

Career
Life
Work

Getting the Job

Workbook

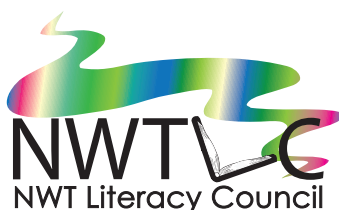
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There are 10 manuals and workbooks in the *Career – Life – Work* series. You will find a list of them on the last page of this workbook. You can find the whole series online at www.nwt.literacy.ca under the adult resources section. If you would like print copies, please contact the NWT Literacy Council.



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About this Workbook

The search for a job begins when you complete your education or when you need a job. This workbook is about getting the job you want. It covers transferable skills, résumés, cover letters, job applications and interviews.

It is important to follow the workbook step-by-step. For example, you will need to evaluate your skills and abilities before you write your résumé. You can work through this workbook on your own, with a friend or as part of your class.

There are numerous writing activities, opportunities for discussion and good outlines for you to follow.

My Personal Inventory

A personal inventory is a useful way to keep track of the information you'll need to fill out job applications or write résumés. It will also come in handy when it's time to evaluate your career choices and other options.

Your Turn!

Answer the following to help you take stock of your personal likes and strengths.

I am:

How would you describe yourself? For example: helpful, strong, dependable, friendly, happy, etc.

I like:

What do you enjoy? For example: being with people, being outdoors, sewing, fixing things, etc.

Things I do well:

Review your experiences. What activities do you do well? For example: work well on a team, fix things around the house, serve customers courteously, work independently, good with tools and building, etc.

My education and training

List each program or course you've completed, including where and when. What did you learn?

My volunteering experience:

List each experience. What did you do? Who did you meet? What did you learn?

My work experience:

Make a list of your paid positions. What did you like about each job? What did you learn?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Top Five Skills Employers Want¹

What skills should you emphasize in your résumé? What buzzwords catch an employer's attention? You know the skills you have to offer, but what are the buzz words? According to a study by The Conference Board of Canada, reading, writing and arithmetic are no longer enough for a perfect job candidate. Based on the study, the main skills employers want are:

1. **Reliability**—Will you go to work on time? Will you be at work every day? Will you call in to work if you are sick?
2. **Problem-solving skills** – Problems arise every day at work. Can you cope? Can you make the right decision? Employers need the assurance that you can deal with job challenges.
3. **Organizational skills** – Life in the working world requires being able to sort through information and keep files and information neat and tidy.
4. **Leadership skills** – Leadership consists of a strong sense of self-confidence and the ability to take initiative. Can you take an active role in a team building project? Can you speak up about your ideas?
5. **Working with others skills** – Are you a good team player? Do you get along with people? Do you offer ideas and input into projects?

¹ http://www.ceswoodstock.org/job_search/résumébuzzwords.shtml

Do You Have These Skills?

Your Turn!

Reliability	Yes or No
Problem Solving Skills	Yes or No
Organizational Skills	Yes or No
Leadership Skills	Yes or No
Working with Others Skills	Yes or No

How can you demonstrate these skills, if you have them?

Reliability

Problem Solving

Organizational

Leadership

Working with Others

Types of Résumés²

There are three basic types of résumés: chronological, functional, and a combination of the two. The following information explains what each type of résumé is and when to choose one type over another. All three types have the same information but in a different format and layout.

Remember to make sure you have an example for each skill that you say you have in your résumé. For example a potential employer might ask you to tell them more about your “effective organizational skills.”

Chronological Résumé

The chronological résumé is probably the most well-known. It usually goes like this:

- Objective
- Education and Training
- Experience
- Volunteer Experience
- Skills and Abilities

Functional Résumé

A functional résumé lists your skills and abilities first. This type of résumé is good to use if you have been unemployed for a period of time or are changing careers. It is important to show prospective employers what you can offer them. A functional résumé does just that. There are many ways to organize a functional résumé.

² http://careerplanning.about.com/od/résuméwriting/a/résumé_writing.htm

Here is one suggestion:

- Objective
- Skills and Abilities
- Experience
- Volunteer Experience
- Education and Training

Combination Résumé

A combination résumé is exactly what it sounds like—it combines a functional résumé with a chronological one. A combination résumé is good for people who have a good work history but would like to highlight their skills because they are applying for a different kind of job.

Here is one way to organize a combination résumé.

- Objective
- Education and Training
- Skills and Abilities
- Experience
- Volunteer Experience

Transferable Skills for Your Résumé³

Write down all the activities you have been involved in over the past five years. Include paid work, volunteer work, school, cultural and sporting activities, etc. From this list, identify the skills that you have developed through participating in these various activities.

Your Turn!

Activity/Work	Skill
Building a cabin for our family	Organizational skills Planning skills Working together skills Carpentry skills

³ www.une.edu.au/careers

Transferable Skills

You probably came up with a lot of transferable skills! Now you will need to demonstrate how you have that skill.

Your Turn!

You will end up with quite an extensive list of transferable skills. Choose your top seven skills and describe how you have this skill. This will be your master list of skills that you can use in your résumé. Each time you prepare your résumé to submit to a potential employer, you will need to select 5-7 of the most relevant skills and include them in your résumé. This **Skills and Abilities** section in your résumé is really the core of the document.

Skill	Details
Excellent organizational skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Organized a family fun night at my daughter's school that was very successfulVery neat and tidy at work and at homeAble to organize information on the computer so that it is easy to access documents

The Chronological Résumé

Jane Doe

111 Franklin Avenue, Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P9

Phone: 873-1212 Cell: 444-4444 janedoe@gmail.com

Objective

To obtain a job as an administrative assistant in a non-profit organization.

Education and Training

- Academy of Learning: Microsoft Office 2011-2012
- Administrative Assistant Program, Aurora College 2010-2011
- Completed Grade 10 2007-2008

Experience

Administrative Assistant 2008-2009

Band Office, Fort Providence

- Duties included: answering the phone, photocopying, taking notes, managing the database, writing letters, organizing large scale mail outs and assisting the executive director

On-call Administrative Assistant 2007-2008

Friendship Centre, Fort Providence

- Duties included: answering the phone, writing letters, greeting the public, maintaining confidential records, opening and distributing mail to others in the office, photocopying and organizing mail outs

Part-time Cashier 2005-2008

Northern, Fort Providence

- Duties included: working at the cash register, being friendly to customers, cashing out at the end of the day, memorizing bar codes and working with others

Volunteer Experience

- Senior's Centre (spending time with Elders) 2010-present
- School (reading to children) 2008-2010

Skills and Abilities

Communication skills:

- Able to communicate effectively with staff and clients/customers
- Excellent telephone etiquette
- Understand that customer service is the most important skill when working with the public

Writing Skills

- Able to take minutes accurately
- Able to write letters, reports and other documents
- Able to prepare agendas for meetings

Interpersonal Skills

- Work well with others
- Take directions well from co-workers and management
- Honest, reliable and trustworthy
- Friendly with the public

Organizational Skills

- Coordinate travel and per diems
- Plan and coordinate large mail outs
- Maintain records accurately on the computer and paper files

The Functional Résumé

John Smith

222 Franklin Avenue, Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P9

Phone: 873-5555 Cell: 446-3333 johnsmith@gmail.com

Objective

To obtain a position as a carpentry helper.

Skills and Abilities

Summary:

- Hardworking and reliable
- Work safely
- 5 years experience in building

Building Skills

- Experience in drywall, painting, roofing, laying hardwood floors, and siding
- Experience building houses and cabins
- Pay attention to detail
- Solve problems as they arise

Interpersonal Skills

- Work well with others
- Take direction well from co-workers and management
- Honest, reliable and trustworthy

Math Skills

- Completed 140 math (equivalent to Grade 10 math)
- Can measure accurately

Organizational Skills

- Keep tools clean and organized
- Keep a clean site
- Able to plan out what needs to be done next
- Punctual

Experience

Builder Helper 2011-2012

Larry's Construction

- Duties included: working with a crew to build houses, drywall, roofing, siding, flooring, decks, etc.

Built a Cabin 2009-2010

- Duties included: putting in a foundation, putting up the cabin, doing the roof and siding

Air Cargo Handler 2007-2009

Northern Airlines

- Duties included: handling cargo, tagging luggage, putting luggage on planes

Volunteer Experience

- Help friends and family with building projects ongoing
- Help put up tents and tent frames for community hunts ongoing

Education and Training

- Completed Small Engine Repair Course 2009
- Completed Builder Helper's Program from Aurora College 2008
- Completed Grade 10 2006

The Combination Résumé

Jane Doe

111 Franklin Avenue, Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P9

Phone: 873-1212 Cell: 444-4444 janedoe@gmail.com

Objective

To obtain a job as an administrative assistant in a non-profit organization.

Education and Training

- Academy of Learning: Microsoft Office 2011-2012
- Administrative Assistant program, Aurora College 2010-2011
- Completed Grade 10 2007-2008

Skills and Abilities

Summary

- Hardworking, reliable, and professional
- A team player
- Fluent in South Slavey

Communication skills:

- Able to communicate effectively with staff and clients/customers
- Excellent telephone etiquette
- Understand that customer service is the most important skill when working with the public

Writing Skills

- Able to take minutes accurately
- Able to write letters, reports and other documents
- Able to prepare agendas for meetings

Interpersonal Skills

- Work well with others
- Take directions well from co-workers and management

- Honest, reliable and trustworthy
- Friendly with the public

Organizational Skills

- Maintain records accurately on the computer and paper files
- Coordinate travel and per diems
- Plan and coordinate large mail outs
- Maintain and add to database

Experience

Administrative Assistant 2008-2009

Band Office, Fort Providence

- Duties included : answering the phone, photocopying, taking notes, managing the database, writing letters, organizing large scale mail outs and assisting the executive director

On-call Administrative Assistant 2007-2008

Friendship Centre, Fort Providence

- Duties included: answering the phone, writing letters, greeting the public, maintaining confidential records, opening and distributing mail to others in the office, photocopying and organizing mail outs

Part-time Cashier 2005-2008

Northern, Fort Providence

- Duties included: working at the cash register, being friendly to customers, cashing out at the end of the day, memorizing bar codes and working with others

Volunteer Experience

- Senior's Centre (spending time with Elders) 2010-present
- School (reading to children) 2008-2010

Write a Résumé!

Your Turn!

Find a job that you would like to apply for in the newspaper or online. Fill in the blanks below and then use this information to write a résumé on the computer.

Name: _____

Contact Information:

Objective

Education and Training

Experience

Volunteer Experience

Abilities and Skills

Summary

Other Skills

1.

2.

3.

4.

Writing a Cover Letter⁴

A **cover letter** provides a potential employer with a first impression of you. Many employers receive lots of résumés and applications so your cover letter needs to stand out in the pile. A cover letter should be attached to all résumés.

There are two types of cover letters:

- One is written in response to an advertised position.
- The other is a **canvassing** letter, written to a company/employer where there is no advertised position.

Tips for writing cover letters:

- Tailor your cover letter for each job you apply for.
- Type your letter.
- Be clear, concise and specific.
- Write only one page.
- Edit carefully; grammar, punctuation and spelling must be perfect.
- End your letter by asking for an interview.
- Find out whom to send your letter to. Make sure you address the letter to the correct person.
- End your letter with “Sincerely”.
- Keep a copy of every letter you write. You will need to re-read it before you go for an interview.

⁴ www.une.edu.au/careers

Format for Your Cover Letter

Date

Your Address & Contact Information

Name of Contact

Position Title

Address

Date

Dear: Name

Paragraph 1:

If replying to an advertisement, state the position you are applying for and position number and where you found out about it. If cold canvassing, state the reason for writing and describe the type of work you are seeking. State why you are interested in working for the organization.

Paragraph 2:

Tell the reader about your school and work background.

Paragraph 3:

Convince the employer that you are a good candidate for the job. Talk about your skills in relation to the job you are seeking. Match the skills needed for the job with your transferable skills.

Closing Paragraph:

Ask for action. State when you are available for interview and how you can be contacted.

Yours sincerely,

Signature – leave enough space here so that your signature will fit.

Typed name

Enclosures: (e.g. résumé)

just
another
example

Sample Cover Letter

May 10th, 2012

John Smith

222 Franklin Avenue, Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P9

Phone: 867-873-5555 Cell: 867-446-3333

johnsmith@gmail.com

Mr. Jones

Northstar Building Company

Box XXXX, Yellowknife, NT X1A 3R9

Dear Mr. Jones:

I would like to apply for the position of Carpenter Helper posted on the website *Jobs North* on May 5th, 2012.

I completed the Carpentry Helper course offered through Aurora College in 2009. This program ran for eight weeks and taught me the basic skills needed for carpentry. It was a great way to refresh my skills and learn new ones. The course also taught me the importance of being safe.

I have experience working for a builder for one summer. I worked with a crew to build houses. We did a variety of tasks like drywall, flooring, siding, roofing and framing. I enjoyed working with a crew and was always punctual.

I would be happy to meet with you to discuss my qualifications for this job. I am available for an interview anytime. You can contact me at the above numbers.

Sincerely,

John Smith

John Smith

Enclosures: résumé

Writing Your Cover Letter

Your Turn!

Write a cover letter for the job you chose to write your résumé for. Follow the outline below. Write a final copy on the computer.

Date: _____

Your Name and Address

Name of Contact and Address

Dear Name: _____

Paragraph 1: (State the position you are applying for and position number and where you found out about it.)

Paragraph 2: (Tell the reader about your school and work background.)

Paragraph 3: (Convince the employer that you are a good candidate for the job. Talk about your skills in relation to the job you are seeking.)

Closing Paragraph: (Ask for action. State when you are available for interview and how you can be contacted.)

Sincerely,

Enclosures: résumé

Job Applications

Often businesses have a job application that they would like you to fill out.

Your Turn!

Fill in the job application below for a local grocery and gas store.

Name: _____

Phone: _____ Cell: _____

Address: _____ Email: _____

Position you are applying for: (circle one)

Cashier Gas Attendant Head Cashier Janitor Night Clerk

Availability

Please be honest with your answers, so we set a schedule that works for both you and us.

What days and hours from Monday - Sunday are you available for work?

How many hours per week can you work?

Please Answer the Following Questions

Why are you applying to work here? _____

What skills do you have for this job?

Why do customers shop at this store?

What does customer service mean to you?

A customer complains that the coffee tastes terrible. What would you do?

What would you do if your replacement doesn't show up when it's time to go home?

A customer leaves without paying for their gas. What would you do?

A co-worker is rude to customers, what would you do?

Math Questions

The customer's purchase totals \$13.93. They give you a ten dollar bill and a five dollar bill. How much change do you give them?

If one bottle of soda costs .99, how much do three cost?

Each pot of coffee holds 6 cups. We usually sell 10 cups of coffee every fifteen minutes. How many pots of coffee will you need to make at one time?

Career Life Work

Work Experience: Please list the jobs that you have had in the past five years. Please give one reference for each job.

Job: _____ Time Period: _____

Duties:

Contact Person:

Job: _____ Time Period: _____

Duties:

Contact Person:

Job: _____ Time Period: _____

Duties:

Contact Person:

Education, Training and Experience

High school: _____ Grade level attained: _____

Other training:

Job Interviews

You have been successful! You now have an interview for the job.

The job interview gives the potential employee and potential employer a chance to learn more about each other. It also gives you a chance to prove yourself.

Nervous? Most of us get nervous when we go to a job interview. What questions will they ask? Will I be able to answer them? Will I make a good impression? Here are a few tips to help you get ready for your job interview.

1. **Prepare** for your job interview by knowing about the job, company, business and organization. Practice answering questions with a friend or spouse.
2. **Get ready**
 - Make sure your clothing is neat, tidy and appropriate for the type of job you are applying.
 - Bring copies of your résumé and any other documents that you want to show like your carpentry helper's certificate or your administrative assistant's diploma.
 - Bring a pen and paper for note taking.
3. **Be on time.** On time means five to ten minutes early.
4. **Stay calm** during the job interview. Maintain eye contact with the interviewer. Listen to the entire question before you answer.
5. **Give examples.** If they ask you what your organizational skills are, tell them how you organize your home, office, your computer files, etc.
6. **Follow-up.** Ask when you will be hearing from them. Call them if you have not heard from them in that time period. If you did not get the job, ask why? It may help you when you interview for another job.

Your Turn!

Job Interview Questions

Work with a partner and talk about interviews that you have had. Were you successful? What kinds of questions were you asked? Write down six questions that you think an employer might ask.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Compare your questions to the questions on the next handout.

Job Interview Questions⁵

What will they ask? How should I answer? The key is to give better answers than anyone else. To do this, you must:

1. Think of the likely questions.
2. Develop excellent answers.
3. Practice!

Most questions will relate either to your ability to do the job or to the type of employee you will be. Here are some sample questions you might get:

1. Tell me a little about yourself.

Focus on both your personal and professional values.

"I am a very conscientious person and I like to do a good job both at home and at work. People tend to view me as a "people person." I like to work with others and enjoy working as part of a team on a project. I respect others' opinions and like to give my own input into a project too. I work well in a fast-paced environment and work well under pressure. I always have a smile for people at work – either co-workers or the public that I am dealing with."

2. What is your greatest strength?

This is a great chance to highlight your best skills. Don't pick just one, focus on your top three or four. Determine which strengths would fit best with the position for which you are applying. For example, if the job announcement stresses the ability to handle multiple tasks, you could say:

"I have excellent organizational skills and work well under pressure. But my greatest strength is my ability to handle multiple projects and deadlines effectively."

⁵ <http://www.best-interview-strategies.com/questions.html>

3. What is your greatest weakness?

Tell the interviewer a true weakness, but then say what you've done to overcome it. For example:

“Sometimes I struggle with the math involved in carpentry. I always make sure that I check my work with another co-worker or the boss before I make that first cut.”

4. How do you handle stressful situations?

Give some examples of stressful situations you've dealt with in the past. Tell how you use time management, problem-solving or decision-making skills to reduce stress. For example,

“I often make a to-do list if I am feeling overwhelmed at work. This really helps me focus on what needs to be done. I also feel really good when I cross off each item on the list.”

5. Why do you want this position?

Here's where your research about the company or organization will help you stand out among the other candidates. Explain how you've always wanted the opportunity to work with a company that provides (for example) a vital public service. Or you can say something about the position that you find interesting.

“I really enjoy working with my hands. I have always wanted to be a carpenter and I hope this is the first step to that goal. I have also heard really good things about your company and hope to learn some new skills and use the skills that I already have.”

6. Do you have any questions?

This is always asked at the end of an interview. Have your questions ready. Here are some suggestions:

- Can you tell me a little more about the job?
- What are the top two expectations you have of the person coming into this position?
- Would there be initial training involved in this position?
- Is there anything else you would like to know about my skills and abilities to do this job?
- How many employees work for the organization or in this department?
- When will the job start?
- When do you expect to make your final decision?

More on Job Interview Questions⁶

Here are some more questions that you might face in an interview. Read them over and talk to a friend about how you would answer them.

<p>How do you define "being on time?"</p> <p>Describe a time when you handled a stressful situation successfully.</p> <p>Tell me about a time when you solved a problem.</p> <p>Give me an example where you set and achieved a goal.</p> <p>How do you resolve conflict?</p> <p>Describe a situation where your job required you to go above and beyond the call of duty?</p> <p>Describe a time when you had to prioritize because you had too many things to do.</p> <p>Describe a time when you had to make a quick decision.</p>	<p>Give an example of a time you showed initiative.</p> <p>Describe a recent situation where you dealt with an upset customer or co-worker.</p> <p>Describe a situation where you planned ahead to avoid potential problems.</p> <p>Why did you leave your last position?</p> <p>Explain your qualifications for this position.</p> <p>Where do you want to be in five years?</p> <p>How would others describe you?</p> <p>What do you do best?</p> <p>What are your long-range objectives?</p> <p>How do you feel about overtime?</p>
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⁶ <http://www.best-interview-strategies.com/questions.html>

Handling Inappropriate Questions⁷

Employers cannot discriminate based on race, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability. Still, some interviewers might ask related questions. If an employer asks if you have children, for example, you can respond in three ways:

1. Answer honestly. "Yes, I have two children."
2. Refuse to answer. "You are not allowed to ask that."
3. Answer the underlying concern about whether you'll show up for work. "You may wonder if my personal life may interfere with work. In fact, I have an excellent attendance record. I was at work 98% of the time at my last job."

Answer #3 addresses the employer's underlying question: "Will you really work at the job?" It reassures the employer that you will do the work required.

Your Turn!

Discuss with a friend or in a group how you would handle these inappropriate questions.

1. Do you have any health problems?
2. Do you go to church?
3. How old are you?
4. Have you ever filed a Worker's Compensation claim?
5. Do you have daycare for your children?
6. How many sick days did you take last year?
7. Do you have any disabilities?
8. Are you married?

⁷ <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/news/tjhg/s5exercise.html>

Mock Interviews

Practice, Practice, Practice! In this mock interview you are going to work with a partner and interview them for a job. And they are going to interview you for a job. You will need to discuss possible interview questions together.

Your Turn!

Choose eight questions to ask your potential new employee. Follow the steps below:

1. Decide on a job that your partner is applying for. It could be an administrative assistant, cashier, carpenter's assistant, painter, handy-person, teacher's assistant, childcare worker, etc.
2. Write up eight questions for your interview (on next page). Under each question, write down possible answers that would meet the requirements of the job.

For example: job interview for a carpenter's helper

Question: Tell me about your experience working in carpentry.

Answer: years of experience (2 or more), at least four types of things they have done (painted, built a fence, put in flooring, tile work, etc), how they learned the skills (from school, another carpenter, or their dad)

just
another
example

3. Interview your partner.
4. Score each question out of five. Score the overall interview out of 40.
5. Review the interview with your partner and talk about what they did well and what they need to improve on.

Your Interview Questions

Write your interview questions below. Come up with possible answers for each question.

1. _____

Answer:

2. _____

Answer:

3. _____

Answer:

4. _____

Answer:

5. _____

Answer:

6. _____

Answer:

7. _____

Answer:

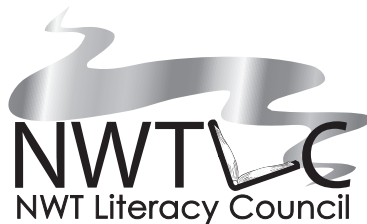
8. _____

Answer:

The *Career - Life - Work* Series consists of the following:

- Personal Management Skills Manual
- Communication Skills Manual
- Career Development Manual
- Job Success Strategies Manual
- Dealing with Conflict Workbook
- Getting the Job Workbook
- Soft Skills for Work Workbook
- Planning Your Career Workbook
- Dealing with Stress Workbook
- Goal Setting Workbook

You can download these documents from www.nwt.literacy.ca



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