

# Applications

## Why Employers Use Applications

Applications are designed to assist employers to quickly spot an applicant's inexperience and other weaknesses. An employer does this to screen out applicants.

## Key Principals in Using an Application

Use your application to help make a good first impression.  
Avoid answers that can screen you out.

## The Employer's goal is to select workers who:

Can do the job  
Will be reliable  
Can be trusted  
Will work hard

## General Tips for Completing Applications

### Before you approach the employer:

1. **Be prepared** - take your resume, portfolio or a completed application and two **black pens**. It is important to bring names, addresses, dates, and other information you are likely to need with you.

### When completing the application, remember:

1. You are probably being watched and timed by the receptionist.
2. Read over the entire application first **and follow directions carefully**.
3. Don't erase, scratch out or leave blanks.
4. **Be neat**. Stay within the boxes. **Print carefully**. Grammar and spelling must be perfect. If they cannot read the application, the application may be discounted!
5. **Fill in every blank**. If a question doesn't apply to you, write **N/A (not applicable)** or draw a dash (-) in the space provided.
6. List the specific job/s you are interested in. Never write "anything." Make sure you do your homework. You might even need to do some research or call to find out specific job titles. You can also put down a general title or write in a couple of job titles that you may be interested in.
7. Always be honest when completing applications!
8. Use only positive information. If the response is negative or requires an explanation, write "will discuss in interview." Avoid words such as "**fired**" or "**quit**." Better explanations

include: no career advancement, return to school, relocated, personal or will discuss in the interview.

9. When asked to specify salary requirement, it's best to use phrases like "will discuss in interview," "open," or "negotiable," rather than lock yourself into a specific salary range. If you have little or no work experience, you may put "minimum wage," or "entry level."
10. When picking up or returning an application, make sure you are dressed and groomed appropriately because the employer may interview you on the spot or may later ask the receptionist's impression of your appearance.
11. Do not fold or crumple the application. It's important to ask for another application if this is the case.
12. Make sure you have a good message phone number.
13. Make sure the address you use is one where you can be reached for several months. If you will be moving soon, give a forwarding address or permanent address of a relative or friend. Just be sure you ask permission to use that person's address first!
14. Sign and date the application.
15. Re-read it twice before giving it to the employer. Did you complete everything? Does it reflect you and your abilities?
16. Be aware of illegal questions. You have the choice not to provide answers to illegal questions.

## **Appearance counts:**

Employers often rely on first impressions. They will be looking at the way you dressed, your behavior, how you asked for an application and the way you completed the application.

There are all different types of applications. Some are short and simple. Others are long and complex. However, most applications will ask for the same information.

## **Before you fill out an application, prepare for questions such as:**

- What position are you applying for?
- What hours are you available to work? Mornings? Evenings? Weekends? From what time to what time?
- Can you work overtime? (Employers are looking for individuals who are able to be flexible)
- You may be asked how you will get to work. Employers want to know that you can get to work everyday and on time. Consider how you will get to work everyday and make sure you have a plan in place and ready to go (Walk, Bike, Car, Cab, Bus, Get a Ride).

Remember, employers use applications to weed out candidates!

## **The Following are examples of why applications are rejected:**

- Failed to follow instructions
- Submitted an incomplete or unreadable application
- Requested salary higher than that publicized
- Left gaps in work history
- Had been “fired” from several jobs
- Had an unstable work history
- Failed to describe skills

## **Frequent complaints about applications received by employers:**

- Applications completed sloppily or could not read due to messy or illegible handwriting
- Items crossed out
- Crumpled up
- Application incomplete (DO NOT write “see resume” on your application)
- Names and addresses incomplete or unreadable
- Indicated “anything” for type of work sought
- Work history reversed; did not put most recent job first
- Vague descriptions of skills, experience, and accomplishments
- Left important questions blank. Gave no indication as to whether the blank was an oversight, omission or not applicable (N/A) to the individual.
- Failed to sign and date the application

## **Reference Checks**

A reference is a person an employer can contact to find out more about you. Employers will want to contact your previous employers to find out if you are a good worker.

You may also use other people who know you well such as teachers, coaches or supervisors. You cannot use your parents or relatives for a reference. Make sure to contact the individuals you want to use and ask their permission to use them as a reference.