

Recruitment Guidance: Facilitator Guide

Overview and Purpose

This session is designed to provide students with some guidance on starting the process of applying for jobs. It includes advice on managing applications, writing CVs and cover letters, as well as interview technique.

With an increase in apprenticeships and school/college leaver roles, it is important that students are prepared for their transition into the workplace, and the different processes they will go through to get there.

(Note: we recognise that all recruitment processes are different. This session is to start students thinking about this topic. It aims to provide guidance on developing skills that will be transferable across different applications).

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Consider what they might look for in a role
- Think about what will be required of them when applying for a job
- Begin to develop an understanding of the skills used in writing applications and interviews

Preparation / Materials Needed

- Chart Paper / Post It Notes
- Marker pens
- Download the session PowerPoint

For virtual delivery, students can make their own notes (on paper or on a device) and can download their own copy of the slides.

Agenda

Getting Started (5 min)

- What do you already know about applying for jobs?

The Application Process (45 min)

- Applying for different jobs
- Writing CVs and Cover Letters
- Interviews and STAR technique

Wrap-up & Reflection (10 mins)

Vocabulary

CV: A CV (curriculum vitae) is a short, written summary of the experience, qualifications and abilities that you have, relating to a role you want.

Cover letter: This is a short letter that you write to a potential employer, introducing yourself, your abilities, and the reasons you are right for a certain role. This can demonstrate your fit for a job, as well as a little of your personality.

STAR Technique: A technique for structuring answers to interview questions, breaking down an experience or anecdote into 4 stages: Situation, Task, Action, and Result.

Teaching Guide

Section 1: Getting Started (5 minutes)

Share the agenda of the session on the screen (slide 2).

Ask the students to discuss in pairs, before spending **2 minutes** writing down anything that they already know about applying for jobs. Ask them to think about the sort of things that they might need to consider when entering the recruitment process, and the things that might make them more or less suited for a particular role. This should include things like their skills, technical abilities, interests, qualifications, and goals.

If they have extra time, they should think about the things they might be expected to do as part of a job application process: including submitting a CV or cover letter, providing their official documents, providing references, and completing interviews.

Debrief the whole class back together for **2 minutes** asking each table in turn their thoughts. This is simply to get the students thinking about what they already know and also assess their current understanding.

Section 2: The Application Process (45 minutes)

Choosing a role

It is important that your job is the right fit for you! Explain that students should be thinking carefully about the sort of roles that they would like to do and be suited for before they start making applications. Emphasise that they should consider their own strengths and weaknesses, as well as the goals that they have for their career.

Read through the points on slide 6, explaining that they should think about their skills and experience, the things that they enjoy doing, their long term plans, the qualifications that they have, and the lifestyle that they want to live. These points should all inform the types of role that you begin to apply for.

Move on to slide 7, explaining to the students that it is likely that they will find themselves making several applications for a number of different roles. Managing this can be challenging, as all roles will have slightly different requirements, as well as different deadlines.

Carefully managing your time can make this process much easier, and help you to avoid making silly mistakes such as missing deadlines. Some people may find it helpful to have one document that contains all the relevant information for their different applications clearly laid out. The tracker on slide 7 is as an example of one way in which this can be done.

As you may need to make several applications, it is likely that at some point in your career you will face rejection from a job role. Emphasise the point on slide 8 that this is not a negative reflection on your character or ability, and can actually be a positive opportunity!

Like everything else, applying for jobs is a skill that you will develop through practice. Rejection provides a great opportunity to learn and grow, and to develop your resilience. It is incredibly valuable to go over the feedback that is provided during a job application, to work on sharpening your skills.

Ask the students to think about a time in their life when they have been rejected, or been unable to achieve their goals. How did this help them grow? What did they learn from that experience?

Writing CVs and Cover Letters

Read through the definitions of a CV and a cover letter on slide 10, giving a brief overview of what each document is and what it should contain. Although not every job application will require you to provide one or both of these documents, knowing how to write them is an incredibly useful skill, as it teaches you to talk about your skills and experiences in relation to a specific role.

Tips for CV writing (slide 11):

- **Tailor your CV to each application:** you should have a template version of your CV, which you can adapt slightly for each role that you apply for, making sure that the information you include is relevant to the job.
- **Match to the job description:** when adapting your CV, try to match the language that you use to that used in the job description. This ensures that you clearly demonstrate the ways in which you fulfil the requirements for the role.
- **Be concise:** your CV should be concise - try to keep it to a maximum of two sheets of A4. You should be able to display your skills in this space; ensure that you don't include irrelevant information.
- **Consider a skills based CV:** this is a structure of CV that is focused around the transferable skills that you have, rather than the details of your work history. You should choose a few skills that you think are relevant to the job, using examples from your education/work experience to demonstrate how you have used these skills.
- **Including contact details:** include your phone number and email address, so that potential employers can contact you. Remember to make sure that your email address is suitable for a professional work environment: for example `firstname.lastname@domain.tld`.
- **Provide achievements, not just responsibilities:** when talking about your work experience, it is important that you provide information on what you were able to learn/achieve in the role, rather than just listing the responsibilities you held.
- **Only include relevant information:** a wide variety of activities can be relevant for a job application, but it is important to outline how the experience would help you in the role - don't just list hobbies you enjoy, talk about the skills that they have helped you develop.
- **Using clear formatting:** make sure to use a clear and consistent font, such as Arial, Calibri, or Times New Roman. Ideally this should be in 11pt, with clear spacing to make sure that your CV is easy to read.

Activity: Ask the students to choose one of the hobbies listed on slide 12 to write about as if they were writing their own CV. They should think about the skills that they could develop through an activity such as this, and how they could be useful in the workplace.

Get the students to feedback on their ideas, before showing the example answers on slide 13: all of these hobbies demonstrate essential soft skills, such as project management, communication, leadership, and teamwork.

Tips for writing a cover letter (slide 14):

- **Demonstrate your research:** a cover letter is your chance to show an employer how much you want the role. You should be able to use the research you have done into the company to demonstrate that you would be a good fit for the company.
- **Make sure to include your contact details:** as with a CV, it is important that your employer knows how they can contact you.
- **Be concise:** don't waffle or include unnecessary detail. A cover letter should be around 3-4 paragraphs.
- **Display your skills:** use examples from your work experience to demonstrate how you can fulfill the skills and values that are listed in the job description. Using the language of the job description can be very useful to structure your answer.
- **Show that you understand the role:** you should be able to demonstrate that you understand what would be required of you, were you to be given the job, and that you would be able to fulfil those requirements.
- **Be reflective:** a cover letter should be reflective, rather than descriptive. Instead of listing all of your achievements, think about how a few relevant achievements have helped you develop the abilities that would make you a valuable addition to the workplace.
- **Double check SPAG:** it is important that you come across as a competent professional - double-checking your spelling and grammar before submitting your letter is an easy way to make sure that you do this.
- **Match the format of your CV:** as with your spelling and grammar, formatting is an easy way to make sure that you look professional. Your cover letter should use the same format of your CV, and be clear and easy to read.

Interviews and STAR technique

Show the students the outline of the STAR technique on slide 16. STAR stands for Situation, Task, Action and Result. This is a strategy for structuring your response to interview questions. It is designed to help you to break down the details of an experience that you have had, or a scenario that you can imagine, so that you can provide a succinct, relevant explanation of how you have used/would use your skills to overcome a challenge.

Situation: set the scene, and provide some brief context on what situation you were in.

Task: explain what was required of you in the situation. What challenge did you have to overcome?

Action: what did you do to solve your problem, or complete your task?

Result: what were the results of your actions? Did you manage to complete your task? You can use numerical data or qualifications to support your achievements here.

Read through the example of a STAR technique interview answer on slide 17 with the students.

Activity: ask the students to create an answer to the practice interview question on slide 18. They should use the STAR technique to do this, breaking it down into easy stages. After 5 minutes, ask for volunteers to share their answers with the class.

A lack of confidence is one of the most limiting factors when it comes to participating in an interview. Talk through the tips on slide 19 with the class.

- An interview is not an interrogation, it is a two way conversation, which should allow both you and the interviewer to find out more about each other, and how you might fit with the role.
- You may find it helpful to spend some time reflecting on your past experiences, thinking about what you have learned. Having a range of anecdotes to draw from can help you to feel more confident and prepared in an interview.
- It is perfectly okay to ask questions during an interview! If you don't hear a question, or don't understand what is being asked of you, it is always better to ask your interviewer for clarification than to try to make up an answer to a question you don't understand.
- Being prepared and practiced is one of the most important tools for creating confidence in an interview. Knowing that you have prepared responses that you can adapt to different situations will allow you to feel at ease in the conversation, and prevent you from panicking about what to say.
- Thinking and speaking about yourself in a positive tone is also incredibly important for confidence. You should be able to feel proud of your achievements, and understand when you have worked successfully.

Section 3: Wrap Up & Reflection (10 minutes)

Time for students to reflect on what they have learnt from this session. Ask students to select one of the reflective questions on slide 21 to answer, thinking about the skills that they have exercised throughout the lesson. Choose a few students to share.

These questions should enable them to reflect on their skill development, and consider how they can draw on their past experiences to support them in their career journeys.

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