, etc.)

Employment History

Every job application will ask for previous employment history. If you have never worked, put “N/A” in the blank. You can explain things to the employer during the interview, but not on the application.

If you have worked, always begin with the most recent job. Applications may ask for information on the following:

- Employer’s name, address, and phone number (Be sure to have this information with you in the event that applications are filled out on site.)
- Supervisor’s name
- Job title
- Salary
- Reason for leaving (acceptable terms)
 - Promotion
 - Restructuring
 - Reduction in Force
 - Resignation
 - Return to school
 - Contract completed
 - Career change
 - Rearing a family
 - Temporary/Seasonal work
 - Company closed

(Never use the word “quit” on a job application. This word has a negative connotation in business that may hurt your chances for new employment. It may infer lack of commitment or dependability to an employer.)

References

References are people that the employer can contact to verify information about you. Choose references carefully. They should be people who can give good recommendations for employment. Never use relatives as references.

Always ask their permission before using them in your job search and be as specific as possible about what areas you are asking them to reference.

People who may be used as references are:

- ❑ Friends
- ❑ Neighbors
- ❑ Teachers
- ❑ Community contacts
- ❑ Professional contacts

Be sure to verify the current contact information. Have several references to choose from so one person is not always called.

Give your references a copy of your resume to help them answer questions.

Section 2:
APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Procedure for Practice Applications

The following are suggestions to make the job application process easier. Try to avoid filling out applications onsite. If possible, always take the application home to fill out.

- Look professional every time you go to an employer's office, even if it is just to pick up an application.
- Ask for a copy of the job description.
- Ask for an application to take with you.
- Make a copy of the application.
- Read the directions and application thoroughly before starting to write.
- Fill out a practice copy of the job application before completing the original.
- Make changes as necessary.
- Print the application in blue or black ink.
- Have someone proofread the application.

If you have any questions with the above steps, you should call the Human Resource office or a related department at the company or business.

Completed Job Applications

When you are comfortable with the information on the practice application, you are ready to complete the original. Follow these guidelines:

- Applications make a better impression when typed.
- If not typed, blue or black ink (No Pencil).
- "X" boxes from corner to corner, do not go out of the box and do not fill in the box.
- Make sure all boxes are complete.
- Have someone proofread the application.
- Before turning the application in, make a copy for your files.

Checklist

Always tell the truth on an application. It is a legal document. Applications should parallel the resume. Take a copy of your resume as you seek employment so all information is available should you need to fill out an application on site.

APPEARANCE

- Typed if possible, otherwise printed neatly.
- Do not:
 - Use correction fluid on mistakes.
 - Use pencil.
 - Do not scribble through mistakes.
 - Do not leave blank spaces.

WRITING STYLE

- Begin sentences or phrases with powerful action verbs.
- Use short paragraphs (under five lines) and short sentences.
- Be brief and concise (not wordy)
- Make sure the application is absolutely free from grammatical, spelling, punctuation, and typographical errors

CONTENT

Contact Information

- Contains name
- Contains address
- Contains telephone numbers and email address (if checked regularly)

Position Desired

- Indicates the sort of position, title, and area of specialization sought
- Is specific

Education and Training

- List highest level first.
- List training courses relevant to desired position.
- List addresses of institutions attended.
- List dates attended.
- Give graduation date.

Special Skills

- Include all paid and volunteer experiences that are relevant to desired position
- Include equipment and tools with which you are proficient and which are relevant to the desired position.
- List licenses and certifications earned.
- List accomplishments.

Employment History

- List most recent job first
- List supervisor information with name, address, phone number.
- List job title
- Give salary
- Give reason for leaving

References

- Names, addresses, and phone numbers
- No relatives

Signature and Date

- Legible signature
- Current Date

Section 3:
SAMPLE APPLICATIONS

SAMPLE EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION FORM #1

It is our policy to comply with all applicable state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination in employment on race, age, color, sex, religion, national origin or other protected classification.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____
Last First Middle

Address: _____
Street City State Zip Code

Telephone: _____

Are you over 18 years old? Yes No

Are you a U.S. citizen or otherwise authorized to work in the U.S. on an unrestricted basis?
 Yes No

How did you learn of this opening?

Have you ever worked here before? Yes No

Are there any hours, shifts or days you cannot or will not work?

Shift preferred: Part-time _____ Full-time _____

Are you willing to work overtime as required? Yes No

Have you ever been convicted of a felony? Yes No
(Conviction will not necessarily disqualify an applicant foremployment.) If yes, describe conditions: _____

SAMPLE EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION FORM #2

**Print all information requested except signature.
 APPLICANTS MAY BE TESTED FOR ILLEGAL DRUGS
 Complete all sections of this application.**

Date _____

Name

Last First Middle Maiden

How Long? _____ Social Security No. _____

Telephone _____

If under 18, list age _____
 (Be specific)

Position applied for (1) _____

Position applied for (2) _____

Day/hours available to work
 No pref _____ Thur _____
 Mon _____ Fri _____
 Tue _____ Sat _____
 Wed _____ Sun _____

How many hours can you work weekly? _____ Can you work nights? _____

Employment desired: ___ Full-Time Only ___ Part-Time Only ___ Full- or Part-Time

Date available for work? _____

Type of School	Name of School	Location (Complete mailing address)	# years completed	Major & Degree
High School				
College				
Technical School				
Professional School				

Have you ever been convicted of a crime? ___ No ___ Yes

If yes, explain number of conviction(s), nature of offense(s) leading to conviction(s), how recently such offense(s) was/were committed, sentence(s) imposed, and type(s) of rehabilitation. _____

EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION FORM

DO YOU HAVE A DRIVER'S LICENSE? ___ Yes ___ No							
What is your means of transportation to work? _____							
Driver's License No. _____ State of Issue _____							
___ Operator ___ Commercial (CDL) ___ Chauffeur					Expiration date _____		
Have you had any accidents in the past three years?					Yes/No	How Many? _____	
Have you had any moving violations in the past three years?					Yes/No	How Many? _____	
Office Use Only							
Typing	Yes No	___ WPM	10-key	Yes No	Word Processing	Yes No	___ WPM
			Other Skills:				
Personal computer	Yes No	___ PC ___ MAC	_____				
Please list two references other than relatives or previous employers.							
Name:				Name:			
Position:				Position:			
Company:				Company:			
Address:				Address:			
Telephone ()				Telephone ()			
<p>An application form sometimes makes it difficult for an individual to adequately summarize a complete background. Use the space below to summarize any additional information necessary to describe your full qualifications for the specific position for which you are applying.</p>							

EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION FORM

MILITARY

Have you ever been in the armed forces? ___ Yes ___ No

Are you a member of the national guard? ___ Yes ___ No

Specialty: _____

Date Entered: _____

Discharge Date: _____

WORK EXPERIENCE

Please list your work experience for the **past five years** beginning with your most recent job held. If you were self-employed, give firm name. **Attach additional sheets if necessary.**

Name of employer: _____

Address: _____

City, ST, Zip Code: _____

Phone No: _____

Name of Last
Supervisor

Employment
Dates

Pay or
Salary

Job Title:

Reason for leaving (be specific):

List the jobs you held, duties performed, skills used or learned, advancements or promotions while you worked at this company.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Please list your work experience for the **past five years** beginning with your most recent job held. If you were self-employed, give firm name. **Attach additional sheets if necessary.**

Name of employer: _____

Address: _____

City, ST, Zip Code: _____

Phone No: _____

Name of Last
Supervisor

Employment
Dates

Pay or
Salary

Job Title:

Reason for leaving (be specific):

List the jobs you held, duties performed, skills used or learned, advancements or promotions while you worked at this company.

EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION FORM

WORK EXPERIENCE			
Please list your work experience for the past five years beginning with your most recent job held. If you were self-employed, give firm name. Attach additional sheets if necessary.			
Name of employer: _____ Address: _____ City, ST, Zip Code: _____ Phone No: _____	Name of Last Supervisor	Employment Dates	Pay or Salary
		Job Title:	
Reason for leaving (be specific):			
List the jobs you held, duties performed, skills used or learned, advancements or promotions while you worked at this company.			

WORK EXPERIENCE			
Please list your work experience for the past five years beginning with your most recent job held. If you were self-employed, give firm name. Attach additional sheets if necessary.			
Name of employer: _____ Address: _____ City, ST, Zip Code: _____ Phone No: _____	Name of Last Supervisor	Employment Dates	Pay or Salary
		Job Title:	
Reason for leaving (be specific):			
List the jobs you held, duties performed, skills used or learned, advancements or promotions while you worked at this company.			

May we contact your present employer? Yes No

Did you complete this application yourself? Yes No

If not, who did? _____

Signature _____ **Date** _____

THE SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEW

Introduction

Your hard work has paid off; you have gotten the call to set up an interview. What do you do next?

One key to success is to develop effective interviewing skills. Selective presentation of your background, thoughtful answers to interview questions, well-researched questions about the organization, and appropriate thank you letters contribute to successful interviews.

There is no magic to interviewing. Interviewing is a skill that is learned and improved with practice. The job interview is a strategic conversation with the purpose of helping you to land the job you want. You can strongly influence the outcome of the interview by realizing that the interview is not an objective process in which the employer offers the job to the best candidate based on merit alone. An interview is a highly subjective encounter in which the interviewer offers the job to the qualified person who is the most likeable and who does the best job in the interview.

Personality, confidence, enthusiasm, a positive outlook, and excellent interpersonal and communication skills count heavily in the success of a job interview.

Your job interview begins as soon as you walk in the door of the interviewer's office.

This lesson will give students an opportunity to learn and practice effective interviewing techniques.

Objectives

- Students will understand the parts of an interview.
- Students will be able to identify positive and negative components of interviews.
- Students will participate in mock interviews.
- Students will be able to write a follow-up letter.

Section 1:
STEPS IN AN INTERVIEW

Opening exercise

Complete the sentence below:

“The best or worst thing about interviews is...”

Interview Steps

Most interviews follow similar formats. Interviews are broken down into the following categories:

- Preparation
- Presentation
- Follow-up

Preparation

Preparation is a very important step in the interview process and happens before the interview takes place. The more preparation you do, the more comfortable and confident you will be in the interview.

Prepare for an interview by doing the following:

- Learn about the company.
- Review your resume and think about how your experiences support the job requirements.
- Double-check time and location. Drive to the location ahead of time to familiarize yourself with the route and drive time.
- Prepare what you want to say. Think about your strengths and weaknesses and your long-range goals.
- Rehearse with mock interviews.
- Try on and prepare appropriate clothing.

Comments:

Section 2:

THE IMPORTANCE OF FIRST IMPRESSIONS

What the interviewer looks for...

The interview begins as soon as you walk into the room. You must be aware of what interviewers are looking for to increase your chance of an effective interview.

Interviewers are looking for:

- General personality
 - Poised, sincere, trustworthy
 - Articulate, analytical, ambitious, initiative, and genuinely interested in the company.
- Personal appearance
 - Neat, conservative
 - Demonstrates professionalism.
- Work experience
 - Ability to talk about the importance of specific job skills formerly learned or used in terms of the new job.
 - If there is no former work experience, discuss skills developed through training, etc.
- Verbal communication skills
 - Verbalize thoughts clearly.
 - Listen effectively.
 - Be confident.
- Work skills
 - The interviewer will evaluate your skills for the job, i.e. organization, analysis, and research.
 - Emphasize the skills you feel the employer is seeking and give specific examples of how those skills were developed.
- Goals/Motivation
 - Employers will assess your ability to express your short- and long-term goals in terms of ambitious, yet realistic.
 - Demonstrate a sincere interest in the functional area or industry and express a desire to work hard and succeed.

- Knowledge of company and/or industry
 - Research the company to be aware of its products and purpose. Do not waste interviewing time asking questions that could have found in printed material/research.
 - Ask specific questions or be able to discuss how the job relates to company goals and objectives.

Appearance

The first few moments of your interview are extremely important. The interviewer will begin assessing you the moment you walk into the interview session. The following list can help you make a good first impression.

- Clothes
 - Clean
 - Conservative
 - Pressed
 - Well fitted
- Hair
 - Clean
 - Conservatively styled
- Nails
 - Clean
 - Trimmed
 - Clear polish, if any
- Jewelry
 - Conservative
 - Not flashy
- No Cologne/Perfume
- Make-up
 - Light
 - Natural

Body Language

Non-verbal communication is a very important factor in the success of a job interview. Some positive traits communicated through body language are:

- Openness
 - Open hands and arms
 - Relaxed but good posture
- Confidence
 - “Steeple” hands
 - Eye contact
- Cooperation
 - Head tilted
 - Sitting on chair edge

Some negative traits communicated through body language are:

- Defensiveness
 - Crossed arms/legs
 - Pointing fingers
 - Clenched fists
- Suspicion
 - Sideways glance
 - Rubbing nose
- Nervousness
 - Throat clearing
 - Fidgeting
- Frustration
 - Short breaths
 - Running hand through hair
- Insecurity
 - Chewed pen
 - Fingernail biting
 - Hands in pockets
 - Slouched posture

Why didn't they hire me?

Remember that an interview is subjective. The interviewer is observing your behavior, your communication style, and much more.

Following is a list of reasons why people were NOT hired:

- Lack of enthusiasm
- Sloppy, unprofessional appearance
- Knows-it-all attitude
- Discourteous
- Limp handshake
- Late to interview
- Criticize previous employer
- Nervous and unprepared
- Inability to express ideas clearly
- Focused on money
- Lack of eye contact
- Asks no questions about the job

Points to Remember

7. Be natural
8. Be confident, not cocky
9. Do not exaggerate your experience
10. Be attentive
11. Do not lounge
12. Do not be a joker or make wisecracks
13. Do not dominate the conversation
14. Make sure you understand questions

Section 3:
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Common Questions

Each interview is different but there are common questions that you should be prepared to answer. If you practice answering these questions, you will appear more confident. Practice your responses but do not memorize answers.

Learning Activity

Complete the following questions with a well thought out response. Use the back of the page if more space is necessary.

- Tell me about yourself.

- What are your greatest strengths?

- Why do you want to work here?

- What does teamwork mean to you?

- What is your greatest weakness?

- ❑ Why are you the best candidate?

- ❑ How do you handle problems with people?

- ❑ What are you looking for in a job?

- ❑ What salary are you looking for?

Illegal Questions

Most interviewers know to avoid the following types of questions. You are not required to answer questions about:

- Sex, race, religion or ethnic background.
- Age, unless there are legal restrictions about age related to the job.
- Marital status, children, or other family members.
- A non-work related disability.
- Any arrest record.
- Any details of a military discharge.

Questions to ask the interviewer

There is an opportunity in most interviews for the job seeker to ask questions. You should always have a few questions prepared to ask the interviewer. **DO NOT ASK ABOUT SALARY AND BENEFITS IN A FIRST INTERVIEW UNLESS THE EMPLOYER BRINGS UP THE TOPIC.**

Some suggested questions are:

- ❑ What is the greatest challenge of this position?
- ❑ Where does this job fit in within the organization's activities?
- ❑ What is a typical day like for this position?
- ❑ Are there opportunities for advancement and self-improvement?
- ❑ Why is this position open?
- ❑ When do you expect to make a hiring decision?

Section 4:
MOCK INTERVIEWS

Ground Rules

- Give the person your attention.
- Look for strengths
- Look for opportunities for improvement
- Maintain respect for all individuals
- Be courteous and professional

Observer Checklist

Review the following items and make notes on what you observed during the interview. Check the appropriate box and make notes for discussion purposes

1. Appearance <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor Comments: _____ _____ _____	4. Asks Questions <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor Comments: _____ _____ _____
2. Body Language <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor Comments: _____ _____ _____	5. Best Thing Observed: Comments: _____ _____ _____
3. Answers Questions <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor Comments: _____ _____ _____	6. Needs Work: Comments: _____ _____ _____

Dos and Don'ts

Review this list of dos and don'ts to help avoid common problems during job interviews.

DO

- Use proper language skills.
- Have a good, firm handshake.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Display good posture.
- Listen carefully to questions.
- Organize your thoughts beforehand. (Job seekers should use a few seconds to formulate answers to interview questions.)
- Be honest.
- Speak freely and naturally.
- Be enthusiastic.
- Prepare questions to ask.
- Have excellent personal hygiene and grooming.

DON'T

15. Use poor language skills or jargon.
16. Have a limp, "cold-fish" handshake.
17. Dominate the conversation.
18. Criticize or otherwise diminish your previous employer.
19. Interrupt the interviewer.
20. Be late.
21. Chew gum.
22. Smoke or use other tobacco products.

Section 5:
FOLLOW UP LETTERS

Tips For Follow Up Letter

Follow up letters are effective for the following.

- Accepting an invitation to an interview.
- Asking if a position for which you interviewed or submitted a job application is still open.
- Asking interviewers for feedback explaining the reasons you were not selected for a job.
- Offering additional information not included on a resume.
- Staying in touch and reaffirming your interest in the company or job.
- Staying in touch with a company and reaffirming employment interest after a “lay-off.”
- Thanking an employer for a job opportunity after you have accepted it.
- Thanking an employer for a job opportunity even after you have declined it.

After the interview, you should prepare a follow up letter to the interviewer. The purpose of the follow-up letter is to thank the person or persons who interviewed you and reaffirm your interest in employment with the company.

Your letter should be short and friendly, printed on high-quality paper, and mailed within 24 hours after the interview.

Section 6:
APPENDIX

Sample Follow-up Letter: Thank You for Interview

[Your Name]+

[Street Address]

[City, ST, Zip Code]

[Date]

[Recipient Name]

[Title]

[Company Name]

[Street Address]

[City, ST, Zip Code]

Dear [Recipient's Name]:

Thank you for the interview today. I appreciate your consideration of my qualifications and application for the job of logistics technician with your company. As my resume and application show, I am qualified for the job because of my training and previous experience. To work for your company would enhance my long-term goals and my employment would add to your cadre of loyal, dedicated employees.

I will check with you next Monday to see if you have made a decision about the position. Please contact me if you have any other questions.

Sincerely,

[Legible Handwritten Signature Here]

[Your Name Typed Here]

