



The job application may be your only opportunity to convince an employer that you are a good match for the company's job opening. You may be competing with dozens of other job seekers. How can you make sure your application stands out and leads to an interview and doesn't end up in the pile that won't be considered? Employers tell you what they look for in a job application.

WHAT ITEMS DO EMPLOYERS LOOK AT FIRST?

Completeness and Neatness

- Blanks or incomplete answers may disqualify you so make sure you answer every question. Bring information with you so that you can give dates, company names, names of supervisors, names of references, addresses and phone numbers for each. Make sure you print neatly. Most employers prefer you to use ink.

Work History

- Relate your experience to the job opening. Employers also look at how long you were at each job.

WHAT SHOULD I PUT IN "POSITION APPLIED FOR?"

- Never just put the word "anything" or "doesn't matter." Be specific and honest about what you are looking for. If you don't know what kind of positions the company has, ask someone. A general position like "warehouse" or "clerical" may be appropriate if you don't know specific job titles.

SHOULD I GIVE A MINIMUM SALARY?

- Be realistic about the minimum you will accept. Put it on the application if you will not work for less.
- If you are willing to negotiate it's okay to put "negotiable." It's okay to put in a salary range.

IF I QUIT OR GOT FIRED FROM A PREVIOUS JOB, WHAT SHOULD I DO?

- Don't lie. It's better to volunteer termination reasons; don't make the employer have to ask. List negative reasons in a positive way.
- If you were terminated for a reason such as absenteeism, make sure you solve the problem that caused you to miss work. You could put on the application "Terminated - I was having car problems and missed work but now have good transportation."
- Don't make negative comments about a former employer. You can put a statement such as "quit - happy to discuss at interview" or "quit - better opportunity."

WHAT IF I HAVE A SPOTTY WORK HISTORY?

- Gaps that aren't explained are red flags to employers. Explain reasons for leaving short-term jobs. Job-hopping is negative if not explained.

WHAT IF I HAVE NEVER WORKED?

- Explain what you have learned from life's experiences and show how they can benefit the employer.
- List extra-curricular and volunteer activities, highlighting skills that can be transferred to the job you are applying for.

WHAT IF I HAVE LIMITED READING, WRITING OR SPELLING SKILLS?

- Be honest about personal limitations. Complete the application yourself. Be sure your application is complete even if your spelling isn't very good. If you are attending classes, such as Adult Basic Education or GED, to upgrade your skills put that information on the application.

WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE A TELEPHONE?

- Most employers require you to have a telephone or a reliable telephone contact where you can receive messages. If you do give a message number, check with that person frequently to make sure you get messages quickly.

WHO SHOULD I PUT FOR REFERENCES?

- Have both personal and business references ready. Don't use relatives. Be sure your references know that you are using them. Have complete contact information with you, including addresses and telephone numbers.

WHAT IF I HAVE CONVICTIONS ON MY RECORD?

- Employers can legally ask if you have been convicted of a felony. Background checks are common so do not lie on the application.
- Don't apply for positions that may be inappropriate for your criminal history. Explain how you have learned from your mistake.

SHOULD I INCLUDE RÉSUMÉS, REFERENCE LETTERS, CERTIFICATES, ETC.?

- Include a résumé if you have one. Most employers do not want other things included. If you do decide to include something, make it no more than one page. Have all of these documents with you at an interview in case you are asked for them.

HOW SHOULD I DRESS WHEN I GO TO FILL OUT AN APPLICATION?

- Dress appropriately for the position. Always be clean and neat. Remember you are making your first impression. It should be a good one.

POCKET RÉSUMÉ

The information below is often requested on a job application.
Fill in the Pocket Résumé ahead of time and take it with you as a reference.
Always go to your interview prepared (have ID's, Social Security card,
driver's license and driving record and special certifications handy).

Education (name and location of high school, college, and/or trade school attended):

Highest Grade Completed: _____ **Courses/Major:** _____

Degree/Certificate: _____ **Years Attended:** _____

Work History (include most recent job first):

Company: _____ **Dates Worked:** _____

Address: _____ **City:** _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Job Title: _____ **Pay:** _____

Duties: _____

Company: _____ **Dates Worked:** _____

Address: _____ **City:** _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Job Title: _____ **Pay:** _____

Duties: _____

Company: _____ **Dates Worked:** _____

Address: _____ **City:** _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Job Title: _____ **Pay:** _____

Duties: _____

References: Bring the name, address, and phone number of three references (ask permission before using).

The Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation is an equal opportunity program. Auxiliary aids and services are available, upon request, to individuals with disabilities.

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Employers Talk About ... **Effective Job Applications**

Top Three Pieces of Advice:

- 1. Be thorough, neat, and detailed. Make sure your handwriting is legible.*
- 2. Apply alone (not with a group of friends or your children).*
- ..3. Communicate what skills you can bring to the employer.*

...and more



Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation

Martin O'Malley, Governor

Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor