

WORK SEARCH ACTIVITIES

US

UPDATED AUGUST 2013

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Introduction

ABOUT THE ACTIVITIES

Regardless of where they are in their careers (just entering the workforce or changing positions after years of experience), knowing how to effectively market themselves is one of the biggest challenges facing job seekers today. They are often thrown into the competitive job hunt without the tools to navigate it successfully, so looking for work can be frustrating and overwhelming. It is understandable that many people feel defeated before they even begin their search.

With this in mind, Career Cruising has designed a series of six activities to help users acquire the knowledge, self-marketing strategies, and practical skills that will allow them to approach the challenge of finding a job both confidently and efficiently. These activities guide users in developing a specific skill set that gives them a competitive advantage in the job market, regardless of the careers that interest them. They are based on four key skills that are central to the work search: **understanding job requirements, resume writing, cover letter writing, and job interviews**. We recognize that mastering these skills extends beyond simply presenting one's work experience in different formats, since many student users may not have much previous employment to draw from and employers often receive hundreds of similar applications for a single position. Therefore, users are taught to reflect more broadly on how they might showcase their unique combination of traits, experiences, and achievements.

The activities in this package promote learning through a combination of individual research and reflection, peer revision, creative group projects, and class discussions and presentations. They can be adapted for any age group, whether participants are just starting middle or high school, in the process of completing post-secondary training, or have been in the workforce for years and are contemplating a career change. Instructors and counselors can integrate these activities into a variety of lesson plans or workshops, and they can be easily adapted according to the needs of participants.

In **Activity #1**, users are introduced to the work search process as they practice analyzing job postings to determine employers' key requirements and preferences. In creating their own posting for a fictional company, users reflect on the qualifications and attributes an ideal candidate might possess and begin to consider how they can best market themselves to employers.

Activity #2 presents users with an unthreatening approach to writing effective resumes. The detailed job posting and sample resumes encourage critical thinking about strong and weak resume characteristics, and emphasize why a finely tuned resume is such a powerful asset.

As a follow-up exercise, **Activity #3** asks users to recall situations in which they demonstrated or acquired valuable skills. They research a real job posting, and then use the Resume Builder to produce a customized resume. The process aims to give users without much previous job experience the confidence to recognize and promote their transferable skills. The activity includes a **Resume Builder Guide** and a list of **Action Verbs** to be used as quick references.

Activity #4 explores the purpose of a cover letter. Users assess a weak and a strong example to see how a cover letter can make an important first impression on a potential employer, and then consider how they might emphasize specific skills in a cover letter that complements their own resumes.

Introduction

To follow up, **Activity #5** guides users through the entire cover letter writing process, which includes using the Job Search tool to find a suitable posting, writing a rough draft, evaluating peer work, and producing a draft that can be saved and used as a starting point for future job applications. The activity includes a **Cover Letter Guide** as a quick reference for users.

In **Activity #6**, groups of users script and conduct mock job interviews and receive peer feedback on their performances. This activity builds participants' confidence by having them practice interview preparation and showing what they can expect from a real-life scenario. For those who have prior interview experience, the activity allows them to hone their skills and share tips with their peers.

CAREER CRUISING RESOURCES

The Work Search activities introduce users to a variety of resources that Career Cruising has developed to help them define and accomplish their career goals. However, users should also be challenged to investigate this wide network of support materials on their own time to determine which resources will be most valuable to their job hunt.

The **Employment Guide** provides users with valuable advice and ideas for every step of the work search process. The Work Search activities are a good introduction to the guide, but we encourage you to incorporate information from the Employment Guide into any discussion about work or career development. At sites where access to computers may be limited, you can print out specific sections of the Employment Guide to use with these activities. Go to the Employment Guide, click on the **Printer Friendly** icon at the top of the page, and choose the sections you'd like to print. Click the **Print Report** button and follow your browser's printing instructions.

The **Resume Builder** allows users to generate functional and professional resumes with the information that they have entered into their Plans. It shows users how to distill their experiences and qualities into transferable skills and market them effectively. Using this tool, users can easily update and save resume content, and then customize versions according to specific job application requirements.

The **My Journal** component of My Plan is a great tool for job seekers to document and process information related to their work search, reflect on real-life experiences, and plan their next steps. We've included a number of prompts in these activities to kickstart the journaling process. We suggest incorporating My Journal into all students' or clients' career planning and work search activities.

The **Job Search** tool, which incorporates content from Indeed.Com, lets users search for jobs in the **Employment** section of Career Cruising or from any occupation profile. Anyone experiencing problems finding job postings can click on the **Job Search Help** link on the Employment homepage for tips on improving search results and answers to common questions.

These activities and supplementary resources form a solid foundation for users who are interested in career development but may be relatively new to or apprehensive about the work search process. Whether they are used in a classroom, an employment center, or as part of an independent search, we hope that these activities encourage students, clients, and instructors alike to explore the extensive Career Cruising resources devoted to helping you figure out what comes *after* school.

Work Search Activity 1: In the Employer's Shoes

FOR THE TEACHER

Introduction

The purpose of this activity is for students to understand the process of applying for a job by assuming the perspective of an employer. Students will:

- Practice using the **Job Search** tool in the **Employment** section of Career Cruising
- Analyze job advertisements to identify important criteria common among most ads
- Create a job ad that considers the qualifications, work experience, and traits of an ideal candidate

Setting the Stage

Start a class discussion about how people look for jobs. Ask whether students have searched in job databases or applied for jobs before. You can highlight information available in the **Work Search** section of the **Employment Guide**, or have students read that section prior to the activity. (**Have students reflect on the benefits and drawbacks of the different methods of finding a job in the My Journal section of their Plans.**)

In class, use the **Job Search** tool to look up examples of job ads, or use a pre-selected example. (If the tool is not activated at your site, please speak to your school's Career Cruising Administrator.) Discuss what a company's objectives might be when they post or publish a job ad and what keywords applicants should focus on when reading an ad that will help them prepare targeted cover letters and resumes.

Divide the class into "hiring panels" made up of 2 to 5 students. Each group will create a hypothetical company and an advertisement for an open position based on an occupation that interests them. At the end of this activity, one member of each hiring panel will read the ad to the rest of the class. Give students a chance to discuss each group's job ad and provide feedback. (As students continue to learn about the work search process, you may choose to have them prepare resumes and cover letters, and perform mock job interviews as candidates for one or more of the ads developed by the class.)

Starting the Program

Go to www.careercruising.com. Enter your personal My Plan username and password in the spaces provided, and click on **Log In**.

Work Search Activity 1: In the Employer's Shoes

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PART A: READING JOB ADS

The format and content of print and online job ads may vary, but the objective remains the same: a company has a need and is looking for the right person to fill it!

As a class or in small groups, use the **Job Search** tool in the **Employment** section to search for job postings for two or three occupations of interest. You may want to print out the job ads for reference during class discussion. Answer the following questions:

1. What kinds of requirements are commonly addressed in the job ads? (e.g. education requirements)

2. Give three examples of qualifications that were “required” in the job ads (e.g. previous experience):

3. Give three examples of qualifications that were “preferred” or “desired,” but not necessarily required in the job ads (e.g. graduate degree preferred):

4. What unusual requirements did you find requested in the job ads?

5. What can you learn about the job requirements from the working conditions described in the ad?

Work Search Activity 1: In the Employer’s Shoes

6. What other important information does an applicant get from a job posting?

PART B: RESEARCH AN OCCUPATION AND CREATE YOUR COMPANY

Imagine that your group has been selected as **the hiring panel** at an innovative start-up company. The company has an entry-level position open, and your task is to write a job advertisement calling for qualified applicants.

1. Sign in to Career Cruising and click on Careers to search for occupations that interest your group. Choose an occupation and fill out the following information:

Occupation: _____

Core Tasks: _____

Working Conditions (*including employers*): _____

Salary Range: _____

Education/Training: _____

Skills, Abilities, or Other Qualifications: _____

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2. Imagine a company that might hire someone in this occupation. You can use the Job Search tool in the occupation profile to search for ideas. Create your company profile:

Company Name: _____

Location: _____

Company Background and Mission: _____

Company Motto/Slogan: _____

Number of Employees: _____

Types of Employee Occupations: _____

Website Address: _____

Contact Information: _____

3. Create an entry-level position in your company. You can use the Job Search tool or the Sample Career Path in the occupation profile to look at examples. Discuss what skills, qualifications, and traits the ideal candidate for the job possesses. Fill out the following information:

Job Title: _____

Key Responsibilities: _____

Reports to: _____

Entry-level Salary: _____

Work Search Activity 1: In the Employer’s Shoes

Education/Training: _____

Work Experience: _____

Special Skills: _____

Other Qualifications: _____

PART C: WRITE YOUR JOB AD

How will your ideal candidate learn about this position? Why is this job desirable? Read the **Advertised Positions** section in the **Employment Guide** for tips on how people search for jobs. Then, answer the following questions:

1. Where would you advertise to attract the desired type of applicants? What form(s) of advertising might be most effective? *(e.g. posting on a tech website for a computer programming position)*

2. Why do people want to work for your company? *(e.g. cool work environment, newest equipment)*

3. What benefits does your company offer its employees? *(e.g. health care, paid vacation days)*

Work Search Activity 1: In the Employer’s Shoes

4. What future promotions, job titles, or raises are possible for an entry-level employee?

5. What should candidates include when they apply for the position? (e.g. resume, writing portfolio)

Using the information you compiled in **PART B** and **PART C**, compose your company’s job advertisement. Remember to include the hiring manager’s name and contact information, position title and main tasks, required skills, education and work experience, and preferred qualifications and strengths. Make your company sound like a place a skilled job-seeker would want to work!

Position: _____

Job Reference Number: _____

Deadline: _____

Please Include: _____

Contact: _____

Job Description: _____

Work Search Activity 1: In the Employer’s Shoes

SUMMARY – YOUR VIEWS

Now that you’ve learned a little more about analyzing job advertisements, answer the following questions:

1. What did you learn about what employers are looking for in candidates from creating your own company and job ad?

2. Why is it important to tailor your application (cover letter, resume, etc.) to the requirements in each job ad you respond to?

3. How confident do you feel that you will be able to identify important criteria in job ads when you search for work?

4. How and where do you intend to search for jobs? (e.g. online job ads, networking)

5. What are three tips for reading job ads that you would give to someone who is searching for work?

Work Search Activity 2: What Makes a Good Resume?

FOR THE TEACHER

Introduction

In this activity, students investigate the role that resumes play in the work search process. This activity builds on information available in the **Resumes** section of Career Cruising's **Employment Guide**. The goal of this activity is to help students:

- Understand the purpose of a resume
- Identify key components and appropriate content for resumes
- Describe characteristics of both strong and weak resumes

Setting the Stage

Select an object from the room (e.g. a book or a pen) and ask volunteers to try to “sell” the object to the rest of the class. Ask students what they know about marketing, and what it means to market themselves to potential employers. Resumes are the most important tools that students have to sell their skills and experience, and it’s crucial that they know how to market themselves effectively. **(Have student reflect on the challenges of marketing themselves to potential employers in the My Journal section of their Plans.)**

Have students review the sample resumes on their own, then work with a partner to evaluate the resumes as part of a Think-Pair-Share exercise. Partners can then share their observations with the class, and subsequent discussion can focus on specific elements of each resume.

We recommend following up this activity with **Work Search Activity 3: Writing Your Resume**.

Starting the Program

Go to www.careercruising.com. Enter your personal My Plan username and password in the spaces provided, and click on **Log In**.

Work Search Activity 2: What Makes a Good Resume?

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PART ONE: UNDERSTANDING RESUMES

Sign in to Career Cruising using your personal My Plan username and password. Click on **Employment** to access the **Employment Guide**. Read the **Resumes** section and answer the following questions:

1. What is the purpose of a resume?

2. What do employers learn about candidates from their resumes?

3. What is a career/job objective statement?

4. What is the difference between the Work Experience and Summary of Skills sections? Why is each section important?

5. What types of bulleted information should be included in a Summary of Qualifications section?

Work Search Activity 2: What Makes a Good Resume?

6. What are the four components of an effective bullet point statement? Give your own example of a strong bullet point.

7. In your own words, describe the three types of resumes: chronological, functional, and modified chronological.

8. When should a job seeker use a functional style of resume?

9. How should a candidate follow up with a potential employer after applying for a job?

10. How can candidates ensure their resumes make a positive first impression? Give at least three tips.

Work Search Activity 2: What Makes a Good Resume?

PART TWO: EVALUATING SAMPLE RESUMES

Read the sample job posting and resumes found at **the end of this activity**. Answer the following questions:

1. What skills, education, experience, and other qualifications is the employer looking for in a candidate? List keywords from the job posting below.

2. What impression do you get of Taylor based on Resume A?

3. What impression do you get of Jamie based on Resume B?

Work Search Activity 2: What Makes a Good Resume?

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4. Which candidate do you think is more qualified: Taylor (Resume A) or Jamie (Resume B)? Why?

5. Which candidate do you think presents their qualifications more professionally? Explain.

SUMMARY – YOUR VIEWS

Now that you know a little more about writing strong resumes, answer the following questions:

6. Based on your current work and life experience, which resume type (chronological, functional, modified) do you think is best for you? Why?

7. What impression do you want to make with your resume, and how are you going to make sure you're successful?

Dining Out Magazine

August 2013 Issue

We're Hiring at LE WOK INDONÉSIEN!**Position:** Sous Chef**Job Ref.:** SC-5309**Location:** Le Wok Indonésien, 789 Main Street, Northwest City, CA 59800**Job Type:** Full-time, 40-50 hours/week**Deadline:** August 31, 2013**Job Summary**

Do you live for great food? Are you a motivated and creative culinary professional who strives to take casual fine dining to a new level? **Le Wok Indonésien** is a Southeast Asian restaurant committed to providing its guests with an unparalleled dining experience. We are looking for an enthusiastic and dedicated sous chef to join our team and make those mouths water in anticipation.

Key Skills & Abilities

- An organized team player with excellent communication skills
- Consistently punctual and reliable, with a professional appearance
- Take pride in your work (and your wok!) and actively learn new cooking techniques
- Demonstrate superior customer service skills and courtesy when interacting with guests
- Innovative and Creative

Key Duties

- Supervise kitchen staff to ensure efficient meal preparation and production
- Help create new menu items and present dishes according to chef's specifications
- Manage food and supply budget; keep track of stock and order new ingredients as needed
- Clean and sanitize all kitchen equipment
- Promote a positive atmosphere in both the kitchen and dining room
- Fulfill any other duties assigned by the chef or restaurant manager

Recommended Qualifications

- Associate degree in culinary arts or related program
- Minimum 1-2 years of experience working in a fast-paced restaurant
- Training in safe food handling and/or workplace safety
- Demonstrated excellence in cooking and food presentation
- Strong work ethic

Work Conditions & Physical Requirements

- Comfortable working under pressure in a hot, hectic environment
- Able to stand on feet for long periods and lift heavy objects
- Willing to work irregular hours, including some evening, holiday, and weekend shifts
- Appreciate our diverse, multicultural work environment

We offer a competitive salary and benefits, as well as opportunities for career advancement. Please send your cover letter and resume to Geraldine Greene, Restaurant Manager, and indicate the Job Reference Number in your application.

RESUME A

Taylor Kelly's Resume

My Address: 42 Shady Pines Drive, Northwest City

My Phone Number: 555-555-9876

My Email Address: partyanimal_1991@email.com

Date of Birth: July 1, 1991

My website: www.yourspace.com/kellysfavebabyanimals

Marital status: Single

Job Objective: I want to be your sous chef! 😊

Skills Summary:

- ☞ I am young but very skilled
- ☞ I enjoy cooking a variety of dishes
- ☞ I am good at typping, surfing the web, and Microsoft Word
- ☞ I have over 1½ years of travel experience between jobs

Education:

- ✍ Graduated from Central Northwest Elementary & Middle School. June 26, 2003
- ✍ Albert Einstein High School Dip. June 20, 2007
 - 😊 **Award: for "Most Likely to Get A Crazy Haircut"**
- ✍ Northwest City College Culinary Arts Program Assoc. Degree May 12, 2010
 - ☞ As part of the program I worked at a French bistro that won an award in 2007
 - ☞ I also have **Food Handler Certification** and am working towards **Certified Sous Chef** designation

Relevant Courses:

- CULART-2601: Stocks, soups and sauces – learning how to make sauces, stocks and soups
- CULArt-1001: Introduction to Knife Skills – *tried* to learn about using different types of knives (lol)
- CULArt-3600: Garnishes – learning about making fancy garnishes to put on meals

Relevant Work Experience:

- 1. LEMONADE STAND ENTREPRENEUR** – Approx. Summer 2000 & 2001
 - ☞ Making and selling lemonade
- 2. FAST FOOD WORKER AT HAPPY BURGER**- 2006-2008 (in the summers between school years)
 - ☞ Flipping burgers and making milkshakes
 - ☞ Service with a smile!
- 3. ASSISTANT SWIMMING INSTRUCTOR AT THE NORTHWEST CITY POOL:** June to September 2007 (P/T)
Helping teach kids swimming lessons in groups of 4-10 kids
 - ☞ Leadership skills
- 3. APPRENTICE COOK AT LE FRENCH BISTRO**, as a requirement of culinary program – October 2009-April 2010
 - ☞ Assisting with cutting veggies and making garnishes, which is pretty tedious
 - ☞ Experience working with many other cooks in a hot and crowded kitchen
- 4. CONCIERGE AT THE LUXURY HOTEL** – November 10, 2012 to Now
 - ☞ Dealt with hotel staff and guests
 - ☞ Watched cooking done by chefs in kitchen at hotel restaurant

Hobbies & Interests:

- 😊 Big Siblings – volunteered with a disadvantaged child
- 😊 Marathon Trainer & Runner – My last race was a 10k one but this is an ongoing interest and I plan to run a full marathon soon, which will require a lot of training hours during the evenings and weekends
- 😊 Enjoy travel and tasting exotic dishes since I am a chef
- 😊 Enjoy listening to dance music and DJing/creating music in my spare time

"REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST"

RESUME B

Jamie Morgan

681 Lakeview Street
Northwest City, CA 59800

555-555-5259
jmorgan@email.com

Job Objective: A challenging position as sous chef, where I can use my culinary skills and knowledge of Southeast Asian cuisine to uphold Le Wok Indonésien's reputation for incomparable quality and service.

Skills Summary:

- Hard-working, accomplished chef with 4 years of experience in a fast-paced kitchen environment
- Associate Degree in Culinary Arts: proficient in variety of techniques, including sauces, soups, meats, and pastries
- Innovative with a proven track record for award-winning recipe creation and menu development
- Reputation for being reliable and providing superior customer service in a luxury hotel setting
- Dedicated to continuing my culinary education through practice, specialty training, and travel

Work Experience:

- July 2012 – Present **Concierge**, Hôtel de la Perle, Northwest City
- Liaising with 15 kitchen staff to ensure client satisfaction with hotel food services
 - Implementing a new room-service system that aims to reduce meal returns by 50%
 - Consistently receive the highest rating for client service on guest surveys
- Sept 2010 – May 2011 **Apprentice Chef**, Curryosity Fusion Restaurant, Northwest City
- Prepared high-quality meals for 200 customers a night, as part of the kitchen team
 - Co-created award-winning, highly requested Indian-French fusion dish for menu
 - Commended by Chef Gupta for creative garnishes and plated presentations
- April 2007 – Sept 2009 **Line Cook**, Fill 'Er Up Family Restaurant, Northwest City
- Devised online shift scheduling system that increased kitchen efficiency by 30%
 - Created four menu items that generated \$12,000 in sales during the first two weeks

Education:

- Sept 2009 – May 2011 **Associate Degree in Culinary Arts**, Northwest City College, Northwest City
- **Certifications** **Certified Culinarian**, American Culinary Federation, received 2011
Food Handler Certification, Northwest City Public Health, received 2007, updated 2012

Volunteer Experience:

- Oct 2008 – June 2010 **Kitchen Manager**, Breakfast for Kids, Northwest City
- Managed weekly kitchen budget of \$2,000 and staff of 5 volunteers
 - Developed menus to suit a wide range of tastes and food restrictions

Awards & Honors:

- May 2011 **Delicious Dish of the Year**, National Food Fusion Awards
Aug 2008 **Employee of the Month**, Fill 'Er Up Family Restaurant

Activities & Interests:

- Member of the American Culinary Federation, Northwest City Division, Sept 2012 – Present
- Weekly contributor to food appreciation blog, "A Pinch of Salt n' Pepa," May 2010 – June 2012
- Travelling to obtain first-hand knowledge of regional cuisines, including Southeast Asia and Brazil

Work Search Activity 3: Writing Your Resume

FOR THE TEACHER

Introduction

In this activity, the follow-up to **Work Search Activity 2: What Makes a Good Resume**, students will use the information they've acquired about resumes to write their own resumes. They will:

- Inventory skills they have acquired through various activities and experiences
- Link their skills, experiences, and achievements to the requirements outlined in a job posting
- Use Resume Builder to create and refine their own resumes
- Build confidence in their ability to identify and highlight their skills and qualifications

Setting the Stage

We suggest completing **Work Search Activity 2: What Makes a Good Resume** before completing this activity. Classroom discussion can focus on what students have learned (or know) about resume writing. Remind students that their resume may be the only chance they have to impress potential employers who likely have hundreds—or even thousands—more resumes to read through for a single open position. On average, a resume gets less than a minute of consideration from employers, so it's important to make every word count. **(Have students reflect on the challenges of having their resume stand out from those of other applicants in the My Journal section of their Plans.)**

Think about inviting hiring managers from local businesses to speak to your class about what they are looking for when they review applicants' resumes and to provide feedback on some students' resumes. If you'd like to incorporate this activity into other classes, you can modify it so that students research content and write resumes for historical figures, fictional characters, important scientists, or other individuals covered by your curriculum. Including resume writing activities in other classes ensures students get plenty of practice writing strong resumes.

The **Action Verbs** handout included with this activity provides students with lots of options for conveying job-related tasks and achievements in a concise and persuasive way in their resumes. The list is also available for download in the **Effective Bullets Points** section, under **Resumes** in the **Employment Guide**.

Starting the Program

Go to www.careercruising.com. Enter your personal My Plan username and password in the spaces provided, and click on **Log In**.

Work Search Activity 3: Writing Your Resume

PART A: BRAINSTORM RESUME CONTENT

Many job searchers find it difficult to confidently take stock of their abilities and skills, especially if they don't have a lot of work experience. Think about *all* the activities you've participated in, including jobs, clubs, school projects, sports, and hobbies, and answer the following:

1. Describe a situation in which you had to identify and prioritize tasks in order to successfully accomplish something before a deadline.

2. Give an example of a time when you were really proud of yourself, or stood up for yourself.

3. Describe an occasion when you set a good example for members of a group, or motivated others to achieve a goal.

4. Describe how you successfully persuaded a friend, classmate, or parent to see your point of view about an issue that was important to you.

Work Search Activity 3: Writing Your Resume

5. Write about a time you weren't sure how to handle a problem, and what you did to figure it out.

6. Describe an important decision you had to make, and the steps you took to arrive at your decision.

7. Give an example of a time you had to gather and analyze a lot of information in order to give an informed recommendation or opinion about something.

8. Describe an instance when you didn't get along with someone you had to work with, and what you did to resolve the situation and ensure your work got done.

You may not have known you were doing it at the time, but through the experiences you described above, you've successfully demonstrated several skills and characteristics that many employers look for: **organization, confidence, leadership, communication, problem solving, decision making, analytical thinking, and teamwork.**

In the chart on the following page, make a list of all of your activities and accomplishments, and identify the skills you acquired or demonstrated through each experience.

Work Search Activity 3: Writing Your Resume

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<p><u>Activities / Experiences</u> <i>(e.g. jobs, volunteer opportunities, extracurricular activities, special training, important projects, memberships, etc.)</i></p>	<p><u>Skills</u> <i>(e.g. goal setting, creativity, critical thinking, numerical literacy, proficiency in Excel, research, adaptability, etc.)</i></p>

Work Search Activity 3: Writing Your Resume

PART B: FIND A JOB POSTING

Use the **Job Search** tool to find a job posting that interests you. Sign in to Career Cruising with your personal My Plan username and password, and click on **Employment**. In the **Job Search** section, search for a posting by job title, keyword, or company name. (Hint: Try selecting a company that you know employs students. The location does not matter for this activity.)

Once you've found a suitable posting, answer the following questions:

1. **What position is being advertised?** _____

2. **What company is hiring?** _____

3. **What tasks will the successful candidate perform?**

4. **What are the education requirements?**

5. **What skills or characteristics are applicants required to possess?**

6. **What other qualifications are mentioned in the posting?**

PART C: WRITE YOUR RESUME

Use Resume Builder Guide at **the end of this activity** to fill in and refine the content in your resume. Tailor the content to the requirements of the job posting you located. Refer to the chart on **page three** of this activity for experiences and skills to add to your resume. To access the Resume Builder, go to your My Plan homepage and click on **Build My Resume**.

Work Search Activity 3: Writing Your Resume

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SUMMARY – YOUR VIEWS

Now that you've written your resume, answer the following questions:

1. What skills or characteristics were you surprised to learn that you have after brainstorming content for your resume?

2. What is the most challenging part of writing your resume?

3. Do you see any weak areas in your resume? What can you do to improve these areas before you apply for a job?

4. What skills or achievements are you most proud of? How will you highlight them in your resume?

5. What employers in your community would you consider sending your resume to? Why?

Resume Builder Guide

Your Name

Address (from your personal profile)
Phone number (from your personal profile)
Email address (from your personal profile)

Career Objectives

Customize the objective to match each position you apply for. Rather than sending out a generic resume to multiple employers, show that you care enough to state why you want this job. The statement should indicate something desirable in your skill set or what you plan to contribute to the company if you are selected for the position.

Educational History

List the diplomas, degrees, training workshops, continuing education programs, and other relevant forms and levels of education you've obtained. You can use the Description field to highlight relevant courses, projects, or achievements, or make any other clarifications about your educational history as required by the job posting.

Work Experience

This section is often considered the “heart” of a resume. Give a brief outline of your career progression by presenting the relevant jobs in your work history. Make sure that starting and ending dates, job titles, and employer information are accurate.

Use the Description field to record skill/task/tools/result statements (see the **Employment Guide**) that emphasize accomplishments and achievements, rather than just duties performed on the job. Forge strong links between previous positions and the position sought, especially for your transferable skills.

Show—don't tell—by choosing action verbs and punchy adjectives over passive verbs and vague descriptors. See the **Effective Bullet Points** section for **Resumes** in the **Employment Guide** for tips on how to write concise points that incorporate action words.

Volunteer Experience

This section describes your unpaid experiences, which can be beneficial for showing that you are a well-rounded person outside of the work environment. Keep this section brief, and tailor it to match the career/job objective or job posting. Use the Description field to highlight relevant skills acquired, such as leadership or organizational skills.

Awards & Certificates

List a selection of relevant academic awards, scholarships, memberships in professional associations, and/or certifications (maximum 6). Include the award title and date awarded; you can use the Description field to identify the granting institution or any other pertinent information.

Extracurricular Activities

List your relevant activities, including organization name and dates. Use the Description field to explain your role (e.g. Member or Chair), duties performed, and transferrable skills acquired.

Hobbies & Interests

Only include hobbies and interests if they are somehow related to the career/job objective (e.g. *you are applying to be an outdoor tour guide and you enjoy rock climbing and snowshoeing*). Use the Description field to describe the relevant skills you've acquired.

Skills & Abilities

This section provides a customized snapshot of your unique skill set, qualifications, and personal attributes. Many people, therefore, choose to place it right after the career/job objective so that employers will be more likely to read it. (Note that you can move sections in the Resume Builder tool, and you can rename this section **Skills Summary** when you export your resume.) Highlighting valuable skills in this section can be especially helpful for those with less relevant work experience, such as someone who is searching for an entry-level position or changing careers.

Select four to six skills or abilities from the dropdown menu, and use the Description field to target each to the requirements of the job posting. You don't have to use full sentences, but the descriptions should be free of grammatical errors and inconsistencies. Be precise and accurate in your wording. It might help to include industry keywords, in case an automated system is sorting through applications.

Additional Information

Include this optional section only if the information you want to relay to a potential employer doesn't fit easily under any of the other headings.

References

In general, do not include your references' contact information on your resume. It is also unnecessary to have the notation "References Available Upon Request" on a resume, as this is assumed by the employer. You can prepare and print references separately in the References section of the **Resume Builder**.

Choose your references carefully, and obtain their permission before forwarding any of their contact information to another party. It's a good idea to give your references a copy of your resume and discuss your qualifications before they are contacted by potential employers.

Refer to the **Resumes** section in the **Employment Guide** for additional tips and suggestions for composing effective resumes.

Action Verbs

accelerated	changed	deployed	equalized	influenced
accentuated	charted	derived	established	informed
accomplished	clarified	described	estimated	initiated
achieved	classified	designed	evaluated	innovated
acquired	closed	detailed	examined	inspected
acted	coached	detected	exceeded	inspired
adapted	collaborated	determined	executed	installed
addressed	collected	developed	exhibited	instituted
adjudicated	combined	devised	exhorted	instructed
adjusted	commanded	diagnosed	expanded	integrated
administered	commercialized	differentiated	expedited	intensified
advanced	commoditized	directed	experimented	interpreted
advised	communicated	discerned	explained	interviewed
advocated	compared	discovered	explored	introduced
altered	compelled	dispensed	exported	invented
analyzed	compiled	displayed	expressed	inventoried
anchored	completed	dissected	extricated	investigated
applied	composed	distinguished	fabricated	itemized
appointed	computed	distributed	facilitated	joined
appraised	conceived	diversified	financed	judged
arbitrated	concluded	diverted	finalized	justified
arranged	conducted	documented	fixed	launched
articulated	configured	dominated	forecasted	led
ascertained	conserved	doubled	forged	learned
assembled	consolidated	drafted	formalized	lectured
assessed	constructed	drew	formed	leveraged
assisted	consulted	drove	formulated	liaised
associated	continued	earned	fostered	licensed
audited	contracted	edited	founded	listed
augmented	contrasted	educated	gained	listened
authenticated	controlled	effected	generated	located
authored	converted	effectuated	governed	lowered
authorized	conveyed	elected	graduated	maintained
balanced	coordinated	eliminated	guided	managed
bestowed	corrected	emphasized	halted	manipulated
brainstormed	corresponded	empowered	handled	manufactured
briefed	counseled	enacted	headed	mapped
broadened	crafted	encouraged	hired	marked
budgeted	created	endeavored	honored	marketed
built	critiqued	endorsed	hosted	mastered
calculated	crystallized	endured	hypothesized	masterminded
calibrated	curtailed	energized	identified	maximized
capitalized	cut	enforced	illustrated	measured
captured	deciphered	engineered	imagined	mediated
catalogued	decided	enhanced	implemented	mentored
catapulted	decreased	enlarged	imported	merged
categorized	defined	enlisted	improved	minimized
centralized	delegated	enlivened	improvised	modeled
chaired	delivered	ensured	incorporated	moderated
championed	demonstrated	entrenched	increased	modernized

modified	pioneered	recaptured	retrieved	studied
monetized	planned	received	reviewed	structured
monitored	positioned	recognized	revised	substantiated
motivated	predicted	recommended	revitalized	succeeded
narrated	prepared	reconciled	satisfied	suggested
navigated	prescribed	recorded	saved	summarized
negotiated	presented	recruited	scheduled	supervised
networked	presided	redesigned	searched	supplemented
nominated	processed	reduced	secured	supplied
normalized	procured	reengineered	serviced	supported
observed	produced	referred	selected	surpassed
obtained	programmed	refined	separated	synergized
offered	progressed	regained	served	synthesized
officiated	projected	regulated	shaped	systematized
operated	promoted	rehabilitated	shared	tabulated
optimized	propelled	reinforced	shepherded	talked
orchestrated	proofread	rejuvenated	simplified	targeted
ordered	proposed	remedied	sketched	taught
organized	prospected	rendered	slashed	tended
oriented	protected	renegotiated	sold	terminated
originated	proved	renewed	solidified	tested
outsourced	provided	renovated	solved	thwarted
overcame	publicized	reorganized	sparked	traced
overhauled	published	repaired	spearheaded	trained
oversaw	purchased	reported	specified	transcribed
participated	qualified	repositioned	spoke	transferred
partnered	quantified	represented	standardized	transformed
perceived	questioned	researched	started	transitioned
perfected	raised	resolved	streamlined	translated
performed	rated	responded	steered	
persuaded	ratified	restored	stimulated	
piloted	realigned	restructured	strategized	
pinpointed	rebuilt	retained	strengthened	

Work Search Activity 4: Cover Letter Basics

FOR THE TEACHER

Introduction

The purpose of this activity is to help students understand the basic form and function of cover letters, and to prepare them to write their own cover letters. Students will be able to:

- Explain the purpose of a cover letter
- Identify appropriate and effective cover letter form and techniques
- Reflect on content for their own cover letters

Setting the Stage

Ask students to recall a time when they've made a particularly good or bad first impression. What were the consequences of the impression they made? A cover letter is an applicant's introduction to a potential employer—and first impressions count! **(Have students reflect on the importance of first impressions when searching for work in the My Journal section of their Plans.)**

Review what students already know about cover letters. In this activity, students will build on that knowledge with tips and advice from Career Cruising's **Employment Guide**. If access to computer resources is limited, you can print out the **Cover & Broadcast Letters** section of the guide for students to use in class.

Have students work in groups, acting as hiring panels, to discuss and evaluate the two sample cover letters. Encourage students to mark up the cover letters by circling or underlining the strengths, weaknesses, mistakes, and other points of interest in the letters. When students have finished with the worksheets, you can go over the cover letters as a class, highlighting examples of effective—and ineffective—cover letter writing.

Finally, students will have the opportunity to express which accomplishments they would include in their own cover letters. This initial inventory will help them think objectively about their own skills and abilities, and how they'd like to present themselves to potential employers.

Starting the Program

Go to www.careercruising.com. Enter your personal My Plan username and password in the spaces provided, and click on **Log In**.

Work Search Activity 4: Cover Letter Basics

PART A: TRUE OR FALSE?

Read the **Cover & Broadcast Letters** section of the **Employment Guide** and answer the following true-or-false questions about cover letters:

	True or False?	
1. The purpose of a cover letter is to highlight your qualifications for a specific job and secure an interview.	T	F
2. All of the really important information is in the resume, so a cover letter doesn't need to be perfect.	T	F
3. You don't need to send a resume if you send a cover letter.	T	F
4. A cover letter highlights the most important information about your qualifications, while a resume is a more comprehensive summary of your qualifications.	T	F
5. It's a little pushy to address the hiring manager by name; it's better to always address your cover letter to "Whom It May Concern."	T	F
6. You should write your cover letter in point form because hiring managers may be too busy to read all of it.	T	F
7. Ideally, cover letters should be one page long and contain three to five paragraphs.	T	F
8. You should tailor your cover letter to describe how your skills, abilities, and achievements are transferrable to the job you're applying for.	T	F
9. You should include examples in your cover letter to prove that you possess the skills and characteristics the employer is looking for.	T	F
10. Your confidence and enthusiasm about the position should come across in your cover letter.	T	F
11. Sending a form letter is fine—it's not like your skills or experiences are going to change.	T	F
12. If you don't have much experience, don't draw attention to it; emphasize the relevant skills you've acquired in other ways.	T	F
13. If your contact information is on your resume, you don't need to put it in your cover letter as well.	T	F
14. Ending your cover letter with an invitation for the employer to contact you for an interview is a little desperate.	T	F

Work Search Activity 4: Cover Letter Basics

PART B: EVALUATING SAMPLE COVER LETTERS

Read the job posting and cover letters found at **the end of this activity**. Evaluate how well the cover letters present each applicant. Feel free to circle, highlight, or underline points of interest in each letter for discussion.

Once you've considered each letter, answer the following questions:

1. What are some of the strengths and/or weaknesses of Taylor's cover letter (Cover Letter A)?

2. What are some of the strengths and/or weaknesses of Jamie's cover letter (Cover Letter B)?

3. How different are Taylor (Cover Letter A) and Jamie's (Cover Letter B) actual qualifications?

Work Search Activity 4: Cover Letter Basics

Page 3 of 4

4. What impression did you get of the applicant from Cover Letter A?

5. What impression did you get of the applicant from Cover Letter B?

6. If you were the hiring manager, which applicant would you interview? Why?

SUMMARY – YOUR VIEWS

Now that you know a little more about writing cover letters, answer the following questions:

7. Why are cover letters important when submitting a resume for a job opening?

8. What are some of the challenges of composing a strong cover letter?

Work Search Activity 4: Cover Letter Basics

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9. Cover letters are tailored to specific job postings, but, in general, what would you like potential employers to know about you? What do you have to offer? (e.g. a specific skill, characteristic, or accomplishment)

Dining Out Magazine

August 2013 Issue

We're Hiring at LE WOK INDONÉSIEN!**Position:** Sous Chef**Job Ref.:** SC-5309**Location:** Le Wok Indonésien, 789 Main Street, Northwest City, CA 59800**Industry:** Food Services**Job Type:** Full-time, 40-50 hours/week**Deadline:** August 31, 2013**Job Summary**

Do you live for great food? Are you a motivated and creative culinary professional who strives to take casual fine dining to a new level? **Le Wok Indonésien** is a Southeast Asian restaurant committed to providing its guests with an unparalleled dining experience. We are looking for an enthusiastic and dedicated sous chef to join our team and make those mouths water in anticipation.

Key Skills & Abilities

- An organized team player with excellent communication skills
- Consistently punctual and reliable, with a professional appearance
- Take pride in your work (and your wok!) and actively learn new cooking techniques
- Demonstrate superior customer service skills and courtesy when interacting with guests
- Innovative and creative

Key Duties

- Supervise kitchen staff to ensure efficient meal preparation and production
- Help create new menu items and present dishes according to chef's specifications
- Manage food and supply budget; keep track of stock and order new ingredients as needed
- Clean and sanitize all kitchen equipment
- Promote a positive atmosphere in both the kitchen and dining room
- Fulfill any other duties assigned by the chef or restaurant manager

Recommended Qualifications

- Associate degree in culinary arts or related program
- Minimum 1-2 years of experience working in a fast-paced restaurant
- Training in safe food handling and/or workplace safety
- Demonstrated excellence in cooking and food presentation
- Strong work ethic

Work Conditions & Physical Requirements

- Comfortable working under pressure in a hot, hectic environment
- Able to stand on feet for long periods and lift heavy objects
- Willing to work irregular hours, including some evening, holiday, and weekend shifts
- Appreciate our diverse, multicultural work environment

We offer a competitive salary and benefits, as well as opportunities for career advancement. Please send your cover letter and resume to Geraldine Greene, Restaurant Manager, and indicate the Job Reference Number in your application.

COVER LETTER A

RE: Job CS-5390

To Whom it May Concern,

I recently saw that you are hiring a sous chef. Since the beginning of time, I have wanted to work in your restaurant. Working at Le Wok Indonésien would be an amazing opportunity for me to learn new cooking techniques and improve my knife skills, which are not the best. I just know U R the kind of man/woman who likes to make people's dreams come true! :)

As you can see in my resume, I apprenticed as a cook at a very prestigious restaurant that once won an award as best new French bistro in the city. Then I took a year and a half off to travel for personal reasons before getting a job as a concierge at a luxury downtown hotel. Although dealing with annoying guests and staff is a real pain, it's worth it to be able to visit the kitchen during my breaks and watch the hotel chefs at work. I have learned a lot about cooking in a hectic environment that way. Once, I even saw them prepare an elaborate meal for a celebrity wedding at the hotel. I have to respect client "confidentiality," but it was a big feast with expensive and exotic ingredients! I'm sure everything I learned here would help me rise above the other cooks at your restaurant. It goes without saying that I am a very hard worker who never overlooks even the tiniest detail. Everyone also says that I am very proactive and have endless synergy, which I'm sure you will agree are important qualities that a person of my young age rarely possesses. I learned during my culinary arts program that I actually prefer doing pastries, so I would like to stick with this as much as possible. I'm looking for a job that pays me at least \$35,000 a year.

I am confident that my enthusiasm makes up for any shortcomings I may have. In my free time, I volunteer with Big Siblings as a big sibling to an underprivileged child. I am also an avid runner. Just this last year, I completed a 10 k marathon, which is the highlight of my life. Since I have intensive training on most weekends and some evenings, I would have to schedule my shifts last-minute around this priority.

I hope you'll call me if you feel that I am a suitable candidate. If not, all the best to you and your staff, and I'll still recommend your restaurant to all of my friends.

TKL.

Taylor Kelly

partyanimal_1991@email.com

COVER LETTER B

Jamie Morgan
681 Lakeview Street
Northwest City, CA 59800
555-555-5259
jmorgan@email.com

August 12, 2013

RE: Sous Chef, Job Ref. SC-5309

Ms. Geraldine Greene, Restaurant Manager
Le Wok Indonésien
789 Main Street
Northwest City, CA 59800

Dear Ms. Greene,

Please consider my application for the position of sous-chef at Le Wok Indonésien, as advertised in the August 2013 issue of *Dining Out Magazine*. The restaurant's reputation for outstanding service and culinary innovation is widely known, and it would be a privilege to work under Chef Giselle Petit. I can offer my flawless record of being reliable and punctual, strong communication and leadership skills, and a willingness to learn and be creative in the kitchen. Above all else, my goal is to give customers an unforgettable meal.

I graduated from the Culinary Arts program at Northwest City College in May 2011. The program teaches the essentials of food preparation, presentation, and service in the restaurant industry, and includes courses in garnishes, nutrition, baking, and stocks, soups, and sauces. During the hands-on training, I became comfortable working in a fast-paced environment with a diverse variety of co-workers.

I apprenticed under renowned Chef Max Gupta. During my training period, we won the 2011 "Delicious Dish of the Year" Food Fusion Award for inventing our popular dish called Spicy Melon Curry. Inspired by Mr. Gupta's experiences, I spent a year travelling in Southeast Asia to sample the cuisine of Thailand, India, and Vietnam. This experience has deepened my understanding of food preparation and appreciation, and I am keen to apply this knowledge in a practical setting.

In my current position as a concierge, I am challenged to be resourceful when resolving issues. For example, guests often approach me with special food restrictions that must be accommodated by the hotel restaurant. By discussing options with the chefs and relying on my culinary training, I suggest an appetizing alternative menu. My goal is to take these skills to the next level, and working creatively with food as Le Wok Indonésien's sous chef would be an exciting step forward in my career.

Please see my resume for more information about my relevant skills, work experience, and education. I welcome the opportunity to discuss the details of this position in person at your earliest convenience. I can be contacted by phone after 4:00 pm on weekdays and by email any time.

Sincerely,

Jamie Morgan

Jamie Morgan

Work Search Activity 5: Writing Your Cover Letter

FOR THE TEACHER

Introduction

In this follow-up activity to **Work Search Activity 4: Cover Letter Basics**, students build on their knowledge of effective cover letter writing and create their own cover letters in response to a job posting. Students then review and evaluate other students' work, which helps to ensure that they recognize and understand successful strategies for cover letter writing. As well, the activity allows students to see how their peers present qualifications, skills, and abilities that they may also possess.

Setting the Stage

We strongly recommend completing **Work Search Activity 4: Cover Letter Basics** prior to completing this activity. Classroom discussion can focus on what students have learned about the purpose and characteristics of cover letters. Ask students what skills, characteristics, or achievements they would like to highlight in their cover letters.

This is a three-part activity. Students will need time to research jobs, write a rough draft of their cover letter, type up a final draft, and evaluate other students' cover letters. This activity may take place over the course of **two 50-minute classes**.

Cover letters are tailored to specific job postings, so students will need to find a suitable posting for this activity. They can use the **Job Search** tool to find postings that interest them. (If the tool is not activated at your site, please speak to your school's Career Cruising Administrator.) To reduce the amount of time needed for this activity, you can collect job postings for students to use or create your own job ad requesting applicants for the position of "Student" in your class.

Starting the Program

Go to www.careercruising.com. Enter your personal My Plan username and password in the spaces provided, and click on **Log In**.

Work Search Activity 5: Writing Your Cover Letter

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PART A: FIND A JOB POSTING

Sign in to Career Cruising using your personal My Plan username and password. Click on **Employment** to access the **Job Search** tool.

You can search for a suitable job opening by position title, keyword, or company name. Although you are not actually applying for the job, you will need to find a position that closely matches your current level of experience and skill. If you cannot find a suitable posting, ask your teacher for assistance.

1. What is the title of the position?

2. What is the company's name? What is the name of the hiring manager or contact person?

3. What are the education and/or experience requirements for this job?

4. What skills and/or characteristics are required for this job?

5. What other requirements or important details are mentioned in the posting? (e.g. *Must have own car.*)

PART B: COMPOSE YOUR COVER LETTER

Use the guide on the following page to help organize and format your own cover letter in response to the posting. Remember what you learned about writing cover letters in the **Employment Guide!**

Work Search Activity 5: Writing Your Cover Letter

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COVER LETTER GUIDE

Your name
Address
Phone number
Email address

Date

Hiring manager's name and job title
Company name
Company address

Re: Job Reference, if provided

Greeting (addressed to the hiring manager, if possible),

Opening Paragraph: CAST THE HOOK. Snag the reader's attention with your introduction. Name the position you are applying for and where you saw or heard the advertisement. If applicable, include a reference to the person(s) you spoke to about the organization. This section should be more about the employer than about you, so do your research. Briefly sum up why you are interested in working with the organization, and the specific way(s) in which they would benefit from hiring you. Remember, despite the many technologies used in today's workplaces, people still hire people. Use your cover letter to reach out professionally to the hiring manager, person to person.

Middle Paragraph(s): REEL IN THE LINE. Draw the reader in. Don't simply duplicate your resume in full sentences. In one to three paragraphs, offer a few well-chosen, concise examples of your skills and experience. Tailor your cover letter to the position, matching your qualifications to the requirements outlined in the job posting. The cover letter is a space to highlight what your resume can't convey, such as personal traits and work habits, writing style, and what you will contribute to the organization. Give the reader a glimpse of the passionate, committed person behind the words.

Closing Paragraph: MAKE THE CATCH. This paragraph confirms the next steps in the hiring process that either you or the manager will take. Thank the reader for taking the time to consider your application. Indicate that your enclosed or attached resume contains further details of your qualifications. Mention your desire to discuss the position in an interview. Indicate when you can be reached, as well as any follow-up actions you will take (for example, phoning to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet).

Sincerely,

Signature

Your Name

Enclosed/Attached: Resume

Work Search Activity 5: Writing A Cover Letter

COVER LETTER CHECKLIST

- Include your contact information
- Include the company's name and address
- Include the date
- Use an appropriate greeting
- Address your cover letter to a named individual
- Mention the position you're applying for
- State where you saw the job posting
- Express interest in the company and position
- Explain why you would be a valuable addition to the company
- Ensure each paragraph has a strong opening sentence
- Group your points by theme
- Repeat key phrases and skills from the job posting
- Highlight your strongest qualifications
- Talk about your skills in the context of the position
- Include only information that is relevant to the job
- Use examples to illustrate your points
- Demonstrate that you have researched the company
- Encourage the hiring manager to contact you for an interview
- Project confidence and enthusiasm
- Use simple business language
- Use action verbs
- Keep your cover letter to one page in length
- Format your cover letter as a standard business letter
- Vary your sentence structure (*e.g. don't use too many "I" statements*)
- Include only true information about yourself
- Proofread carefully for spelling mistakes

SUMMARY – YOUR VIEWS

1. What was the most difficult part of writing your own cover letter?

2. Which parts of your cover letter might stand out to a hiring manager and make you memorable?

3. Overall, what kind of a first impression do you think your cover letter makes?

Work Search Activity 5: Writing A Cover Letter

PART C: PEER REVIEW

In this part of the activity, you will review another student's cover letter. Remember to be fair and helpful in your feedback.

Read the writer's cover letter carefully, but **do not look at the job posting** that the writer is responding to. Based on what you see in the writer's cover letter, answer the following questions:

1. What is the title of the position?

2. Where did the writer find out about the job opening?

3. What company is doing the hiring? What is the hiring manager's name?

4. What skills, characteristics, education, or qualifications are required for the position?

5. What did you learn about the company from this writer's cover letter? Has the writer researched the company?

Work Search Activity 5: Writing A Cover Letter

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6. Why does the writer want to work for the company? Why would the writer be a valuable addition to the company?

7. How would you describe the writer's confidence in his or her qualifications? Is the writer enthusiastic about the position?

Now, read the job posting that the writer is responding to.

8. How easy was it for you to answer the questions about the posting using just the writer's letter as a reference?

9. Overall, how well do you think the writer did linking his or her qualifications to the requirements listed in the posting?

10. What is the strongest part of the writer's cover letter?

Work Search Activity 5: Writing A Cover Letter

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11. In what other ways does the cover letter meet the cover letter criteria checklist? (e.g. standard business language is used; the cover letter has been proofread for errors, etc.)

12. What advice would you give the writer for composing cover letters in the future?

Once you have reviewed, revised, and typed a final version of your cover letter, be sure to upload the document to the **My Files** section of **My Plan**. You can use this cover letter as the starting point for future cover letters you create.

Work Search Activity 6: Preparing for Job Interviews

FOR THE TEACHER

Introduction

The purpose of this activity is to help students prepare for job interviews. Students will:

- Learn about the characteristics of successful job interviews
- Research an occupation in depth
- Prepare and present mock job interviews that allow them to practice interviewing behaviors and techniques, and strengthen communication skills

Setting the Stage

Ask students about situations that tend to make people nervous (*e.g. writing a test, playing in a big game, making a speech*). Have students suggest strategies to combat nervousness in these situations. Explain to them that many of the same strategies, such as practicing and maintaining a positive attitude, can help them prepare for one of the most important steps in the work search process: the job interview.

In this activity, students will gather information about job interviews from the **Employment Guide**, and prepare and present their own mock interviews. Students can use Career Cruising to learn about the key skills, abilities, education/training, and other requirements associated with an occupation that interests them, and they can use the **Job Search** tool to find related job postings to give their mock interviews additional detail. (If the Job Search tool is not activated at your site, please speak to your school's Career Cruising Administrator.)

Students may need **two to three classes** to complete this activity, depending on how you choose to implement the steps. You can set the length of the interviews and/or the minimum number of questions. They will need one class to prepare their scripts, and additional class time to present their mock interviews. Students can work in groups of three or more (for larger groups, two or more students can play the roles of hiring panel members instead of a single hiring manager), and all group members should participate in the development of interview questions and responses. Encourage students to dress the part when presenting.

While students will be presenting examples of "good" interview behavior, it may be helpful for you to model a "bad" interview yourself in order to help underscore what NOT to do in an interview. You could also refer students to the **Interview Evaluation Worksheet** in the **Employment Guide** to use as a guide as they observe and evaluate your mock interview and those of their classmates.

Starting the Program

Go to www.careercruising.com. Enter your personal My Plan username and password in the spaces provided, and click on **Log In**.

Work Search Activity 6: Preparing for Job Interviews

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JOB INTERVIEW SKILLS

Sign in to Career Cruising with your personal My Plan username and password, and click on **Employment**. Read the **Interview Skills** section of the **Employment Guide**. Answer the following questions:

1. What are the main objectives of a job interview?

2. How can an applicant make a positive first impression during a job interview?

3. How should an applicant prepare for a job interview?

4. What are behavior-based questions? Give your own example of a behavior-based question.

5. Summarize the strategy for answering behavior-based questions:

6. What are problem-solving questions? Give your own example of a problem-solving question.

Work Search Activity 6: Preparing for Job Interviews

Page 2 of 5

7. What 5 steps should an applicant take when answering a problem-solving question?

8. What is the P.A.W.S. model and how can it help an applicant answer interview questions?

9. How can an applicant demonstrate positive communication skills during an interview?

10. How should an applicant follow up with a potential employer after an interview?

MOCK JOB INTERVIEWS

As a group, research an occupation in Career Cruising that interests you, but that you may not know much about. Then, write a brief script for a job interview scenario that you and your partners will present to the class. The interview should feature a well-prepared and professional applicant who models positive job interview skills and behavior. **Be sure to use a variety of types of interview questions that are designed to help uncover the applicant's qualifications!**

Work Search Activity 6: Preparing for Job Interviews

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Learn more about an occupation that interests you. Click on **Careers**. Search for an occupation by keyword, school subject, or cluster.

(Note: Pick an occupation for which job interviews are typically conducted. Occupations that require auditions, such as performers or athletes, are not suitable.)

Occupation: _____

1. What do people in this occupation do?

2. Where do people in this occupation work?

3. What are some challenging or unusual working conditions for people in the occupation?

4. What are the education and/training requirements for the occupation? (e.g. degree, apprenticeship, certification)

5. What skills are required for the occupation? (e.g. problem-solving, communication, technical)

Work Search Activity 6: Preparing for Job Interviews

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6. What other attributes or abilities are required for people in the occupation? (e.g. organized, disciplined)

7. What other information from the occupation profile or interviews could you use in the interview script?

WATCHING THE MOCK JOB INTERVIEWS

As you watch the interview candidates in other groups, record examples of positive interview behavior (e.g. *asking the interviewer thoughtful and relevant questions*) and examples of interview behavior that could use some improvement (e.g. *using weak examples to demonstrate their skills*). Put a checkmark next to the behavior or skill each time it is repeated in ensuing performances.

Watch for: clothing, posture, body language or fidgeting, improper language or verbal fillers, eye contact, knowledge of company and self, asking questions, ability to handle the interviewers' questions, quality and length of responses, and other behaviors highlighted in the Employment Guide.

SUMMARY – YOUR VIEWS

What did you learn from the mock interviews about making a positive impression during a job interview?

Work Search Activity 6: Preparing for Job Interviews

Page 5 of 5

How did the best applicants demonstrate that they met the job requirements?

What were some mistakes that you noticed during the mock interviews?

How would you, as an applicant, avoid these mistakes?

What are the top **three** tips for job applicants that you took away from the mock interviews?

Did this exercise make you feel more confident or comfortable with the idea of interviewing for a job?
How can you continue to improve your interview skills on your own?
