



.....
Where to search for jobs
and Apprenticeships and
how to apply for them

[Apply Yourself] 2010/11



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[Introduction]

This booklet is aimed at those applying for jobs and Apprenticeships.

The main aim of application forms, CVs, letters of application and interviews is to show an employer what you have to offer in terms of:

- * **Skills**
- * **Experiences**
- * **Attitudes**
- * **Potential** – how much more you can learn and offer in time.

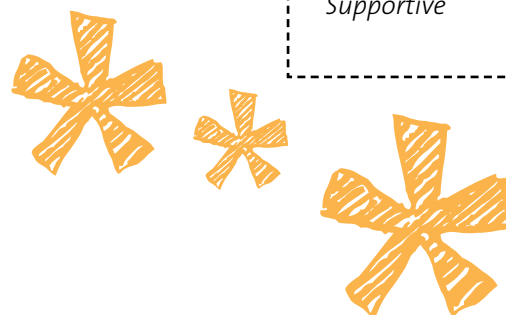
Your keys to success will be:

- * **Perseverance:** you may need to make a number of applications before you're successful. Learn from any rejections.
- * **Recognising you have competition:** if you're interested in a job or Apprenticeship, others will be too. It will be vital not to take any part of the application process for granted.
- * **Research:** find out fully what you are applying for and who you are applying to. This way you'll be better able to highlight the appropriate skills and experiences.
- * **Willingness to keep on learning:** getting the job will be one thing, keeping it will very much depend on your willingness and ability to develop the skills you already have and learn new ones.

POSITIVE WORDS

These words can be used in interviews, on application forms and in CVs. If you don't know what they mean, look them up!

<i>Enthusiastic</i>	<i>Conscientious</i>
<i>Innovative</i>	<i>Fair</i>
<i>Dynamic</i>	<i>Imaginative</i>
<i>Positive</i>	<i>Creative</i>
<i>Contributed</i>	<i>Precise</i>
<i>Initiated</i>	<i>Resourceful</i>
<i>Succeed</i>	<i>Caring</i>
<i>Cooperated</i>	<i>Active</i>
<i>Negotiated</i>	<i>Confident</i>
<i>Flexible</i>	<i>Eager</i>
<i>Accurate</i>	<i>Honest</i>
<i>Committed</i>	<i>Trustworthy</i>
<i>Willing</i>	<i>Diplomatic</i>
<i>Passionate</i>	<i>Ambitious</i>
<i>Able</i>	<i>Reliable</i>
<i>Amiable</i>	<i>Tactful</i>
<i>Focused</i>	<i>Helpful</i>
<i>Loyal</i>	<i>Efficient</i>
<i>Productive</i>	<i>Skilled</i>
<i>Keen</i>	<i>Proficient</i>
<i>Progress</i>	<i>Competent</i>
<i>Achieved</i>	<i>Capable</i>
<i>Friendly</i>	<i>Effective</i>
<i>Organised</i>	<i>Adept</i>
<i>Adaptable</i>	
<i>Supportive</i>	



[Finding vacancies – *including the hidden ones*]

Many vacancies are never advertised. Some put this figure as high as 70%. Advertising is very expensive and some companies receive so many speculative applications they don't advertise at all. *(A speculative application is one that is made to a company when a vacancy has not been formally advertised. Employers are usually happy to receive these as it shows great motivation by the person applying and saves on advertising costs. See page 11 for more information about how this could work for you).* **Small companies often take people through word of mouth.**

Keep positive and realistic. The process of finding vacancies, applying and going for interviews will take time and energy. Learn from disappointments – ask for feedback.

Register with the right people. Connexions West gets job and Apprenticeship vacancies from local employers. Make sure your local Connexions centre or personal adviser knows you are interested in receiving details. Also register on the Apprenticeship website to search and apply for local and national Apprenticeships:
www.apprenticeships.org.uk

Use local job fairs to speak to employers about what they're looking for and how they recruit. Go prepared with copies of your CV. Dress appropriately – you never know who you might be talking to.

Many employers still use newspapers (including the free ones like Metro), magazines and trade magazines to advertise their vacancies. Most libraries will hold reference copies of latest editions.

Get as many people as possible looking for you. Sign up with recruitment agencies and Connexions West. Over 18s can use the local Jobcentre Plus office. Make sure your friends and family know what you're looking for too.

Use business directories for details of companies. Use the information to research the companies further and customise speculative letters and CVs. Double-check that any contact names given are still current. Libraries, Connexions centres and Jobcentre Plus offices usually hold reference copies or use the online versions.

There are lots of online job search websites. You can search these by type of work, location and salary. Most large organisations use their own website to advertise vacancies.

Be prepared to progress to your ideal job – not walk straight into it. You may need to consider a part-time or temporary job to get you into the right company or improve your skills. Remember – it's easier to get a job when you're already in work.

Scan the local newspapers and watch the local news. They'll cover what's happening in the business world, for example, company expansions, new developments and government contracts. Make contact before the jobs are advertised.

Visit your local business park or office complex. Gather company brochures, talk to receptionists, get names of key people and send them a speculative letter plus a tailored CV.

Volunteer to work unpaid or on a trial basis. This is a really good way to show off your skills and attitudes. Employers can see how you fit in and what you can do.



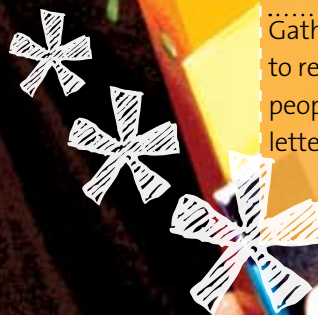
*** THINK ABOUT:**

Employers are usually very happy to receive speculative applications – it can save them advertising fees.

Make sure your friends and family know what sort of job you're looking for too.

Be prepared to progress to your ideal job – not walk straight into it.

Gather company brochures, talk to receptionists, get names of key people and send them a speculative letter plus a tailored CV.



[Curriculum vitae]

A CV is a summary of the key skills and experiences you have gained through education, employment and life. This includes activities such as work experience, a gap year, part-time work, a Saturday job, holiday work (even if it is with a family member) and voluntary work.

Many employers use CVs to help them make a quick decision about who to invite for interview. If they can't easily see that you have the skills and experience they are looking for, your CV will probably end up on the 'No' pile.

If you have been asked to supply a CV in reply to a job advert you must make sure it focuses on what the advert says. Pick the advert apart and build your CV to meet the criteria.

A CV can also be used to contact employers who aren't currently advertising – this is called a 'speculative' contact. If your CV makes the right impact they might put it 'on file' for when a suitable vacancy does come up.

Your CV should change over time to reflect any new qualifications and skills you gain.

You would normally send a covering letter with your CV. See page 11 for how to write one.

CV Styles

There's a CV Builder on the Connexions West website: www.connexionswest.org.uk – go to Jobs.

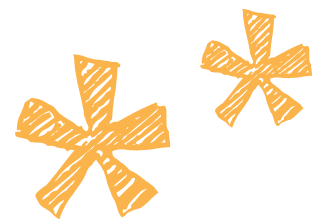
There is no one perfect style of CV. Use your Connexions centre, public library or the internet to see a range of different styles. Choose the one you feel happiest with – and get some opinions. Or develop your own style! Just make sure it passes the CV checklist. This section includes two examples.

CV Checklist

Use the checklists 1–5 to ensure your CV makes the right impact.

1: Find out what the employer is looking for

- * Have you really studied the job advert and its requirements?
- * Have you listed all the skills, experience and qualities essential for the job?
- * Have you done additional research about the employer to ensure you are using the right language? *This is particularly important if you are making 'speculative' contacts.*
- * Have you spoken directly to the employer about the opportunity?



2: Sell what you can offer

- * Are you using short, snappy, positive statements?
- * Have you shown how your skills and experience match those in the advert?
- * Have you clearly stated what you can offer to the company/college?
- * Is it clear that you are committed to developing your existing skills and learning new ones?
- * Are you being truthful?

3: Make your CV easy to put straight on the 'Yes' pile

- * Have you printed your CV on good quality paper?
- * Is it a **maximum** of two sides of A4?
- * Are you using a **sensible** email address like s.jones@mymail.com?
- * Have you checked your spelling?

Have you given the following information:

- * **A personal profile** summarising suitability for the job/course
- * **Personal details** such as name, address, postcode, phone number(s), sensible email address.
- * **Education:** Show the schools or colleges you have attended with dates – putting the most recent first.
- * **Qualifications:** List all those you have taken (or will take in the near future) with the grades – include things like first aid certificates.
- * **Experiences of work/employment:** Part-time work, Saturday jobs, holiday work, gap year, voluntary work and don't forget any work experience. Give dates and a brief overview of your role making sure to mention the skills you used.
- * **Interests and hobbies:** Employers like interesting, motivated people who do things in their spare time.
- * **References:** It's useful to offer the name of someone who knows you from an educational setting and one from a work or private setting – but don't use a member of your family.



4: Get other people's opinion of your CV

- * Have you shown your CV to someone who knows you well?
- * Have you asked for feedback on your CV from friends, colleagues or your Connexions personal adviser?
- * Have you considered the feedback and made the necessary improvements?

5: Deal positively with rejection

- * Have you contacted the company to find out why you weren't successful?
 - * Have you revised your CV in the light of this feedback?
 - * Do you accept that rejection can happen for a number of reasons?
 - * Are you being realistic and persistent enough?
- Get advice from your Connexions personal adviser or a teacher. They will be able to advise if you are going for the right opportunities in the right way.

*** THINK ABOUT:**

Company brochures, websites and publicity materials can give you some useful key words to use.

Speaking to the employer shows you are really interested; it can give you some useful additional information and means your CV doesn't arrive cold.

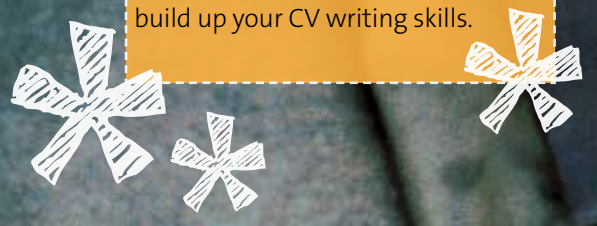
Hotstuff@ and sonoframbo@ will not make a good impression and could cost you the opportunity. Set up a separate email account for applications if necessary.

One spelling mistake could make the difference between getting an interview or losing an opportunity.

Ask potential referees first before giving their name and contact details – you want them to be able to say positive, enthusiastic things about you.

Your Connexions personal adviser, your teachers, parents, carers and friends can help to make sure you are not 'under selling' yourself.

Don't take rejection personally – internal candidates usually have an advantage and it can take time to build up your CV writing skills.



Example CV1:

A 16 year old applying for an Apprenticeship in Engineering

Samantha Jones
135 Bridge Road, Greendale, New Town, NT3 5HJ.
Telephone: 00123 546 2468 Email: s.jones@mymail.com

Personal Profile:

I am a well-organised, hard working student who enjoys a range of subjects. I'm really enthusiastic about all things mechanical and electrical and take every opportunity to expand my understanding and knowledge. I have thoroughly researched the Apprenticeship programme and feel positive that this opportunity would allow me to work and study effectively and develop my skills in an exciting and hands-on way.

Skills:

- Team working – active member of the school council and hockey team.
- Self-management – all assignments and projects delivered on time.
- Communication – working with staff and customers in the bike shop.

Qualifications:

Higher Diploma in Engineering. Specialist learning: resistant materials. My student project involved designing a water pump for use in developing countries. Additional learning: Spanish.

GCSE Maths – C
GCSE English – D

GCSE Science (Triple Award) – C
GCSE Physical Education – D

GCSE ITC – C

Education:

New Town City Academy, 2005 – 2010
Priory Hill Primary School, 2000 – 2005

Experiences of Work:

December 2009 – present: Clips & Bits Cycle Shop. Saturday sales assistant. This job involves serving customers, displaying new stock, helping customers choose the right bike for their needs, booking in bike repairs and carrying out minor repairs.

May 2008: work experience at FutureTec Engineering (automotive). Worked with the hybrid development team that was quality controlling an advanced cooling system. Also spent time exploring system controls with the IT department.

Interests:

Cycling: I'm a member of the New Town U18 Cycle Club. I enjoy speed trials, mountain biking and customising bikes for friends and family.

Hockey: I played for the school team for three years. I hope to continue with a college team.

References:

Mr. B. Carter
Head of KS4 Engineering
New Town City Academy
Bellvue Road
New Town
NT2 8TM

Mr. D. Henderson
Clips & Bits
23 Long Road
New Town
NT1 3BZ

Example CV2:

A **17 year old** applying for a job with a Health Club & Spa.

Julek Pawlak

29 London Road, Norwood, N21 3QY. T: 00122 794 2453. E: j.pawlak@newmail.net

I am a fit and enthusiastic young person who is dedicated to the field of health and fitness. I enjoy working with customers and helping them make effective use of their time and the equipment. I am very keen to continue my training and take on additional responsibilities.

Employment

- **2008 – present:** part-time leisure centre assistant at Bridge Road Leisure Centre. Checking sports equipment, setting up the sports hall, handling payments and taking bookings on reception.
- **2008 – present:** part-time pool supervisor at King's Bridge Water Centre. Advising on water safety and monitoring the pool activities.
- **2007 – 2007:** Saturday job at Bellmore's Builders' Merchants. Unloading and shelving stock, stock control, advising customers and customer service.
- **2007:** holiday job at Ashton's Garden Centre. Watering plants, displaying new stock, helping customers, packing goods and plants.
- **2007:** work experience (one week) at Barrett's Lane Fitness Studio. Setting up equipment for classes, showing new members how to use the equipment safely and effectively and helping the instructors with fitness assessments.

Education & Achievements

- | | | |
|------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| 2007 – 2008 | City College (full-time) | |
| • Sport (Exercise & Fitness) | BTEC First Diploma | Distinction |
| 2006 - 2007 | City College (part-time as part of Year 10/11 programme) | |
| • Sport & Leisure | BTEC Introductory Certificate | Merit |
| • Youth First Aid | St. John Ambulance | Passed |
| 2007 | Wick Swimming Pool | |
| • National Pool Lifeguard | Life Savers UK | Units 1 & 2 |
| 2007 | Wick Swimming Pool | |
| • Swimming Challenge | Amateur Swimming Association | Bronze & Silver Awards |
| 2003 – 2007 | St. Michael's Secondary School | |
| • English, ICT, Art & Design | GCSE | D |
| • Maths | GCSE | E |
| 1998 – 2003 | Elm Grove Primary School | |
| • Personal Survival | Amateur Swimming Association | Level 1 & 2 |

Interests

- Keeping fit and active through team and individual sports - football, weight training and swimming.
- I'm a keen supporter of Wick FC.
- I enjoy going to the cinema.

References

- Details of two referees are available on request.

[Covering and speculative letters]

Covering and speculative letters are your first chance to sell yourself to a prospective employer. **If you don't get it right, you may not get a second chance.**

A covering letter should:

- * be sent with a CV or application form that has been asked for by the employer.
- * clearly state the job you are applying for.
- * contain the key information that will most 'grab' or impress the employer.
- * be short and punchy. You don't want to put them off before they even get to read your CV/ application form.

A speculative letter should:

- * be sent to an employer with a CV in the hope they may have a vacancy to suit you. It is a great way to tap into the 'hidden' job market – all those vacancies that never make it into the newspapers, job centres or vacancy websites.
- * not repeat everything you've put in your CV, but highlight the key skills and experiences that would really interest the employer.
- * show that you have done some research into the company.
- * be sent to a named person. Telephone the company in advance and ask who would be the most relevant contact for the type of work you are looking for.

- * clearly state why you are contacting the employer, for example, full-time work, part-time work, an Apprenticeship, work experience placement or holiday work.
- * state when you could start work.

General dos and don'ts

- * **Do** keep your letter to one page of quality A4 white or cream paper (match it to your CV). Use a good quality envelope too.
- * **Do** keep the letter short, uncluttered and to the point. Use five or fewer lines per paragraph and alter the length of sentences.
- * **Do** spell check and proof read all documents. Ideally get someone else to do this.
- * **Don't** forget to enclose either your CV or the application form.
- * **Don't** mass copy letters – personalise them.
- * **Do** make it sound as if you have chosen them above all others. Find out a little about them, for example how long they have been operating, if they specialise in a particular product.

- * **Do** make sure you emphasise your skills and the needs of the company.

- * **Don't** forget to ask for an interview and ensure you are going to be around to go for one if asked. It won't look good if you post a pile of speculative letters and then disappear on a three-week holiday!

There are plenty of examples of covering and speculative letters in books and on the internet – try your local Connexions centre or library. Customise them to suit the company you are approaching and use a style that you are comfortable with.

Example covering letter:

21 Green Lane
Bridge Heath
New Town
NT5 3NL

Mr N. Black
Horton and Black Bindings PLC
Units 34-39
Waterside Business Park
Feeder Way
Walton WA12 9PF

31 May 2010

Dear Mr Black,

ACCOUNTS CLERK – VACANCY REFERENCE 168495

Please find enclosed my CV in application for the post advertised by Connexions on 27 May 2010.

Since completing my BTEC First Diploma in Business (with Merit), I have been particularly keen to apply my business, administration and finance skills with a company that operates across Europe.

I am a fluent speaker of Spanish and also have a working knowledge of German.

I am a fast and accurate worker, with a keen eye for detail. I really enjoy the benefits of team working and can also work effectively on my own.

I am enthusiastic and determined to make a success of this exciting opportunity.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this application and I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Yours sincerely

Alicia Covas

Example speculative letter:

Include your full contact details

85 Rasse Road
North Broadway
Lonnington LN6 8MS
kathy.adelaide@mymail.com
M: 08070 369 121

Address the letter to a named person in the company

Mrs B. Thorpe
The Animal Clinic
Deane Road
Lonnington
LN10 5AF

Date the letter

24 April 2010

Get to the point in the opening paragraph

Dear Mrs Thorpe,

I am writing to ask if you are planning to offer any Animal Care Apprenticeships this autumn.

I understand from the local newspaper that the Animal Clinic is planning to expand the number of veterinary surgeries in the area.

I have enclosed my CV which outlines my experience in this type of work including:

- Work experience with the PDSA surgery in Brayton.
- Voluntary work at High Lane Petting Farm.
- Saturday sales assistant at Pets4All.

I am currently studying for a Higher Diploma in Environmental and Land-based Studies.

I have excellent references and would like to discuss any possible vacancies with you.

Yours sincerely

Show you know something about the company

Kathy Adelaide

Include examples from work experience, school subjects, hobbies or personal experience

[Application forms]

You will need to complete an **application form** for most jobs and Apprenticeships.

Like a Curriculum Vitae (CV) an application form gives an employer a general overview of your skills and experiences and the reasons why you think you are the right person for the job.

You should give all applications forms careful consideration and time.

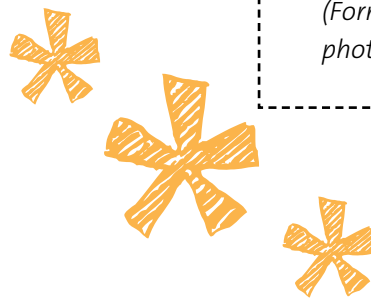
You might want to use a covering letter to go with an application form – see page 11 for details and examples.

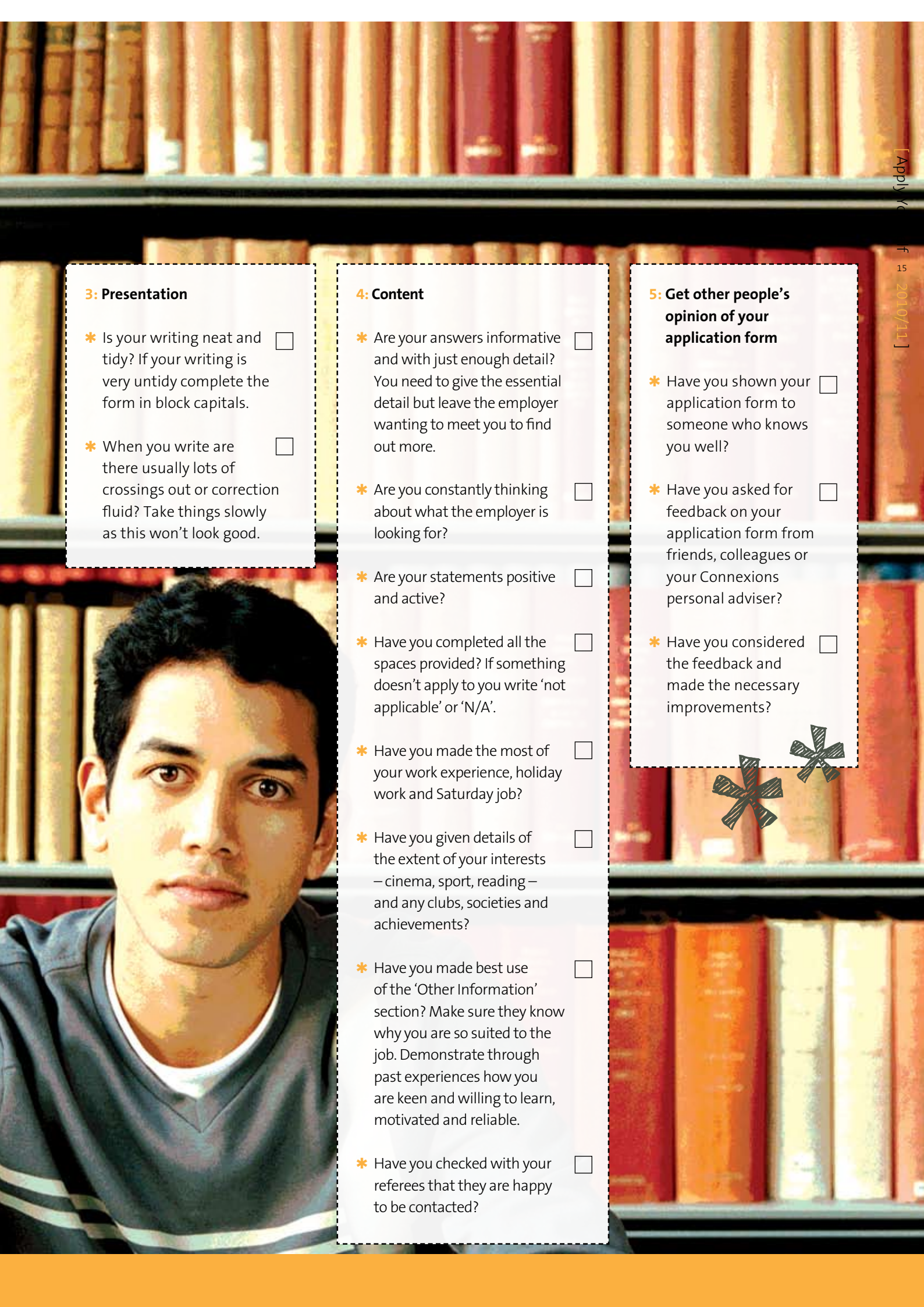
1: Find out what the employer is looking for

- * Have you really studied the job advert and its requirements?
- * Have you listed all the skills, experience and qualities essential for the job?
- * Have you done additional research about the employer to ensure you are using the right language?
- * Have you spoken directly to the employer about the opportunity?

2: Preparation

- * Have you given yourself plenty of time to complete the form?
- * Have you taken a copy of the form to practice on? This is essential as it will help you judge how to make best use of the space available.
- * Have you read any instructions that came with the form?
- * Have you read through the form thoroughly?
- * Do you have a good quality, **black** pen to complete the form?
(Forms are often photocopied).





3: Presentation

- * Is your writing neat and tidy? If your writing is very untidy complete the form in block capitals.
- * When you write are there usually lots of crossings out or correction fluid? Take things slowly as this won't look good.

4: Content

- * Are your answers informative and with just enough detail? You need to give the essential detail but leave the employer wanting to meet you to find out more.
- * Are you constantly thinking about what the employer is looking for?
- * Are your statements positive and active?
- * Have you completed all the spaces provided? If something doesn't apply to you write 'not applicable' or 'N/A'.
- * Have you made the most of your work experience, holiday work and Saturday job?
- * Have you given details of the extent of your interests – cinema, sport, reading – and any clubs, societies and achievements?
- * Have you made best use of the 'Other Information' section? Make sure they know why you are so suited to the job. Demonstrate through past experiences how you are keen and willing to learn, motivated and reliable.
- * Have you checked with your referees that they are happy to be contacted?

5: Get other people's opinion of your application form

- * Have you shown your application form to someone who knows you well?
- * Have you asked for feedback on your application form from friends, colleagues or your Connexions personal adviser?
- * Have you considered the feedback and made the necessary improvements?





6: Before you submit it

- * Have you signed and dated the form?
- * Have you spell-checked the form?
- * Have you taken a photocopy or saved a copy of the completed form?

7: Deal positively with rejection

- * Have you contacted the company to find out why you weren't successful?
- * Will you revise your application form in the light of this feedback?
- * Do you accept that rejection can happen for a number of reasons?
- * Are you being realistic and persistent enough?

Get advice from your Connexions personal adviser or a teacher. They will be able to advise if you are going for the right opportunities in the right way.

Criminal Convictions

Generally, the rule is – if an application form asks if you have one, and you do, you must say yes. But, if a length of time called the 'rehabilitation period' has passed since your conviction you no longer have to declare you have a criminal record. But there are some exceptions to this.

The following website has some useful guidance:

www.nya.org.uk/youthinformation-com
Go to Justice and Equality > Criminal Records.

Also see page 22 for how best to tell an employer about a conviction.

*** THINK ABOUT:**

Company brochures, websites and publicity materials can give you some useful key words to use.

If the form is electronic you may be restricted to a particular font style and size.

Speaking to the employer shows you are really interested; it can give you some useful additional information and means your application form doesn't arrive cold.

Don't cross out or use correction fluid on an application form. Take copies and practice. Don't rush.

State you have a clean driving licence if relevant.

Use sentences like: *"I organised a successful work experience placement with a juice bar chain."* and *"My voluntary work at the hospice inspired me to start a fund raising appeal at school – last term we raised £300."*

Don't leave holiday work or Saturday jobs out – these show your motivation to try things.

Flesh out the skills, experience and qualities you have in the 'Other Information' section.

Your Connexions personal adviser, your teachers, parents, carers and friends can help to make sure you are not 'under selling' yourself.

Don't take rejection personally – internal candidates usually have an advantage.

[Using email to apply for jobs: *Top ten tips*]

Applying for jobs by email is becoming more common as it is easy to administer by employers.

It can be particularly useful when making a number of speculative applications.

- * Although it is easy to blast off a large number of speculative applications – don't be tempted to do this. As with any speculative application, do your research, customise your covering/ speculative letter and CV. Contact each company to find out if they are willing to accept email applications and ask who you should send the email to.
- * When applying for advertised vacancies include the title of the position and the reference number in the subject line.
- * Keep your email style formal. Remember – you are talking to a potential employer, not chatting to a friend.
- * Don't use text message slang – companies want people who can communicate professionally.
- * An email application is likely to be skim read and quickly assessed as printing them all off would be time consuming and expensive. Keep what you write focused on the position and the employer.
- * Keep track of who you have sent speculative applications to. Save the customised letter/CV under the company name so you can check what you have said.
- * Write your letter in the body of the email message. Make sure you include a signature with your email address and telephone number. Attach your CV as a WORD document.
- * Double-check your spelling. Mistakes in an email message could cost you the job.
- * Don't attach documents in unusual formats – an employer will not waste time trying to open them.
- * Always use a sensible email address. Hotstuff@ and sonoframbo@ will not make a good impression and could cost you the opportunity. Set up a separate email account for applications if necessary.

*** THINK ABOUT:**

Don't use text message slang.

Double-check your spelling.

Don't attach documents in unusual formats.

Remember – you are talking to a potential employer, not chatting to a friend so keep your email style formal.



[Selection tests]

Many employers, especially large ones, use some form of testing as part of their recruitment process. The tests are designed to help employers judge whether a candidate has the right skills, attitudes and behaviours for a job.

Remember – these tests are designed to measure your capability to perform well in a job. If you have the right skills and attitudes, the test results will back this up.

General dos and don'ts:

- * Do try to find out what sort of test(s) you will be taking. Many companies will provide practice questions. Check company websites for information.
- * Do practice the skills you will be tested on. Crosswords, word games and mental arithmetic can all help get your mind limbered up. See page 24 for some websites that include example tests.
- * Do be prepared to sit any tests with a large number of other candidates. They are often used to make an initial selection. Suitable candidates are usually invited for interview.
- * Do read any instructions at the start of the test. Mark your answers clearly and correct any mistakes as directed.
- * Don't try to give the responses you think the employer is looking for. Many tests are very clever at double-checking your responses for inconsistencies.
- * Do be honest with your answers. How you respond in a test could be discussed during an interview.
- * Don't lose hope if you feel it's going badly. If you get stuck on a question, go with your first response and move on.
- * Don't worry if others seem to finish the test before you. Just try to answer as many questions as possible in the time given.
- * Do remember to take your glasses with you if you need them for reading.
- * Do ask for additional support or time if you have a disability.
- * Do ask for feedback. Any weaknesses highlighted could be improved upon.



*** THINK ABOUT:**

Be honest with your answers – how you respond in a test could be discussed during an interview.

Don't worry if others seem to finish the test before you.

Don't lose hope if you feel it's going badly – If you get stuck on a question, go with your first response and move on.

Do ask for additional support or time if you have a disability.

Remember – these tests are designed to measure your capability to perform well in a job. If you have the right skills and attitudes, the test results will back this up.



[Getting ready for an interview]

It is quite natural to feel nervous about going for an interview. Doing some preparation before the event will help steady your nerves and give you a confidence boost.

First of all – you’ve been selected from dozens of applicants. Your CV, application form or telephone call has done the trick. The employer already thinks you’ve something to offer and wants to know more.
So – well done!

What to expect

Interviews can take various forms. Hopefully the letter of invitation will tell you everything you need to know. Read this carefully as knowing the date, time and place may not be enough.

- * You might need to confirm your attendance at an interview in advance.
- * Be very well prepared for all the usual, tough questions – see next page.

- * You may be asked to make a presentation. Make sure you stick to the subject and to the time allocated. If you create a Powerpoint presentation, keep the number of slides to a minimum.
- * You may be interviewed by more than one person – a panel. If you have prepared properly it shouldn’t make any difference that there are a number of people asking the questions.
- * There may be a test or a number of tests to take. You will usually be warned in advance so get some practice in if possible. See page 18.
- * Some employers like to use group activities or role-play to see how you operate and interact with others. This is often used to assess team working or leadership skills.
- * You might be taken around to look at the organisation and meet various people. Give a good impression and ask some questions – it might all be part of the selection process!

* THINK ABOUT:

Be prepared – you may be interviewed by more than one person.

Ask questions – show you are really interested.

If you create a Powerpoint presentation, keep the number of slides to a minimum.



[Tackling the tough interview questions]

Here's a list of questions that employers often ask and what they're really looking for.

Practice your answers before the interview. Keep them short and to the point – don't ramble on.

“Tell me about yourself”

- * The employer is looking for a quick overview of what you can bring to the job. Prepare in advance the five key things you want the employer to remember after the interview has finished. Talk about relevant past experiences, your strengths and abilities and why you are good for the job and the company.

“Why do you want this job?”

- * This is about your motivation and commitment. Base your answer around what the job is about. State how the employer will benefit from having you do the job as well as how you will benefit from working for the company.

“What do you do in your spare time?”

- * This is asked for two main reasons. First, to show whether you have a rounded personality; if you do things with your life outside of work – you are generally motivated. Also it gives the employer an idea of whether your outside interests will interfere with you doing your job. If you are a club DJ – are you going to be bright and alert at 9am? Go through your interests quickly and highlight any relevance to the job and the skills you have developed through them.

“What are your main strengths and weaknesses?”

- * This focuses on your self-awareness. Employers want people who know what they are good at and where they need to improve. Link your strengths to the job – show how you'll be a positive influence. Everyone has weaknesses – so don't try to make out you're perfect. Carefully choose 'positive weaknesses' and turn them into strengths:
“I always want to get things just right – but that's good for quality.”

“What have you gained from your previous work experiences?”

- * This is about your ability to learn and develop. Think about all your previous jobs (part-time, holiday, Saturday, work experience). Did you have any responsibilities – however small? Were you always on time for your job? Did you work well as part of a team or were you good working on your own? Pull out all the positives and show how these will benefit this employer.

“When have you had to”

- * Employers like people to be able to demonstrate they have particular skills with real life examples. Again, carefully consider the job description. List the key skills needed and prepare examples of situations or achievements that show you have each skill. It is okay to draw examples from part-time jobs, holiday jobs, work experience, school projects, interests and hobbies.

“What would you do in situation?”

- * Questions about ‘situations’ are used to find out about your style and approach. Prepare by listing all the roles you’ll be likely to do in your new job. Think about what could possibly go wrong and decide how you would deal with it.

“Do you have any criminal convictions?”

- * If you do, and you still need to declare it, you will need to present yourself in a positive manner. Give a clear, straightforward account of the offence. Talk about:
 - * why you no longer think the conviction is relevant
 - * your achievements since the conviction
 - * skills gained whilst in custody or on community service
 - * your changes in attitude.

Make positive statements about what you can do. For further information log onto the website:
www.nya.org.uk/youthinformation-com
Go to Justice and Equality > Criminal Records.

“Why should we employ you?”

- * The employer wants to make sure you will add value to the company and not simply take the salary. State what skills you can offer and back up everything you claim with short examples.

“Do you have any questions?”

- * You are very likely to be asked this one. Prepare a few in advance and don’t be afraid to write them down and take them into the interview with you. It’s always good to ask about staff development and training opportunities. You could also ask about how the company sees its future – expansion, new product lines.

* THINK ABOUT:

State how the employer will benefit from having you do the job – as well as how you will benefit from working for the company.

Turn weaknesses into strengths:
“My Spanish speaking skills aren’t as good as I’d like – but I’m hoping my evening classes will help me improve.”



[Telephone interviews – *top ten tips*]

With the increase in call centres and other telephone-based businesses more and more companies are choosing to use telephone interviews to check the telephone manner and skills of potential staff.

- * **Take it seriously.** A telephone interview is the very best way to check on a candidate's abilities, especially when telephone manner and customer contact are key parts of the job (such as call and contact centres). Role play might be used to assess your strengths and weaknesses.
- * **If you use your mobile,** make sure it is fully charged and you have plenty of credit.
- * **Make the call from somewhere quiet and private,** where you won't be disturbed.
- * **Have the job advert and your CV in front of you.** You might need to refer to these during the interview.
- * **Smile!** Although they can't see you, smiling will help you relax and sound more friendly and positive. Standing up during the call can also help build confidence.
- * **Listen carefully and speak clearly.** If you need a moment to think before replying to a question let the person on the other end know – don't rush or go silent.
- * **Prepare some questions about the job and company in advance.** This shows motivation and real interest.
- * **Have some paper and a pen ready to take down any information you are given and questions you are asked.** You might be asked the same things if invited to a face-to-face second interview.
- * **Practice the 'tough questions'** – just as you would for a face-to-face interview (*see page 21-22*). Ask a friend to play the part of the interviewer.
- * **End the call on a positive note.** Thank the interviewer and say how interested you are in the opportunity.

* **THINK ABOUT:**

Show motivation and real interest – prepare some questions about the job and company in advance.

Take it seriously – a telephone interview is the very best way to check on a candidate's telephone manner.





* * @

[Really useful websites]

Apprenticeships

- * Earn as you learn, work towards recognised qualifications and gain practical skills from the workplace. There are over 190 job roles available, ranging from accountancy to floristry, engineering to veterinary nursing.
www.apprenticeships.org.uk

Vacancies, CV templates and builders, job hunting skills

- * Online help to get you back to work.
www.direct.gov.uk/backtowork
- * Help with your CV, CV formats, CV builder.
<http://careersadvice.direct.gov.uk/helpwithyourcareer/writecv>
- * Net yourself a job.
www.fish4jobs.co.uk
- * Lots of CV templates, online CV builder, plenty of job vacancies and interview skills videos.
www.monster.co.uk
- * Temporary and permanent positions with UK employers. CV and job seeker advice including an interview simulator.
www.reed.co.uk
- * Careers advice, CV sins, active job hunting, how to make yourself more employable plus loads of vacancies.
www.workthing.com
- * CV builder.
www.connexionswest.org.uk

Selection tests

- * Examples of questionnaires and practice tests used by some of the leading employers.
www.shldirect.com

South West recruitment

- * Bath Chronicle
www.thisisbath.com
- * Connexions West: go to the jobs section on the website
www.connexionswest.org.uk
- * Somerset County Gazette
www.countygazette.co.uk
- * This is Bristol
www.thisisbristol.com
- * This is Gloucestershire (includes a virtual careers fair)
www.thisisgloucestershire.com
- * Tourism Skills Network
www.tsns.org.uk
- * Venue
www.venue.co.uk
- * West at Work: covers all the major development sites in the West including Southgate in Bath, Cabot Circus in Bristol and Locking Parklands in Weston-super-Mare.
www.westatwork.co.uk
- * Western Daily Press (includes a 'What's it like to work for...' section)
www.westpress.co.uk
- * Western Morning News
www.westernmorningnews.co.uk

West of England industries

- * Work Matters – what's happening in local industries.
www.connexionswest.org.uk

Recruitment agencies

- * National and local agencies
www.agencycentral.co.uk

Business directories

- * Applegate – industry, technology and manufacturing companies
www.applegate.co.uk
- * BT Business
www.thephonebook.bt.com
- * Europages: European business directory
www.europages.com
- * Thomson Local
www.thomsonlocal.com
- * UK Small Business Directory
www.uksmallbusinessdirectory.co.uk
- * Yellow Pages
www.yell.com

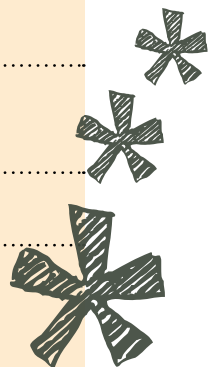
Now you've got the job!

- * National Minimum Wage
www.hmrc.gov.uk/nmw
- * Citizens Advice Bureau – advice on employment issues
www.adviceguide.org.uk

[Job search tracker]

Keep track of your job search efforts – don't miss important deadlines.

Vacancy title	<i>Apprentice Chef</i>		
Vacancy reference number	<i>THF/123/APP</i>		
Company name	<i>Clarion Hotel</i>		
Contact name	<i>Jan Springer</i>		
Address	<i>3 Park Rise, Tarn TN8 9DG</i>		
Telephone	<i>00543 345 567</i>		
Email	<i>js@email.com</i>		
Where vacancy was seen	<i>Connexions</i>		
Vacancy details requested	<i>25 January</i>		
Vacancy details received	<i>29 January</i>		
Closing date for applications	<i>12 February</i>		
Application method	<i>Application form</i>		
Application submitted	<i>6 February</i>		
Interview date	<i>18 February</i>		
Expected date of interview result	<i>20 February</i>		
Outcome	<i>Didn't get it</i>		
Comments	<i>Didn't prepare enough for interview</i>		





Connexions centres in the West of England:

Bath and North East Somerset:

T: 01761 430 900 E: bath-enquiries@connexionswest.org.uk

Bristol: 4 Colston Avenue, Bristol BS1 4ST.

T: 0117 987 3700 Minicom: 0117 907 4514. E: enquiriesbristol@connexionswest.org.uk

North Somerset: 45 Boulevard, Weston-super-Mare BS23 1PG.

T: 01934 644 443 E: enquiries-nsom@connexionswest.org.uk

South Gloucestershire:

21–23 High Street, Kingswood, South Gloucestershire BS15 4AA.

T: 0117 961 2760 E: enquirieskingswood@connexionswest.org.uk and

28 Gloucester Road North, Filton, South Gloucestershire BS7 0SJ.

T: 0117 969 8101 E: enquiriesfilton@connexionswest.org.uk and

Yate West Gate Centre, 21 West Walk, Yate, South Gloucestershire, BS37 4AX

T: 0117 961 2760 E: enquirieskingswood@connexionswest.org.uk

Head Office: 4 Colston Avenue, Bristol BS1 4ST.

T: 0117 987 3700 Minicom: 0117 907 4514.

enquiries@connexionswest.org.uk

www.connexionswest.org.uk

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www.lpw.org.uk

