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# Transformational Toolkit

## Employment Resources for ALL Veterans

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# Resume Writing Tips

## GETTING STARTED

**Tailor your resume to each new job**
- Example: Office, Retail, Food Service, etc.

**Offer a skills summary first**

**Incorporate major keywords from the job description**

**Use actions verbs to begin your bullet point statements**
- Spearheaded
- Managed
- Coordinated
- Oversaw
- Developed

## FORMATTING

**Format your bullet points to show measurable results**
- Accomplished (X) by doing (Y) as measured by (Z)

**Use 12 pt. font, nothing smaller or larger**

**Shorten your LinkedIn URL**

**Translate military job titles into civilian terms**

**Limit your resume to 1-2 pages**

**Do not include your age on your resume**

**Do not include pictures**

**Do not add hobbies**

**No pronouns**

**Federal resume can and should be longer than generic resume**

## FILE SAVING

**Proofread, proofread, and proofread again!**

**Turn resume into PDF before applying**

**Save the final file with your name followed by resume**
- James Krimbleton: jkrimbleton_resume.pdf or jameskrimbleton_resume.pdf

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# Summary of Qualifications

The summary of qualifications is your marketing pitch, which allows you to boast about your talents. It should correspond with your objective and it should include specific achievements, certifications, licenses, computer skills, or other job-related skills. It is important that you list only the skills and achievements that will help you with the position that you are seeking.

## Summary of Qualifications Samples

Over _____ years of experience in management and supervision.
Highly effective in promoting a positive, productive environment.
Reputation for excellence and high quality service to clients.
Good eye for detail; well organized, skilled in setting priorities.
Resourceful and self-confident; can get the job done, and do it well.
Strong interpersonal and communication skills.
Remain calm and work well under demanding conditions.
Proven record of innovative and effective staff development.
Strong commitment, vision and leadership.
Developed innovative programs for major _____, incorporating trends on the leading edge of _____ field.
Effective problem solver; thorough researcher.
Well organized and focused in coordinating projects.
Strong analytical, writing and research skills.
Conscientious and thorough with detail.
Equally effective working independently and in cooperation with others.
Effective working alone and as a cooperative team leader.
Keen perception for extracting important data.
Innovative in designing and carrying out projects.
Highly motivated to achieve set goals.
Successful in mastering new skills through hands-on experience.
Graduate degree with an emphasis in _____.
Skilled and thorough in analyzing problematic situations and finding creative solutions.
Sharp, quick learner; willing to get involved.
Strengths in analyzing, researching, organizing, and problem solving.
Excellent organizational and communication skills.
Fluent in _____ and _____.
Computer literate in MS Word, Excel, Access and PowerPoint.

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# How to Translate Your Resume

## JOB TITLES

**NCOIC, Watch Captain, Petty Officer of the Watch = Supervisor, Manager, Coordinator**
**Commander, Chief = Division Head, Director, Senior Manager**
**Senior NCO = First Line Supervisor**
**First Sergeant = Personnel Supervisor**
**Squad Leader = Team Leader**
**Supply Sergeant = Supply Manager/Logistics Manager**
**Operations NCO = Operations Supervisor**
**Platoon Sergeant = Supervisor/Instructor/Trainer**

## JOB DUTIES

**BE SPECIFIC**
- IF YOU BRIEF SOMEONE = WHO, WHY, WHAT

**INCLUDE NUMBERS**
- MONEY, SUPERVISED, TRAINED

**MAKE SURE YOUR JOB DUTY MAKES A COMPLETE STATEMENT**

**DON'T USE ACRONYMS**

**BRAG ON YOURSELF**
- NO "WE, THE TEAM, THE GROUP"

**USE THE STAR METHOD**
- SITUATION, TASK, ACTIVITY AND RESULT

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS NEED TO RELATE TO JOB YOU'RE APPLYING FOR**

**CREATED PROGRAM**

**CREATED SOLUTIONS**

**SKILLS – BACK THEM UP**
- HOW DID YOU USE THEM
- WHEN DID YOU USE THEM
- WHERE DID YOU USE THEM

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# Tips for Writing a Federal Resume

## Top Ten Tips for Writing a Federal Resume

**Include information specific to the job being advertised.**

Information such as job number, grade, and title are essential for the HR specialist who may be dealing with many applications at once.

**Include your personal information.**

Include your full name, mailing address with zip code, all contact numbers, reinstatement eligibility (if applicable), previous grade and dates the position was held if a previous Fed employee.

**Write your education qualifications in chronological order.**

Start from high school to college. Include the name, city, and year that your diploma or degree was received. Be sure to highlight grades and any awards you received.

**Specifically mention the major subjects and total credits you have earned.**

Do not use bullet points! They are not well received by Federal HR departments. They want you to write out what you have done.

**Explain your credentials and work experience in great detail.**

Education counts a lot more in Federal recruitment than it does in the civilian sector. Make sure you show how well you qualify for the position through your education.

**Even if your education doesn't match exactly….**

You can still qualify for the position through equivalent experience. Explicitly spell out your previous experience and how it relates to the job you are applying for.

**Unlike many civilian sector HR departments, Federal resumes are not read by a machine.**

Your resume will be read and qualified by an actual person. You need to ensure you are being as descriptive as possible so full qualifications can be granted.

**If you have previous work experience that is relevant to the job you are applying for, include it with full detail.**

Give phone numbers of employers, positions you have held, number of hours worked per week, salary, accomplishments and duties. Indicate whether or not it is ok to contact your previous employers, they will call!

**Write about other qualifications that may be slightly related to the job.**

Explain why you think they are similar by giving concrete examples like: software used, memberships, certificates, and/or awards. These all count heavily on Federal qualification standards.

**Don't forget to enclose Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs) if applicable, and mention it in the resume.**

Don't let your KSA become a verbatim copy of your resume.

KSAs should be written in your own style without borrowing from online samples. Use a lot of examples to justify your application. Always type your full name and include signature.

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# Federal Resume Template

Your Last Name
Announcement # (See Objective)

First, MI, Last Name
719.555.1212 H
719.555.1313 C
Citizenship: US
(DO NOT include full SSN unless requested in the announcement)

Email Address
Street Address, Apt #
City, State Zip Code
Veterans Preference: 5 or 10 points

---

**Objective:** Announcement Number, Job Title and grade(s) of the position. *(Direct Hire positions will not have an announcement number – VRA, 30% or more, etc.)*

**Work Experience**
**Job Title**
Employer's Name
Employers Street Address
City, State Zip Code

**mm/yy - Present**
S: Supervisor's Name
P: 555.555.1212 May contact
40 hrs/w, $00,000/yr

**Duties:** Preferred in paragraph format. Highlight those duties which closely resemble your knowledge, skills and abilities which would qualify you for the position.

**Next paragraph you may provide detailed information regarding those duties which may not be closely aligned with the position but may show transferable skills and the scope of your abilities.**

**Education**

mm/yy **Master of Arts in Organizational Management, GPA 3.85**
Name of University, City, State Zip Code

mm/yy **Bachelor of Science in Human Resources Management, GPA 3.76**
Name of University, City, State Zip Code

mm/yy **Diploma/GED**
Name of your High School/GED, City, State Zip Code

**Job Related Training**

mm/yy Basic Staffing and Placement, School Name
mm/yy Workers Compensation, School Name

**Honors, Awards**

mm/yy Veterans Preference Awards (Expeditionary Medals, Campaign Badge, Purple Heart)

**Other Information**

I certify that I can type 50+ words per minute and that the information within this resume is accurate.

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# Federal Resume Example

Your Last Name
Announcement # (See Objective)

First, MI, Last Name
719.555.1212 H
719.555.1313 C
Citizenship: US
(DO NOT include full SSN unless requested in the announcement)

Email Address
Street Address, Apt #
City, State Zip Code
Veterans Preference: 5 or 10 points

---

**Objective:** Announcement Number, Job Title and grade(s) of the position. (30% or more)

**Work Experience**
**Labor Relations Specialist**
US Postal Service
1 Post Office Drive
San Antonio, Texas 78284

**03/13 - Present**
M: Donna Dunker
P: 210.368.1604
40 hrs/w, $76,200/yr

**Duties:** Provide expert advice, counsel, and assistance to various levels of management regarding conduct, performance, and dispute resolution affecting more than 11,000 federal employees. Conduct research and analysis of national agreements and relevant case law to resolve complex labor relations issues. Provide administrative and technical expertise in the areas of labor-management and employee relations issues, including third party proceedings before the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB), binding arbitration hearings, performance and conduct based actions, and other related ER/LR programs/issues. Represent federal employer in regional arbitration hearings and prepare post-hearing briefs and position papers on grievance appeals. Participate in grievance and pre-arbitration discussions and settlements with national business agents representing each respective union. Assist managers with developing and negotiating management interests at the bargaining table and responding to union interests. Interpret facts and events, and/or identify relevant aggravating or mitigating factors in order to recommend appropriate disciplinary and corrective action to management. Communicate agency-wide labor relations policies and procedures to management and staff of local organization and conduct audits of same to ensure standardized, consistant application. Serve as point of contact regarding grievances, unfair labor practice charges, information sharing, contract interpretation, disciplinary action, and labor relations training.

**Adept negotiator and capable advocate. Recognized for effectively reducing agency liability from over $1.25 million to less than $300K. Negotiated 300+ grievances from four different bargaining units, resulting in 150 union withdrawals, 148 settlements, and only 17 cases appealed to arbitration. Achieved excellent track record as management advocate representing the agency in 21 arbitration hearings.**

# Federal Resume Example cont.

**Win/loss record to date is 11 wins, 6 partial wins, and only 4 losses. Played a key role in implementing a national program from Postal Service HQ which is projected to save the agency approximately $4,000,000 this fiscal year. Hand-picked to spearhead the project based on contract knowledge and demonstrated ability to organize, train, implement and manage a high-profile program in nearly 100 offices, stations, and branches comprised of approximately 4,000 employees.**

**Education**

05/97 **Bachelor of Science - Business Administration, GPA 3.50+**
Wayland Baptist University, San Antonio, Texas

12/96 **Associate Degree – Foreign Language & Military Studies**
USAF Air University, Maxwell AFB, Montgomery, Alabama

05/83 **High School Diploma**
Grand Saline High School, Grand Saline, Texas

**Job Related Training**

07/15 **LAW: REDRESS**, USPS Learning Development
04/15 **Charge Writing, Attendance Control, Grievance Handling**, USPS HQ Labor Relations
01/15 **LAW: Understanding USERRA**, USPS Learning Development
11/14 **Labor Relations Specialist Training**, USPS HQ Labor Relations
10/14 **Basic Advocacy**, USPS HQ Labor Relations
09/10 **Process Improvement**, Harvard Business School (online)
08/10 **Time Management**, Harvard Business School (online)

**Other Information**

I am a highly trained, educated, and experienced professional with over 25 years government employment eagerly seeking new challenges and opportunities in the HR/LR field. I am organized, disciplined, and resourceful, committed to working both independently and within a team to accomplish agency goals and achieve success. I am proficient with a computer, laptop, tablet, etc., and can type 50+ WPM. I certify that the information within this resume is accurate.

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# Generic Resume Template


**NAME**

City, State • Phone Number

Email Address • LinkedIn URL (shortened)


## PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

**Professional Title** and military veteran with # years of proven experience in the United States Army. Accomplished measurable results while leading teams of # personnel in a dynamic, fast - paced environment. Possess a comprehensive background in X and X derived from conducting both foreign and domestic operations. Managed risk upon multiple lines to protect assets, property, and equipment valued over $$ while meeting the expectations of senior leadership. Career supported by a X degree and vast operational experience.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Skill | Skill | Skill |
| Skill | Skill | Skill |

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Month Year – Month Year

**ORGANIZATION** – Location

**Job Title**

Accomplished (X) by doing (Y) resulting in (Z)
Accomplished (X) by doing (Y) resulting in (Z)
Accomplished (X) by doing (Y) resulting in (Z)

Month Year – Month Year

**ORGANIZATION** – Location

**Job Title**

Accomplished (X) by doing (Y) resulting in (Z)
Accomplished (X) by doing (Y) resulting in (Z)
Accomplished (X) by doing (Y) resulting in (Z)

Month Year – Month Year

**ORGANIZATION** – Location

**Job Title**

Accomplished (X) by doing (Y) resulting in (Z)
Accomplished (X) by doing (Y) resulting in (Z)
Accomplished (X) by doing (Y) resulting in (Z)

## EDUCATION

Degree, Major, Minor, University, Location

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# Generic Resume Example

**John Doe**
Houston, TX • (000) 000-000
doejohn@gmail.com • https://www.linkedin.com/in/johndoe

## PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Operations Manager and military veteran with 12 years of combined experience. Accomplished measurable results while leading teams of 50 personnel in a dynamic, fast - paced environment. Possess a comprehensive background in Process Improvement and Teambuilding derived from conducting both international and domestic operations. Managed risk upon multiple lines to protect assets, property, and equipment valued over $61M while meeting the expectations of senior leadership. Career supported by a Bachelor of Business Administration degree and vast operational experience.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Risk Management | Training & Development | Budgeting |
| Logistics | Business Analysis | Secret Security Clearance |

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Feb. 2006 – Feb. 2018

**UNITED STATES ARMY** – Various Locations
**Operations Manager**

Supervised the training of 40 employees by developing learning curriculum and progress markers, resulting in a 100% course completion rate.
Planned, coordinated, and oversaw the daily activities of 252 members, ensuring monthly, quarterly and annual goals were met.
Re-structured reporting and tracking functions from paper to electronic storage, resulting in a 68% increase of workplace efficiency.

Sept. 2004 – Feb. 2006

**PETE'S WAREHOUSE** – Houston, TX
**Shift Manager**

Created work schedules for 30 team members, resulting in 100% of shifts being properly staffed.
Conducted 60 performance reviews on a yearly basis, identifying productivity shortfalls and administering peer counseling as necessary.
Answered phones, filled out order forms, monitored tracking receipts, and managed all return orders for over 13 customers daily.

## EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science, Business Administration, Sailor University, Tampa, FL

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# Cover Letter Writing Tips

## Highlight Your Relevant Qualifications

In your cover letter, address the top skills and abilities you have that match the job description. Carefully review the job description and try to determine which relevant qualifications seem to add the most value to the position you are applying. Provide a specific example of a time you demonstrated each of these qualifications.

## Customize Each Cover Letter

For every job you are applying for, you should always customize each cover letter to fit the specific position. You want your cover letter to illustrate how your experience matches up to the requirements described in the job listing. If you fail to do this, your application can quickly get eliminated from consideration.

## Explain Anything

You can use your cover letter to detail something in your resume that might need more explaining. For example, a cover letter is a great opportunity to write about a change in careers, a career break, or to explain a long gap in employment.

## Edit Your Cover Letter

Make sure to thoroughly proofread each cover letter before sending it, looking for grammar and spelling mistakes. Consider asking a friend or family member, or even a career counselor, such as your PAVE employment analyst or counselor, to look over your cover letter. You may want to print a copy of your cover letter, read over it, and make any edits as necessary. Reading your cover letter aloud is another great way to catch any errors or awkward wording.

*Source: Alison Doyle/The Balance Careers*

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# Cover Letter Example

September 1, 2018

Jane Smith
Director, Human Resources
Acme Company
123 Business Rd.
Business City, NY 54321

Dear Ms. Smith,

I am interested in the author's assistant position at Acme Company, as advertised on LinkedIn. I am currently employed as legislative director for Assemblywoman Nora Kiel, chairperson of the New York State (NYS) Assembly. I believe that the skills and experiences I have gained at this position make me an ideal candidate for the job of author's assistant.

As legislative director, I have developed strong writing and editing skills. For example, one of my main duties is to prepare Assemblywoman Nora Kiel's personal legislation, which deals with issues related to her position as Senior Member of the NYS Assembly Standing Committee.

This duty requires meticulous writing and editing skills, and an ability to convey complex legal ideas clearly. I have prepared dozens of pieces of legislation and received praise for the clarity of my writing.

I have also gained extensive experience in legal and policy research – fields that you state the author's assistant must be familiar with. My experience in the NYS Assembly has afforded me the opportunity to become familiar with the consolidated and unconsolidated laws of the State of New York. In particular, through my work with Assemblywoman Nora Kiel I have become heavily involved in the current welfare and Medicaid reform movement. I am always eager to learn more about state legislation, reading up on these topics on my own time to become more knowledgeable. I would love to bring this passion for policy and law to your company.

I am confident that my experience in the Legislature and my research and writing skills qualify me for consideration. If you would like, I can provide you with current samples of my work. I have also enclosed my resume. I look forward to meeting with you and discussing my qualifications in more detail.

Sincerely,

Joseph Q. Applicant

*Source: Alison Doyle/The Balance Careers*

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# Interview Tips

## WHAT TO DO BEFORE AN INTERVIEW

### Company Research & Position Checklist

Mission Statement & Company Values
Company structure/organization
Leadership and Management
Recent company projects and news stories
Office locations
Position goals and responsibilities

### The Day Before and Day-of the Interview

Print several copies of your resume, letter of recommendations, references, portfolio of work (writing samples, etc.), and any other materials employer requested you bring before the interview
Review all materials relevant to interview
Gather contact information, directions, money for any toll fees, etc.
Pick your formal business attire
Make sure to bring portfolio of materials
Plan to arrive 20-30 minutes early before interview
Allow time for traffic and parking
Refrain from smoking before the interview and wearing any strong perfumes or colognes

## WHAT TO DO DURING AN INTERVIEW

### Impress the Employer with your Knowledge

Show how you did your “homework” of the company and the prospective position
Ask questions during the interview if interviewer/s talk about something you are interested in and want to learn more

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# Interview Tips cont.

## WHAT TO DO DURING AN INTERVIEW

### Think about your behavior

Convey enthusiasm, energy, and respect
Shake hands and make eye contact
Use words and time wisely
Take time to think before speaking
Ask your interviewer/s if it's fine that you take notes during discussion

Ask 3-5 questions at end of interview that you prepared to ask and weren't covered during the interview
Don't ask about salary or benefits
Collect contact information
Ask what the next steps are in the interview process

## WHAT TO DO AFTER AN INTERVIEW

### After the Interview

Review your notes from the interview
Submit any information or documentation requested during the interview
Send a thank you note via email to all interviewers

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# Phone Interview Tips

## WHAT TO DO DURING A PHONE INTERVIEW

### Do

DO try to keep any kids and/or pets occupied and turn off any background noise

DO use a landline phone if you have one, instead of your cell phone. That way, you'll eliminate the possibility of poor reception or dropped calls

DO keep a glass of water handy, in case your mouth gets dry

DO have your resume in front of you

DO smile and sound enthusiastic

DO speak slowly and enunciate clearly

DO take your time - it's perfectly acceptable to take a moment or two to collect your thoughts

DO take notes during discussion

DO ask 3-5 questions at end of interview that you prepared to ask and weren't covered during the interview

### Don't

DON'T smoke, chew gum, eat, or drink

DON'T interrupt the interviewer

DON'T sound bored

DON'T try to talk through the silent pauses

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# Skype Interview Tips

## WHAT TO DO DURING A SKYPE INTERVIEW

### Do

DO a trial run-through to make sure your camera, speakers and mic on your laptop/computer are working
DO dress professionally
DO choose a good location and check the lighting before your interview
DO keep kids and/or pets occupied during your interview

DO look into the camera and make sure you are speaking loudly and directly to your interviewer
DO smile a lot during the interview
DO take notes during discussion
DO ask 3-5 questions at end of interview that you prepared to ask and weren't covered during the interview

### Don't

DON'T overlook your background

DON'T look preoccupied with other things in the background

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# Top Interview Q&As

## Top 10 Interview Questions and How to Answer Them

**Can you tell me about yourself?**

Try to answer questions about yourself without saying too much, or too little, personal information. You can begin by discussing some of your personal interests and experiences that don't relate directly to work, such as a brief overview of where you grew up, your education, and what motivates you. You can also share some fun facts that showcase your personality, such as a favorite hobby, to make the interview a little more interesting and memorable.

**What is your greatest strength?**

Discuss the attributes that will qualify you for the specific job you are interviewing for, and that sets you apart from the other candidates. Before the job interview, try to make matches between your qualifications and the requirements that are listed in the job announcement. This way, you will have examples to refer to during the interview so you can demonstrate your suitability for the position.

**What is your greatest weakness?**

Frame your answers around positive aspects of your skills and abilities as an employee, turning seeming "weaknesses" into strengths. For example, you can say something like, "I've always struggled with being a perfectionist – I want the task done as perfect as possible the first time, but this means that sometimes I spend more time on a task than is necessary. I've learned to balance this ambition for perfection with the equally important responsibility of meeting deadlines."

You can also discuss examples of skills you have improved on, providing certain instances of how you have recognized a weakness and have taken steps to improve yourself.

**Why should we hire you?**

Confidently state why you're the candidate who should be hired for the job. This is not the time to be modest (although neither should you be arrogant). Your response should be a focused sales pitch that explains the specific attributes and skills you have to offer the employer, and why they should hire you for the job. Before the interview, make sure to review the qualifications and the requirements in the job listing so you can compose a response that aligns with what the employer is looking for.

**What are your salary expectations?**

Think about what you are looking for in terms of salary. Research what the average salary is for the position you are applying for. Review the best way to answer questions about salary so you are offered the pay that you deserve for the position.

*Source: Alison Doyle/The Balance Careers*

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# Top Interview Q&As cont.

## Top 10 Interview Questions and How to Answer Them

**Why are you leaving or why have you left your job?**

State the facts, be direct, and focus your answer on the future, especially if leaving your previous employer wasn't under the best of circumstances. Always try to be positive about your response, and avoid talking badly about your current organization, colleagues or supervisor. You want to give the impression that you're motivated by the possibility of new opportunities and not just trying to escape a current bad work situation.

**Why do you want this job?**

Be specific about what makes you the perfect fit for this job, and talk about aspects of the company and position that appeal to you the most. Before the interview, take the time to thoroughly research the company and its services, products, programs and projects; company values; and company mission so you can show the interviewer your in-depth knowledge about the position and the company.

**How do you handle stress and pressure?**

Give an example of how you have successfully handled stress and pressure in a previous job. Answer the question in a way that you explain what you did to overcome it, or even used it to your advantage. Don't say that you have never really experienced workplace stress because most likely, this is not true; it could also make it seem that you've only worked in low-pressure environments and therefore aren't ready to deal with difficult situations.

**Can you describe a difficult work situation or project and how you overcame it?**

Be prepared to share a detailed example of what you did in a tough situation, whether at your current employer or a previous employer, to show how you can successfully perform in a challenging situation. Avoid talking negatively, or extensively, about other individuals.

**What are your goals for the future?**

Keep your answer focused on the job and the company you're interviewing with, and reiterate to the interviewer/s that the position aligns with your long-term goals.

*Source: Alison Doyle/The Balance Careers*

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# Best Questions to Ask the Interviewer/s

Below is a list of suggested questions to ask the interviewer/s so you can ensure the company is a good match for your qualifications and interests.

## Best Questions to Ask

How would you describe a typical day in this position?

Is this a new position? If not, why is this position available?

What is the company's management style?

Who does this position report to?

How many people work in the company?

How many people work in the department?

How much travel is expected?

What is the typical work week? Is overtime expected?

What are the prospects for growth and advancement?

If I am extended a job offer, how soon would you like me to start?

When can I expect to hear from you?

What are the biggest challenges of this job?

How has the company changed over the last few years?

What are the company's plans for growth and development?

What is the best part about working for this company?

What would be expected in my first 30 days of work?

*Source: Alison Doyle/The Balance Careers*

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# Tips for Writing a Thank You Note

## Tips for Writing a Thank You Note After an Interview

**Send a thank you email to everyone who interviewed you.** Review notes made after interview conversations to remind yourself of topics discussed and points you want to cover in your thank you note.
**Don't wait to send your note.** Send your note within 24 hours of the interview. You want the interviewer/s to still have you fresh in their mind as a candidate for the job.
**Promote your candidacy.** Use your thank you note to reiterate your interest in the job and the company, and to highlight your relevant skills that are specific to the position's requirements.
**Say anything you forgot to mention.** If there's something you had wished you'd shared during the interview, but didn't, do it in your note.
**Clean up interview mistakes.** If you misspoke during your interview or answered a question poorly, you can use your thank you note to rephrase and clarify what you intended to say.
**Proofread your thank you note.** Read thank you note before you send it ensuring there are no errors. Even though the interview is over, the thank you note is still part of the interview process.

## Thank You Note Example

Dear Ms. /Mr. [**Last name**],

Thank you for taking the time to talk to me about the **[Position title]** with **[Company name]**. I was very interested to learn [positive aspects of company].

I believe I am an outstanding candidate for this position because **[Your hard/soft skills and related experience to position]**.

I hope that my resume and interview merit your favorable review, and I look forward to hearing from you soon. Please feel free to contact me at any time if further information is needed at **[Your cell phone number]** or at this email address.

Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

**[Your name]**

*Source: Alison Doyle/The Balance Careers*

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# 30 Second Elevator Pitch

When attending a Job/Career Fair or hiring event, it is important to have a 30 second elevator pitch so the employer can get to know you, your skills, and if you would be a good fit for the positions they are hiring for. This pitch can be used anywhere. Networking is one of the best ways to land a job, you never know who you are going to meet. You need to be ready to give this pitch to anyone, anywhere. So, practice, practice, practice.

## Top 10 Thirty Second Elevator Pitch Tips

**Figure out what type of position you are searching for** - Employers like to see someone with confidence. If you are not sure of what you want to do, they may be unsure if they want to hire you.

**Do not get too personal** - You do not want to give your life story or personal details. Provide a short and to the point description. You want to peek their interest, rather than give them a reason not to hire you.

**Make sure you answer three key questions** - Who are you? What you do? What job are you looking for?

**Focus on the needs of the employer** - They need to know why they should hire you. Use an example: I was able to reduce spending by 20%. That is something an employer can benefit from.

**Eliminate jargon** - Make sure your elevator pitch does not include military or job specific jargon. Some recruiters may be veterans, but a majority will not. Also, in most cases, the recruiter knows the job posting, but not the specifics.

**Put pen to paper** - Write down your 30 second elevator pitch to organize your thoughts. Make sure you pinpoint who you are, what you are looking for, what skills and experience you have, what you will bring to the employer, and any other pertinent information to the job you are seeking.

**Practice, read it aloud, and get feedback** - You want to be professional and do not want the first time you are giving your pitch to be in front of an employer with no practice.

**Prepare a few variations** - Make sure you have a few variations of your pitch aligning to different opportunities that the employer has available.

**Be able to give your elevator pitch without notes or paper** - You should not read your elevator pitch. You should be confident enough that you have it memorized. Some of us are better at speaking in front of others, that is ok, just do the best you can. With more practice, especially in front of others, you will be more confident and comfortable giving your pitch.

**Remember, employers are looking to hire** - Be confident in your elevator pitch. You have something the employer wants and needs, so you have the upper hand.

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# Networking Ins and Outs

Honing your networking skills will serve you well throughout your professional career – these networks will take time to develop. So be patient. By meeting new people, you will learn from others about your profession and companies you're interested in.

## The Ins and Outs of Networking

### Ensure success with preparation:

A good start is analyzing your skill set – write out your strengths and weaknesses. Break down your previous positions to be able to explain job duties. Relate your education to how it can help you with a new position. Start a database of work experiences to explain how you react to different situations.
Create your elevator speech – you should craft an elevator speech that you give to a potential employer within a two or three minute time frame. Picking your strongest points will be very important. Examples could include your work experience and education.
Practice your elevator speech – give your speech to someone you know. She/he can provide important feedback to help with your content and delivery.
Do your research – find out which companies will be attending the event, what each company does, and what positions are available.

### Expand your network:

Locate a networking group – check with the Chamber of Commerce, local job services, your closest PVA Chapter, or other local organizations such as your place of worship.
Identify industry and trade groups – many larger companies offer a multi-faceted approach to finding people to work for them. Trade groups provide a good resource to find experts in your field and potential employment opportunities.
Utilize networking sites and apps – these can be used to create new opportunities, including job searches. Some of these sites include: Meetup, Eventbrite, and Eventful.

### Get your name out there:

Publish your own Blog.
Contribute to someone else's Blog.
Research public speaking forums.
Work with a community workshop.

### Utilize social media to widen your reach:

Use social media to help you expand past your in-person relationships – social media allows you to be able to start, solidify, and build from new and previous contacts. Use sites like LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook to reconnect with people you already know or who have recently met, as well as to network with others, such as people who work at the companies you're interested in.

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# Networking Ins and Outs cont.

**Connect with different types of industries:**

Keep your options open concerning who may be interested in your skills.
Different industries have multiple departments and needs.
Company size, diversification, and location could offer new opportunities.

**Set long term goals:**

Nurture your contacts – you may need to use your network for future opportunities.
Find a mentor.

**Use your personal connections:**

Be clear and direct about your intentions.
Pick the right person that will follow through with your request.
Be prepared to do the follow-up work from information you receive.
Set your boundaries about how many favors you ask for.

**Have a good follow-up plan:**

Send a quick email to build your line of communication.
Remember birthdays of your contacts to keep line of communication open.

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# Making the Most of a Hiring Event

A hiring event can be an opportunity to connect with an employer to learn some hiring tips, as well as connect with other job seekers. Maximizing the event correctly increases your chances of employment and network connections. Be positive, confident and engaging!

## Before the Hiring Event:

**Research the companies you are interested in that will be attending the hiring event and try to have some knowledge of all the companies attending.**

Employers are impressed with job seekers that come prepared with knowledge of the company and know specifically what you want to do and how you can contribute. Additionally, try to apply for some of the positions you're interested in a day or two before the event and share that fact with the company representative at the hiring event.

Prioritize the companies that you are most interested in first. Identify specific jobs you qualify for so when you meet with employers, you will have thoughtful questions. Your goal should be to talk to all the employers at the hiring event, if possible, since you never know where the right opportunity may come from.

**Prepare different resumes targeting different positions and bring several copies of each.**

If you are interested in more than one career option, prepare resumes that are tailored to those career fields. Ensure you are organized.

**Develop and practice your introduction – an elevator pitch.**

Be prepared to introduce yourself and make an impression! Tell the employer your unique story, career accomplishments and what sets you apart from other potential candidates. Be brief, friendly and professional. Practice and always smile!

**Dress appropriately.**

First impressions are important. Dress like it's an interview. Business professional is the norm. Use good judgment.

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# Making the Most of a Hiring Event cont.

## At the Hiring Event:

**Arrive early, speak with employers and attend workshops.**

When you arrive, locate and engage with the employers you are most interested in. If time allows, meet with the additional employers. Remember, this is also a networking and learning event, so make connections and attend workshops.

**Introduce yourself and give your elevator pitch.**

Extend your hand, use a firm grip, look employer in the eye, say “hello”, smile and state your name. Give your pitch, ask questions, listen and pass along your resume.

**Take notes and the employer’s business card.**

Ensure to capture career advice and/or any important information that the employer is sharing with you. Ask for their business card or write down their contact information for later follow-ups. Keep in mind to

## After the Hiring Event:

**Apply for additional positions as discussed with employers.**

When applying for new positions, ensure your cover letter mentions meeting with the employer during the hiring event.

**Follow up by email.**

Shortly after the hiring event (no later than 48 hours), send an email thanking the employer for the information and let them know you have applied to ABC position as discussed.

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# Online Resources

## Online Resources for Employment, Career Planning and Counseling

Here is a list of useful websites that you can visit to learn more about employment, career planning and counseling opportunities.

Paralyzed Veterans of America's employment program
*pva.org/PAVE*

Service to School
*service2school.org*

Career OneStop
*careeronestop.org*

VA eBenefits Jobs
*www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/jobs*

America's Corporate Partners
*acp-usa.org*

TA Online
*taonline.com*

OPM
*www.opm.gov*

SimplyHired
*simplyhired.com*

Indeed
*indeed.com*

USAJobs
*usajobs.gov*

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