

filling out job applications



What is a job application?

Most employers want you to fill out an application for employment when you apply for a job. These forms collect information that a company needs before deciding to hire you. Some employers use paper applications, while others use Web-based applications.



Employers use applications for a good reason.

Most employers use applications to help screen out unqualified job seekers. If something about your application does not sit right with the company, you will not get an interview. Even qualified candidates often get screened out because of their applications. Maybe it was incomplete, had bad handwriting, or was messy. Some applicants get screened out because they don't have as much experience as other applicants or because their credentials aren't as good. Companies have many reasons for rejecting applicants.



Completing an application is not often the best way to get an interview.

Some people do get interviews by filling out applications, but many of them get entry-level and lower-paying jobs because employers are less selective. Filling out an application is not always an effective way to get an interview. Often, it's better to ask an employer directly for an interview.



Tips for completing applications

- **Follow directions:** Carefully read and complete all sections of the application. Follow the directions to avoid creating a negative impression.
- **Be neat and complete:** Carefully answer all sections of the application. A messy or incomplete application makes a negative impression. It will make you look as if you don't care. Carry an erasable black or blue pen with you for completing applications. It creates a more professional look than a pencil and allows you to correct your mistakes.
- **Provide only positive information:** Try to include all of your positive information. In the work section, list any unpaid (volunteer) experience. List any training you've received (in school or through clubs, community centers, or churches) that relates to the job you want.



Let your conscience be your guide.

Many people are tempted to lie on their applications. This is not a good idea, since employers can fire you if they find out that you lied on your application. When you fill out an application, be sure that everything included is truthful.

