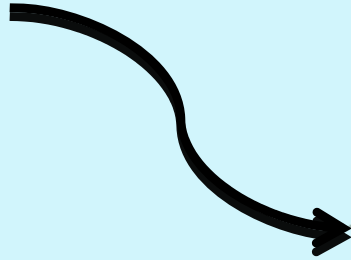


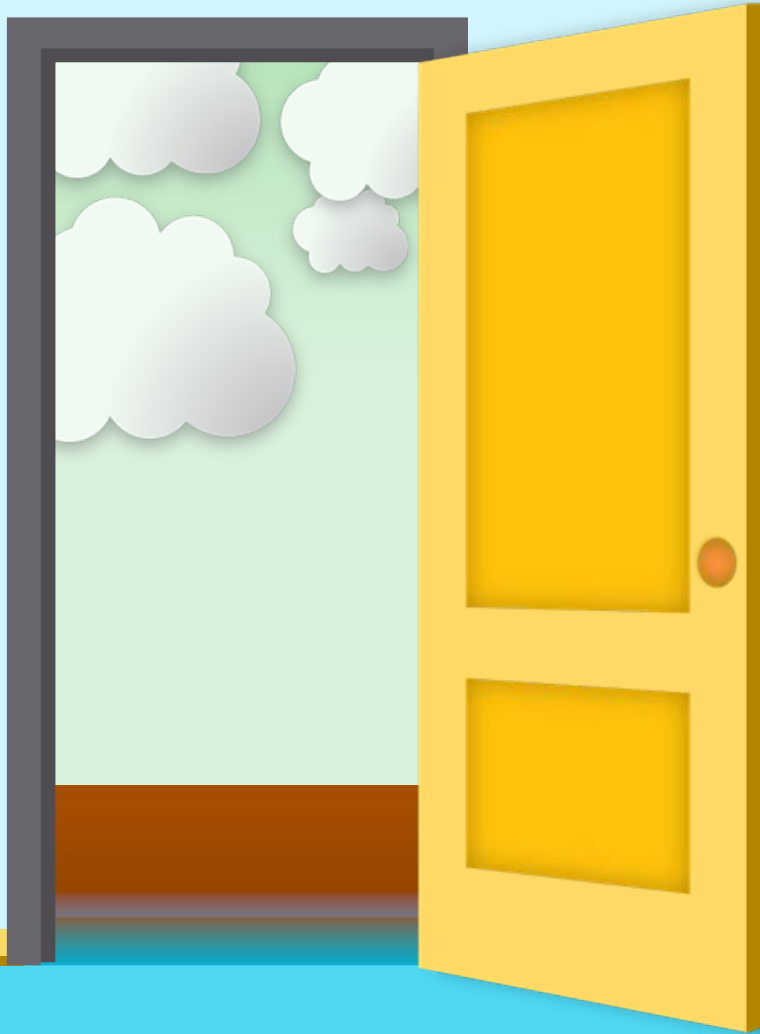


# Interview Skills & Résumé Writing

Corrections Enterprises: “Not Just Making It Right, Making It Better”

# Planting Seeds of Success





# Training Objectives

# Training Objectives

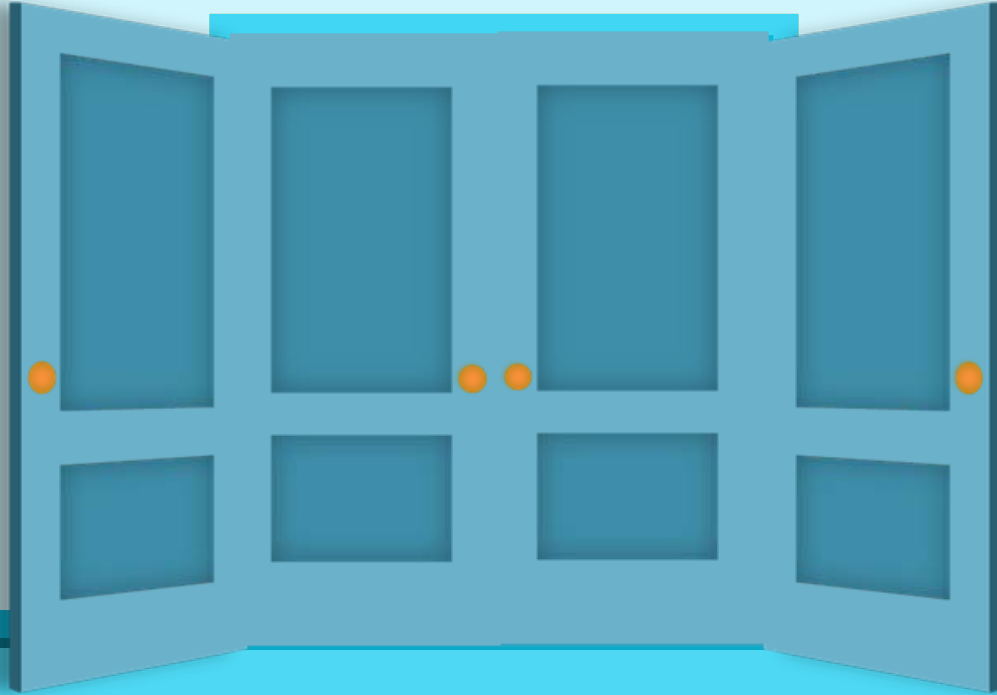
1. Develop professional etiquette and first impression skills.
2. Understand the importance of transferable skills.
3. Learn the practice of researching before an interview in order to be prepared.
4. Identify common interview questions and practice appropriate responses.
5. Consider meaningful questions to ask interviewers.
6. Learn the proper follow-up procedure after an interview.
7. Define the purpose of a cover letter.
8. Identify the “don’ts” and do’s” of writing a successful cover letter.
9. Define the purpose and importance of a résumé.
10. Become familiar with the standard professional résumé format.
11. Define the various résumé styles.
12. Recognize what information not to include on a résumé.
13. Assess the importance of online job applications.



# Reason & Purpose

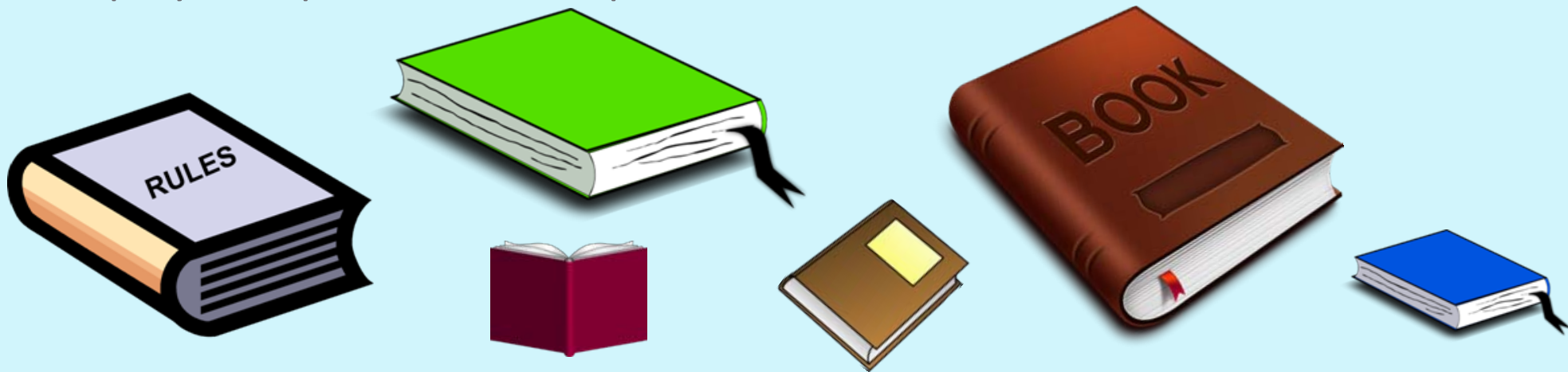
To provide students with the information and skills necessary to compose a **quality résumé** and succeed in professional interviews in order to obtain employment after incarceration.

# Develop professional etiquette & First Impression Skills



# Etiquette and First Impression Skills

As the name suggests, you will never get a second chance on a first impression. As human beings, we are naturally inclined to make many assumptions, either positive or negative, based off of our immediate reaction to something or someone new. Over time, our opinions and perceptions about a person are likely to change, but since interviews are extremely brief it is even more important that you give potential employers a positive first impression.



## **What am I saying about myself?**

We can communicate so much about ourselves, as a person and as an employee, through our written, oral, visual, and gestural skills. In other words, the message that you send to an interviewer can come from so much more than just the verbal communication of answering questions.

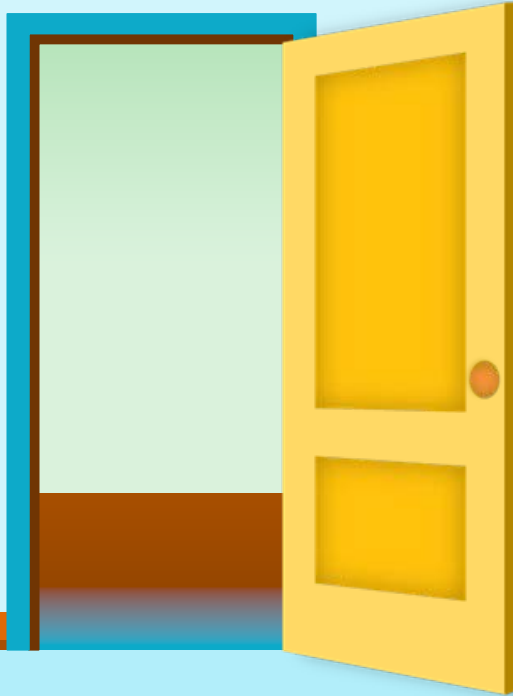


# Punctuality

Many people think that being punctual means being right on time. Let's redefine punctual to mean **early**.

Exercising punctuality communicates **dedication, interest, and responsibility, as well as time management skills**.

When employees are punctual, it **creates an atmosphere of efficiency** for the entire organization.

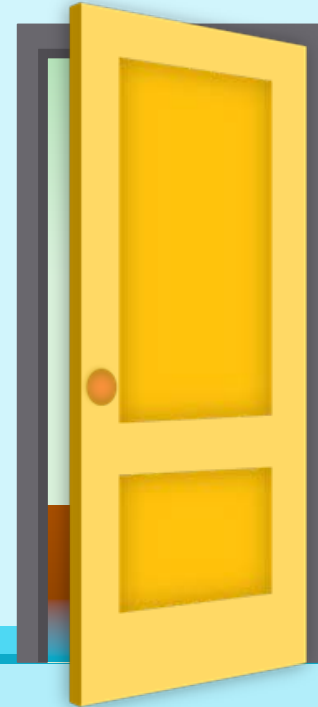


**Arrive to the interview 15 minutes early.**

**Avoid wasting the hiring staff or interviewers time.**

**Let punctuality continue into other aspects of your job-seeking process.**

**When you obtain employment, always be punctual for work.**

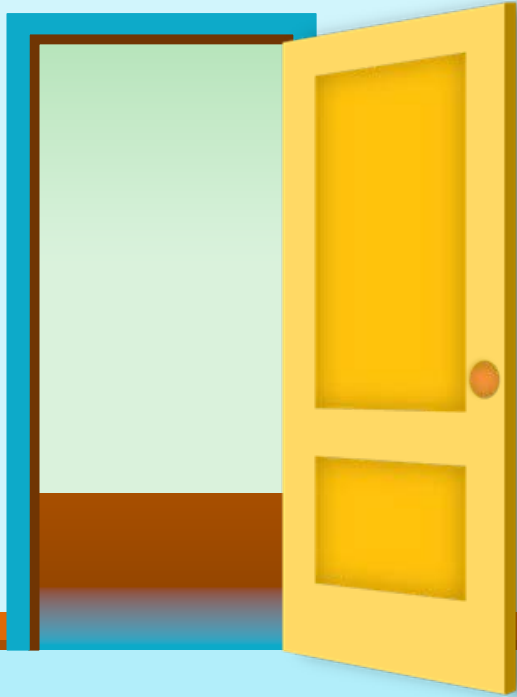


## **Punctuality In Practice**

# Attire

**Dress for the job that you want, not the job that you have.** A well-groomed and professional appearance can go miles in the eyes of an interviewer.

It tells them that **you take yourself seriously, pay attention to detail, and represent yourself well.**

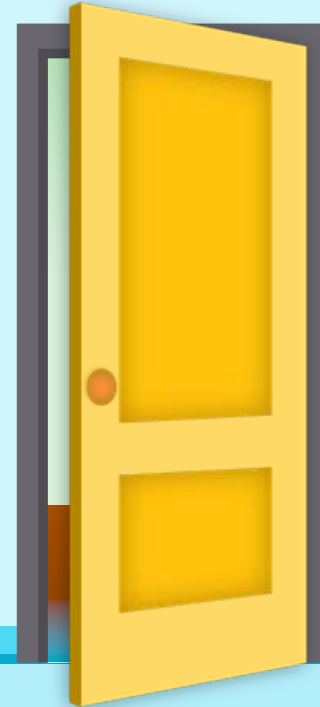


It is always better to be overdressed rather than underdressed.

You can call the organization ahead of time and inquire about the office dress code.

The simple things make a big difference.

Understand the terminology for the various dress codes...



## Attire: Dressing for Success

# Understanding the Various Dress Codes

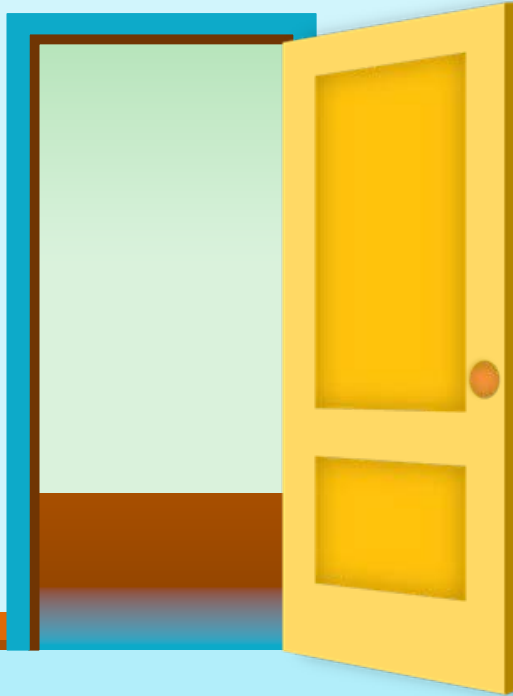
1. **Business Professional:** Men should wear a suit, tie and dress shoes. Women should wear suits or conservative dresses with a jacket and dress shoes.
2. **Business Casual:** Suits are not necessary. Men can wear polo or collared shirts, sweaters, khaki or dress pants. Women can wear similar items or dresses and skirts.
3. **Uniform:** This is the easiest because it is supplied for you! Make sure that you comply with all requirements, whether that is tucking in your shirt or wearing a hair net or name tag.



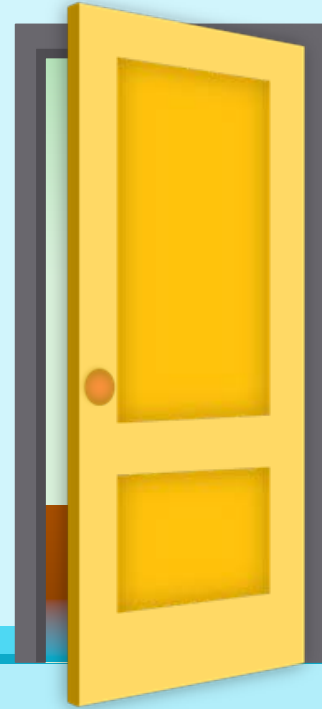
# Handshake

In the business world, a handshake is one of the most important nonverbal cues. Your handshake speaks volumes about your personality, professionalism and confidence.

Turn to your neighbor and practice greeting them with a firm handshake.

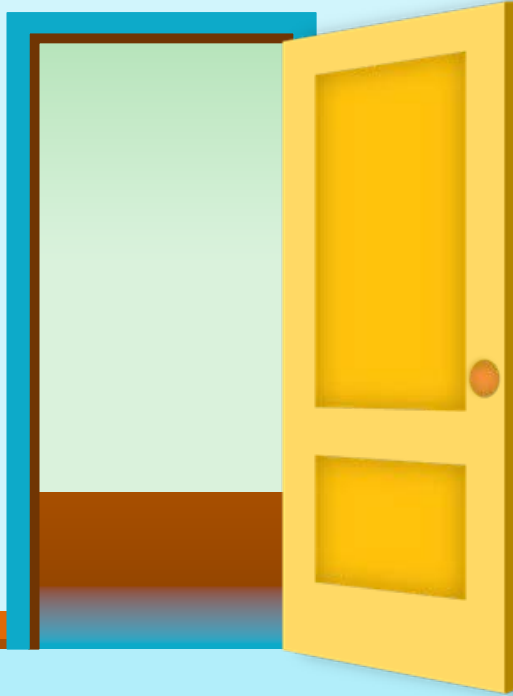


- A handshake is ALWAYS the proper way to greet someone.
- A handshake is ALWAYS the proper way to say goodbye to someone.
- A professional handshake should not be limp or overly forceful.



## The Power of a Handshake

## Make Eye Contact and Smile!



Think about what you are saying about yourself through your facial expressions. Eye contact tells an employer that you are diligently listening to their questions and are giving them your **full attention**.

Smiling is important because it implies a positive attitude. **Positive attitudes are contagious** and employers will feed off of your energy, whether it is positive or negative.



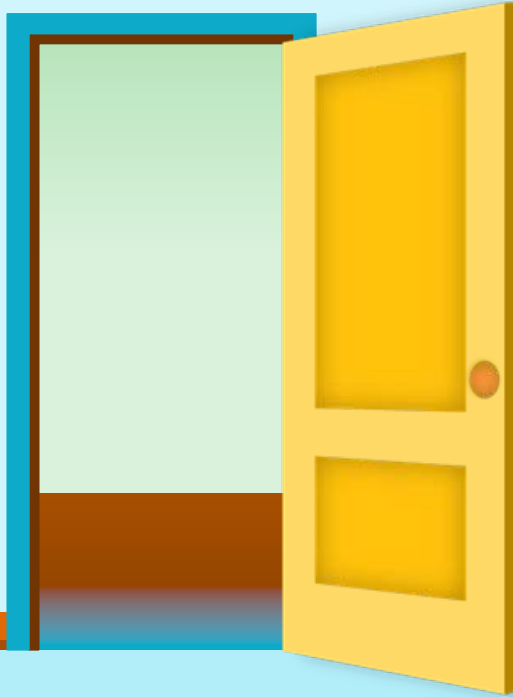
## Now that you know the importance of being engaged....

Here are other distractions to avoid during an interview:

- Never bring along companions to an interview. Always go alone.
- Never eat or drink during an interview unless it is offered to you by the hiring persons.
- Never chew gum during an interview.
- Never check your phone or electronic devices during an interview. Turn them off on or silent.



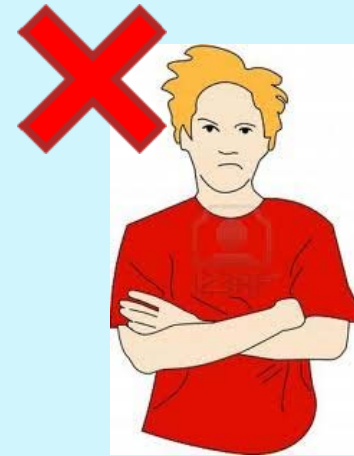
# Posture



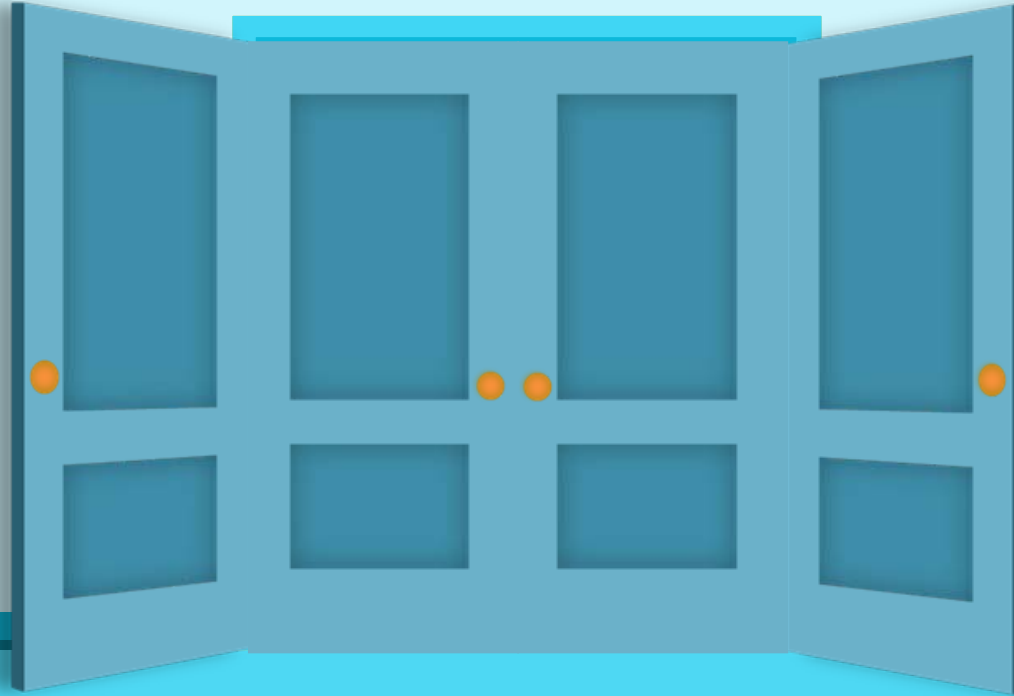
How you hold yourself during an interview is like a preview of how you would hold yourself in front of customers, clientele, or in any situation where you are **representing the business**.

# Importance of Posture

- Sit up straight.
- Do not become overly relaxed or comfortable.
- Do not cross your arms in front of your body. It appears closed off and insecure.
- Do not fidget.



# UNDERSTAND<sup>the importance of</sup> transferable skills



# What is a? transferable skill!

A skill that is not limited to a specific area of knowledge, job or industry and is useful in any work situation.

## Why are they important to employers?

Transferable skills allow you to enter an unfamiliar job with a wealth of basic knowledge and adaptability. Although you may not be skilled in the specific duties of a new job or industry, you possess the building blocks for success.



# Let's Practice Identifying Some Transferable Skills

- Think of specific duties or tasks that you do at your job.
- Then, think about the most basic skills it takes to complete that task.
- For example
  - Working in a metal plant
    - Safety
    - Teamwork
    - Operating heavy machinery
  - Answering phones
    - Communication
    - Customer service
    - Organization



Transferable Skills!



Transferable Skills!

**multi tasking**

**foreign languages**

**supervising**

**communication**

**safety**

**planning**

**time management**

**customer service**

**budgetin  
g**

**computer skills**

**coaching**

**oral presentations**

**team player**

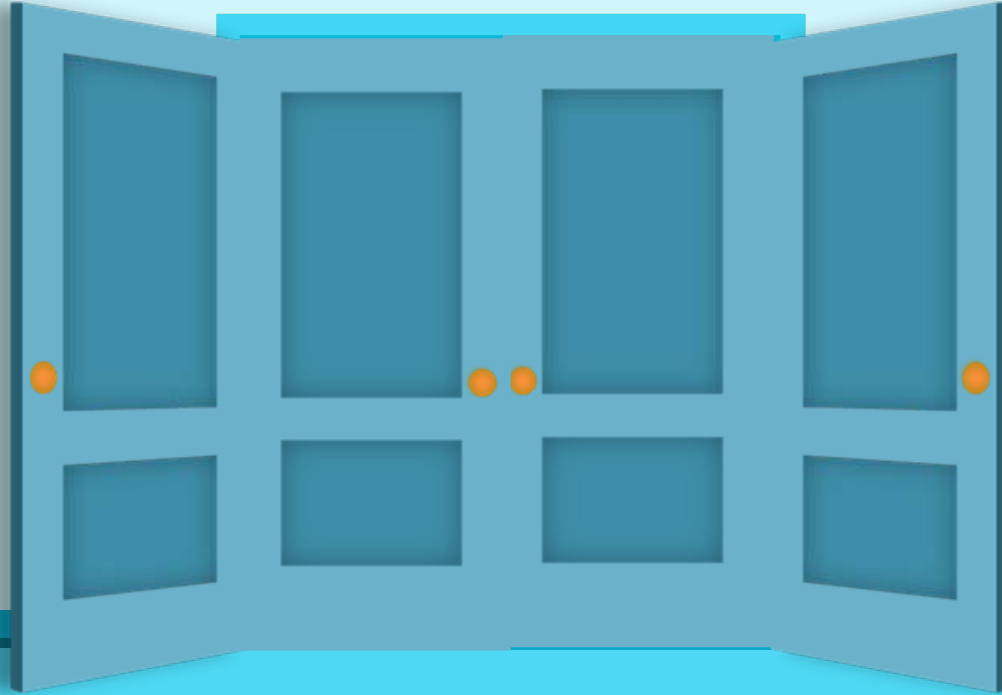
**leadership**

**bookkeeping**

**maintaining records**

**design**

# Learn the practice of Researching before an interview

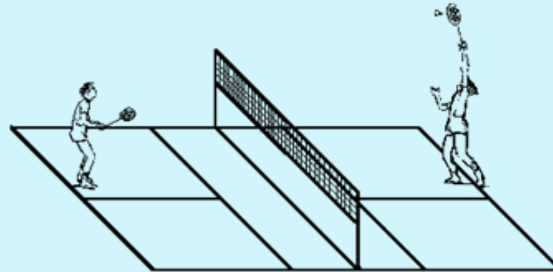




# Do Your Homework and Know What To Expect

The saying goes that success is where preparation and opportunity meet.

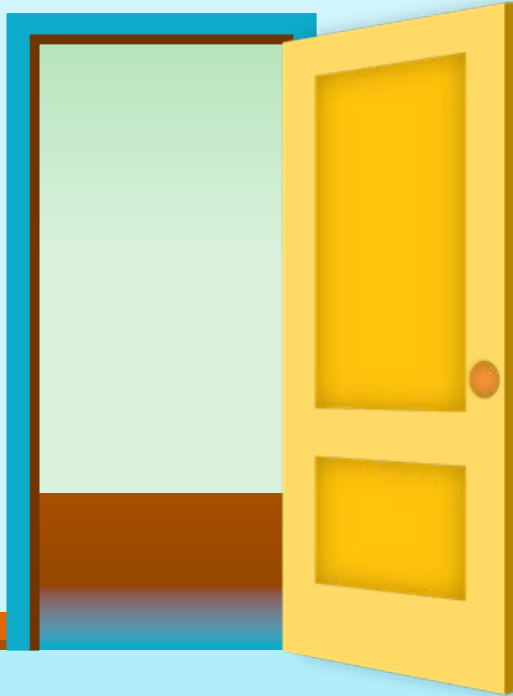
Just as a student studies for a test in school or a professional athlete practices before a big game, an interviewee must study, research, and practice before an interview.



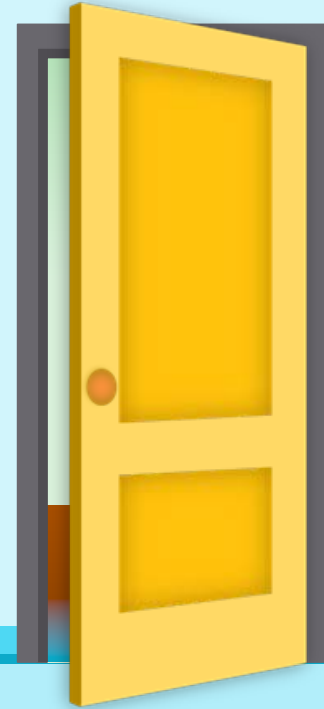
# Research the Organization

First, understand their **mission statement** and their vision as well as their **products or services** offered.

Make it clear that your professional style, skills, and strengths are **cohesive** with the overall mission of their business; don't make them do the math on their own.



- Most companies publish their mission statement on their website, so that is a good place to begin your research.
- If it is possible to visit the institution before your interview (for example, if it is a retailer or restaurant), do so.



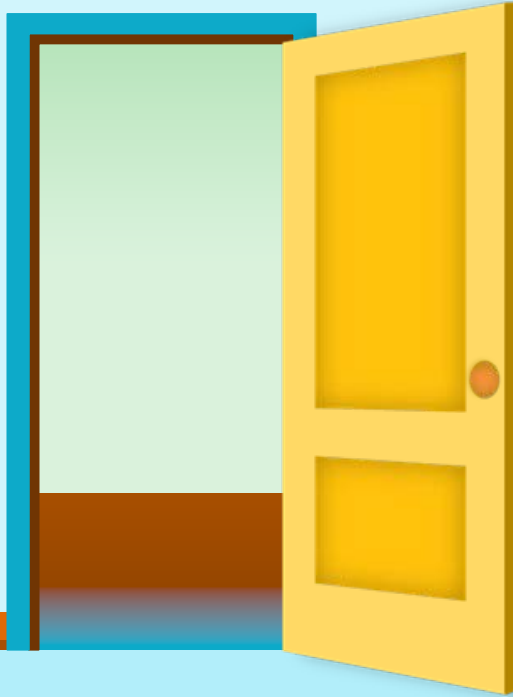
## How Do I Do This Research?

## Research the Specific Position

Interviews are very brief and often just a small part of the employer's busy schedule, so **keep focus on the specific position at hand to maximize your time.**

Interviewers want to know how your **specific experiences and skill set translate** into the job description at hand.

Employers want to know how your talents are **relevant** to the position, and understanding the position itself is the first step.

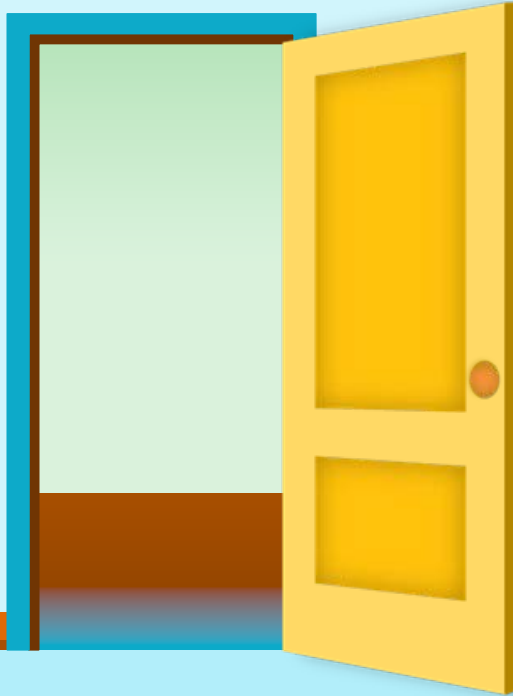


## Research the Hiring Manager or Interviewer

This is more challenging than researching the business or the position, but it is also **not as critical**.

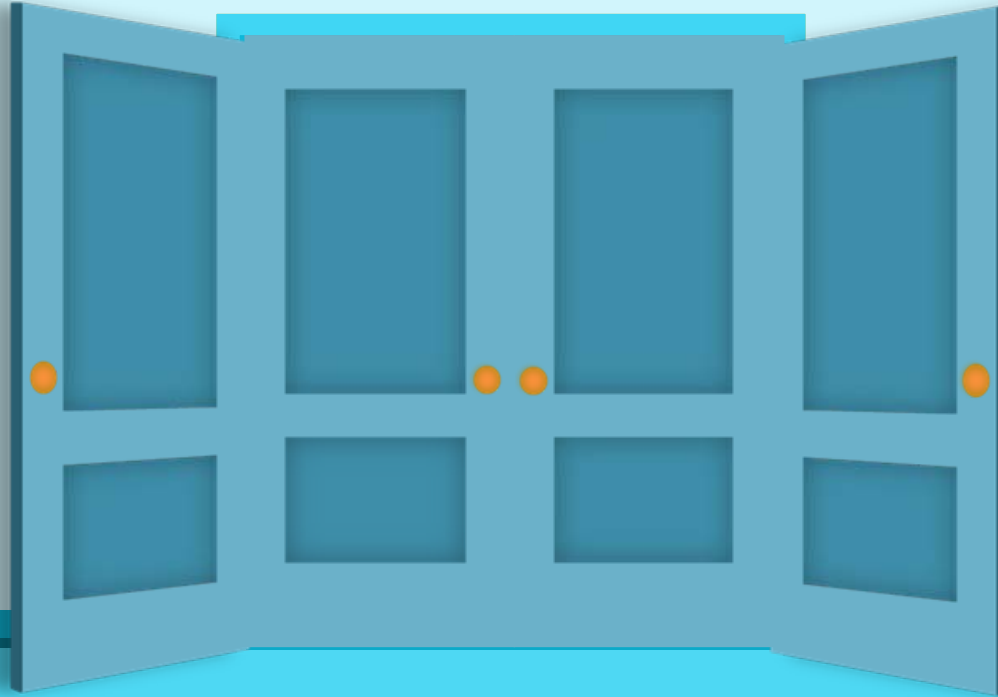
**Finding common ground** is an easy way to seem personable and stand out in a crowd. The more you know about a person, the easier it will be to **make connections and communicate**.

On the same note, be careful not to over-investigate the person and bring up irrelevant information about them during the interview.



# Identify common interview questions & practice appropriate responses

The animation  
automatically begins.



# Questions You Can Expect To Hear



Interviews vary from place to place, but many of the same questions appear again and again. By thinking about your answers ahead of time, you will be more confident during the interview.

As always, what the interviewer really wants to know is how your experiences, skills, strengths, and passions will relate to the position you are applying for.

Describe your past work in a way that allows the employer to see how you would use those skills in the job you are interviewing for.

This is your time to brag about yourself.

This is a good time to clear the air about your incarceration.



**“Tell me about yourself.”**



As I previously mentioned, this is your time to brag about yourself.

Be confident and communicate broad attributes that could be applied to any situation.

Example: "I have great time management skills and always get tasks done on schedule."

Example: "I am a team player who makes sure that everyone's voice is heard."



**"What are your strengths?"**

What the employer is really asking is “Are you AWARE of your greatest weakness?” and “What steps are you taking to improve upon your weakness?”.

DO NOT say that you do not have any weaknesses.

Begin your answer by stating one specific quality in order to minimize the scope of your weakness.

Now that employers know that you are aware of your weakness, they secretly want you to explain how you are working on overcoming it.



**“What is your greatest weakness?”**

The key to dealing with your incarceration is to be upfront and practice full disclosure in order to gain the trust of your interviewer.

You do not want your interviewer to find out about your criminal history in any other way than directly from you, because you have the power to explain it best.

Respond to interview questions about your time in prison in the most positive light possible.

Close off your explanation by reiterating that you are a changed person who has been working diligently on a valuable trade and are excited to be able to share it with society.



**“Explain what you have been doing for the past \_\_\_\_ months/years.” OR “Explain your incarceration.”**

First and foremost, take responsibility for your actions and your situation. Make “I” statements, which reflect that you are capable of owning up to your mistakes and decisions.

Don’t make excuses or flat out lie.

A good explanation is two-fold: own up and feel remorse for what you did, but also show how you have redeemed yourself and what steps you have taken to make real changes in your life.

Another way to show personal growth is by explaining that you were promoted down in security based on good behavior and attitude.



**“Why were you incarcerated?”**

As unfair as it may seem, many employers ask this question during interviews.

It IS a trick question. Remain calm!

The best answer is to say, “I can’t think of any reason you should not hire me, but I can think of lots of reasons why you should. They are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.”

Deliver your answer confidently but not arrogantly!



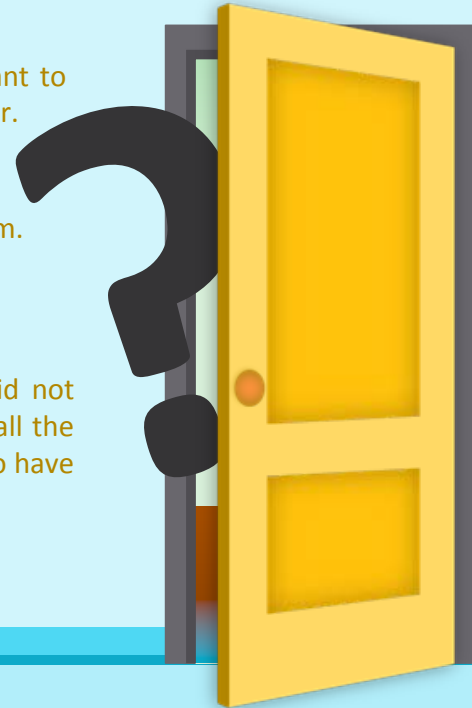
**“Why should we not hire you?”**

Similar to the question about one's biggest weakness, interviewers ask this particular question to see if you can take responsibility for mistakes and learn from them instead of simply denying them. Have one specific example ready, but take a few things into account when choosing your example...

Avoid choosing your worst mistake ever— everyone has them, but you would not want to unnecessarily create a deal breaker. A slightly more innocent mistake is a better answer.

Pick an example where you were able to fix the mistake or solve the problem. Interviewers look for candidates who exhibit growth.

An example is, “At my previous job, I reported to many people and sometimes I did not clearly communicate to all of my various supervisors and so they were not aware of all the other projects I was working on. I became overloaded but I solved the issue by asking to have a meeting with all of my supervisors and we set up a great communication system.”



**“Tell me about a time that you failed or made a mistake.”**

Understanding the multi-faceted reason why interviewers ask this question is key to giving an outstanding answer instead of a vague guess.

Future employers want to understand if you are able to plan ahead and if you are motivated enough to make goals. Even more, they want to see if these goals match up with the goals of the organization.

Potential employers want to discern if you would be a loyal and committed employee, and if your response has absolutely nothing at all to do with their organization, they probably won't think that you would be.

A good answer would emphasize your willingness to commit to an organization and work hard while also suggesting that you could envision yourself moving up in the company over time.



**“Where do you see yourself in 5 years?”**

When asked this question, the most obvious thing that you might think is “Because I need a job, and you are hiring”...

Do not say that!

The important thing here is to create a fluid connection between your personal values, goals, and strengths, and the mission and atmosphere of the organization.

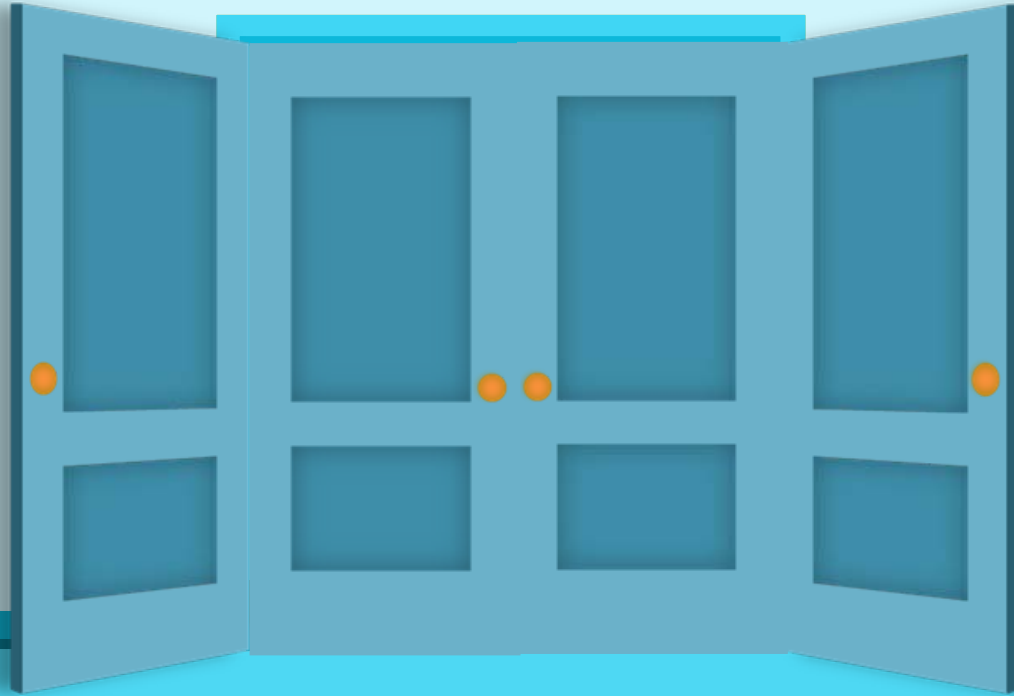
This will be easy if you have properly prepared, as we discussed earlier in the lesson, by researching the mission of the organization as well as the needs of the specific position to which you are applying.



**“Why do you want to work for us?” OR “How do you see yourself fitting in to this company?”**



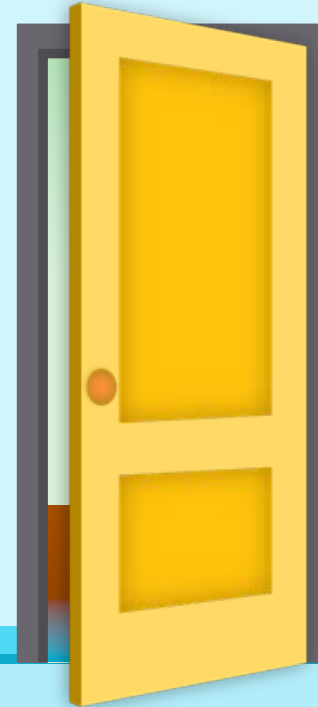
# Consider meaningful questions to ask interviewers



# Why You Should Ask Questions, Too

This shows that you are **engaged**, **curious** and earnestly considering how you would fit into the role at hand. Remember to **actively listen** to what the interviewer responds! This includes making eye contact, nodding, and offering comments and feedback.

1. What have previous employees in this position done to succeed?
2. Can I work over time?
3. What have you enjoyed most about working here?
4. What is the top priority in this position over the next \_\_\_\_ months?
5. What are some challenges that will face the person filling this position?
6. Is there room for promotion?
7. When can I expect a decision?
8. Are you aware of the benefits and protections the government provides to employers who hire ex-offenders?



**Here are some examples of possible questions to ask...**

# Employer Incentives for Hiring Transitional Workers

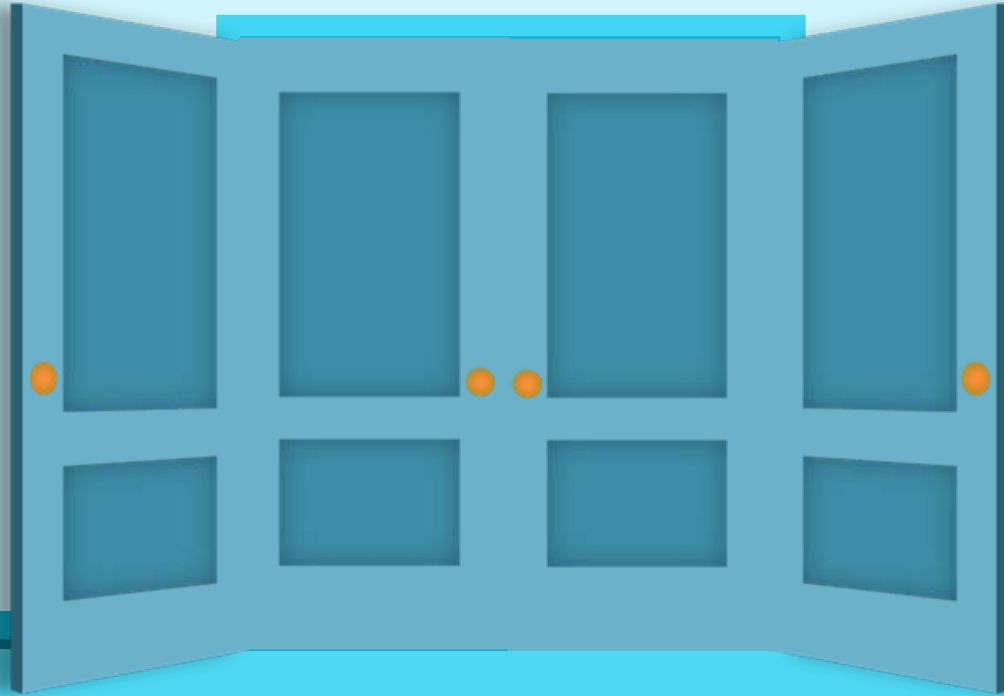
## Federal Bonding Program

- The Federal Bonding Program provides free insurance to employers who hire individuals with criminal records for the first six months of employment. It will reimburse employers for any loss incurred by the employee.

## Work Opportunity Tax Credit and Welfare to Work

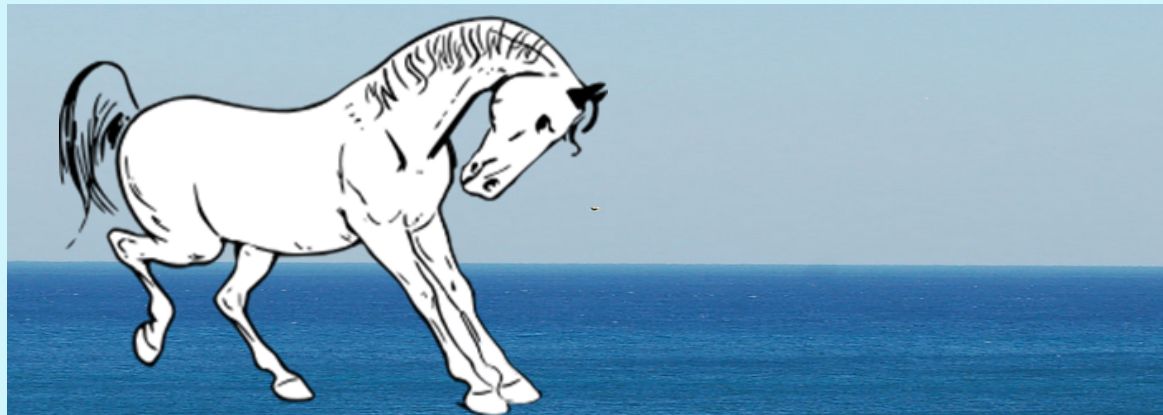
- The Work Opportunity Tax Credit and Welfare to Work is a tax credit for employers who hire felons or other targeted groups. The amount of savings is dependent upon the amount of wages paid but can be up to \$2,400.

# LEARN the proper procedure follow up for after an interview



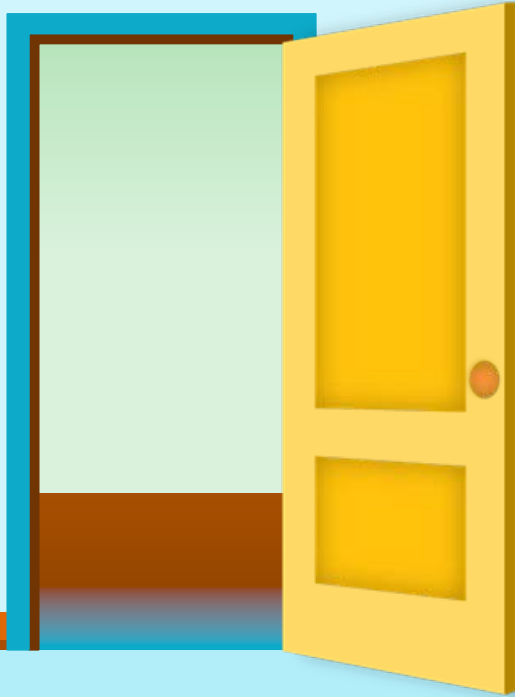
# The Interview Went Well... What Now?

As the famous saying goes, you can lead a horse to water but you cannot make it drink. Ultimately, **you determine your own success**. Getting the interview may in fact be the easy part. You will also have to exercise serious **effort afterwards** to make yourself stand out and secure employment. The most important take away is to strike a **balance between assertiveness and confidence versus patience and politeness**.



# Thank You Notes

Thank you notes are a dying practice, and the old-fashioned gesture will go miles in the eyes of an employer.

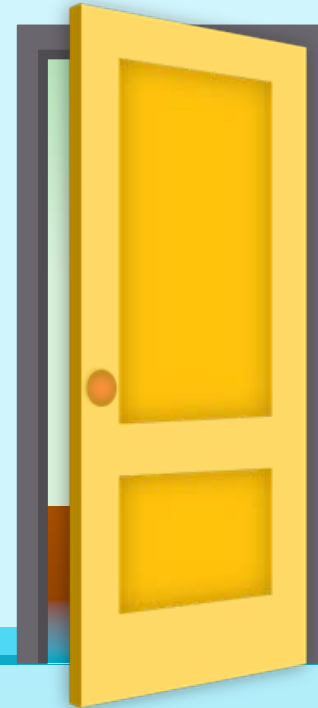


Any form of a thank you note would be appreciated, but the best kinds are handwritten.

A good thank you note should do three things: restate your interest in the position, remind the interviewer of your qualifications, and thank them for his or her time.

Sign off all correspondence with a professional phrase such as “Sincerely”, “Kind Regards”, or “All the Best”.

Send your thank you note very promptly!

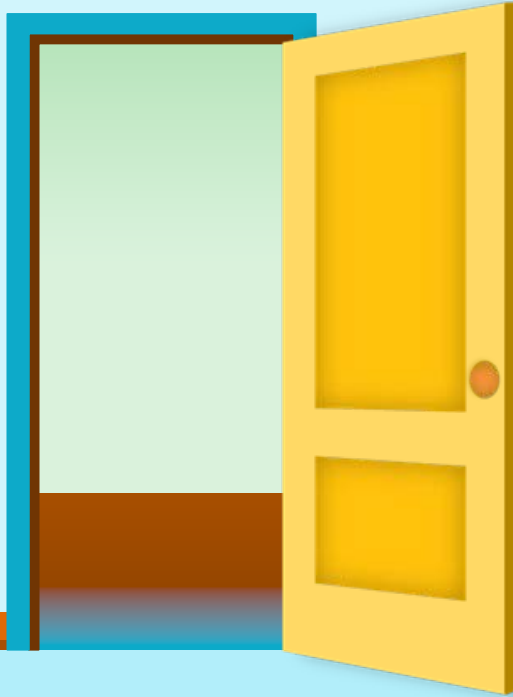


## Thank You Notes



# Repeated Inquiry

Repeated inquiry about a position is the act of **contacting the organization after your interview** to see what the status of your application is and to **reinforce your interest in the position.**



# When should you follow up?

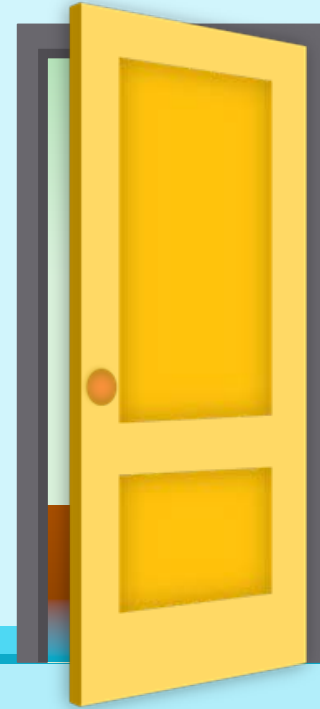
- At the end of your interview, ask “Is there an appropriate time that I may follow up?”
- If the employer did not give you a date that he or she would make a decision by, wait a couple of days before inquiring again.
- If the employer did give you a date that he or she would make a decision by, wait to contact them until at least the day after that date.
- Do not follow up more than twice unless the interviewer has explicitly told you to do so because they are still considering you for the position.



Phone calls, emails, or even dropping by the organization during less busy operating hours are all fine ways to follow up.

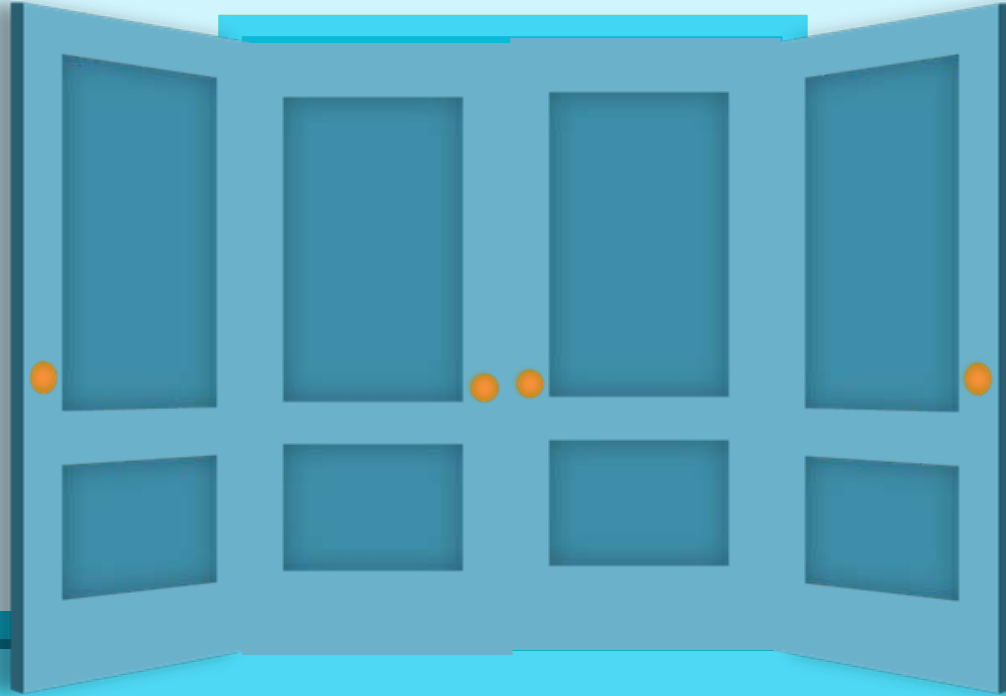
Be extremely polite and understanding in all follow up conversations.

Do not approach follow up communication in a desperate or nagging manner.



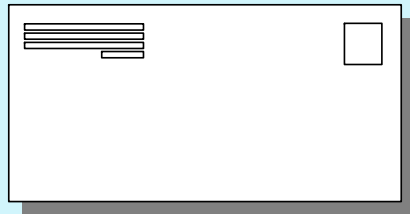
## How should you follow up?

# DEFINE the purpose of a cover letter



# What is a cover letter?

A cover letter is a letter that is often times sent along with a résumé to potential employers by a job seeker, explaining their interest in and qualifications for a certain open position.



# Professional Cover Letter Format

**Heading:** Your name and address, followed by the date

**Address:** The name and address of the person you are writing the letter to

**Greeting:** A professional salutation such as “Dear”, followed by the specific persons’ name

**Body:**

Paragraph 1- Explain your purpose for writing and state what position you are applying for. Also include how you found out about the organization.

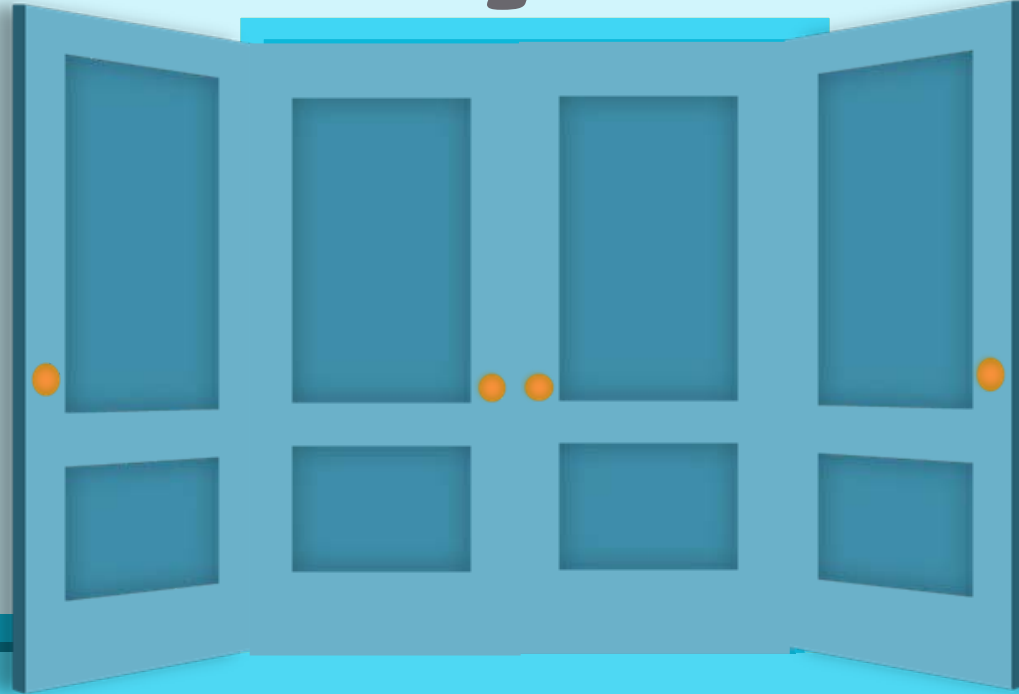
Paragraph 2- Relate your work experience and education to the position and explain how you would be a good fit.

Paragraph 3- Thank the reader and express that you are available to interview.

**Signature:** Sign and print your name



# Identify the DO's & DON'T's of writing a successful cover letter



# Cover LETTERS

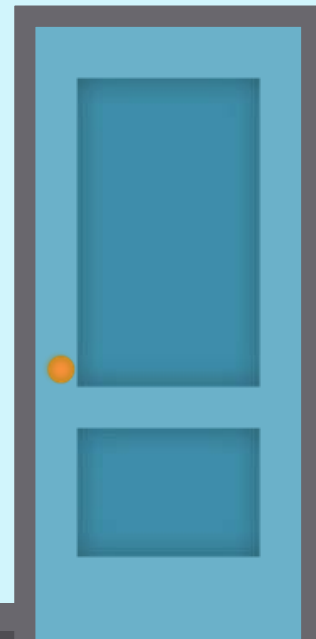
## What not to do

Do not include  
“negatives” (reasons for  
leaving your previous job,  
past criminal records,  
etc.).

Do not write your whole  
life story.

Do not summarize your  
résumé.

Do not address the  
cover letter to the  
whole company or to  
“Whoever it may  
concern”.





# Cover LETTERS

## What to do

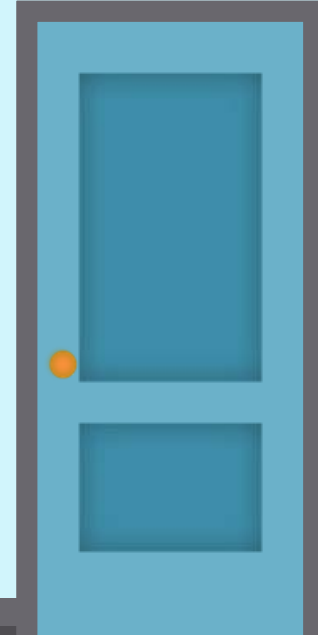
Do keep your cover letter brief.

Do make your cover letter visually easy to read and scan.

Do demonstrate your written communication skills by writing an outstanding cover letter.

Do address it to a specific person, preferably the hiring manager or your point of contact within the organization.

Do use buzzwords. Let's discuss what they are and why they are important...



# Buzzwords

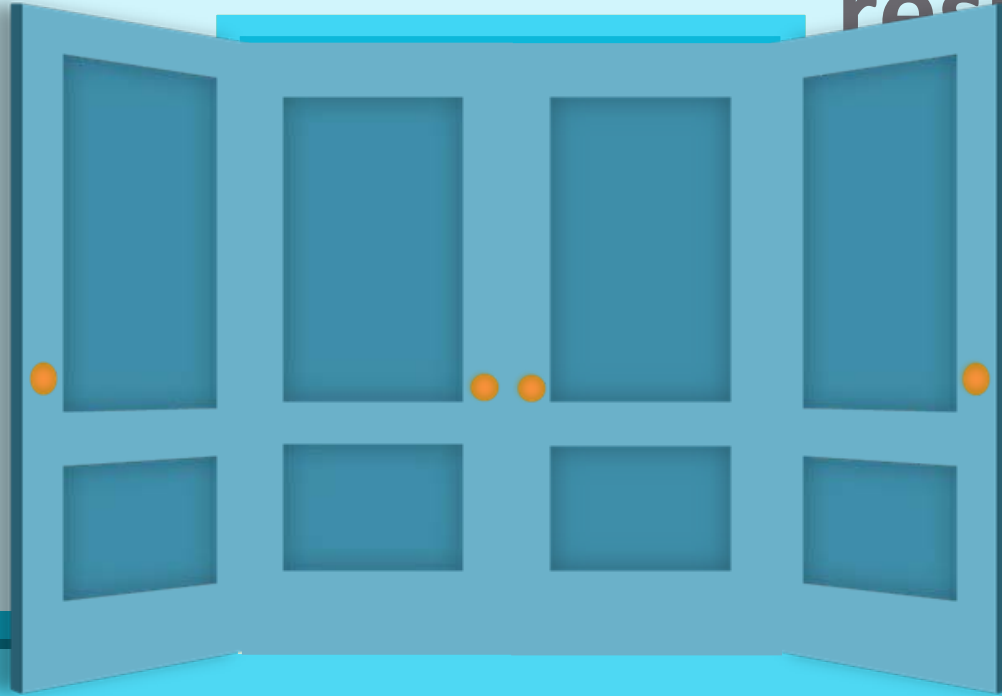
Buzzwords are verbs or phrases that will command the attention of a future employer because they describe the manner in which you carried out actions or the effect that your actions has.

Buzzwords help employers see how you made your previous workplace better, and how you could improve their own organization. Buzzwords also help highlight your transferrable skills.

Examples:

*achieved*      *improved*      *mentored*      *resolved*      *influenced*  
*trained*      *created*      *launched*      *volunteered*  
*increased*      *decreased*

# DEFINE the purpose of a and importance résumé



## What is a résumé?

A résumé is a concise written document that outlines and summarizes your work experience, skills, honors, and background. A résumé gives potential employers a glimpse into your professional qualification and skill sets.

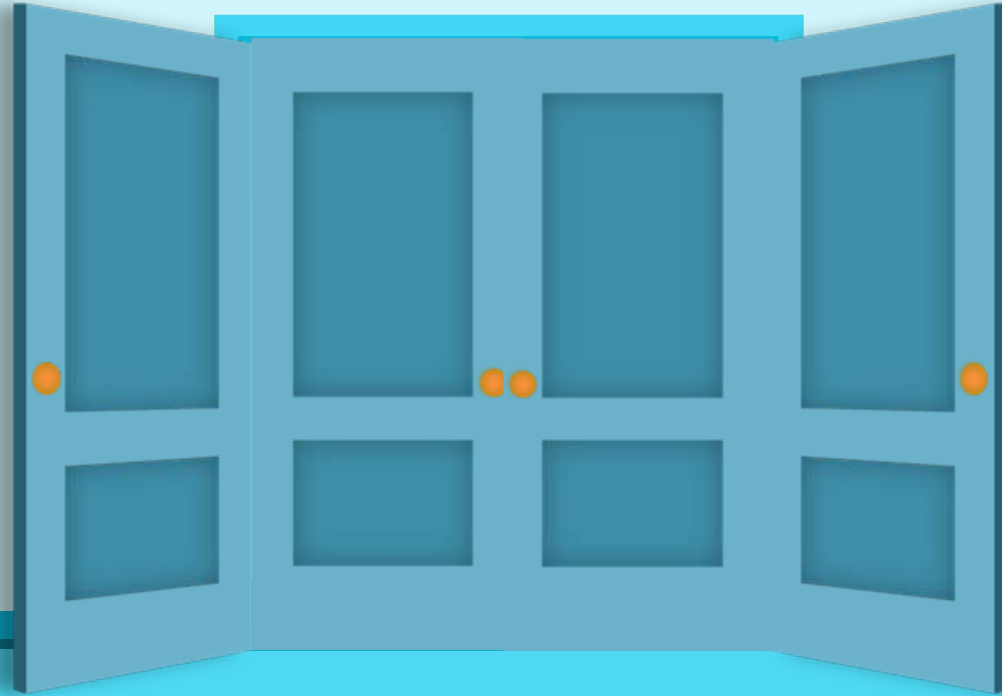


# Why are résumés important?

No matter what position a person is in, they need certain tools to succeed. A baker needs to keep his cupboard stocked with cups, bowls, flour, and sugar. A construction worker need to keep hill toolbox full with nails, hammers, and power tools. Similarly, as a job seeker, you need a quality résumé to succeed. Your résumé is often time what determines if a hiring person will decide to interview you or not. That's right, interviews are not guaranteed to all applicants! Therefore, if you have a weak résumé, you may never even have the opportunity to impress an employer during an interview.



# Become familiar with the standard resume format



# Professional Résumé Format

## Before You Start Writing:

Your résumé should be typed in black ink and printed on ONE standard 8 ½ by 11 inch white page of paper. Use Times New Roman font in 12 point size.

Write your résumé in the third person.

Since you are writing in outline form, incomplete sentences are fine.



# 1. Prominently Display Your Name and Contact Information

- Centered at the top of the page should be your full name and contact information.
- Your contact information should include
  - Your permanent address
  - Your phone number
  - Your email address
    - Make sure that your email address is professional and simple, for example, [joesmith@email.com](mailto:joesmith@email.com). Avoid funny or informal email addresses or nicknames, such as [puppylover85@email.com](mailto:puppylover85@email.com).

Joe Smith  
333 Home Road, Raleigh, NC 11111  
(919) 111-1111  
[joesmith@email.com](mailto:joesmith@email.com)



## 2. State Your Objective (Optional)

- An objective statement is a brief yet specific sentence about what your goal is in applying for the job. This is optional.
- Make sure that your objective is meaningful and says something about your purpose. If your objective is too vague, it is better to omit it and use that space on the page for something more valuable.
- If you choose to include an objective statement, it should not be longer than one sentence.

Objective: Seeking a engineer position which offers team oriented tasks and immediate challenges.

### 3. Skills Summary

- This is a list that you should tailor each time you apply for a different job because it should highlight your qualifications for that specific job.

Example of someone applying for job at a restaurant:

Skills: sanitation skills, cash register operation, food preparation experience.

Example of someone applying for a job in a warehouse:

Skills: merchandise organization, forklift operation, team-oriented tasks.

## 4. Work History

- This is the “meat and potatoes” of your résumé and it will probably take up the most space on the page.
- Depending on which résumé style you use, you will organize your work history differently. We will discuss that in the next section.
- Whichever style you choose, for each job you held, you should include the company name, your job title, and dates that you held the job (listing the month and year that you began and ended will be enough detail).
- Beneath this information, list bullet points describing your duties, occupational skills and accomplishments from that job.
- This is an important place to use buzzwords, which we covered in our discussion of cover letters. (Increased, mentored, designed, piloted, produced, etc)

## 4. Work History cont'd.

Example:

EMPLOYMENT	<i>Northwind Traders, Chicago, IL</i>	1/94-Present
	<b>Assembler</b>	
	Primarily assemble foundry machines and roofing lines for clients in diverse regions, including China and Vietnam; adhere to blueprint and bill of materials specifications.	
	<i>Contoso, Ltd., Schiller Park, IL</i>	10/92-12/93
	<b>Service Representative</b>	
	Installed, connected, tested, and adjusted new electrical equipment, including coils, stackers, and slitting lines for large-scale machinery. Used rod and MIG welders extensively. Traveled to customer sites in Midwest and West.	
	<i>Trey Research, Chicago, IL</i>	1/87-9/92
	<b>Assembler</b>	
	Operated a crane and standard pallet forklifts to assemble and install parts such as large overhead frames. Performed shipping/receiving activities, including packing crate boxes for domestic and international orders.	
	<i>Adventure Works, Chicago, IL</i>	4/85-12/86
	<b>Assembler</b>	
	Operated automated equipment to assemble and inspect a variety of products, including pop cans and automobile hoods, doors, and fenders.	
	<i>Fabrikam, Inc., Chicago, IL</i>	10/84-4/85
	<b>Automobile Mechanic</b>	
	Repaired and maintained a variety of automobiles for individual customers, servicing an average of 15 cars per month.	

## 5. Education

- List only your highest level of education that you have received.
- List the institution and it's location, the degree received, and the year you received it.

Examples:

Bachelor of Arts- English. State University, Raleigh, North Carolina. Class of 2000.

Washington High School, Washington, D.C. Class of 2005.

## 6. Special Training

- List any special training you have completed.
- List the course name or certificate received along with the institution where you completed it and the location of that.

Example:

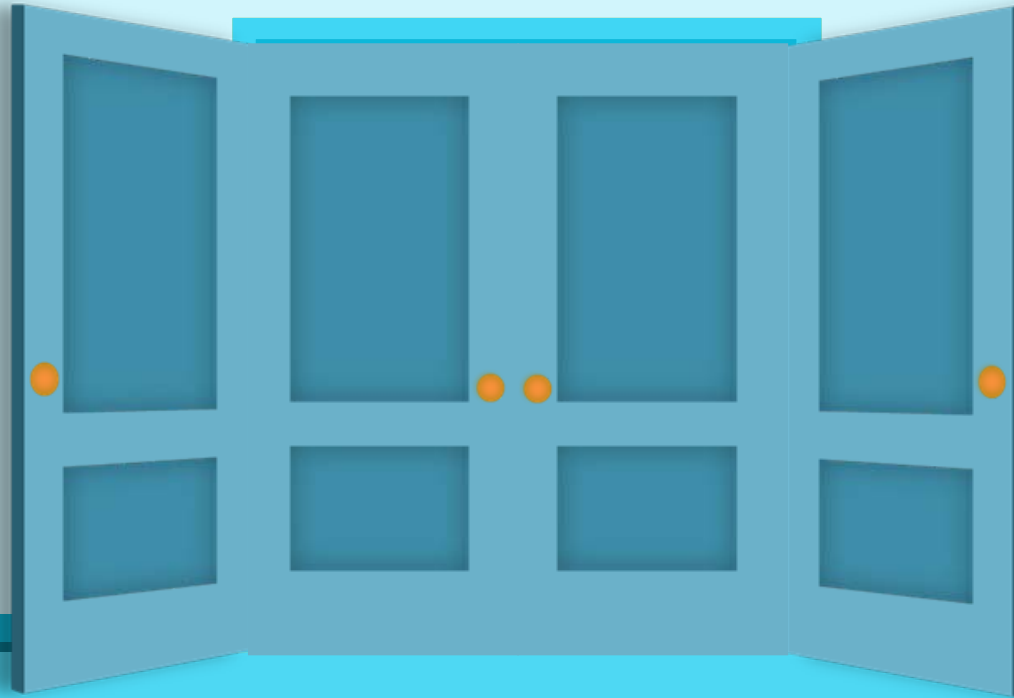
CPR Certified – May 2015

Red Cross Association, Charlotte, North Carolina

## 7. References

- End your résumé with the statement “References available upon request”. Appropriate references are previous employers or supervisors.
- When choosing who to use as a reference, be mindful of what a reference might say about you.
- By saying “References available upon request” instead of listing out the contacts and their information, you save lots of space on the document to display more information about your experience and qualifications.

# DEFINE the various résumé styles





**Functional:**

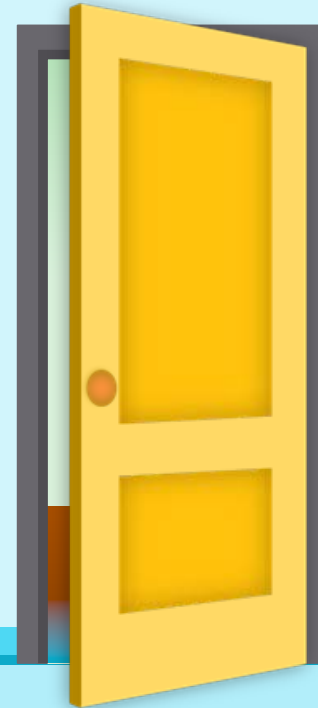
This is the best résumé format for candidates who have gaps in employment. Functional résumés focus on transferrable skills rather than specific dates and locations of employment.

**Hybrid:**

Work experience and accomplishments are broken down into subcategories based on industry or field of work.

**Reverse Chronological:**

Work experience is organized in reverse chronological order, meaning that your most recent experience is listed first and your least recent experience is listed last. This is ideal for someone with steady work in the same industry.



## Different Résumé Styles

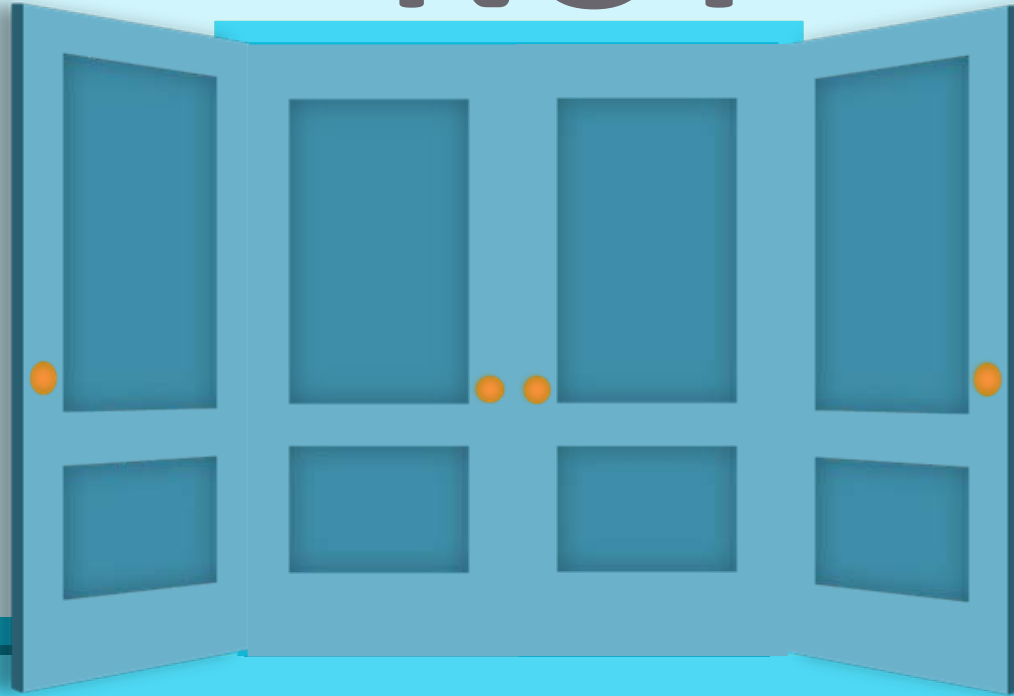
# Recognize

what information

# NOT

to include on a  
résumé

The animation  
automatically begins.



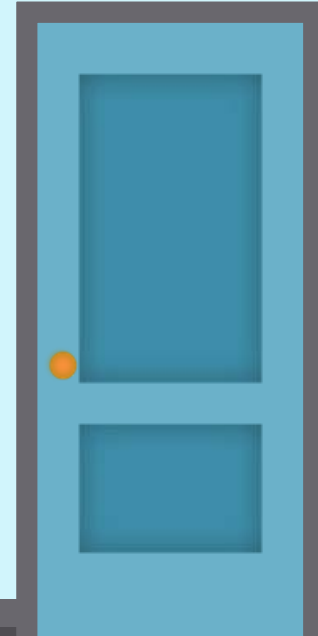
# What NOT to put on your résumé

**Negatives:** Just as we discussed for cover letters, there is no need to put negative information on your résumé that may sound worse when read off of a page instead of discussed face to face.

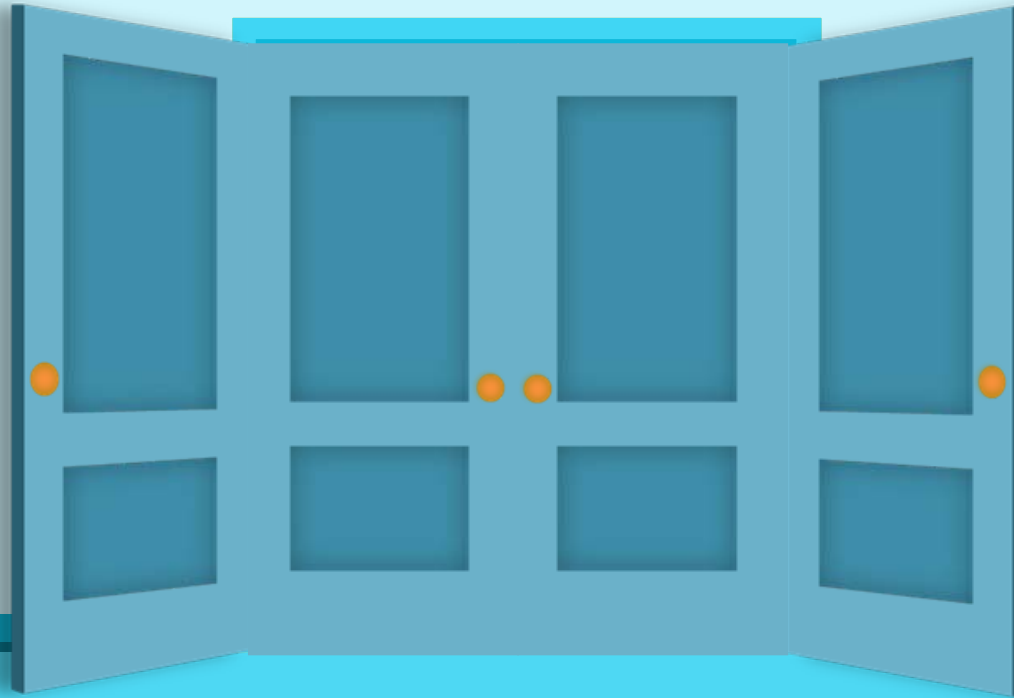
**Personal information** such as age, gender, marital status, or political or religious affiliation should not be included in your résumé.

Do not include a **picture** in your résumé, unless you are applying for a job in a creative industry.

Do not include **salary or pay expectations** in your résumé.



# ASSESS the importance of online applications



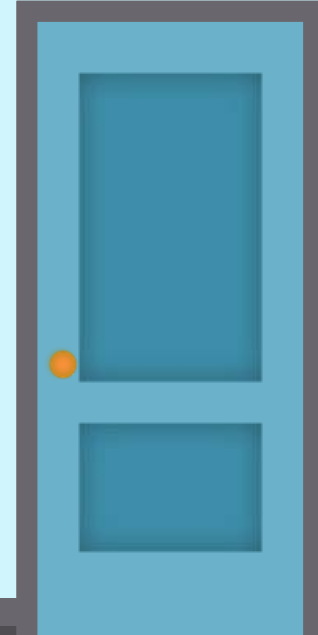
# Online job applications

Job applications do not replace résumés and résumés do not replace job applications, even if they may seem to duplicate each other.

Proper typing is necessary when completing an online job application.

It may be optional to include a cover letter. Always include one and make sure that it is tailored to the specific job, not just a generic cover letter.

Digital files never really go away. Once you send an online application to a business, it will stay in its database forever.



# Basic Computer Skills Lesson

1. Find a computer. You can go to a public library, or ask friends and family if they have one you may use. If you have a laptop but do not have internet connection, you can find Wi-Fi at public libraries, fast food restaurants, and coffee shops.



2. Find a mentor who is computer proficient. Have them help you learn some basic computer skills and bring them with you to fill out an online job application.



3. Purchase a USB flash drive to store your résumé and cover letter on.





# USB Flash Drive Basics



## What is a USB flash drive?

A USB flash drive is a small portable device that you can store electronic information on, such as computer documents, pictures, videos, and more.

## Where can I get one?

You can purchase USB flash drives at most drug stores, supermarkets, and electronic stores. They are relatively inexpensive.

## How do you use it?

By inserting the USB flash drive into the USB port of a computer, and clicking on the pop-up, you will be able to transfer material from the flash drive to the computer and vice versa.

## Why is it useful?

A USB flash drive will allow you to access your résumé, cover letter, and any other document you save onto the drive from any computer. This is especially useful if you do not have a computer of your own.

# Let's Practice!

