

Job Search Ready Strategies

JOB SEARCH READY STRATEGIES

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NAVIGATING THIS RESOURCE

Navigating This Resource

Navigating Pressbooks is easy! The table of contents can be found in the top left-hand corner, with each module being divided into chapters and each chapter subdivided into parts. At the bottom of the page, you will see three buttons that you can also use to navigate: one to go backward, one to go forward, and one that bumps you to the top of the page.

ATTRIBUTION

Attribution

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COMMUNICATE YOUR SKILLS

PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS

Professional Expectations

It is important to consider communication and professionalism during the job search phase. Workplaces have expectations around employee competence, communication skills, conduct (including attitude!), and fit with the organizational culture.

We begin this module by introducing and then reflecting upon the 4 C's of professional expectations: Competence, Conduct, Culture, and Communication. Let's look at what each of these terms means for you!

Competence

This refers to doing your job well. In addition to carrying out your duties, you have additional expectations as an employee that are tested in the application process, such as:

- Managing your time and meeting deadlines;
- Refraining from and minimizing your errors
- Being resourceful – ready to answer the question.

Conduct and Attitude

Professional conduct and a positive attitude are also expectations of most workplaces that are tested during the application process, including:

- Be considerate and polite, even when dealing with someone difficult
- Be friendly but not overly familiar
- Demonstrate an attitude that is committed, reliable, pleasant, positive, and helpful. .

Workplace Culture

Adapting to the workplace culture is a sign that you can be a positive contributor to the team and to organizational goals, rather than a potential source of conflict and friction. This includes displaying a number of positive behaviours, such as:

- Being punctual
- Following protocols, for example, when and how often to check in with your interviewer
- Making appropriate use of organizational resources

Communication Skills

Communication skills are important, whether they are used with supervisors, co-workers, or clients. In most workplaces, everyone is expected to show the following behaviours when it comes to how we communicate:

- Learning people's names
- Introducing yourself to people you don't know
- Politeness and respect toward others
- Respecting confidentiality
- Listen actively: seek first to understand, ask for clarification, and paraphrase what you hear.

Tips For Communicating

“Effective communication builds a positive atmosphere where teams can flourish. When communication is positive and encouraging, team members become stronger and work better together. Those who practice good communication skills make working beside them easier and less stressful.”

– Indeed Career Advice¹

For workplaces to operate smoothly and achieve their objectives, communication is critical. This includes verbal, written, non-verbal, and digital communication on the part of both the sender and the receiver. We'll address all of these different forms of communication in due time, but, for now, let's flip through the accordion below for some concepts to keep in mind.

1. <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/importance-of-business-communication>



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/jobsearchready1/?p=22#h5p-1>

HOW WE COMMUNICATE

How We Communicate

Effective communication will be very important during the job search process. Here are some concepts to keep in mind:

- Start with your goal: What are you trying to achieve with this communication?
- Consider your audience—the employer.
- Keep it professional. Be cautious with humour and avoid slang. One great way to check the tone of your writing is to read it out loud before sending it. Your tone can influence how your message is interpreted.
- Avoid idiomatic expressions and use plain language where you can.

1) Email

An electronic mail message or email is a great way to provide direct, important, and timely information. When writing a professional email, for example, you'll want to keep the following in mind:

EMAIL CHECKLIST

- ✓ Used proper salutations? (Example: Dear Cathy Picard)
- ✓ Proper tone? (read out loud)
- ✓ Good grammar?
- ✓ Correct punctuation?
- ✓ Clear statement/purpose/ask?
- ✓ Appropriate signature? (Example: With Appreciation,)



[Grammarly](#) is a “writing assistant” you can use to proofread and edit your documents. It checks for more than 250 types of spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors, and it allows users to choose editing input based on six different styles of writing, including business writing. There are free and paid (enhanced) versions. Here are 2 ways to use Grammarly:

1. In the web version, paste a document into an editing box, designate the style of document, and click on “Start Review”.
2. Using the Grammarly Plug-in for Microsoft Office, when you click “Review” in Word, the Grammarly Wizard will appear. Click “Check,” then select the writing style you need.

Sending Emails

There are numerous ways you can email a message to someone (e.g., To:, Cc:, Bcc:).

Using “To:”

The main intended recipient of your email should appear in the To line. This is the person you expect to take action or respond, or for whom the information is directly relevant.

Using “Cc:”

You can also send an email to additional recipients by using the Cc field. Before using the Cc field, know how to use it correctly. Cc (“carbon copy” or “courtesy copy”) is used to send a message to recipients who may need to be informed about the information, but who are not expected to take action or to respond. People listed in the To and the Cc fields (their names and/or email addresses) are visible to others in the email.

Here are some examples of situations where you might “Cc someone”:

- You have been asked by your manager to do so
- To keep someone updated on information that doesn't require their immediate action

- You want each person in the thread to be aware of who the message is going to

Here are some examples of situations where you should NOT use Cc:

- You expect a response
- You don't have consent to do so (you could disclose confidential information)
- To call someone out publicly or embarrass them

Using "Bcc"

You can also send an email to additional recipients by using the Bcc field. Before using the Bcc field, know how to use it correctly.

Bcc ("blind carbon copy") is used to send a message to a recipient without disclosing their name or address to others on the thread. Bcc is rarely used and is meant not to avoid transparency, but to protect confidentiality. For example, mass mailings often use Bcc in order to send the same message to many recipients without disclosing their personal information to each other. Using Bcc can also cut down on email traffic when someone mistakenly "replies all" to a large recipient group. If you're not sure how – or whether – to use Bcc in work emails, be sure to ask at your workplace.

"Misusing Cc and Bcc overwhelms people with too much information. Stuffing inboxes with unnecessary information makes email a distraction, diminishing its value and our ability to maintain focus on important work. By distracting attention from important work, this breach of professional email etiquette has serious consequences that sabotage productivity for individuals and companies."

– M. Thomas¹

1. <https://maurathomas.com/productivity/email-etiquette/>

Replying to Emails

When you receive an email, it's because the sender believed the subject of the email was relevant to you in some way. There are a few things to consider before deciding when or how to reply to an email.



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Reply All

When you respond to an email with multiple recipients, it's possible to send your response to everyone in the To and Cc lines by clicking "Reply All". However, in most cases, you should not use this function when responding to emails. **Here is when not to use Reply All:**

- To a department-wide or company-wide email
- When your response is only pertinent to the sender
- To an information-only type email, such as the time or date of a meeting (if you have a conflict or need more information, reply only to the person who sent the email. Let them sort out what does and doesn't work for the group)
- In response to congratulations or happy birthday emails for one person (just email the person being congratulated, not the whole group)
- To disagree with or correct someone
- To vent or comment about the chain

2) Verbal Communication

Verbal communication involves the exchange of messages using words – through speaking, listening, writing, and reading – such as in face-to-face discussions, phone calls, emails, or texts. There are many factors affecting the effectiveness of verbal communication, such as word choice, logical sequencing, using expressions, and word connotations. Strong verbal workplace communications have 4 facets:

1. Listening – e.g., Do you ask clarifying questions? paraphrase what you hear? refrain from interrupting?
2. Speaking – e.g., Do you use words correctly? enunciate? speak at an easily understood pace & volume?
3. Reading – e.g., Do you understand what you have read? Did you read thoroughly before asking questions or responding?
4. Writing – e.g., Do you write with conciseness and clarity? Do you minimize jargon and avoid slang?

3) Leaving Professional Voicemail Messages

You're about to make a business call. There is a possibility – as there always is – that you will be unable to reach the person you're calling and will need to leave a voice mail message instead. When making any business calls, take a moment in advance to think about what you will say if you get a voice mail. Here are some tips:



1. Think it through:
 1. Ask yourself: what is the purpose of my call? What's the most important thing I need them to know?
 2. How can I say what I need to say briefly?
2. When you call:
 1. State your full name and company name.
 2. Speak clearly.
 3. Keep it short and sweet: state the most important reason for your call.
 4. State if you would like to receive a call back, or if you will retry your call.
 - If you wish to be called back, state when you are available to take the call.
 - If you plan to call back, let them know when to expect your call.
 5. Speaking slowly, leave your name, contact number, and/or email address.
 6. End professionally, e.g., "I look forward to speaking with you".

4) Digital Collaboration Tools

Collaboration tools bring employees together despite physical distance, improving daily communication and keeping productivity up. Check out the presentation below for some details to consider regarding established practices and general etiquette when it comes to meeting virtually.



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/jobsearchready1/?p=27#h5p-3>

5) Non-Verbal Communication

Hopefully by now you've come to appreciate the context of your communication. Sometimes it's not what you say, but how you say it. In some cases, you can communicate without saying or typing anything at all. Non-verbal communication involves the exchange of messages without words, such as via facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, tone of voice, and even emoticons. Here are some tips to consider how you communicate without speaking:



- Where possible, turn your camera on for video chats
- Be mindful of your personal appearance: look neat
- Keep a tidy workstation
- Dress professionally, in line with the workplace dress code
- Stand and sit with good posture
- Don't hunch: hold your shoulders back to convey confidence
- Keep your arms relaxed at your sides while talking
- Beware of crossing your arms, as it can suggest you are closed off
- Express undistracted attention by leaning forward in your seat

General Tips

Most workplaces will have you mixing and matching different styles of communication and contextualizing your messaging accordingly. Here are some additional tips to keep in mind:

Watch Your Tone

Tip:	Instead of...	Say...
Be confident, but not overconfident	"You must agree that my plan is the best one."	"I believe my plan has some advantages."
Be courteous	"I didn't like the way you conducted that meeting today."	"I'd like to discuss how today's meeting ended."
Focus on the positive	"There's no way the project will be done by Friday."	"The project has been delayed while we make some improvements."
Use non-discriminatory language	"The guys in the warehouse will take care of that."	"The staff in the warehouse will take care of that."

Using Positive Language

Negative language usually contains words like not, can't, won't, or impossible. It emphasizes the negative, says what **cannot** be done, and implies blame. In fact, negative language can feel coercive or imply the other person has been careless or deceitful. On the other hand, **positive language** emphasizes what **can** be done, offers choices and alternatives, and is encouraging and helpful. So, instead of saying something like "your car won't be fixed for a week", you might opt to phrase it as "your car will be ready next week". This example shows how the same news can be delivered in a positive or negative way. Although the news is the same, it's more likely to be well received when delivered using positive language.

Now for some practice! In the drag and drop exercise below, practice pairing each “negative” sentence with its corresponding “positive” counterpart.



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Remember: compared to texts, emails are considered to be a more formal form of communication in the workplace. For this reason, common text conventions – such as the use of emojis and acronyms – are often best left out of emails. This is another way you can promote clearer communication at work.

ARTICULATING YOUR SKILLS - STAR FRAMEWORK

Articulating Your Skills – STAR Framework

Articulating your skills is itself an invaluable skill. It is something you will make use of again and again as you progress through the modules in this course. It will help you build a resume, write a cover letter, and prepare for an interview.

So far you should have taken an inventory of your skills, identified your strengths and weaknesses, and begun to consider the ways in which some of those skills might be transferable to **Digital Technologies**.

In this part of the module, you are going to learn how to articulate those skills in a way that makes sense to and gets a positive response from employers.

Simply listing your skills is helpful, but the best way to show that you have in fact developed certain skills is to prove it with evidence: **You talk about a time when you put those skills to work.**

The STAR Framework

Knowing how to best articulate your skills will help you throughout your career, from writing a resume to networking effectively to answering tough job interview questions. It begins with using the STAR framework.

STAR is an acronym that stands for:

- **Situation:** What was the situation?
- **Task:** What was your task?
- **Action:** What action did you take?
- **Result:** What was the result?

Using the STAR framework ensures that you demonstrate the skills you have in a clear and focused manner. It provides an opportunity to articulate your skills and form a foundation that prepares you to answer behavioural questions during job interviews. Becoming familiar with the STAR framework will be especially useful when writing resumes, cover letters, and preparing for interviews.

Accomplishment Statements

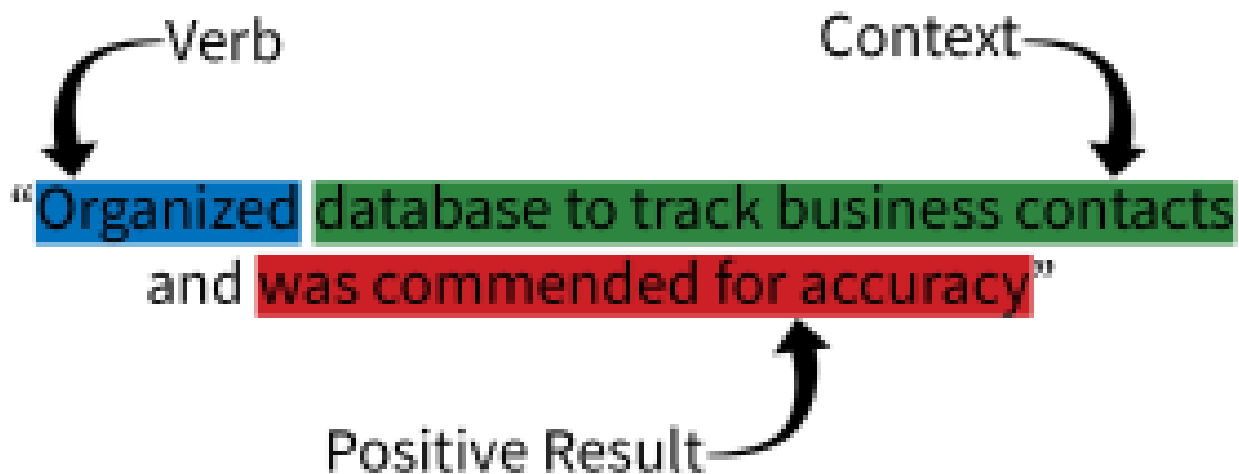
Now that you are familiar with the STAR framework, let's talk about accomplishment statements. **An accomplishment statement is your STAR story distilled down into one phrase.** Here is the simple formula for an accomplishment statement:

VERB + CONTEXT + RESULT

In one phrase, an accomplishment statement explains...

- The action you took (Verb),
- Under what circumstances (Context), and
- The positive outcome (Result).

Let's say you want an accomplishment statement to support your organization skills, accuracy, and/or database skills. You think of an example: You had to track business contacts (context), and so you organized (verb) a database, and you were commended for its accuracy (result). Your accomplishment statement could be "Organized database to track business contracts and was commended for accuracy".



Additional examples include:

- Welcomed customers in a friendly manner and provided clear directions for locating products

- Flexibly handled multiple projects at the same time, leading to improved office efficiency
- Interacted with diverse customers on a regular basis, providing personalized service

RESUME AND COVER LETTER WRITING

APPLYING FOR JOBS

Applying for Jobs: Best practices for applying for a job via email

A job application email is a form of business correspondence, so make a positive, professional impression.

1. Review your resume and cover letter to ensure they are correct and error-free.
2. Name each file in a way that makes it clear what the document is, usually with your name and the job applied for, such as MelReidResume.docx or AnnaCarraCoverLetter.pdf. (If the employer prescribes a certain file naming convention, be sure to follow that.)
3. Unless otherwise directed, save the documents in PDF format.
4. Enter a clear, short subject line, usually with your name and the job applied for, such as Mel Reid application for CyberSecurity Specialist. (Again, if the employer prescribes a certain format for the email subject, be sure to follow that.)
5. Compose a short message:
 - Start with a salutation, such as **Dear Kelly Green** or **Dear Hiring Manager**.
 - Provide a statement that addresses the job you are applying for and the source where you learned of the position. For example: *"I am writing to express my interest in the CyberSecurity Specialist position posted on the Lasonde School of Engineering website. My resume and cover letter are attached for your consideration."*
 - Give a short but impactful statement of the qualifications that make you an ideal candidate – you might consider this a highly condensed version of your cover letter. For example: *"I am a fast learner, with experience _____ and recent completion of _____."*
 - Add a statement expressing enthusiasm for further discussion about the job. For example: *"I look forward to an opportunity to discuss how I might contribute to your firm's ongoing success."*

- Use a complimentary close, such as “*With great interest.*”.
 - Provide your full name, email address, phone number, and link to your LinkedIn page if applicable.
6. Add the recipient’s email address last! This helps prevent you from sending the message in error before it is ready. Only add the email address once you’re sure your message is free of errors and you have the right documents attached. (You might even consider test-sending the email to yourself first to be sure everything is correct.)

COVER LETTERS

What is a Cover Letter?

A cover letter produces some distinct opportunities and advantages to strengthen your application:

- demonstrates your written communication skills
- opportunity to express enthusiasm and positive energy
- show that you have done some research about the employer
- another way to connect your skills and experience to the requirements of the position by explaining your experience ¹

The Purpose of a Cover Letter

There are 3 main purposes for a cover letter: ²

- identify the position to which you are applying
- demonstrate why you are the best person for the job
- convince the employer why they should invite you to an interview

Just as with a resume, writing a cover letter is not an exact science. There are guidelines, but there are a variety of ways to write a cover letter to meet employer expectations while still letting your unique voice come through.

[There are many freely available examples of cover letters to peruse and explore.](#)

1. https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/job_search_writing/job_search_letters/cover_letters_1_quick_tips/index.html

2. https://owl.uwo.ca/access/content/group/d7c559cd-6048-4288-bf19-9a39203d3c41/Developing%20a%20Resume%20and%20Cover%20Letter%20-%20Storyline%20output%20-%20Dec%209/story_html5.html

Cover Letter Content and Format



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/jobsearchready1/?p=58#h5p-52>

Use the Job Posting to Develop your Cover Letter

The job posting can yield valuable information to develop your cover letter and resume, such as keywords.

Here's what a **cover letter** might look like for that posting. Take a look at the anatomy of the letter and pay attention to the ways in which the example specifically utilizes language from the posting itself:

1. Position: quickly identifies the name of the position
2. Employer: names the company or employer that posted the position
3. Source: outlines where and in what capacity they found the job posting
4. Education: establishes that they are soon to satisfy the requisite degree-level
5. Experience: specifies that they have several years experience performing relevant work
6. Skills: mentions that they have experience in coordinating projects
7. Work Setting: notes that they have experience working in marketing and media content development
8. Work Conditions and Personal Suitability: takes language directly from the job posting and personally contextualizes it with a description of their previous experience
9. Specific Skills: illustrates that they have prior experience in studying products and then writing about them (which is what this job will specifically require them to do)

Job: Data Analytics

Employer: XYZ Canada

Location: Anytown, ON

Experience: Experience an asset

We are XYZ, a three-time Best Places to Work award winner in insurance. We enable client success through the expertise of over 400 employees based in Canada (and more than 3,000 employees globally), investments in innovative technologies, and ensuring quality relationships with highly-rated insurers, vendors, and financial institutions.

We are seeking individuals who have:

- Strong ability to work collaboratively in a remote or hybrid environment
- Strong time management and organizational skills; quick learner
- Ability to consistently meet deadlines independently and comfort with fast-paced, changing environments

Specific Skills:

- **Analytical Skills:** Demonstrate a willingness to learn and develop analytical skills. This includes the ability to understand data, identify patterns, and draw insights.
- **Statistical Knowledge:** Have a basic understanding of statistics and be eager to learn more.
- **Data Visualization:** Understanding how to create effective data visualizations to communicate insights is valuable.
- **Database Management:** Basic knowledge of database management systems to retrieve and manipulate data from databases.
- **Critical Thinking:** Demonstrate the ability to think critically, approach problems analytically, ask questions, and seek solutions.
- **Attention to Detail:** Keen eye for detail is important for ensuring data accuracy and quality.
- **Communication Skills:** Effective communication is key, both in terms of expressing ideas and understanding instructions.
- **Problem-Solving Skills:** Interns should demonstrate a willingness to tackle challenges and find creative solutions.
- **Learning Agility:** Eager to learn and grow, open to feedback, willing to learn new tools and techniques, and adaptable to changing priorities.
- **Programming Skills:** Familiarity with programming languages commonly used in data

analysis, such as Python or R, is beneficial.



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/jobsearchready1/?p=58#h5p-21>

Resources

- [Cover Letter Tips Checklist](#)
- [Indeed has compiled a wide range of cover letter samples that are organized by target jobs and industries.](#)
- Additionally, [the University of Virginia also provides discipline-specific cover letter examples.](#)

When writing your cover letter, be sure to use an upbeat and enthusiastic tone and use words that evoke a feeling of self-confidence (words like “certain” and “positive” for example).

By understanding the need to specifically address the needs of the employer and contextualizing your own experience, you will be able to identify, emulate, and create effective, targeted cover letters.

RESUMES

An Overview of Resumes

A resume is a one- to two-page document that sums up a job seeker's qualifications for the jobs they're interested in¹. Your resume includes your relevant experience, skills, education, and accomplishments. It helps you show what you can do and convinces an employer that you are qualified and would be a good hire².

The purpose of your resume is to get you an interview! Your resume is your personal marketing tool; it describes and proves your accomplishments, skills, experiences, and knowledge in a way that is concise and persuasive. Because it is targeted to the reader, your resume needs to be tailored each time you apply for a new position.

A note about Indeed's videos: You will be invited to like and subscribe to the Indeed web site, but this is not necessary for this module; it's purely optional for you.

Myths and Facts



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/jobsearchready1/?p=53#h5p-11>

1. <https://www.pongoresume.com/articles/391/what-is-a-resume-a-brief-overview.cfm>

2. <https://resumegenius.com/blog/resume-help/what-is-a-resume>

Digital Technologies Resume Format

Using headings from resume examples or templates can be a good place to start when developing and organizing your resume.



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/jobsearchready1/?p=53#h5p-13>

[Click here to view this Resume example as a PDF](#)

Resume Format

While the format of a resume will vary depending on the situation, there are some guidelines that can help you develop a standard resume for the **Digital Technologies job postings**:

1. 1 and 2 Letter-sized pages (8.5 x 11”) with 1” margins on all sides.
2. Using headings and sections will help give structure to the content of your resume. It’ll also produce an optimal amount of white space, which will make it more pleasing to the eye.
3. You will want to make sure that your font choice is consistent throughout the resume, that the font size of the body is between 10 and 12 points, and that the text is free of spelling, grammatical, or punctuation errors.
4. Make sure you are using a sans-serif font like Calibri, Arial, Helvetica, Tahoma, Trebuchet MS or Verdana.
5. Be sure to establish consistency with things like dates or bulleted lists (don’t switch between bullets and numbers part way through)
6. Check out the [York U Career Centre Resume Resources](#)
7. [Always target your resume](#)



TIP: A sans-serif font is a typeface that does not contain any superfluous flourishes—there is nothing extra that has been added.



Baskerville is an example of a “serif” font: its letters have a small line added.

Helvetica is an example of a no-serif or “sans serif” font: Its letters have no small line added.

Keep in mind that you can be flexible with headings—here are a few examples to keep in mind:

- The order and titles of your sections may vary based on whether you use a chronological or functional format.
- You do not have to separate paid and unpaid experience into 2 separate sections (e.g., Work Experience vs. Volunteer Experience). Instead, you can combine them under 1 “Relevant Experience” heading. However, with the experience, you will need to clarify if it was a volunteer role.
- You can have a separate section devoted to what would be of particular interest or value to the employer. For example, you could have a **Technical Skills** section.

Resume Content

Every resume can be expected to contain some basic information and sections, including

- Your name and contact information (email, phone number, LinkedIn profile URL, or link to your online portfolio if you have one);
- Information about your experiences (work experience or extracurricular activities);
- Information about your skills and accomplishments; and
- Information about your education.

Generally speaking, information about key skills and accomplishments is so important that it is usually presented both early in the resume (as highlights of qualifications or a profile/skills summary) and later on when you discuss your experience and education. The trick is to determine what information to include, what to leave out, and the order in which to place your information. We will discuss additional possible resume sections later on in this module.

Your resume is not the place to list everything you have ever done. In fact, the more targeted and concise you can be, the greater impact your resume will have. The greater the impact of your resume, the greater likelihood of your being accepted for an interview.



“When writing your resume, [...] make it as easy as possible for employers to identify the reasons why you’re a great candidate. That means featuring the most important and relevant information first and removing irrelevant or outdated information”.³

A Note on Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS)

An Applicant Tracking System (ATS) is software used by many employers in their recruitment process. This software helps the employer organize and rank candidates so that they can more easily select a few for interviews. This means that having a basic understanding of how an ATS works – and of what an ATS looks for when deciding which resumes to mark as “yes, interview” versus “no, not the best candidate” – will help you have a better chance of being selected for an interview.

3. www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/how-to-write-a-resume-employers-will-notice

One thing to keep in mind is that an ATS often uses a job description or posting as a guide to finding applicants that match keywords or skills. This is why it's important to include them in your resume. Some ATS are quite sophisticated, while others are not. Since you likely don't know what type of ATS your target employer uses, it can be a good idea to organize your resume so that it can successfully pass through the less sophisticated types of ATS, as especially complicated "or over-formatted page layouts with columns, charts or images can be hard for applicant tracking systems to read."⁴

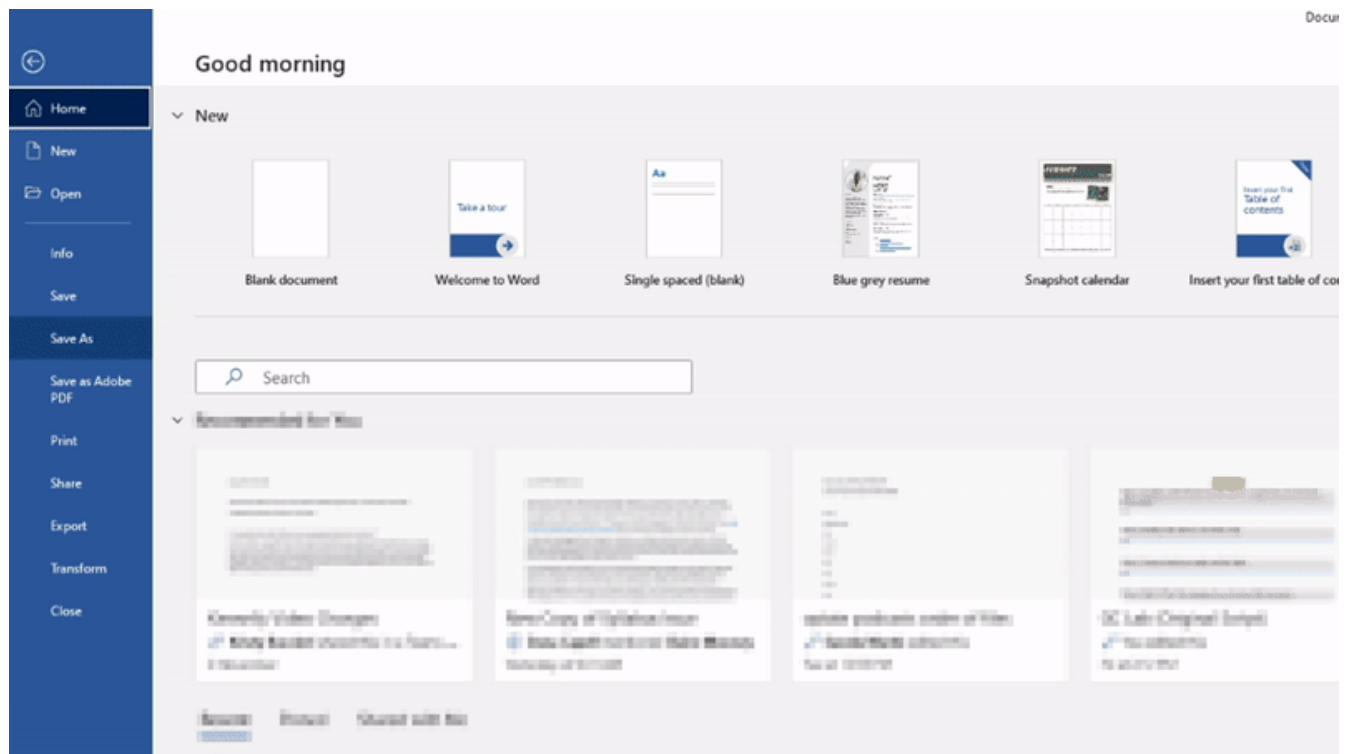
Here are some best practices to pass through an ATS successfully:

- Avoid headers, footers, and page numbers
- Avoid columns, tables, graphs, and images
- Spell out any acronyms
- Use bullet points instead of paragraphs
- Use keywords from the job posting, if there is one
- Submit documents in MS Word format unless instructed otherwise



You can also save your document in .rtf format to see how it looks in plain text. Go through the document in .rtf format, then check and remove any incorrect symbols that appear in the document. You can then save the corrected document in.docx format. How you save the file will be different depending on your word processor, but we've included an example for Microsoft Word that you can follow along with.

4. www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/how-to-write-a-resume-employers-will-notice



In Microsoft Word, the drop-down menu underneath the text field where you would designate a title for your document is where you'll find a list of file formats (.rtf among them).

Resume Organization

If a recruiter only spends 7 seconds screening a new resume, where are they looking? Watch [this video explaining what recruiters are looking at](#) in that short time frame.

The Top Third of Your Resume

While there may be different approaches to crafting a resume, everyone can agree that the resume's most important "real estate" is the top third of page 1. There are 2 things to know about this all-important section of your resume:

First: the top of page 1 is where the reader will start reviewing your resume. The very top is where the reader expects to be able to find your name and contact information. So, always place your name and contact information first. For example, here is the very top of the Chronological Resume example shared earlier:

Yeo Lion

Document was last saved: Just now

Toronto, Ontario • 905-905-5555 • yeothelion@yorku.ca

Second: as you now know, a person reading your resume will only spend around 7 seconds reviewing it before deciding whether you make a good candidate to interview. So, make it very clear right away that what you have to offer is a good match for what the reader is looking for. Do this by providing a Profile or Summary of Skills section immediately after your name and contact information. To illustrate, here is the same example again with some bulleted points, as it would appear below the contact information:

Yeo LionToronto, Ontario • 905-905-5555 • yeothelion@yorku.ca

Highlights of Qualifications and Skills

- Over three years of customer service experience with the ability to prioritize deadlines while being organized.
- Experience working on a variety of different projects. Knowledge of effective problem-solving in a timely and efficient manner.
- Ensured every detail was in place before handing in projects and before presenting products to customers.
- Committed to continuous learning and new responsibilities.
- Experience using Microsoft Word, Excel, Outlook and PowerPoint.

Immediately following their name and contact information, this person has indicated the work they do (or seek to do) and an easy-to-scan list of their best skills and knowledge – the Highlights – that would qualify them for the position they're looking for.

This resume uses the top third real-estate in a persuasive manner by providing their name and contact information, followed immediately by the skills and traits they want the reader to know above all else.



You will probably further elaborate on your key skills or credentials later in your resume. In other words, it's OK if it feels a bit like you're repeating yourself. What's important is to use this valuable space to catch the reader's attention and make it clear that you are worth a closer look!

How to Write Your Highlights of Qualifications

Highlights of your qualifications are just that: highlights. Highlights are chunks of information designed to give someone the important details quickly. You'll want to limit yourself to 5-7 sentences in length, using bullet points quickly advertise your critical qualifications for the job goal. You can do this by following these 3 steps:



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/jobsearchready1/?p=53#h5p-16>

Other Resume Sections

You've placed your name, contact information, and summary of skills/profile at the top of your resume. What's next? That depends on your unique background as well as the job you're applying for. To begin, there are two questions to consider:

What other information should I include in my resume (and what should I leave out)?

Employers will expect to see information about your education and training, as well as your experience, skills and accomplishments. In some cases, providing additional information, such as certifications, awards, or memberships, can contribute to the positive impression you make. For example, you can include a section

about training you have completed, such as First Aid/CPR, WHMIS, or others that show you have the knowledge needed to succeed in the job you're applying for. Just remember that everything you include in your resume should have a purpose, and it should support your efforts to show the reader why you are the best fit for the job.

When deciding what to include in your resume, try to make sure the information is relevant and recent. Here are some practical tips and examples:

- If you have completed at least one year of post-secondary education, you can usually leave your **high school education** off your resume.
- If you include **non-employment experience**, list only those that signal knowledge, skills, or attributes that could be relevant to the job you seek (e.g. "Code Camp leader since 2023" indicates leadership and community-mindedness)
- Many employers want to see your Interests section. This can either be directly related or not.

After my name, contact information, and Highlights of Qualifications, in what order should I arrange the sections of my resume?

It is good practice to place the information or sections that most closely show you are qualified for the job earlier in your resume. For example, if you do not have any experience yet in a dentist's office but have just completed studies to be a dental assistant, you may wish to place your Education section before your Experience section.

Education Section

In the Education section, show what formal education you have engaged in. If it is a formal credential – such as a certificate, diploma, or degree – make that clear by providing the name of the credential, the institution, and the date completed (or expected to be completed). Take a look at the visual example below, taken from the earlier examples, to see for yourself:

Education

Ontario Secondary School Diploma

Expected Graduated 2024

- Acquired a strong understanding of the importance and integration of digital culture into today's society.
- Maintained an educational blog about the digital technologies and theories surrounding the iPhone.
- Member of the Computer Code Club

Experience Section

Experience can come **from employment, school projects, volunteer work, extracurricular activities, or experiential learning activities.**

In the Experience section of your resume, you get to show how and where you have accomplished results in the past through the application of your skills. This section might be organized as a chronological Work History.

Many students find it helpful to develop the Education and Experience sections of their resume before composing the Highlights of Qualifications for the top of the resume.

You do not have to provide an exhaustive list of your experiences. In fact, the more selective and concise you are – and the closer you stick to what the employer is looking for – the more impactful your resume can be. “Only include the details of your past work that are especially relevant to the work you want to do next.”⁵

The standard resume begins with your name and contact information, and is immediately followed by a Summary (or Highlights) of Qualifications. Next, provide two sections, beginning with the one most closely aligned to your job goal. One is a section for your Education, and the other is your Experience. Your Experience might come from multiple sources, such as employment, volunteer work, or extracurricular activities. When listing employment history, list the positions you have held in reverse chronological order, beginning with your current or most recent position. Be sure to provide the name of the employer, job location (city), dates of employment, and 4-6 bullet points with related accomplishment statements (we will look at accomplishment statements shortly).

5. <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/how-to-write-a-resume-employers-will-notice>

Experience

Sales Associate – Sheridan Garden Center

Seasonal 2021-2023

- Delivered customer service to reflect and convey a positive corporate image.
- Enhanced the customer experience and improved retention through knowledge, patience, and understanding.
- Utilized Microsoft Office to complete reports as well as daily administration tasks.
- Ship out merchandise to different vendors while keeping an organized tracking system ensuring items are sent properly and received promptly.
- Continuously resolve customer requests and analyze situations to determine appropriate solutions.
- Read and comprehend weekly reports, national scorecards, sales analysis, and unit projection goals.

Accomplishment Statements



The accomplishment statement [is a concept that concept that is explained in Module 1 under the “Articulating Your Skills” heading](#). This section will seek to position accomplishment statements as something you can make use of specifically within the context of your resume, as they are an excellent source of content for the Experience section of your resume. You might find it useful to complete the associated activity linked above, as it will ask you to craft accomplishment statements for your portfolio that you can use in your resume.

An Accomplishment Statement is a phrase that tells the story of an achievement or unique contribution you have made. It's a success story that helps demonstrate your value to the reader by providing evidence of a past achievement. Accomplishment statements are usually used in the chronological resume format.

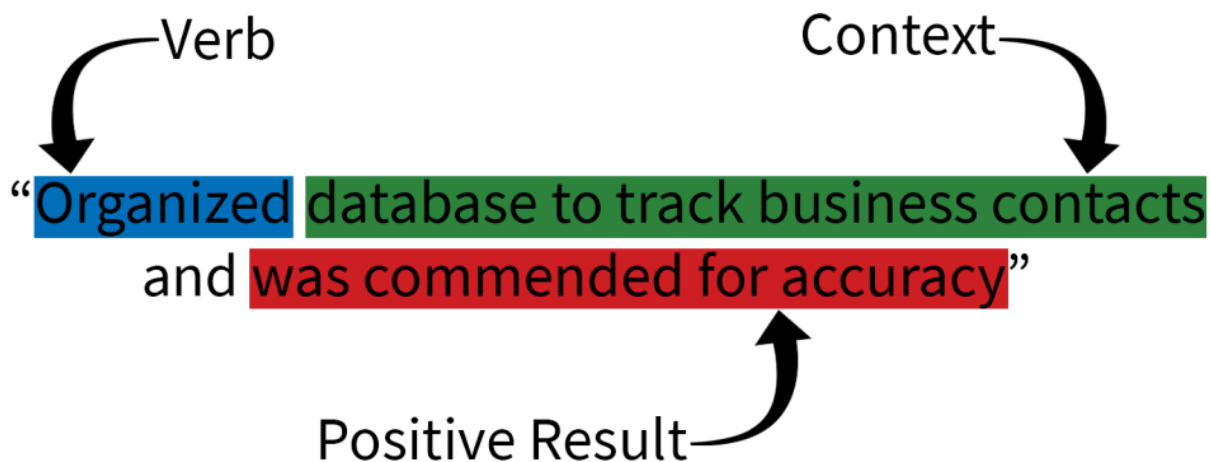
Use the CAR acronym to develop an Accomplishment Statement:

C is for CHALLENGE/CONTEXT: What was the challenge/context/problem/issue?

A is for ACTION: What action did you take/What skills did you use?

R is for RESULTS: What was the result/the benefit of your actions? (quantify or qualify where you can.)

The example below will show you what an accomplishment statement looks like when it is all put together.



Features of an Accomplishment Statement

- It’s in the form of a single phrase (in a resume, use a bullet point).
- It includes a descriptive Action verb (what you did).
- It shows a positive Result.
- Where possible, the Context and/or Result are quantified (with a number) or qualified (with a descriptor). For example: “Served customers” would become “Served over 50 customers per day.”

Accomplishment Statements are not merely a list of duties; instead of saying what you have done, you show the value you brought to the experience – and the value you can bring to your next employer. “Lead with strong action verbs and follow with an accomplishment rather than a task. Employers are interested in what you’ve

achieved, not just what you’ve done.”⁶ If you’re not sure how to describe your accomplishment, you can make use of [this resource from ResumeGenius that lists over 100 resume action verbs!](#)

Other Sections

Another way to demonstrate your interest in the digital technologies field and your well-rounded interest would be to add Volunteer, Extracurricular, or Achievements and Awards sections.

Extracurricular Activities

- Musician: singer/songwriter, formal training in voice, guitar, piano (Royal Conservatory of Music); performances at various fundraising/charity events
- Fitness Enthusiast: participated in numerous 10km, half-marathon, and marathon running races.
- freeCodeCampu (2023)

Achievements

- Aspiration in Computing Ontario Affiliate Winner 2023
- Perseverance in Math Award
- RCM 10 Piano

Media Attributions

- contact info
- highlights of qualifications
- education
- experience
- extracur

6. <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/how-to-write-a-resume-employers-will-notice>

INTERVIEW SKILLS

INTERVIEW OVERVIEW

Interview Overview

An interview is a conversation between 2 or more people to collect and assess information. The purpose of a job interview also includes deciding which applicant is the best fit for the job, organization, and team based on your response to their questions.



Employers ask interview questions to confirm 3 things:

- If you have the abilities and skills to do the job;
- If you will fit well with the team and the organization; and
- If you have enthusiasm and a good work ethic

Interviews can be structured or unstructured, informal or formal, and held in person, by phone, or virtually.

While sometimes one round of interviews can suffice, many employers engage in multiple rounds of interviews before deciding whether to extend a job offer to a candidate. For example, candidates may be asked to take part in a telephone interview with Human Resources, and if they screen in, they may be invited to interview with a direct manager.

The following 9-minute video from Indeed will help you understand what to expect from an interview, along with some top tips for interviewing:



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/jobsearchready1/?p=77#h5p-33>

Structure and Format

While some employers take an unstructured, informal approach to interviews, most employers use more structured, formal methods: doing so allows them to accomplish multiple goals, including ensuring that all questions they ask relate directly to the job at hand and that each candidate is evaluated in the same way.

The structure of an interview will vary somewhat based on the type of interview, which we'll review soon, but most high-level interviews will proceed through the following steps:

Before the interview

- Research and prepare: This includes researching the company, reviewing the job posting, and preparing your responses to common interview questions.
- Check out the [York U Career Centre resources to help prepare for an interview](#)

At the interview

- Greetings and introductions. The interview may give a brief summary of the position and of the planned selection process.
- Interviewer asks the candidate a series of questions and the candidate gives responses
- Candidate asks 1-3 prepared questions and the interviewer gives responses
- Thanks, indication of next steps, and conclusion of interview.

After the interview

- Employer and candidate each conduct their post-interview activities.

- Check out the [York U Career Centre resources for steps to take after an interview](#)

Not all interviews are the same. Interviews can vary not only by their delivery format but also by their structure and the types of questions asked. Knowing what type of interview to expect will help you determine how to best prepare. Let's look at the various types of job interviews. No matter which format is used, treat each interview like you would a formal, face-to-face business meeting: be well-prepared, dress appropriately, and conduct yourself with professionalism.



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/jobsearchready1/?p=77#h5p-34>

Types of Questions

The questions asked by the employer during an interview can be of different types. Your interview may be composed of one type of interview question but, more often, interviewers will use a variety of question types in order to gather the information they need from candidates. Let's look at some of the more common types of interview questions you're likely to deal with.



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online here:

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INTERVIEW PREPARATION

Interview Preparation

Research the Employer

An interview presents a great opportunity to show your prospective employer that you are excited to work for them and that you are giving due consideration to how well the organization aligns with you and your career development goals. So, spend some time learning about the company: What does it do? What are its mission, goals, and values? You can find great information about your target employer in a number of places, including:

- The job posting
- The company's web site
- LinkedIn (look for its company page).

Research the Job

Researching the job you are interviewing for is the most important step you will take to prepare for the interview. This is because employers tailor interviews to determine how good a fit the candidate is for the job in question. If you have a good idea of what the job requires, you'll be well positioned to prepare effectively for your interview.

So, just as you have spent time learning about the company, learn about the job by looking closely at the job posting or by reading the job description if one is available. You will get valuable clues about what is most important to the employer in a job candidate.

Let's say you have applied to the job posting below and have been called for an interview.

Job: Data Analytics
Employer: XYZ Canada
Location: Anytown, ON
Experience: Experience an asset

We are XYZ, a three-time Best Places to Work award winner in insurance. We enable client success through the expertise of over 400 employees based in Canada (and more than 3,000 employees globally), investments in innovative technologies, and ensuring quality relationships with highly-rated insurers, vendors, and financial institutions.

We are seeking individuals who have:

- Strong ability to work collaboratively in a remote or hybrid environment
- Strong time management and organizational skills; quick learner
- Ability to consistently meet deadlines independently and comfort with fast-paced, changing environments

Specific Skills:

- **Analytical Skills:** Demonstrate a willingness to learn and develop analytical skills. This includes the ability to understand data, identify patterns, and draw insights.
- **Statistical Knowledge:** Have a basic understanding of statistics and be eager to learn more.
- **Data Visualization:** Understanding how to create effective data visualizations to communicate insights is valuable.
- **Database Management:** Basic knowledge of database management systems to retrieve and manipulate data from databases.
- **Critical Thinking:** Demonstrate the ability to think critically, approach problems analytically, ask questions, and seek solutions.
- **Attention to Detail:** Keen eye for detail is important for ensuring data accuracy and quality.
- **Communication Skills:** Effective communication is key, both in terms of expressing ideas and understanding instructions.
- **Problem-Solving Skills:** Interns should demonstrate a willingness to tackle challenges and find creative solutions.
- **Learning Agility:** Eager to learn and grow, open to feedback, willing to learn new tools and techniques, and adaptable to changing priorities.
- **Programming Skills:** Familiarity with programming languages commonly used in data analysis, such as Python or R, is beneficial.

Answer the following questions based solely on information from the job posting:



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/jobsearchready1/?p=80#h5p-37>

“Tell Me About Yourself”

“Tell me about yourself” is one of the most common questions you will be asked as an interviewee, and it is often asked early on. So, knowing how to structure your answer will make a great positive impression from the start. Structure your answer using a present-past-future format:

- **Present:** briefly explain where you are now in terms of your career, whether in terms of training, work, or both. Explain what you do and recount a positive accomplishment.
- **Past:** indicate how you got where you are, for example, via education and/or past experiences.
- **Future:** indicate what you’re looking to do next and show how the position you’re applying for aligns with how you envision your future

Here’s an example:

Question:

Why don’t you tell us a little about yourself and why you are interested in our position?

Answer:

For the past year, I have been working at Infosplit, doing database maintenance. I also have some background in data analysis, both in my part time role and within school projects.

I have always been good with numbers and interested in big data. For example, during my part

time experience at Infosplit, I made some recommendations to improve the quality of data inputs. This allowed for more robust analytics by the reporting department.

I am a quick learner and excited to be part of the Digital Technologies program to contribute and build my knowledge within your team.

Determine Likely Questions

One of the most valuable things a job posting can do is provide clues as to what the specific questions will be in the interview. As noted at the start of this module, employers conduct interviews to confirm 3 things:

1. If you have the abilities and skills to do the job;
2. If you will fit well with the team and the organization; and
3. If you have enthusiasm and a good work ethic.

By looking closely at a job posting, you can often identify what the employer is looking for (and thus, what the employer is likely to ask during an interview).

Based solely on information from the job posting, it's likely that you'll be able to predict some of the topics that will be addressed during the interview. Below, you'll see a number of quotes from the above posting. Before clicking them open to see what the likely question or topic is, see if you can guess them yourself.



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/jobsearchready1/?p=80#h5p-41>



Once you have determined the questions that will most likely be asked, you'll be able to prepare your answers to interview questions in advance! That way, when the time comes for the interview,

1. You are more likely to provide the information the interviewer is looking for in a way that has the strongest impact.
2. You won't be stuck trying to think of answers on the spot.
3. You will feel more confident, and
4. You will appear more confident.

Using the STAR framework



The STAR framework [is a concept that is explained under the “Articulating Your Skills” heading](#). This section will help contextualize ways to use the STAR framework to your advantage while interviewing. You might find it useful to complete the associated activity linked to above, as it will ask you to craft accomplishment statements for your portfolio that you can use in your resume.

The STAR framework is the method to use when responding to behavioural interview questions where the

interviewer asks you to recount an occasion where you faced a certain situation and had to take some action (for example, “Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a conflict”).

Once you have determined what questions you are likely to be asked, prepare scenarios from your experiences – from work, education, placements, volunteering, etc. – where you demonstrated the skills and knowledge required for the target job. Instead of merely telling the interviewer you have the skills they seek, your answers to these questions give proof of those skills.

S-T-A-R stands for Situation, Task (or Tactics), Action, and Result: When responding to behavioural interview questions, be sure to include all of those elements.

Situation: briefly describe the specific situation you were in. (What was the context? Who was involved? What problem needed to be solved? etc.).

Task/Tactics: What was your responsibility in the situation? Explain your thought process and the options considered.

Action: Describe the course of action you took, step by step. Explain your rationale for taking the action you did.

Result: What was the positive outcome generated by your action? (E.g., What was accomplished, improved, or learned?)

Here’s an example of the STAR framework in action being applied to answer the following interview question: “Sometimes customers can be angry. Give an example of how you have handled this in the past?”



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/jobsearchready1/?p=80#h5p-42>

If you want some additional information on the STAR framework, you can read [this article by Alison Doyle which details examples of the framework being used to answer interview questions](#).

Now that you're familiar with the STAR Framework, try ordering the phrases found below to formulate a STAR response to the following interview question:

“Tell me about a time when you had to be strategic in order to meet all of your priorities.”



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/jobsearchready1/?p=80#h5p-43>

Questions For the Employer

You learned early in this module that a typical interview consists not only of questions by the employer for the candidate but also of a chance for the candidate to ask questions of the employer. Don't miss this opportunity! Asking questions shows that you are engaged in the conversation, interested in the company and the job, and that you are enthusiastic, knowledgeable, and prepared. This is another chance for you to demonstrate your understanding of the company and the position, restate your skills and why you would be a great hire, and show your interest and passion for the work you hope to do with the organization. So, be prepared to ask 2-3 questions during your interview. Here are some ideas:



If the interviewer has not already described what to expect for the next steps in the selection process, this is a good time to ask. For example, you might ask, “What are the next steps in the interview process?” Remember, this is not the time for your questions about salary, benefits, or vacation time. Save those questions for when a job offer is extended. For now, focus on showing that you are the right person for the job.

Be prepared to ask 2-3 questions during your interview. Here are some ideas:



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PREPARING FOR TECHNICAL INTERVIEWS

The following resources can help you prepare for a technical interview.

1. Video: How To Prepare for an Interview – The Best Pre-Interview Strategy. In this video, Jenn, an Indeed Career Coach, shares her recommended strategy for interview research and preparation.



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One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/jobsearchready1/?p=247#oembed-2>

1. In this article, we define a technical interview and discuss how to prepare for one to make sure you're ready. indeed.com/career-advice/interviewing/technical-interview-preparation
2. freeCodeCamp is a community of people from all around the world who are learning to code together. <https://www.freecodecamp.org/news/interviewing-prep-tips-and-tricks/>
3. Planning to interview for a software or technical position? Refer to these tips and resources to help you prepare! [Columbia University, Centre for Career Education](#)
4. [Technical Interviewing 101](#)
5. *The ultimate guide on how to efficiently prepare for your software engineering technical interview – coding test round.* [Tech Interview Handbook](#)

VIRTUAL INTERVIEW PREP TOOLS

Record yourself doing a practice interview!

You can use the video camera on your smartphone or record yourself in a virtual meeting environment using a platform like Zoom. You can play the roles of both interviewer and candidate, but it can be very helpful to recruit someone else to act as the interviewer. Plus, you can get their feedback on your interview performance. After you finish recording, go back and review your performance. How did you do?

It can be helpful to get another person to watch the recording too, so they can offer you some constructive feedback. Be sure to evaluate not only how well you responded to each interview question but also how you conducted yourself overall during the “interview”. Practice makes perfect!

LinkedIn has a free Virtual Interview [Practice](#).
Click on the blue “Practice and get feedback” button within the [LinkedIn Interview practice page](#)(no need to try premium)

The thought of being on camera makes some people nervous. Virtual interviews are more common—and more similar to in-person interviews—than you might think. Below are links to resources to help guide you in the process.

- [20 best video interview tips that will land you the job \(The Muse\)](#) Tips for video interviews, covering technical setup, professional attire and effective communication strategies to help jobseekers stand out and make a strong impression
- [Technical Equipment and How to Perform a Pre-Interview Tech Check](#)
- [Dos and Don'ts of Lighting](#)
- [How To Position Your Camera](#)

- [Background Composition and What to Wear](#)
- [What Not to Say or Do During a Virtual Interview](#)
- [Body Language and Maintaining Good Eye Contact](#)
- [Minimize Potential Distractions and Interruptions](#)
- [The Importance of Practicing](#)
- [What to Do at the End of Your Interview](#)

Be sure to check out the steps to using the [LinkedIn Interview Preparation Feature provided by the York U Career Centre](#).

CONFIRMING REFERENCES

Confirming References

You have already put a lot of work into getting to this point, so now let's look at some highly effective strategies before the interview. This will help you keep that positive momentum.

Confirming References

A reference is a person who can vouch for your skills, knowledge, and experience as they relate to the jobs you apply for. Employers often check applicant references in order to verify statements you made in your resume or interview. Speaking with people who are familiar with your work can provide reassurance to the employer about your past responsibilities, work ethic, professional behaviour, skills, and dependability.

There are plenty of people you can ask to be a job reference for you. What is most important is that your references are willing and able to say positive things about you and your work. Just remember to always get permission before listing anyone as a reference. Call and ask the person if they would be comfortable speaking positively about you as a reference.



Here are some people you might consider asking:

- past or current supervisor
- former teacher, professor, advisor, or coach
- someone you have volunteered for (or with)

Prepare your list of 3-4 references in advance and be prepared to provide them upon request, such as during an interview. Have both a hard and a soft copy prepared. This should be in the form of a one-page document with your name and contact details at the top, consistent with your resume and cover letter. Then, under the heading References, list each reference along with the following information: name, job title, company, phone, email, and relationship.

When you have been asked for your references or called for an interview, be sure to let your references know. This allows them to prepare to be contacted and prevents them from being caught off guard. This is also a good time to thank them once again for agreeing to act as a reference and to let them know about the job you've applied for. Giving your references a heads-up ensures they can be well-prepared to help you by providing a reference that supports your candidacy for the target job.

Here is an example of a reference sheet:

Yeo Lion

Toronto, Ontario

905-905-5555

yeothelion@yorku.ca

References

Nicole Chen

Supervisor, Moonbeam Inc.

(705) 555-7777

nchen@email.com

Nicole was my direct manager from 2020 to 2022 when I worked as a software developer for Moonbeam Inc.

Kwame Nelson

Team Lead, Softwerks Co.

(705) 555-0000

knelson@email.com

Kwame is an team lead in my part-time role

Cooper Moore

Instructor, ABC College

(705) 555-7770

cmoore@email.edu

*Instructor in 2 classes and my faculty advisor for my diploma

DISPLAYING CONFIDENCE

Displaying Confidence

Even after considerable planning and preparation, many people get nervous at the prospect of engaging in a job interview. This is natural! To start with, remember that interviews are a 2-way street: not only is the employer seeking to learn if you are a fit for them, but you are also seeking to learn if the employer and job will be a fit for you!



If your interview is in person and there are no social distancing measures currently being enforced, offer a firm handshake to each person taking part in the interview. Remember to smile, make eye contact, and use the person's name when greeting. [Check out this video on the Dos and Don'ts of interview handshakes.](#)

Don't be put off if you offer a handshake and it is declined. For some cultures, shaking hands is not appropriate. If you wish to politely decline a handshake yourself, try simply putting your hand to your chest with a smile.

The best way to establish confidence in your interviewing ability is practice! Don't just read and write about interviewing skills – find a way to actually practice going through the interview process. The act of rehearsing “out loud” will help reveal considerations you may not have thought about. Here are some ideas:

1. Find a friend to help you: They can play the part of an interviewer and conduct a mock

interview with you. They might also be able to give you some advice on the way you present yourself and whether your answers are clear and compelling. “A mock interview helps you learn how to answer difficult questions, develop interview strategies, improve your communication skills, and reduce your stress before an actual job interview.”¹

2. Block off some time before and after your interview to gather your thoughts.
3. Before your interview, take a few moments to think about what calms you and gets you in a confident, peaceful mind space. This might be a brief meditation, a short walk outside, or a quick pep talk from a friend.
4. Try the Power Posing hack! Check out [this TED Talk video about body language and power posing for confidence](#).
5. Try the STOP mindfulness exercise:
 - S = Stop what you’re doing.
 - T = Take a few deep breaths to bring yourself fully into the present moment.
 - O = Observe what’s going on with your body, feelings, and thoughts. What physical sensations are you experiencing? What assumptions are you making?
 - P = Proceed with your activities, making an intentional choice to incorporate what you just learned.

When answering interview questions, do not feel compelled to rush quickly into your answer. It’s okay to take time to think before responding. If needed, you can also ask the interviewer to repeat a question or to skip the question temporarily and return to it later in the interview.

1. <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/how-to-use-mock-interviews-to-practice-interviewing-2061626#:~:text=A%20mock%20interview%20helps%20you,a%20formal%20list%20of%20questions>

DRESS FOR SUCCESS

Dress for Success

Your appearance for an interview should be designed to make a positive impression while keeping the focus on you. In other words, you do not want anything to distract from your interview.

What you wear depends on the workplace you're looking to join: dress for the work environment (is it Business, Business Casual, or Casual?).

Generally, there are 3 categories of business attire:

For more visual examples of attire, follow our Pinterest page:



For more visual examples of attire, follow our Pinterest page: https://www.pinterest.ca/LSECOOP/_saved/

Business

- usually a matched suit (skirt suit or pantsuit)
- collared shirt or blouse, white or plain in colour
- darker colours, which tend to look more formal

Business Casual

- Dress pants or skirt
- Dress shirt
- Optional: jacket or sweater

Casual

- Casual pants and skirts
 - Shirts with or without a collar, T-shirts without logos
 - [Check out this video on smart casual.](#)
-

MORE TIPS:

- If possible, find out the dress code of your target workplace. Then, take it one level up for the interview. In other words, err on the side of more formal: dress 20% better at an interview than you would on the job itself.
- Dress in clothes that make you feel good; you will project yourself more confidently.
- Try on your outfit; does it fit? Is it clean, in good repair, and wrinkle free?
- Are your shoes clean and polished?
- Practice good hygiene.
- Don't wear fragrances, as others may be sensitive.
- Keep accessories to a minimum.
- Check out the [York U Career Centre website for more tips to dress for success](#)

Media Attributions

- interview

BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Before, During and After the Interview

Before the Interview

You have been invited to an interview; congratulations! You have already put a lot of work into getting to this point; let's look at some powerful strategies for the interview. This will help you keep that positive momentum.

Technology

- Be sure you are familiar with the platform to be used, e.g., Zoom, Teams, etc...
- Make sure you have a strong internet connection and all your equipment is working, e.g. webcam, microphone.
- Position your camera to be angled slightly down at your eyes for optimal visuals.
- Turn off or mute your devices and ensure you will not have interruptions during the interview, such as a phone ringing.
- A noise-cancelling headset can help keep distractions to a minimum.
- Prepare to give your undivided attention. Close any programs or browser windows you won't need.
- Mute your microphone when you are not speaking.

Background

- Arrange a quiet, tidy, and uncluttered area with minimal distractions.
- Ensure your surroundings and background are clean and professional. Consider a virtual background (an option available in many platforms).
- Have a comfortable chair that looks clean (i.e., not torn up by your pet's nails, etc.).
- Before the call, let others in your home know you'll be in a meeting so they don't walk in on the call.

Desk Space

- Have a copy of your resume, the job description, any other important notes and documents, and a pen nearby.
- Allow enough table space to lay out your papers so you won't have to shuffle through them.
- Have a glass of water at the ready for the big day.

Attire

- Dress as professionally as you would for an in-person interview.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/jobsearchready1/?p=93#h5p-48>

Record yourself doing a practice interview! You can use the video camera on your smartphone or record yourself in a virtual meeting environment using a platform like Zoom. You can play the roles of both interviewer and candidate, but it can be very helpful to recruit someone else to act as the interviewer. Plus, you can get their feedback on your interview performance. After you finish recording, go back and review your performance. How did you do?

It can be helpful to get another person to watch the recording too, so they can offer you some constructive feedback. Be sure to evaluate not only how well you responded to each interview question but also how you conducted yourself overall during the “interview”. Practice makes perfect!

During the Interview

You have researched the employer and the job, and you have practiced answering a variety of interview questions. You have selected your interview outfit, and you have taken steps to ensure you are confidently prepared for your interview. Now let's look at some more strategies to make a great first impression at the interview itself.

Set the right tone before the interview starts:

1. Arrive or connect virtually a few minutes early.
2. Have copies of your resume at hand.
3. Have your reference information ready to provide.

Make a strong first impression in the first few minutes:

1. Greet the interviewer(s) with confidence and enthusiasm.
2. Smile.
3. Sit up straight and make eye contact.

Remember to be aware of your non-verbal communication – your body language.

Click each of the non-verbal behaviours to see what it may be communicating to a potential employer.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/jobsearchready1/?p=93#h5p-49>

*The following activity contains free-to-use images from both Unsplash and Pixabay; they can be found at the following links:

1. [man in red and gray v neck shirt wearing black sunglasses](#)
2. [girl covering her face with both hands](#)
3. [man wearing black and white checkered sport shirt](#)
4. [photo by MabelAmber](#)
5. [photo by Engin_Akyurt](#)
6. [boy in green jacket sits on folding padded chair near door inside room](#)

Clearly, your body language can send powerful messages. So too can your Communication Style. Let's look at 4 basic Communication styles.

Passive

- May show poor eye contact and/or body posture
- Does not express their needs or wants
- Avoids saying "no"
- Can lead to misunderstandings

Aggressive

- May use a loud, demanding voice
- Often makes intense eye contact
- May fail to listen
- May blame, criticize, or attack others

Passive-Aggressive

- Seems passive but feels powerless inside
- Becomes resentful and acts out in subtle, indirect ways
- Has difficulty voicing their needs
- May deny when there is a problem

Assertive

- Open communicator, yet not overbearing

- Can express own needs, desires, ideas, and feelings
- Expresses self in a way that is also considerate of others
- Can say no and use “I” statements well (I think, I feel, I want)



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/jobsearchready1/?p=93#h5p-50>



Phone interviews will have their own etiquette (as we’ve outlined already). If you are interviewing by phone, try to work in the following:

- If the interviewer is calling you, identify yourself when you answer: “Hello, Jamie Jobseeker speaking”.
- If you are calling the interviewer: “Hello, this is Jamie Jobseeker calling for Ms. Hiring Manager”. (Or, if they identify themselves when they answer, “Good afternoon Ms. Hiring. This is Jamie Jobseeker calling for our 1 p.m. phone interview.”)
- At the end of the call say, “Thank you for your time today. I appreciate it and I look forward to hearing from you”.

After the Interview

Shortly after the interview is the perfect time to reflect on the experience. This means thinking about not just what went well, but also what you can improve on for next time. [You can download this PDF featuring a list of questions that you can use to prompt this reflection.](#)

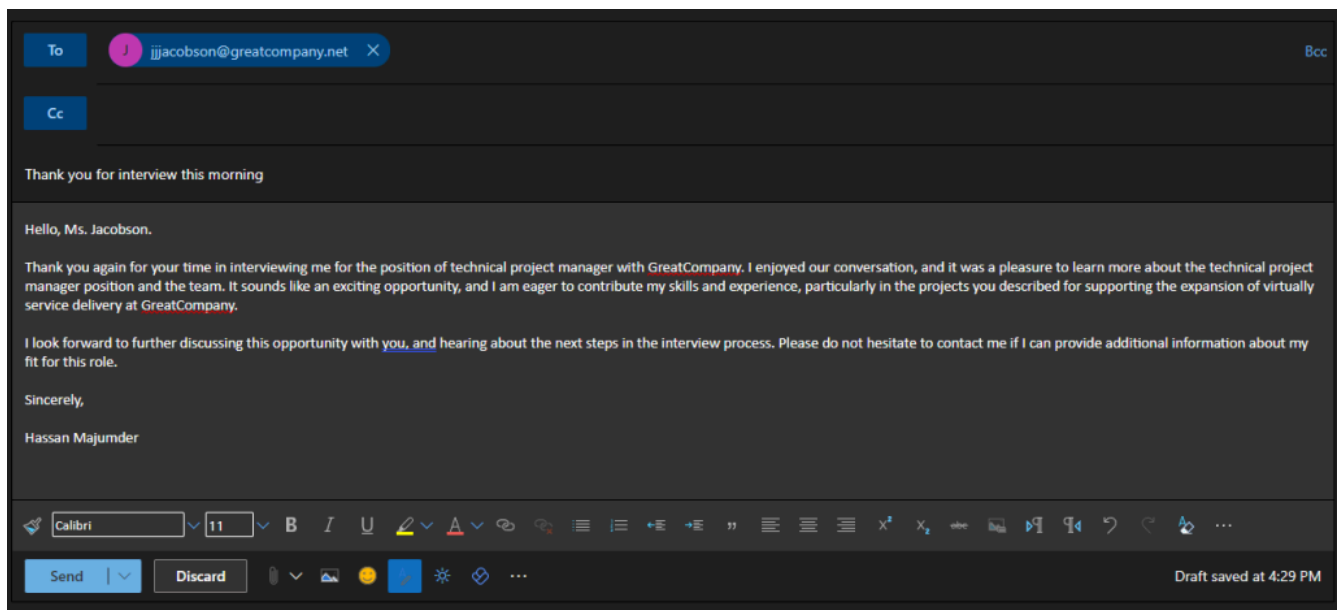


[You can use this Job Search Tracker spreadsheet from The Muse](#) to keep track of companies you research, jobs you apply to, interviews you attend, and steps you take to follow up!

Last but not least, you'll want to send a 'thank you' message. Yes, you thanked your interviewers at the end of the interview. But it is common practice to also offer a more formal message of thanks to interviewers within 2 business days of your meeting. Today this is commonly done via email. Here are some tips for writing a post-interview Thank You message, along with an example:

Emails are often informal, but this is a business communication and should be structured as a business email. Be sure to follow these guidelines (and example):

1. Type the e-mail address correctly and double-check before hitting Send!
2. Use an action-specific subject line.
3. Use normal sentence capitalization
4. Keep your sentences short
5. Use an appropriate greeting
6. Express gratitude and be specific.
7. Reaffirm your interest in the opportunity.
8. Mention something specific about the interview to jog the reader's memory and connect this message to your interview.
9. Express interest in next steps.
10. Invite contact.
11. Sign off with a complimentary close
12. Include a signature.
13. Edit and spell check before sending!



Are salary negotiations something you need to consider? Sometimes you'll be asked this in the interview, but you could also be asked to share your salary expectations before or after the interview. The timing depends on the company. [CERIC has some articles to review](#) to help you navigate questions and discussions around compensation.

1. [man in red and gray v neck shirt wearing black sunglasses](#)
2. [girl covering her face with both hands](#)
3. [man wearing black and white checkered sport shirt](#)
4. [photo by MabelAmber](#)
5. [photo by Engin_Akyurt](#)
6. [boy in green jacket sits on folding padded chair near door inside room](#)

DISCLOSURE, SALARY AND ILLEGAL QUESTIONS

Disclosure, Salary, and Illegal Questions

In this section, we'll talk about 3 areas of potential concern for some interviewees.

The Employment Standards Act covers many people working in Ontario. This law addresses many specifics around work, such as work hours, pay, leaves from work, holidays, vacation, and termination. To see if you are covered under this Act and to learn more, check out [Your guide to the Employment Standards Act](#).

On Disclosure

Disclosure refers to letting a potential or current employer know some sensitive information about you, such as self-identification with an equity-seeking group (e.g., BIPOC, 2SLGBTQIAA, person with a disability, etc.). Decisions about disclosure are very personal and can be an area of concern when you are engaging in career development activities like interviewing. Many people are unsure what to disclose, when to disclose it, or whether to disclose anything at all.

Related to this is the notion of accommodation: “A workplace accommodation is where an employer makes adjustments to the workplace for a person or group of people with unique requirements as a result of a characteristic protected under human rights law.”¹

The requirement for Canadian workplaces to offer accommodation applies not just to employees who have already been hired but to candidates during the recruitment and selection process as well.

1. <https://www.sterlingbackcheck.ca/blog/2017/12/what-are-workplace-accommodations/>

On Salary

Be prepared in case your interviewer asks about your salary expectations. Research the market rate for similar work in the area. Keep in mind that salary is affected by your skill level and qualifications, the local cost of living, labour market demand, and the mix of total compensation offered by the employer, such as through employee benefits.

You can consult [Canada's Job Bank](#) for wage information on your target occupation and your local labour market so that you can be prepared and have a pay range in mind. Consider what your lowest acceptable range of pay would be, as well as specific examples of your accomplishments, in case you are in a position to negotiate a higher wage. Additionally, [websites like Glassdoor will allow you to validate your pay range](#).

On Illegal Questions

Employers cannot ask a candidate questions that could reveal information about the candidate's race, religion, gender, marital status, politics, health, or other protected characteristics. Even if such questions are sometimes asked accidentally, they can contribute to discrimination and therefore should not be raised as part of a job interview.

Do you know that an employer legally can and cannot ask you in an interview? Let's find out



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/jobsearchready1/?p=83#h5p-47>

If you'd like to learn more, you can check out the [Steps to Justice resource](#) we used to craft the quiz above.

There are a number of options available if you are asked an illegal interview question:

- You can answer the question if you are comfortable doing so.
E.g. "Yes, I do have a driver's license, I see that it is a requirement for the job."
- You can explain your reason for not answering the question.
E.g. "I never talk politics at work because I know it's a sensitive topic."

- You can ask why the question is being asked.
E.g. “I’m not quite sure I understand. Could you please explain how the issue is relevant to the position?”
- You can refuse to answer the question.
E.g. “That question makes me uncomfortable. I’d prefer to move on to the next question.”

Every job searcher is unique; some will have to contend with aspects of the interview process that others will not, such as topics related to personal information. As always, the best way to have a positive interview experience is to be prepared.

RESOURCES

HOW TO RESEARCH COMPANIES

Employers are always interested in what you have learned about their company and why you want to work for them.

It is important to go into each interview knowing as much as you can about each company.

When you arrive for a job interview, the better prepared you are with your company research the better your chances of success.

If the first question an employer asks you is “what do you know about our company”.... and you have not done your research you will miss the opportunity to show your initiative and enthusiasm. The most important job interview information you need to know is this: “Failure to prepare is preparing to fail” (Benjamin Franklin). **WHY SHOULD YOU CONDUCT COMPANY RESEARCH?**

- The most important reason to research the company and the job opportunity before the interview so you can show the interviewer how your skills and abilities meet both the job requirements and the company needs.

- To demonstrate that you are the right candidate – you can use your research to tailor your answers by making them relevant and appropriate.

- By doing your homework, the employer will see that you have taken the time to find out about the job and the company **WHAT CAN YOU FIND OUT BEFORE THE INTERVIEW?**

- Brief company history such as when the company was established, the shareholders, expansion plans and mergers

- Basic facts such as size, organizational structure, locations, subsidiaries, holding company, key people
- Type of products and services the company offers
- Research who the major competitors are in the industry
- Who are their customers and target market; what % of the market share
- Find out who are their suppliers are
- Company culture including: mission, vision, values and policies
- Any news such as acquisitions, expansions, new products, management changes, challenges etc.

How to research companies continued... **WHERE CAN YOU FIND INFORMATION**

- The single best resource is the company’s website; go to your favorite search engine and type in the company name; scroll through all the information and make notes
- Read sections including: media releases, staff biographies

- Look specifically for information on corporate culture, upcoming opportunities and challenges the company is facing

- Search the company website for details about the position you are being interviewed for; try to find out information about the particular department and staff who work there

- Try to find information about the interviewer on the company website

- If the company does not have its own website, you can try typing in the company name and use different search engines such as: www.businessweek.com
- LinkedIn is a professional social network site where you can find information about companies and individuals.

NEURODIVERSITY JOB SEARCH RESOURCES

[7 Interview Tips for Neurodivergent Job Seekers \(HigherEdJobs\) \[Article\]](#)

Jobseekers who choose to disclose that they are neurodivergent can “position themselves to self-advocate throughout the application and screening processes, which can be helpful.” This can also help the jobseeker ascertain if the company would be a good fit for them. Other tips include rehearsing prior to an interview, sharing visual examples such as a portfolio during an interview and debriefing with a trusted person after an interview.

[Interview Tips for Neurodivergent Job Seekers \(Thrive Autism Coaching\) \[Article\]](#)

Thrive, an autism life coaching service, provides neurodivergent jobseekers with advice on what to do before, during and after an interview, as well as tips on how to seek accommodations. For example, using stress management techniques before the interview can be helpful. The article also recommends developing self-advocacy skills to ask for accommodations.

[Interview Tips for Neurodivergent Job Seekers \(Concordia University\) \[Article\]](#)

The career hub at Concordia University advises jobseekers to “know your neuro-exceptional strengths and struggles,” as that can be a common question in an interview. As well, disclosing neurodivergence is a personal choice and may make asking for accommodations easier. Interviewers who are aware of accommodations can prepare ahead of time for the interviewee.

[Embracing Neurodiversity: Guidance for Jobseekers \(Understanding Recruitment\) \[Article\]](#)

Advocating for accommodations during an interview can be important for the neurodivergent jobseeker. Accommodations may include changing the interview format or providing questions in advance.

[Job Readiness: A workbook for autistic jobseekers \(NeurodiversityHub\) \[Workbook\]](#)

This extensive workbook covers many topics that can guide neurodivergent jobseekers in their job search, including how to prepare for an interview, the STAR template to help in answering interview questions and

practice questions, which include information on why the question is being asked. The workbook also has tips on how to handle a phone interview and an in-person interview.

[‘A guide to Lauren’: How my personal autism handbook transformed my experience at work](#)[Article]

After being diagnosed autistic at 27, figuring out how to approach this at work has been one of the most difficult things for me. *Who do I tell? How much do I tell them? How weird is too weird? How open is too open? What if I seem quite different? Will people still like me?*

RESOURCES FOR CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT

[Linkedin Interview Practice Questions with feedback](#)

[Convert Your LinkedIn Profile Into An Online Portfolio](#)

[Indeed Career Guide](#)

[Resume catalogue from Thompson Rivers University](#)

[Sample of a combination resume](#)

INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

Interview Checklist

Before the Interview

- Research the Company (History, products and services, mission, values, etc.)
- Re-read the job Description
- Practice Common job interview Questions and your answers
- Think of your questions to ask
- Prepare a list of specific accomplishments that are specific to the job
- Practice with a mock Interview

Day Before the Interview

- Prepare your interview clothing; make sure it is clean, wrinkle-free, and fits properly.
- Get Plenty of rest the night before
- Plan your route with an estimated time
- Gather everything you need:
 - Directions and Contact information
 - Resume Copies
 - References
 - Notepad
 - Pen
 - A Smile

Day of the Interview

- Eat a healthy meal before the interview, and bring a breath mint
- Leave plenty of time before the interview to account of any issues

After the interview,

- Thank them for their time
- Send a follow-up thank-you email

REFERENCE SHEET EXAMPLE

Reference Page Template (remove this title if using/before sending)

Copy and paste your resume heading here

Reference Name

Job Title & Name of company they work for

Contact Information: email, personal phone number or business phone number

Relationship to you: Optional

Reference Name

Job Title & Name of company they work for

Contact Information: email, personal phone number or business phone number

Relationship to you: Optional

Reference Name

Job Title & Name of company they work for

Contact Information: email, personal phone number or business phone number

Relationship to you: Optional

RESOURCES FOR JOBSEEKERS WITH LEARNING DISORDERS

[Dyscalculia at Work \(Succeed with Dyslexia\) \[Webinar\]](#)

This on-demand webinar delves into how dyscalculia manifests in adults. Drawing from lived experiences, the webinar provides a holistic understanding of dyscalculia in professional settings and offers additional resources for ongoing support. Succeed with Dyslexia also has several other [on-demand webinars](#) exploring workplaces and learning disorders.

[Dyslexia. A Gift for Professionals \(Specialisterne\) \[Blog post\]](#)

In this blog post, a sales professional with dyslexia shares how their learning differences have become an asset in their career. They highlight the unique strengths that individuals with dyslexia often possess, such as creativity and resilience, while offering practical tips for managing challenges like decoding new information. This post offers insights for both jobseekers and employers on creating supportive work environments.

[Employment Counselling for People with Developmental and Learning Disorders \(Alis\) \[Article\]](#)

This resource offers practical strategies for supporting jobseekers with learning disabilities, focusing on improving organization, time management and task completion. It provides step-by-step approaches such as using adaptive tools like voice recognition software, creating checklists and practising social behaviours in a structured environment. Career professionals can use these strategies to help clients navigate job searches and perform more effectively in the workplace.

[How to Support Employees with Learning Disabilities \(Randstand\) \[Article\]](#)

This article provides practical guidance for employers looking to create an inclusive work environment for employees with learning disabilities. It highlights key strategies such as eliminating written tests, offering flexible deadlines and implementing structured processes to help employees thrive.

[How'd You Get THAT Job?! \(understood.org\) \[Podcast\]](#)

This podcast series explores the diverse career paths of individuals with learning and thinking differences. The series features interviews with professionals who share how they found fulfilling careers that align with their

unique ways of learning. One episode offers [advice from a career coach with ADHD and dyslexia](#), providing practical tips for navigating the workplace. Understood.org also offers additional resources on [workplace supports](#) for people with learning disabilities.

[Important Context for Counselling People with Learning Disorders \(Alis\) \[Article\]](#)

This resource provides an in-depth overview of specific learning disorders, including their impact on skills such as reading, writing and math. It covers common disorders like dyslexia, dyscalculia and dysgraphia, offering insights into how these conditions can affect job performance. The article also highlights strategies for managing learning disorders in the workplace and includes links to related resources on supporting individuals with learning disabilities.

[Learning Disabilities Association of Canada \[Association\]](#)

Find links to provincial/territorial associations, as well as advocacy research and position papers.

[Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario \[Association\]](#)

This website has several resources for individuals with learning disorders and their support networks including [online workshops and courses](#), [personal stories and reflection](#) and [articles about LDs and employment](#). You can also find useful general information from their sister site, [LD@Home](#), including [common terms, definitions of and myths](#) around learning disabilities, understanding learning disabilities and current research, as well as information about [workplace disclosure](#) and [accommodations](#).

[Project GOLD \(JVS Toronto\) \[Program\]](#)

Project GOLD is a free program designed to help adults with learning disabilities, ADD or ADHD gain a better understanding of their unique strengths and challenges to secure meaningful employment. The program offers personalized job search support, including resume modification, job coaching and workshops, while also aiding with workplace accommodations and disclosure.

[We Need to Talk About NVLD in the Workplace \(FastCompany\) \[Article\]](#)

This article highlights the unique challenges of Non-Verbal Learning Disorder (NVLD) in the workplace, a lesser-known learning disorder. It explains how individuals with NVLD, who often excel in verbal communication but struggle with nonverbal tasks, can be misunderstood and overlooked in professional settings. The article advocates for better workplace accommodations and awareness, emphasizing the importance of aligning job responsibilities with the strengths of employees with NVLD to foster a more inclusive work environment.