MCQUEEN HIGH SCHOOL

Job Readiness Program



Interview Packet

Made Possible by the support of McQueen’s Partners in Education:

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HOW TO FIND A JOB

1. Identify the kind of job you are interested in.

* Ask friends, neighbors, and relatives for leads.
* Check a company’s website for employment opportunities.
* Ask owners/managers at the store you are interested in working for if they will have any openings soon.
* Ask the Career Center for leads.
* Read the classified sections of newspapers on-line or in print.
* Talk with employment agencies, JOIN, school counselors.

1. Research the job before you apply.
   * Visit the company’s website.
   * Find out what company policies are about hiring, dress, shifts, responsibilities.
   * What kind of work/product does the company provide?
   * Names of the company’s executives/managers?
   * What is the company’s major goal?
   * Does the company have more than one location?
   * Is the company private, public, a franchise, or owner/operator?
   * Call ahead to ask if you can pick up an application and take it home to complete, or if you must complete the application in their office.
   * Inquire if an interview is normally conducted when the application is submitted, or if someone will call you for an interview.
   * Ask what the job involves.
2. Prepare yourself by thinking ahead.

* What are the skills, strengths, and abilities you bring to this job?
* Why do you want this job?
* What experiences do you have that could be transferred to this job?
* Be positive and courteous, smile, and speak clearly when contacting the company.
* Have your master application complete and available so you can use the information to properly complete the application for a company.

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| INTERNET SITES THAT CAN HELP | |
| www.careers.msn.com | www.careerbuilder.com |
| www.monster.com | www.renohelpwanted.com |
| www.career-wizard.com | www.dllr.state.md.us/county/brochures |
| www.Topusajobs.com | www.collegeview.com/careers |
| www.job-interview.net | www.office.microsoft.com |
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BUILDING A RESUME

Your resume should:

* **be clean and neat.** Errors leave a poor impression, no matter how good the resume.
* **be visually interesting.** Leave white space, use bullets and easy to read type, double space between sections.
* **be brief.** Preferably one page in length, or a maximum of two pages.
* **be organized.** Group information together under headings: education, experience, skills.
* List education and experience in reverse chronological order, including dates. includeskills relevant to the position.
* **include references.** Be sure to ask permission of those you list as references BEFOREwriting their name on your resume. Do not list family or relatives as references. References should be a professional adult who is credible and able to highlight your strengths.
* **be descriptive.** Use action words, but do not use “I”. If you have no “real” job experience,there are other ways to sell yourself as a worthy employee.

**Volunteer work**: If you have done volunteer work for your church, scouts, club, organization, or just helping neighbors, list that as experience. Highlight volunteer work that required a regular schedule and punctuality. Emphasize your ability to be timely and responsible. Yard work, errands, babysitting or other chores may not have been paid, but are good experience. List each as a job, list the duties required, and emphasize the level of responsibility.

**Paid jobs**: If you received payment for any kind of task, such as babysitting, housework, yard work, etc., include that as work experience. Ask those you have worked for to provide a reference and include their contact information.

**School activities**: Extra-curricular activities require commitment and responsibility, which are valuable job skills. List sports or clubs, emphasizing the skills gained while involved. Team sports require practice, dedication and teamwork. Team players are valuable employees, so be sure to mention that as a skill.

**Academic achievement**: If you are proud of your academic achievement, mention that. Getting good grades shows dedication and intelligence, which are qualities that employers like. Any honors you list are a “plus.”

**Highlight your skills:** Employers are interested in employees who perform well on a regular basis and use daily living skills applied to a job. Below is a list of skills employers think good workers need to have. Choose three or four to include on your resume, but be able to back up these attributes with real-life experiences that you can talk about in your interview.

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| **SOFT SKILLS** are self-management and people skills.  **SOME EXAMPLES INCLUDE:**  punctual, efficient, enthusiastic, positive, courageous, dependable, respectful, independent, ambitious, courteous, accurate, artistic, perfectionist, competent, motivated, humorous, creative, Considerate, flexible, considerate, dedicated, confident, knowledgeable, productive, industrious, cooperative, adventurous, mature, honest, open-minded | **HARD SKILLS** are learned in school and from books.  **SOME EXAMPLES INCLUDE:**  proficiency in computer applications, second language, advanced writing skills, AP/honors coursework, accounting, finance, programming, project management, specialized coursework |

**FULL NAME**

Complete Street Address

City, State Zip

Phone Number With Area Code

e-mail address

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **OBJECTIVE** | One sentence that states the job title and company you want to work for. |
| **EDUCATION** | Name of high school, city, state  Year to present  List others, if appropriate, in same format, most recent first. |
| **EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE** | Job title, Company/Employer, City, State  Month, year to Month, year  Responsibilities/skills  Job title, Company/Employer, City, State  Month, year to Month, year  Responsibilities/skills |
| **SKILLS& ABILITIES** | List hard skills you can do and soft skills that describe you. |
| **ACTIVITIES&** | School, church, community involvements |
| **ACHIEVEMENTS** |  |
| **REFERENCES** | Full Name, Job Title, Company  City, State Area code phone number  Full Name, Job Title, Company  City, State Area code phone number  Full Name, Job Title, Company  City, State Area code phone number |

**SAMPLE RESUME**

**JOSEPH SCHMOE**

1234 Elm Street

Reno, NV 89523

(775) 123-4567

josephschmoe@gmail.com

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **OBJECTIVE** | To work in a sales position at Downtown Video. |
| **EDUCATION** | Robert McQueen High School, Reno, NV  2012 to present  Flagstaff High School, Flagstaff, AZ  2011 to 2012 |
| **EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE** | **Childcare provider, Mrs. Alice Schmoe, Reno, NV**  June, 2011 to present  Care for school age children during the summer and after school, monitor homework, provide healthy snacks and physical activities.  **Gardener, Mr. Fred Rogers, Reno, NV**  spring and summers, 2010 to present  Mow lawns weekly, provide weed control, and maintain watering in Mr. Roger’s absence. |
| **SKILLS & ABILITIES** | Punctual and dependable; learn quickly and enjoy working as a member of a team. |
| **ACTIVITIES&ACHIEVEMENTS** | Drama Guild, Math Club President, JROTC,GPA 3.42 |
| **REFERENCES** | Fred Rogers, CPA, Price/Waterhouse (retired)  Reno, NV (775) 787-1234  Iona Anderson, Counselor, Flagstaff High School  Flagstaff, AZ (928) 600-0107  Sam Rodriguez, Drama Teacher, McQueen High School  Reno, NV (775) 746-5880 |

HOW TO WRITE A COVER LETTER

The purpose of a cover letter is to state what you can do for the company. Think about what sets you apart from other applicants. What will make the hiring manager take a chance on you? A cover letter translates information on the resume as to how you can help the company.

Do your homework and find out about the company and the job for which you are applying. Know the qualities the company is looking for, and highlight the skills you know how to do.

Keep your letter positive and upbeat. This is not the place to write a sob story about your employment situation. Put yourself in the hiring manager's shoes. Would you call yourself in for an interview?

**PARTS OF THE COVER LETTER:**

**Return Address**

The return address is your address including street number and name, city, state, zip code, and the current date.**(SEE EXAMPLE ON PAGE 8.)**

**Inside Address**

The inside address is the address of the potential employer. Include their name and professional title, street number and name, city, state, and zip code. **(SEE EXAMPLE ON PAGE 8.)**

**Salutation**

It is best to address your letter to a specific person, but use “Dear Hiring Manager” if there is no way to find that out. Make sure to use the correct gender (Mr., Mrs., and Ms.) and spelling of the person’s name. Use “Dear Search Committee" if the decision will be made by committee.

**BODY PARAGRAPHS:**

**Opening Paragraph**

Hiring managers are busy and do not care to wade through fluff. Keep paragraphs short: two to three sentences. Your opening paragraph should clearly state the position for which you're applying. All managers think, “How can this person help our company?” Your opening may also include a synopsis of why you are a top candidate for the position. “Your position advertised in the Reno Gazette-Journal is an excellent fit with my qualifications. My background includes 3 years of retail experience.”

**Sell Yourself Paragraph**

This is where you write your sales pitch and outline the top reasons why you are worthy of an interview. When writing the body text, keep in mind that hiring managers want to know what you can do for them, not learn about your life story. Write how your credentials, motivation, and experience would benefit their operation. Review your top five selling factors (the ones you jotted down when doing your company research) and weave them into the body, perhaps as a bulleted list. Back up achievements with specific examples of how your performance benefited current and former employers. Precede your bulleted list with a statement such as “Highlights of my credentials include:” or “Key strengths I offer include:”

**Closing Paragraph**

Your final paragraph should generate a call for action, so express your strong interest in an interview and state that you will follow up soon to confirm your resume was received and discuss the possibility of meeting face-to-face. Include a thank you for considering you for the position.

**Complimentary Close and Your Name**

End with a professional close such as **Best regards**, **Sincerely**, or **Respectfully yours,** and your signature.

**SAMPLE COVER LETTER**

435 Bridgetower Drive

Reno, NV 89523

April 22, 2014

John Kingsmore

Kingsmore and Associates

222 Eastvale Avenue

Reno, NV 89303

Dear Mr. Kingsmore:

I am very interested in working for Kingsmore and Associates and using my education and experience as an office assistant to assist your company. I am responding to your advertisement in the Reno Gazette Journal on Sunday March 4, 2011 for a Receptionist/Office Manager, and I would like to be considered an applicant for this position.

My Business Management education and previous experience in competitive offices make me the qualified person you are looking to hire. My keyboarding rate is 65 words per minute, and I am proficient at all Microsoft Office applications. My experience includes handling multi-lined phones and working as a team member with colleagues. I am able to manage your office with the efficiency you expect, and guarantee your customers will receive the excellent service and courtesy they are accustomed to from your reputable company.

Thank you for your consideration of my application for the office assistant position. I am available for an interview at your convenience and would appreciate the opportunity to talk with you about employment with your company. I will contact you next week for an interview to discuss my qualifications and opportunities to work for your company.

Sincerely,

Maya Cheng

Maya Cheng

RESEARCHING THE COMPANY

**Researching the company you are applying to is a critical part the process of getting a job. Once you have chosen the company you are going to write in your résumé, cover letter and application, research specifics about the company.**

* Enter the name of the company in a search engine to find the company's Web site. Click on different sections such as About Us, Employment, Products, Services, Mission Statement, and Executive or Management Team. Read the News section to find out what is new or upcoming in the company. Remember important points to mention in the interview.
* Write down the address and name of the contact person to use in your cover letter. If the website does not list a person by name, use the phone number on the website to call the Human Resources Department and ask for the name of the contact person to include in your cover letter.
* Prepare a list of products and services from the website that the company offers. Use the list to emphasize in your cover letter how YOUR skills, knowledge, and experience could fit in and help the company.
* Get all relevant information about the specific job you are applying. Such information is usually mentioned in the job posting that you may have responded to. Knowing more about the company and the job you will be interviewed for will help you be better prepared.

ONLINE APPLICATION

**Most businesses have their applications on-line. To complete the application for the Job Readiness interview,**

1. Log onto [www.washoeschools.net/McQueen](http://www.washoeschools.net/McQueen)
2. Click on Counseling on the right side of the page.
3. Then click on the “Job Readiness Program” link.
4. Read the directions for "Employment Application for Sophomore Job Readiness Interviews."
5. Click on the "Application for Employment.docx" link
6. Download this application and save it in a location you can easily access.  This will allow you to work on the application over time.
7. Complete ALL blanks on the application with accurate information.
8. When you have completed the application in its entirety, proofread your application and print a copy.
9. Include the completed application in your packet for the interview.

OPTION:

If the company you are applying has an online application, you can complete the companies real online application, print a copy and include it in your packet for the interview.

# Most applications ask the same general questions:

HOW TO COMPLETE AN APPLICATION

* Personal information – name, address, contact information.
* Identification – social security card, and/or citizenship status.
* Education – list most recent or highest degree first.
* Employment experience - names of businesses, addresses of businesses, dates employed, supervisor names, phone numbers
* References – full names, company names and job titles, contact information
* If you are related to the company in any way.
* Emergency contact information.

Some businesses have computerized applications that need to be completed in the store or office. When applying for a position, bring a completed master application form with the above information with you to fill out an on-line application at the store or business.

Spelling counts. The job application is an important part of your first impression. When you hand the application to the employer, it must be as perfect: neat handwriting, perfect spelling, correct capitalization and punctuation.

Always tell the truth. Make sure the dates are correct and the information accurate. Good employers will do background checks if they are serious about hiring honest employees.

Your application must be NEATLY hand written, typed, or word processed.. When possible, make a copy of the original application, and complete a rough draft before writing the final.

Use black or blue pen only, preferably an erasable pen, in case you make a mistake on the final.

All blanks must be filled in. Write NA in the blank for questions that are not appropriate for you to answer or do not apply to you.

Do not use the word “anything” if you are asked what job you can do. “Anything” is not a job title.

Ask permission from the person BEFORE you write his/her name as a reference.

When the application is complete, read it again to check for mistakes.

Sign your name in cursive writing (script) where it asks for your signature. Do not print!

HOW TO PREPARE FOR AN INTERVIEW

You never get a second chance to make a first impression. When the interviewer likes you right away, he/she may assume that if you excel in one area (your image), you excel in others. Some employers make a subconscious hiring decision within SECONDS of meeting a job seeker.“You won’t get the part unless you look the part.”

* Be refreshed, prepared, and on time**. Be early if possible.**
* Research your potential employer’s business**.**
* Be prepared to ask questions.
* Bring your master application, resume, and cover letter.
* Dress appropriately**. Dress in a businesslike manner, not as if you were going on adate. Certain basics are essential:**
  + Wear the best you can afford. **Classic dressing is most appropriate. When you visit the work place of your potential employer, pay close attention to the clothing of workers about five years your senior, not to junior employees who are not yet proven.**
  + Be clean: **take a shower, use a deodorant-antiperspirant.**
  + No jeans, tank tops, or shorts
  + No dirty, unshined, scruffy shoes
  + No heavy perfumes or after shave lotions; **some people are allergic to fragrances.**
  + No heavy jewelry. Lose the nose ring, tongue barbell, and other piercings.
  + No dirty hands or nails; **no chipped nail polish, and stick with light or clear polish**
  + No gum, **but assume you have bad breath. Use mouthwash, a spray or a mint just before the interview.**
  + No dirty hair, no long hair, or heavy facial hair for males**. Extreme colored hair**and hairstyles highly discouraged!
  + Cover up any tattoos.

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| **FEMALES**  No heavy make-up  No make-up on the collar line  No long nails that begin to curve  No hosiery runs  No bra straps or undergarments showing  AVOID:  short hemlines  Plunging necklines  See-through fabrics  Tight-fitting clothing  Open-toed or sling back shoes  Make sure colors in outfit match  Exposed midriff  Flat shoes or low heals recommended | **MALES**  A fresh shave  Over-the-calf dark socks  No big, baggy pants  No nail polish  No hats of any kind  No underwear/undershirts showing  No dirty-looking socks |

DURING THE INTERVIEW

* Be confident, but not arrogant.
* Focus on your strengths; redirect weakness questions to talk about strengths.
* Maintain good eye contact.
* Listen carefully, think before answering a question, and speak clearly.
* Do not use slang or grammatically incorrect words (i.e. “yea”, “like”, “um.”)
* Be honest, and do not exaggerate.
* Sit up straight.
* Be interested and be interesting.
* Have pride in yourself and what you do.
* Go alone, but then meet someone after the interview so you can “debrief,” relax, and talk through your experience.
* Use a firm handshake—not a death grip and certainly not a dead fish.
* Be polite and courteous to everyone.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

* Say “Thank you” to those who have taken time to interview you.
* Reinforce with the interviewer that you can do the job and why.
* Ask for the job. “When will I hear back from you?”

Potential Interview Questions

**Take some time to think through and record possible responses to these potential interview questions.**

* Why are you interested in this position?
* What are you looking for in a job?
* What would you like best in a supervisor?
* What made you choose us as a prospective employer?
* What is your greatest strength?
* What are the areas in which you feel you could improve?
* What kind of practical experience (or volunteer work or school activity) have you had that would help you in this position?
* How have your extracurricular activities or volunteer work prepared you for work?
* Have you looked to your future? What are your expectations for yourself? What are your plans for the future?
* Describe a time when you:
  + Worked effectively with others.
  + Worked well under pressure.
  + Organized a major project.
  + Solved a difficult problem.
  + Accepted constructive criticism.
* Describe the person you most admire and why you admire them.
* Tell me about the responsibilities you have had at a current or previous job.
* What do you think it takes for a person to be successful?
* If your English teacher were sitting here with us, what would he/she tell us about you?
* Tell me about a time you had a problem with an adult and how you handled it.
* What do you enjoy most?

# A thank you letter should be written and delivered as soon as possible following the interview. The inside address and salutation should specifically name the person you spoke with in the interview.

HOW TO WRITE A THANK YOU LETTER

In the first paragraph, thank the interviewer by name or express your appreciation for the chance to meet with them to discuss the job and see the business. Use the word “meeting” rather than “interview” if it seems appropriate. Make some reference to your positive impressions about the company.

In the second paragraph, offer some new information or additional reasons for the employer to be interested in you for that job - perhaps a “goodie” that you didn’t mention in the interview. You might even link this new information to a problem or opportunity the company is experiencing. Repeat the job title you are applying for, and show continued interest in the position.

In the last paragraph, let the employer know that you would like to hear from him/her again and plant the idea in his/her mind of a phone call to you. Make it clear you are willing to come in and discuss the job further, if necessary.

6055 Lancer Street

Reno, NV 89523

April 23, 2014

Mr. Rudy Delacort

Director of Personnel

Distinguished Fidelity

175 Boylston Avenue

Boston, MA 01949

Dear Mr. Delacort:

Thank you for the opportunity to interview yesterday for the Analyst Trainee position. I enjoyed meeting you and learning more about Distinguished Fidelity.

Your organization appears to be growing in a direction that parallels my interests and career goals. The interview with you and your staff confirmed my initial positive impressions of Distinguished Fidelity, and I want to reiterate my strong interest in working with your company. My prior experience as treasurer of my class, plus my Business College training in accounting and finance, would enable me to progress steadily through your training program and become a productive member of your research team.

Again, thank you for your consideration. If you need any additional information from me, please feel free to call. I can be reached at (775) 555-5555

Sincerely,

Samuel Boyd

SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER

STUDENT INTERVIEW CANDIDATE RUBRIC

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Period \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* **Write your name, period, and teacher on this sheet and take it to your interview (with all your materials)!**
* **After your interview, bring this sheet back to your teacher (or you won’t receive your grade), with**

**all your materials!**

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| **TEACHER PORTION**  **\_\_\_\_\_\_Application** was typed on-line, complete,  printed from website **(15 points)**  Application is incomplete OR inaccurate but printed from  website (10 points)  Application handwritten but complete (10 points)  Application is handwritten and nearly blank (5 points)  No application is submitted (0 points)  \_\_\_\_\_ **Resume** is word processed, neat, clear,  and accurate **(40 points)**  Resume is hand-printed, neat, complete, and precise (30  points)  Resume is rough draft only (20 points)  Resume is messy (10 points)  Resume is started (5 points)  No resume is submitted (0 points)  \_\_\_\_\_ **Cover letter** is word processed, complete,  neat, and accurate **(15 points)**  Cover letter is hand–printed, neat, clear, and accurate  (12 points)  Cover letter is rough draft only (10 points)  Cover letter is messy and barely started (5 points)  No cover letter is submitted (0 points)  \_\_\_\_\_ **Thank you note** is typed or neatly  handwritten, no spelling or mechanical  errors **(10 points)**  \_\_\_\_\_ **Attire** is "business attire" (business suit,  dress slacks with shirt/tie for male; dress,  skirt or dress pants with blouse, limited  jewelry, more conservative for female)  **(20 points)**  **STUDENT’S POINTS: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/100** | **INTERVIEWER PORTION**   * **Arrived** on time— yes / no   Please rank the following traits with a:   * + (for exceptional) * (for average) * - (for needs improvement)   **\_\_\_\_\_\_Effort:** Student shows interest in interview  experience.    \_\_\_\_\_ **Confidence:** Student smiles, makes eye  contact, are poised, relaxed, and confident.    \_\_\_\_\_ **Competence:** Student is able to articulate  specific skills/experiences.  **Would you hire this applicant?**  **\_\_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_\_no \_\_\_\_\_maybe**  **Please be provide honest feedback to the applicant as to your answer:** |
| **STUDENT REFLECTION**  In a brief paragraph, based on the above feedback from your interviewer, what did you do well on and what do you need to improve on for the next time? | |

DAY OF THE INTERVIEW

Checklist:

* **Completed application**
  + Printed from McQueen website
* **Typed cover letter** 
  + Specific to the occupation and company
* **Typed resume**
  + Use recommended format.
* **Rating sheet**
  + Fill in the top of the form with name, teacher, and period.
* **Typed or neatly written thank you letter**
* Addressed to specific person at the company.
* **Come prepared to interview**
  + Practice potential interview questions.
* **Dress in appropriate clothing.**

Plan ahead **STUDENT REFLECTION**

In a brief paragraph, based on the above feedback from your interviewer, what did you do well on and what do you need to improve on for the next time?