

# Finding Your First Job



Service Canada  
[www.youth.gc.ca](http://www.youth.gc.ca)

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Finding a job isn't easy. It is often difficult to know how and where to begin. You need practical information on where to start, who to talk to and what to do.

This booklet can give you the skills you need to look for part-time or summer work. It will give you valuable advice and practical examples.

Use it as your how-to-find-a-job- guide. Good luck!!

# 1. Getting Ready for a Job Search

- You need a Social Insurance Number (SIN) to work at most jobs in Canada.
- You can apply for a SIN card at any Service Canada Centre (SCC) – check the blue pages of a telephone book for the SCC nearest you.
- Apply as soon as possible, as it can take up to 6 weeks for your SIN card to arrive.
- You can apply for jobs while you are waiting for your card; the SCC will give you a receipt to show employers.
- Never provide you're your SIN number to an employer until you have been hired.

## EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

- Each province and territory in Canada has different laws to protect employers and workers. These laws set the rules for things like minimum wage, minimum working age, hours of work, mandatory breaks uniforms and other working conditions. If you know these rules, you will know what to expect from an employer.
- Ask at your local Service Canada Centre for Youth (SCCY) (formerly, Human resources Centre for Students) about getting information on the labour laws for your area.

## 2. Identifying your Skills & Interests

Before you begin looking for a job, you should think about what kinds of jobs interest you. To do this you need to know what you like to do and what you are good at.

Do you like: Working with people?

- Working as a member of a team?
- Caring for, helping or serving people?

**Some possible jobs for you:**

restaurant worker  
camp counsellor  
sales clerk

sports facility attendant  
customer service  
tour guide

Do you like: Working with Things?

- Using tools, machines or equipment?
- Working with your hands?

**Some possible jobs for you:**

construction worker  
warehouse worker  
house painter

nursery worker  
tree planter  
gardener

Do you like: Working with Information?

- Studying or researching topics?
- Reading or writing?

**Some possible jobs for you:**

library assistant  
museum attendant  
data entry clerk

art gallery assistant  
book/music sales clerk  
tutor

Remember, you can't always get the job you want right away. But every job will give you valuable skills and experience that will help you along the way!

# What Do Employers Want?

Employers usually look for at least three things in potential employees:

1. How they think and communicate
2. How they act
3. How well they work with others

Here are some examples of how to match your skills with what employers are looking for:

## **1. HOW YOU THINK AND COMMUNICATE**

**You have homework and after-school activities**

- I manage my time well.

**You are a peer counsellor at School**

- I communicate well with others

## **2. HOW YOU ACT**

**You are on student council**

- I am responsible and have good leadership skills.

**You have a paper route**

- I am self-motivated and can work without supervision.

**You baby-sit your neighbours' kids**

- I am reliable and comfortable working with children.

## **3. HOW WELL YOU WORK WITH OTHERS**

**You are on sports teams**

- I am dedicated and get along well with others.

**You play in the school band**

- I work well in a team setting

### 3. What Kinds of Jobs Are Out There?

Here is a list of areas in which young people with little or no work experience can often find jobs.

<b>Hospitality</b>	◦restaurant worker ◦hotel worker	◦tour guide ◦caterer
<b>Retail</b>	◦grocery store clerk ◦salesperson	◦stock person ◦cashier
<b>Clerical</b>	◦data entry clerk ◦word processor	◦receptionist ◦filer
<b>Outdoor Work</b>	◦groundskeeper ◦berry picker	◦tree planter ◦gardener
<b>Labour</b>	◦construction worker ◦warehouse worker	◦landscaper ◦painter
<b>Recreation</b>	◦special events worker ◦camp counsellor	◦lifeguard ◦referee

Whatever kind of job you are interested in, it is really important to be flexible. Be willing to take short term or part-time jobs, as they will help you gain experience and may even lead to more permanent or full-time work!

## 4. Where To Look For A Job

### **Service Canada Centres for Youth (SCCYs)**

- They list available jobs that are suitable for youth, and provide information and advice on job search techniques.

### **Friends and Family**

- Tell your friends and family that you are looking for a job. They might be able to put you in touch with employers.

### **Teachers**

- Talk to your teachers. They might know of job opportunities that are not advertised.

### **Yellow Pages**

- Excellent for looking up the type(s) of organizations you would like to work for, that are in your area.

### **Newspaper “Help Wanted” Ads**

- A good place to start, but keep in mind that only about 20% of jobs are advertised in the newspaper, so this shouldn't be your only method!

### **Internet**

- A great place to check out companies you are interested in applying to. They may also have a site with job postings!
- Also use search engines to look for job websites.

### **Employers**

- Contact organizations that offer the kind of work you would like, and arrange to talk to the people who do their hiring or who can give you advice and answer your questions.

### **Bulletin Boards**

- Look for job postings on bulletin boards in your community.

### **Organizations that Need Volunteers**

- If you don't have the experience you need to get the job(s) you are interested in, try volunteering!

## 5. Resumés

Your resumé is like your personal advertisement – it tells an employer who you are and what you can do. You often make your first impression on an employer with a resumé, so it is important that you do it well. Here are some tips to help you write a great resumé:

- Keep it short – one or two pages
- Use a computer and print it on good quality paper
- Make it perfect! Ask a few people to read it over for you to make sure there are no spelling or grammatical errors.
- Do not include any information that would indicate your political or religious beliefs.
- Only give positive information – try to create a favourable impression!
- Make sure your phone number, e-mail address, and all your other contact information are current and correct.
- Use dynamic words to describe your skills and experience, such as:

Coached, Assisted, Organized, Creative, Developed, Produced, Helpful, Designed, Responsible, Confident, Energetic, Capable, Lead, Motivated, Flexible, Planned

The staff of any Service Canada Centre for Youth can help you design a resumé. You can talk to staff individually, or attend a Group Workshop where you and other job-seekers learn more about job search techniques. If you need help, all you have to do is ask!

# Sample Resumé

Katherine Lee

1000 Cedar Crescent  
Forest Grove  
Z1Z 1Z1

Ph: 604-999-1234

**Email:** [klee@hotmail.com](mailto:klee@hotmail.com)

## **SKILL PROFILE**

- Good oral and written communication skills
- Good interpersonal skills, and work well with others
- Conscientious and eager to learn new things
- Organized and responsible
- Effective in working with children
- Knowledgeable and comfortable working with computers

## **EDUCATION**

Forest Grove Junior Secondary School, currently in grade 10  
Special Classes: Drama 10, Art 10, Band 10

## **WORK & VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE**

Forest Grove Community Theatre                      Jan 2006 – present  
Position: Usher  
Duties: Ushering at various events at the theatre

Forest Grove Community Theatre                      Oct. 2004 – present  
Position: Assistant Coach  
Duties: Supervising and coaching junior soccer teams

## **EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Sports, music and theatre. I am a member of my school's soccer team, jazz band and acting club, and yearbook committee.

**References Available Upon Request**

## 6. Covering Letters

When you send or give a resumé to an employer, you should always include a covering letter. A covering letter is an important marketing tool that tells the employer why you are the right person for the job.

### COVERING LETTER TIPS:

- **Address** your covering letter to the person responsible for hiring. DON'T use "Dear Sir/Madam" or "To Whom It May Concern." Call and ask for the name and title of the person.
- In the **1<sup>st</sup> Paragraph**, state your interest in the organization, the type of job you want, and how you learned of the job.
- In the **2<sup>nd</sup> Paragraph**, highlighted the experience and skills you can offer the organization. Use dynamic verbs to make it interesting and refer the employer to your resumé.
- In the **3<sup>rd</sup> Paragraph**, request an interview and leave a phone number where you can be reached.
- Your covering letter should be no longer than a page. Make it **concise** and only include information that is relevant to the job you are applying for.
- Make it **focused** – study the job qualifications and explain how your skills and experience match them.
- **Type** your covering letter and use white or light coloured, high quality paper.
- Ask someone with English skills to **proof-read** it for you to make sure there are no mistakes.
- **Sign it!**

## Sample Covering Letter

1000 Cedar Crescent  
Forest Grove  
Z1Z 1Z1

June 25, 2006

Alex Miguel, Programs Co-ordinator  
Pine Creek Youth Theatre  
9000 Main Street  
Forest Grove  
Z1S 8A8

**RE: Application for Drama Camp Leader**

Dear Ms. Miguel:

I am interested in applying for the position of Drama Camp Leader with Pine creek Youth Theatre, which was advertised at the Student Employment Centre.

I feel that I have the necessary skills and experience for this position. Coaching soccer has given me experience in working with children, which is something I enjoy very much. I am also very interested in theatre; I work as an Usher at the Forest Grove Community Theatre, and have taken Drama in school. For further details, please refer to my resume.

I would enjoy being part of Pine Creek Youth Theatre, and am available for an interview at your convenience. You can contact me at (604) 999-1234; I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Katherine Lee

Katherine Lee

## 7. References

When you apply for a job, an employer will often ask you for “references.” A reference is anyone other than a family member who knows about your work habits or your personality. They can include: teachers, coaches, counsellors, people you’ve volunteered for, people you’ve worked for...

- What references say about you will often determine whether or not you get a job, so only ask people who you will say good things about you.
- At the bottom of your resumé write “References Available Upon Request.”
- Prepare your up-to-date references neatly on a separate page. Do not attach this page to your resumé, but make sure to bring it to an interview.
- If you have given out references in an interview, make sure you contact them to let them know they may be contacted.

## 8. Application Forms

When applying for a job, you may be asked to complete an application form. Here are some tips to help your application look better.

- Read and follow the directions very careful.
- Print or write as neatly as you can.
- Answer every question – write “N/A” (Not Applicable) if a question does not apply to you.
- Include all paid and unpaid (i.e. volunteer) work.
- Attach your resumé and covering letter to your application.

If possible, give your application, resumé and covering letter directly to the person who does the hiring. This will allow you to introduce yourself and make a good first impression!

## 9. Job Interviews

The job interview is usually the most important stage in getting a job. You should always be well-prepared for interviews, to present yourself in the best possible way to employers. Here are some tips to help you make your **interviews successful:**

- Before you go to an interview, research the job and the organization, using as many sources as possible.
- Think of questions the interviewer(s) might ask you. With your friends or family, practice how you would respond to those questions. Here are some things that are often asked in interviews:

*What can you tell me about yourself?*

*Why are you interested in this job?*

*What do you think are your strengths and weaknesses?*

*What do you have to offer to the job?*

*What are your long-term career plans?*

- Think of some questions to ask the employer to show that you are interested in the job.
- Wear something just a bit dressier than what you would wear to the job if you got it.

Remember to take all of these things to interviews:

- a copy of your resumé
- names and phone numbers of references
- blank paper and pen for notes
- any questions that you have to ask the interviewer
- the times you are available to work

## INTERVIEW DO'S

- Introduce yourself
- Shake hands firmly with the interviewer
- Maintain eye contact with the interviewer
- React to what the interviewer tells you – nod and smile!
- Listen to the questions – answer carefully and honestly
- Project a positive attitude
- Let your sense of humour show
- Ask when you might hear again from the interviewer

## INTERVIEWER DON'TS:

- Don't sit down until you are asked to do so
- Don't chew gum
- Don't take a friend or relative along
- Don't criticize former employers or yourself
- Don't joke around or get off topic
- Don't ramble – always be concise
- Don't act either too shy or too assertive
- Don't be late. If you are going to be late or can't make it to the interview, call the employer as soon as possible and explain why. Ask if you can arrange a new interview time.

## 10. If You Don't Get The Job

**Don't give up! Finding a job takes time. If you know how to conduct a good job search, you will be successful.**

- Review your covering letter, resumé and interview techniques. Look for areas that could use improvement.
- Call your interviewer(s) and ask if they have any advice on how you can improve your chances in the future. Maybe they will know of other jobs that are available.
- Keep a positive outlook and keep in touch with people you know who are working and who may have job leads.
- Explore other options. Don't rule out volunteering or job-shadowing as ways of getting experience and making useful contacts.

## 11. When You Do Get The Job

- Be on time. Phone your supervisor as soon as possible if you have to be late or absent.
- Be friendly and co-operative with co-workers, but don't waste a lot of time when you're supposed to be working
- Learn the rules – like how many hours you're expected to work and when breaks are allowed.
- Be willing to learn new skills and help out wherever you can.
- Ask questions about anything you are not sure of, but try to think things out for yourself if you can.
- Find out if you need a uniform or any special safety gear.
- Ask about health and safety procedures you must follow.