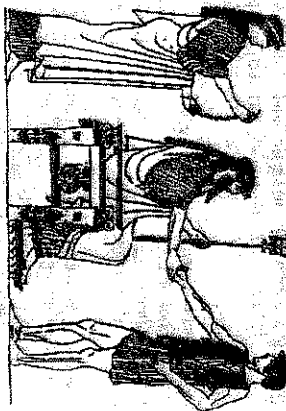


This information may make a useful addition to your repertoire of people skills. You may want to practice using these skills for at least three or four weeks so that they become second nature to you. By following these simple steps and fine-tuning your own interpretive powers, you'll be better prepared to make more accurate decisions about other people based on your first impressions.

Handshaking:



Grasp the Meaning

by Robert E. Brown
(Reprinted from the *NCHRC Quarterly*).

Though it might seem quite perfunctory, the three-second ritual of shaking hands can provide you with as much information about the other person as a psychological profile, if you know how to read the signs. Access to this data is easily available to you insofar as this simple gesture is always performed before job interviews, performance evaluations, meetings, etc. By understanding the other person's body language, you can discover whether he/she is sincere or insincere, dominant or submissive, deceitful. This is because the body cannot lie no matter how much a person may try to cover up his/her true intentions.

This article describes how to interpret the messages of the most common handshakes. Such nonverbal information is an invaluable addition to whatever you may learn from another person's verbal responses, clothing, resume or work record. To interpret handshaking, you'll need to learn how to pick up the subtle signals that are sent during a handshake.

There are four basic steps in this process include:

1. **Engage.** A proper handshake should engage the other person's full hand. This means that the web between your thumb and index finger should be touching your partner's. The hand should be flat enough so your palms are touching. This puts your hand in the proper position to give and receive messages.
2. **Pause.** Pausing is the key ingredient to a successful handshake. By pausing or lingering at the natural conclusion of a handshake, you are expressing sincerity and openness. The objective of the pause is to be the last one to release your hand from the handshake. As you pause, hold your hand slightly at an angle. Cup your last two fingers under slightly, with enough force to support the edge of the other person's palm. This will allow you to receive any of the information your partner sends during the conclusion of the shake.

Being the last one to let go may seem awkward at first. But if you project a positive attitude with the rest of your nonverbal communicators (e.g. positive voice, good eye contact and smiling or restraining a smile), the lingering won't be offensive.

<http://rebrown.com/rebrown/handsh.htm>

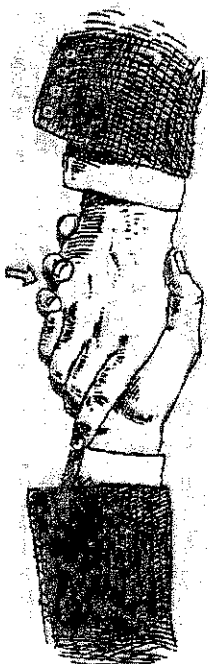
3/19/2004

3. **Observe.** Pausing allows you to observe what type of handshake you're receiving. The hand is particularly suited to this kind of investigation because it has more nerve endings per square millimeter than any other part of the body, with the greatest concentration in the fingers. Observe whether the other person is pushing, pulling or twisting your hand. Notice whether he or she shakes your hand vigorously or barely moves. Is the hand warm and wet or cold and dry? Is it flexible or stiff? Alert your subconscious to be particularly aware at the moment you shake hands. Say to your subconscious: "while I'm doing what I need to do, collect the information you receive, sort and categorize it, and give it to me as I need it."

4. **Remember.** After the meeting, remember what the handshake was like. Ask yourself who shook first. Who let go first? Was the person nervous or relaxed? Was the handshake coherent with what he or she was saying? Compare the opening and closing handshakes. To remember more easily, make a visual image of the handshake each time you greet someone. Write down your impressions.

Once you start remembering handshakes, you can categorize them into 12 basic types. These interpretations should be modified by your own observations but they are a good place to start.

The All-American

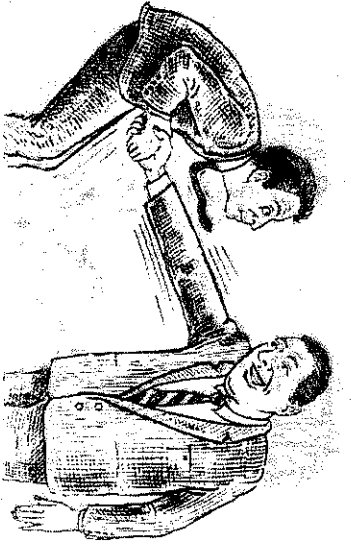


This is the handshake used by most leaders and corporate executives. The person delivering it will look you right in the eye, fully engage your hand, smile and pump your hand two or three times. This handshake expresses a feeling of relaxed self-confidence. The person using it will be open, trustworthy and willing to listen. There's no hidden agenda here. He or she is a good "people" person and could be trusted in a highly classified position.

The Lingering Handshake

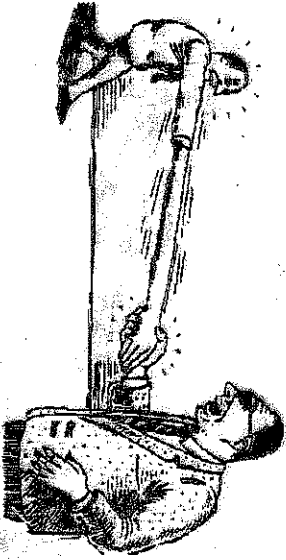
This one is firm with a warm grasp and two or more pumps. The end of the handshake pauses or lingers. The lingering quality may denote openness and sincerity, or it may suggest that the person has something up his/her sleeve. Trust your gut feeling about what the shake means. Check the person out carefully. If the other signals you get warrant it. If you find that the other person is sincere, he or she will be an excellent candidate for a job or a promotion. I would recommend that you offer people a combination of the All-American and the Lingering handshake. This will send the message that you're open and friendly, while allowing you to pick up the other person's signals.

The Push-Off



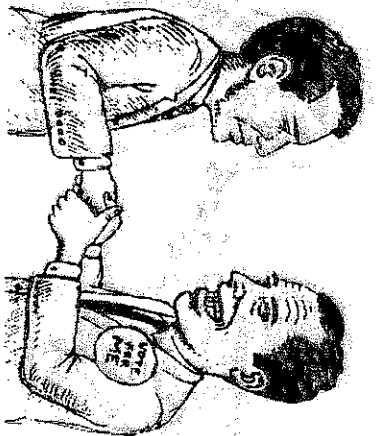
Even though this grip may be firm and warm, at the end your hand is pushed or flicked away. The Push-Off can range from a slight stiff-arm to a flat-out rejection. This handshake implies that the other person has a strong need to establish his or her own territory and agenda. He or she will tend to be a stand-offish person without good "people" skills. This person will probably not make a good manager.

The Pull-In



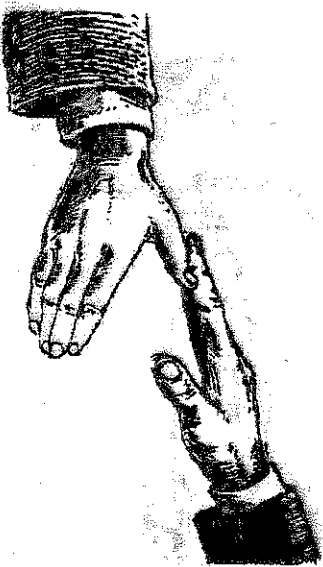
This person holds on to your hand to pull you closer or direct you through a door or toward a chair. This is a somewhat manipulative handshake. Because this type of person is a controller who wants things done certain way, he or she may not be a good team player. If the organization's goals conflict with this person's goals, there will be a problem.

The Two-Handed Shake



During this handshake, the person's right hand will grab yours while the left hand grasps your wrist, forearm, biceps, shoulder, or neck. The higher the left hand, the greater the manipulation and control. This is the favorite handshake of politicians. Because it implies a quick sincerity and intimacy, this person is trying to sell you something that's not really there, e.g., "we're great buddies." He or she would probably not make a good salesperson because other people will tend not to trust this "used car salesman" shake.

The Topper



The dominant party in this handshake has his/her palm facing down in relation to the other person. Like the winner of an arm wrestling match, the hand on top is clearly in control. To retain equality, simply step into this handshake with your left foot. This handshake says "I'm in charge, I'm the Boss." It tends to be the handshake of the conventional boss or manager who manages through control. If this person is too controlling, this can limit his/her effectiveness with other people.

The Finger Squeeze



Like the push-off, the finger squeeze is used to keep someone at a comfortable distance. This kind of handshake will hurt your hand. This is a very insecure type of person who equates brute strength with personal power. They use their hands as weapons to dominate and overpower people. These days, some women are misguidedly using this kind of handshake.

The Bone Crusher



will tend to turn other people off. However, if this person matures, he or she can be a strong leader.

The Palm Pinch

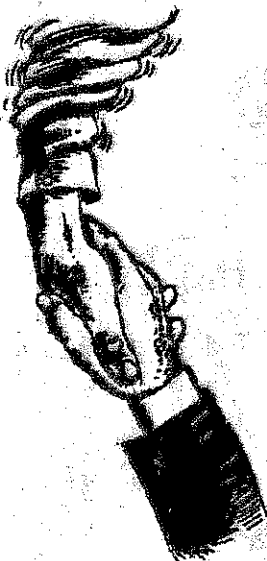


This person just offers you two or three fingers. It is usually given by a woman who hasn't learned how to shake hands properly or who has a fear of intimacy. This person will tend not to be very good at <http://rebrown.com/rebrown/handsh.htm>

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interpersonal skills. If you're going to promote the Bone Crusher or the Palm Pincher, you should tell them to shift to the All-American shake.

The Twister



In this one, the other person grabs your hand normally but aggressively twists it under his/her hand at the end. This person is saying, "We may be coming into this as equals, but in the end I'll be on top." This person can turn on you. You may think you're in control, but he/she will attempt to catch you off guard. This is a deceitful or devious type of person. Don't gloss over the Twister too lightly. The Twister is a major red flag for a serious background check. This candidate may not be a good team player or a good security risk.

The Dead Fish



We all know people who offer this kind of cold, clammy, indifferent handshake. It tends to drain your energy. This individual tends to be somewhat passive or apathetic. This type of employee will usually be better with computers, machines and information than with people. If he/she has good technical skills, don't promote him/her to a managerial position. Dead Fish handshakers probably won't have the energy and interest necessary for that type of work.

<http://rebrown.com/rebrown/handsh.htm>

3/19/2004

Your Name: _____

Class Hour: _____

IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER ABOUT COVER LETTER/OF INTENT WRITING

- ✎ Formatted like business letter – not with a centered header.
- ✎ Don't abbreviate ANYTHING, including in address.
- ✎ Rules of formal writing should be followed – no clichés, numbers 0 – 99, no 'words-with-no-meaning', no ending sentences and clauses with prepositions, time is 'during', not 'in', etc.
- ✎ Don't say 'My name is...'
- ✎ Indent paragraphs.
- ✎ Provide SPECIFIC examples of 'skills, talents, and abilities.'
- ✎ Give specific information on how to reach you in last paragraph.
- ✎ Print it in Black Ink
- ✎ Sign it in Black Ink.
- ✎ Make font and spacing easy to read.
- ✎ Don't use repetition of same phrases over and over.
- ✎ Absolutely no negatives, or hints at, about self or current job.
- ✎ Should only be one page.
- ✎ Make sure you include the date in your heading.
- ✎ You're interested in the position, obviously, that's why you're sending in a letter and resume – that's you're 'application,' – Don't say you're interested in applying.
- ✎ If you know someone who already works there, or someone this person with whom you're applying knows, use their name in the opening paragraph. If the person you're writing to does not know the person, do not use a name.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER ABOUT RESUME WRITING

- ✎ Read top to bottom, not left to right, so should all be aligned the same.
- ✎ Don't abbreviate ANYTHING, including in address.
- ✎ Anything that happens in time, list in order of most recent to least recent.
- ✎ Call grades by their number not name (12th grade, not senior year).
- ✎ Your objective is To DO something.
- ✎ Details of duties and such should be listed, not written as essay paragraphs/narratives
- ✎ When listing school and activities, make sure you include all honors and awards.
- ✎ You do not need to explain the credentials of institutions in same field as the person with whom you are applying.
- ✎ Your Contact Info should stand out, be easy to see and read.
- ✎ When listing, either all begin with caps or all lower case – consistent formatting.
- ✎ Not necessary to explain relationship with people listed as references, only their titles and contact info.
- ✎ The more applicable info is to the job, the closer to the top of the resume it should go.



Resume Handbook
Handbook courtesy of the CareerBuilder Network

I – Introduction

A resume, no matter how good, will not get you a job by itself. However, a good resume will attract the attention of the hiring manager and secure a job interview. The purpose of a resume is to disclose your accomplishments and qualifications to a potential employer. If the employer likes what she sees, she will contact you for a face-to-face meeting.

Think of your resume as a promotional brochure about you. You need to show a potential employer what you have accomplished and where

your experience lies. Your strategy should be to emphasize the experience and skills that a particular employer is looking for.

Your resume is also an example of your communication and organizational skills. A well done resume is itself another reminder of what kind of valuable employee you would be. Likewise, a sloppily produced resume is a terrific way to get yourself taken out of the running before it even starts.

There is a lot of information available on resumes and resume writing – some of it contradictory, but most of it useful. Our advice is to find a good book on resumes and learn the fundamentals of resume writing. They and stay with the most current material you can; resume advice follows trends. The Internet is home to plenty of free advice and information, but in most cases that information will be less detailed than a good resume guide.

I – Activity

1. First, consider your audience. Will you be sending your resume to potential employers or to college admissions boards?
2. Think about the experiences you have had in high school. Write down the headings: *Academic Achievements, Extra-Curricular Activities, Volunteer Experiences, Work History and Awards & Honors*. List all of your accomplishments under the appropriate heading. At this point, include everything you can think of. No experience, honor, etc. is too insignificant.
3. Give your lists to one or two of your classmates. Ask them to mark the items in each category that they think are most impressive. Then, review your own notes. Decide which information you want to keep and which you want to discard.
4. Finally, organize the remaining items under each category from most to least impressive. (If you have an extensive work history, you might want to organize this category chronologically.)
5. Now you are ready to begin formatting and writing your resume. Please continue on to the next activity.



II — Formats

With so many different employment experiences possible, there is no single resume template that works for everyone. There are, however, generally accepted ways to arrange the information on your resume to present it in the best light.

The two styles that are discussed most often are the chronological format and the functional format. Both have their own advantages and disadvantages when it comes to presenting your information. A third style, the combination, is a compromise between the two and has become more popular in recent years. CareerBuilder gives you an overview of each format to help you decide which is best for you.

Chronological

This is the most common resume style, and the one that employers prefer. In the chronological format, the emphasis is placed on employment experience. The applicant's job history is presented in reverse chronological order, with the most recent jobs placed at the top of the list.

The chronological resume is good if your recent job experience is relevant to the job you are applying for, and you want to stay on a similar career path. Potential employers can easily see what you have done, and

how you have progressed and gained experience.

Despite its popularity, there are some reasons why the chronological format may not be right for you. If you are just entering the workforce from school, a resume like this may actually highlight your lack of experience. You may have held jobs recently that have no relevance to the position you're applying for. If you are re-entering the workforce after a substantial absence, this resume will highlight your recent inactivity. Any large gaps in your recent employment history will be evident, and you may be asked about them.

Likewise, a job history full of briefly held jobs might lead a potential employer to question your ability to remain employed. A long employment history at a single company will reveal your age to some extent, something you may not feel comfortable doing.

Functional

In this non-linear format, your skills and achievements are emphasized. Your employment history is summarized or avoided all together. Your skills and previous relevant experience (including educational experience) are presented at the beginning

of your resume. They are organized so the employer can see how your skills relate to the job position you are applying for. (In a chronological resume, employers may simply be looking at the jobs you have held previously to see if you have the experience they are looking for.) It may take more effort to write a functional resume, but you are free to highlight your talents instead of your recent job experience. The functional resume can be particularly effective if you've held a number of similar positions; it will allow you to highlight your skills rather than reiterate what might be a redundant looking job history.

But the functional resume may also raise concerns in some employers' minds as to whether you are withholding information. This doesn't mean that functional resumes are ignored or that they can't be effective. But an employer looking for a clear job history may be put off by the functional format, especially if you've used a functional resume to hide your inexperience or a long gap in your employment history.

If you don't have any problems with the reverse chronological format, use it instead. If you still like the idea of the functional format, you may want to make it more acceptable by combining it with the chronological format

II — Formats, continued

and creating a combination resume.

Combination

The combination resume is simply a functional resume with a brief employment history added. Skills

and accomplishments are still listed first; the employment history follows. You need to reveal where you worked, when you worked, and what your job position was. This will allay an employer's worries about your experience, and it still allows

II — Activity

1. If you are preparing a resume to send to potential employers, decide which format (chronological, functional or combination) you want to use. If you would like to include a resume of your accomplishments when applying to college, decide what is most impressive about your background — work or volunteer experiences, academic achievements, awards/honors or extra-curricular activities. Then, arrange your categories from strongest to weakest.
2. Now, it's time to get an idea of what a resume should look like.

Your counselor or teacher might have examples of strong resumes. Or, you can search under "sample resumes" on the Internet. Note: Some sample resumes may begin with "objective" statements; many experts agree, however, that these are unnecessary. Any objective you have should be stated in a cover letter, not on your resume.

3. Write a sentence or two about each of the activities/honors/etc. that you have listed under your headings. Remember that the purpose of each sentence is to advertise your strengths and selling points.

and to tell readers how your experiences have helped you develop character and hone valuable skills. Don't use the first person ("I"). Do begin each sentence with an action verb or adverb, e.g. "speatheaded" or "effectively solved."

4. The first draft of your resume is done. Now, it's time to fine-tune it. Please continue on to the next activity.



III - Writing Tips

The CareerBuilder Network offers this collection of wisdom for fine-tuning a resume into a winner:

Keep it concise. Employers have lots to do, so don't make the mistake of asking them to read through an unnecessarily long resume. A long, wordy resume will put off someone who is already short on time.

Resumes should be one page if possible, and two if absolutely necessary to describe relevant work experience. A two-page resume is no advantage if it's full of information that isn't reasonably applicable to the position you're applying for. Use the space only if you need it to fully disclose your accomplishments.

Make your words count. Your use of language is extremely important; you need to sell yourself to an employer quickly and efficiently. Address your potential employer's needs with a clearly written, compelling resume.

Avoid large paragraphs (over six or seven lines). Resumes are often scanned by hiring managers. If you provide small, digestible pieces of information you stand a better chance of having your resume actually read. Use action verbs such as "developed," "managed," and "designed" to emphasize your

accomplishments. Don't use declarative sentences like "I developed the..." or "I assisted in..."; leave out the "I." Avoid passive constructions, such as "was responsible for managing." It's not only more efficient to say "Managed," it's stronger and more active.

Make the most of your experience. Potential employers need to know what you have accomplished to have an idea of what you can do for them. Don't be vague. Describe things that can be measured objectively. Telling someone that you "improved warehouse efficiency" doesn't say much. Telling them that you "cut requisition costs by 20%, saving the company \$3800 for the fiscal year" does.

Employers will feel more comfortable hiring you if they can verify your accomplishments.

Be honest. There is a difference between making the most of your experience and exaggerating or falsifying it. A falsified resume can be easily spotted by an employer (if not immediately then during the interview process), and if it doesn't prevent you from getting the job, it can cost you the job later on.

Don't neglect appearance. Your resume is the first impression you'll make on a potential employer, and a

successful resume depends on more than what you say; how you say it counts as well.

Check your resume for proper grammar and correct spelling — evidence of good communication skills and attention to detail. Nothing can ruin your chances of getting a job faster than submitting a resume filled with easily preventable mistakes.

Make your resume easy on the eyes. Use normal margins ("1" on the top and bottom, 1.25" on the sides) and don't cram your text onto the page.

Allow for some breathing room between the different sections. Avoid unusual or exotic font styles; use simple fonts with a professional look. Use standard, non-textured, fine-grained paper in white or ivory. Keep in mind that textured and dark-colored paper may not copy well when the employer makes copies to pass around to other participants in the hiring process. If you need to copy your resume, make sure your copies are clean and clear. Even the best-looking resume can be ruined by a poor copier. Use only copiers maintained for professional copying.

Target, target, target. Emphasize what you can do for an employer. Be specific. If you are going after more than one job opening, customize your resume

accordingly. It helps to tailor your resume for a specific position. Remember to only include the experience that is relevant to the job.

Eliminate superfluous details. Unnecessary details can take up a lot of valuable space on your resume. Don't mention personal characteristics such as age, height, and marital status. This is information that employers may not legally solicit

III - Writing Tips, continued

from you, and they would probably be more comfortable if you don't volunteer it yourself. List your hobbies and interests only if you can relate them to the position you're applying for. If you need room to describe your work experience, avoid this altogether. The phrase "References available upon request" should be left off if you need room to describe your work experience. Most employers assume you have references they may con-

tact, and will request them if there's a need to do so.

Avoid the "Objective" statement. Your objective should be clearly articulated in your cover letter. If you do include an objective, be specific. Vague statements, such as "Looking to utilize my marketing skills" or "seeking a rewarding position" add nothing to a resume and may in fact make you appear insincere.

III - Activity

1. Keep each of the above writing tips in mind as you embellish and revise the draft of your resume. Resume-writing is a painstaking process. Take your time! Remember, for your resume to set you apart from other job or college applicants, it needs to come as close to perfection as possible. If you haven't done so already, type and format your resume on a computer.
2. On a separate sheet of paper, create an evaluation checklist that lists the writing tips described in

this section down the left-hand side (e.g., "Keep it concise," "Make your words count," etc.) and lists the categories included on your resume (e.g., *Honors & Awards*, *Work History*, etc.) across the top. Make two check sheets — one for yourself and one for a classmate.

3. Using a scale of 1-5, you and a classmate should both evaluate your resume according to how well each section meets the criteria listed on the left. If, for example, your *Volunteer Experiences* section is

too wordy it might receive a low score on "Keep it concise."

4. Based on your own and your classmate's evaluation, do one last revision of your resume.
5. Bravo! Hopefully, your new resume is a reflection of your unique assets and marketable skills. May it open doors to your future!

I – Introduction

Perhaps the only thing job-seekers dread more than writing a resume is writing the cover letter to go with it. True, a resume requires good, solid writing and attention to detail, but a cover letter is addressed to a particu-

lar person - whoever is in charge of hiring - and requires the job-seeker to answer the most important question on that person's mind: "Why is this applicant the best qualified candidate for the job?"

How well you write a cover letter may play a large part in how effective your resume will be. A good letter may get you an interview, a bad one may make your resume little more than an afterthought.

II – Content

The cover letter is your chance to sell yourself to a potential employer as the best candidate for a specific position. As such, it's just as important as your resume. In fact, you should never send out a resume without one.

Demonstrate your interest by indicating any connections between the employer and yourself. Show that you work in the same field, that you share a common professional interest, or that you have been following the company or industry in the news.

The most important thing to remember is that your cover letter serves a separate function from your resume and should not be used to repeat the details of your resume, such as work history, education, or personal objectives. The resume is about you, your experience and your skills. The cover letter is about what you can do for the employer. An effective cover letter should accomplish three things:

1. Introduce yourself and your reason for writing

The first paragraph needs to grab the hiring manager's attention. Say exactly why you have sent your resume; you are interested in the company and you want to fill a need they have.

Just mention the job position, describe what the company requires from that position.

2. Sell yourself

In the second part of the letter state (briefly) the skills you bring to the

table that will specifically meet the employer's needs. There is no need to go into great detail; your resume should take care of that.

Instead, use this section to highlight how you will use your talents and experience to benefit the company. Don't use it to indicate how you think you'll benefit from being employed - with a stack of resumes on her desk and positions to fill, the hiring manager isn't concerned with your personal fulfillment. Keep your use of the personal pronoun "I" to a minimum. Try to use it in this sense: "Here's how I can help you."

3. Make a plan

Close the letter by indicating what you would like to happen next. Don't leave the ball in the employer's court; take action! Tell the potential employer where you can be reached, either by phone or by e-mail, but don't wait for a call. Indicate that if you don't hear

II – Content, continued

from them within a few days, you will follow-up with a phone call to make sure your resume and cover letter have reached the intended recipient, and to

arrange a face to face interview. Be assertive but polite. (Some job seekers may want to use a paragraph to explain anything that's not apparent

from the resume, such as large gaps in the employment history.)

I & II – Activity

1. If there is a job for which you want to apply - terrific! Find out - either from the employment ad or via a contact person - what the responsibilities of the position are. If you are simply going to home your job-seeking skills by writing a mock cover letter, choose a company for which you would like to work and determine what positions within the company interest you. Often, you can find job descriptions and listings on company Web sites. Or, ask someone you know who has an interesting job to describe the responsibilities of his or her position.

2. After deciding on a position, list the responsibilities of the job and the qualifications that an applicant should possess. Next to each item on your list, note any experiences you have that meet (or

almost meet) that particular need. If, for example, the job requires knowledge of a software program that you don't happen to know, list the tech skills that you do have - especially those that might be similar to the program mentioned. Moreover, if the company seeks a new hire who has "excellent organizational skills," jot down your experiences with organizing school dances, activities for kids at a camp, etc. Or, if a challenging academic project you worked on required a lot of organization, mention that, in short, be specific about your qualifications and don't worry if you don't have exactly what the company desires. A little creative thinking is all it takes to find links between your experiences and those listed for a position.

3. Ask yourself the following questions: "How can I help this company?" "What makes me unique?" Write down your answers.

4. Discuss the notes you have made with a friend, or someone who knows you well. Ask him or her to adopt the role of potential employer and identify your most remarkable qualifications and experiences. Edit and organize your notes accordingly. Delete superfluous information.

5. At this point, you have selected a job and made notes about your skills and experiences. Now, it's time to compose your cover letter. Please move on to the next activity.

III — Formatting

- There is no one "official" format, but here are some basic rules to keep in mind when composing a cover letter:
 - **A three line block** in the top right hand or left hand corner of the page containing: your home street address; city, state and ZIP code; and the date. (The date may be separated from the block by one line.)
 - **Another three line block**, flush left, one space below the date and one space above the greeting. This block contains the addressee's full name and address, including city, state and ZIP code.
- Use a colon after the greeting, not a comma. The greeting should address a specific person in a formal manner: "Dear Ms. Harper," is perfect; "Dear Jennifer," is not.
- Use a **personalized salutation** (not, for example, "To Whom It May Concern"). Make an effort to find out who will be receiving your letter. If necessary, telephone the company and ask if you do not find a specific name, address the letter to "Hiring Manager," "Human Resources Manager," or simply "Manager."
- **Paragraphs should be separated** by a line of space; indentation is not necessary.
- **You may use bullets and bold print** in the body of your cover letter to organize and highlight information, and make it easier to read. If you do decide to use them, do so conservatively.
- **The closing should read "Sincerely,"** followed by your signature underneath, then your full name in print underneath that. Always leave enough room for your signature between the closing and your name when you print your cover letter.

IV — Writing Tips

- How you write your cover letter is as important as the message it delivers. Your letter is an example of how well you communicate, and no employer wants to hire people who can't do so effectively. With that in mind, here are some tips on making your cover letter look and sound professional:
 - **Personalize the letter.** Whenever possible, address your cover to the individual responsible for filling the position. A generic salutation sends the message that you aren't familiar with the company, such an impression won't convince the reader that you're enthusiastic about the job.
 - **Be natural.** Use simple, uncomplicated language and sentence structure. Don't try to sound like someone else, particularly if that means using untypically formal language, convoluted sentences and words you've never used before (perhaps mistaking them in the process). You may mean to impress, but you'll often sound awkward. Write as you would speak. Be formal, but don't be a stiff. Say things in a simple, straightforward way, and don't rely on a thesaurus. As with your resume, use action words to create dynamic sentences.
 - **Be specific and get to the point.** Your cover letter must be intriguing enough



IV — Writing Tips, continued

- to get the reader to look at the resume, but should be only an introduction to the resume, not a repeat of it. Make sure you answer the question, "Why should I hire this person?"
- **Avoid using clichés**, like "I've taken the liberty of enclosing my resume," or "I'm a people person." It's difficult to sell yourself as unique if your letter reads like every other one in the pile.
- **Be positive.** Don't complain about your boss or describe your present or previous work experience as "boring." Nobody wants to hire somebody with an attitude. Above all, don't sound like you're begging for a job. A hiring manager may wonder why you're so desperate.
- **Be confident but not arrogant.** Don't be negative or too humble. Tell them you're qualified for the job, but don't demand it. Don't profess to know more about the company than you really do. Explain why you find the company attractive (there must be some reason or you shouldn't be writing) and leave it at that.
- **Be polite and professional.** You may be a comedian with your friends, but a potential employer should be treated with respect.
- **Be efficient.** Don't waste space (and the reader's time) on unnecessary details. Respect the employer's time - make sure every sentence has something to do with explaining your interest in the company, illustrating how you'll fill the company's needs, and how you'll contact the company in the near future.
- **Type your letter**, but beware of the dangers of word processing. If you send a similar letter to several companies, make sure that you change all customized statements accordingly; no company wants to read how much you'd like to work for their competitor. Carefully read each letter before you sign it.
- **Be available.** Remember to tell the employer how to reach you. Give a phone number which will be reliably answered by either a person or an answering machine. If possible, include an e-mail address.
- **Do not leave the ball in the employer's court.** Indicate what reaction you expect from your letter and how you will follow up. For example, don't end with "I look forward to hearing from you soon."
- **Proofread.** Check carefully for grammar and spelling mistakes, then check again. Typos and grammatical errors say a lot about the kind of work you do. Don't depend entirely on the spell-check function of your word processor. If you use "there" for "their," for example, spell-check won't notice. Keep a dictionary handy for proper word usage and consult a style manual for grammar questions.
- **Sign it.** If you forget this, the employer may feel like you've sent a form letter.
- **Package it nicely.** Print your resume and cover letter on the same paper stock; the uniformity will look professional. Use only printers that produce neat, readable text with no stray marks or smudges. If possible, avoid using a dot-matrix printer or a manual type writer.
- **Keep one for yourself.** Make a copy of each letter sent, and keep it for future reference.

III & IV – Activity

- Using the information under "Formatting," create a template for your cover letter. This can be done on a computer or, if necessary, by hand. Just block out the appropriate spaces on notebook paper. Gather any information you will need for your cover letter, e.g., the addressee's name, address, etc.
- Read the section entitled "Writing Tips." With the tips in mind, take a stab at composing your own cover letter. Remember, keep your letter short; it should be two, or at most, three paragraphs. Make every sentence count. Then, type or rewrite your draft so that it will be easy for others to read.
- Find three or four other people with whom you would like to

work. Assign each group member two or three of the following "Writing Tips": Be natural; Be specific and get to the point; Avoid clichés; Be positive; Be confident but not arrogant; Be polite and professional; Be efficient; Don't leave the ball in the employer's court; and Proofread (i.e., spelling, grammar, punctuation). Each person in your group will read and check the cover letters of all group members only for the particular items he or she has been assigned. In other words, if you are checking letters for efficiency and confidence, don't look for spelling errors. Do, however, write your comments and suggestions neatly on each letter. (Make sure you reread the "Writing Tips" for which you are responsible, before beginning the proofing process.)

4. After all the letters of each group member have made the rounds, read the comments on your own letter. Then, begin to edit and rewrite your cover letter.

5. When your final draft is complete and typed, print it out on nice paper, and grace it with your John Hancock. View the final copies of your groupmates' letters. As a group, select the letter that you think would make the best impression on a potential employer and share it with your other classmates.

V – What The Experts Say

"... you need to make it easy for the employer to buy. You need to clearly state when you will be available to talk to the employer. Be specific: give telephone numbers where you can be reached both at work and off work. You could have a tremendous background and see yourself very well, but if the employer can't reach you, everything could be lost."

- Lola M. Coxford, *Resume Writing Made Easy for High-Tech*

"Because you can use your cover letter to highlight certain aspects of your resume, the same resume can be used to pursue different job opportunities. The beauty of the cover letter is that you can gear it to each particular company that is the recipient of your resume by stressing your most important qualification."

- Adele Lewis, *The Best Resume for Scientists and Engineers*

"A resume without a cover letter is like an unannounced salesperson showing up at your door. If you are

going to let in a perfect stranger, you at least want to see their credentials. This is exactly what a cover letter does - it introduces you, a total stranger, to the reader. It must be compelling, personable, and brief. It needs to specifically relate to the position in question. Remember, you only have eight seconds to convince the reader to invite you in."

- Barbara B. Vintitsky and Janice Y. Benjamin, *How to Become Happily Employed*

"No cover letter should carry the salutation: 'To whom it may concern.' It will concern no one if you don't personalize it. The surest way to get the information is to find the name in trade journals or in *The Standard & Poor's Register*, *The Dun & Bradstreet Directory*, or other directories. Failing all that, call the company and ask for the name of the appropriate person."

- Kenneth and Sheryl Dawson, *Job Search, The Total System*

"If there is a catch-22 situation in job hunting, it involves the cover letter. Even in situations where it is not requested, you should attach a cover letter to your resume. However, a review of the cover letter is one of the most common methods by which candidates are eliminated from the process. The cover letter is rarely anything but a liability, but you must include it because its absence is worse."

- Jeff B. Speck, *Hot Tips, Sneaky Tricks & Last-Ditch Tactics*

"Poor grammar, bad punctuation, and misspelled words suggest that the applicant is either poorly educated or simply doesn't care about the impression created. The chances are unusually high that the employer is going to forgo reading the accompanying resume and quickly move on to the next job applicant."

- Richard H. Beaty, *The Perfect Cover Letter*

Cover Letter Handbook

Handbook courtesy of the CareerBuilder Network



Friday, May 13th, 2011 in Mrs. Erickson's 3rd and 4th Hour Advanced Placement English Language and Composition Classes

Your Name: _____

Class Hour: _____

Ten Interviewing Rules

In the current job market, you'd better have your act together, or you won't stand a chance against the competition. Check yourself on these ten basic points before you go on that all-important interview.

Look Sharp

Before the interview, select your outfit. Depending on the industry and position, set out your best duds and check them over for spots and wrinkles. Even if the company has a casual environment, you do not want to look like you slept in your clothes. Above all, dress for confidence. If you feel good, others will respond to you accordingly.

Be on Time – No, Be Early

NEVER arrive late to an interview. NEVER, allow extra time to arrive early in the vicinity, allowing for factors such as becoming lost. If you are unfamiliar with the area, and do get lost, you will likely become very upset (worried about being late), and will, consequently, be frazzled, distracted, and out-of-sorts when meeting the interview committee. Plan to enter the building ten to fifteen minutes before the interview.

Do Your Research

Researching the company before the interview and learning as much as possible about its services, products, customers and competition will give you an edge in understanding and addressing the company's needs. The more you know about the company and what it stands for, the better chance you have of selling yourself. You also should find out about the company's culture (the values, behaviors, beliefs and norms that permeate the group) to gain insight into your potential happiness on the job.

Be Prepared

Bring along a folder containing several extra copies of your resume, a copy of your references (even though you previously sent these items to the company), paper to take notes, and a pen that is in an easily accessible location. You should also have questions prepared to ask at the end of the interview. Please reference the handy interview take-along checklist, below.

Show Enthusiasm

A firm handshake and plenty of eye contact demonstrate confidence. Speak distinctly in a confident voice, even though you may feel shaky.

Listen

One of the most neglected interviewing skills is listening (see below). Make sure you are not only listening, but also reading between the lines. Sometimes what is not said is just as important as what is said.

Answer the Question Asked

Candidates often do not think about whether or not they actually are answering the questions asked by their interviewers. Make sure you understand what is being asked, and request further clarification if you are unsure.

Provide Specific Examples

One specific example of your background is worth fifty vague stories. Prepare your stories before the interview. Share examples that highlight your successes and uniqueness. Your past positive behavior can indicate your future successful performance.

Ask Questions

Many interviewees do not ask questions and miss the opportunity to find out valuable information. Your questions indicate your interest in the company or job.

Follow Up

Whether it's through email or regular mail, the follow-up is one more chance to remind the interviewer of all the valuable traits you bring to the job and company. You don't want to miss this last chance to market yourself.

V – Activity

1. Sometimes, reading cover letters can be a very humorous experience. Some folks clearly don't make the effort to proof their work. ("I possess superior editing skills.") Others send their letters in on fluorescent paper. One human-resource manager received a letter with a dollar bill attached – an attempt to "bribe" her for an interview! You have now written your own letter and have read what the experts think. Hopefully, you know the "do's" of cover-letter writing. Now, it's time to carve the "don'ts" into your brain so that in the future your cover letter won't land in someone's circular file (trashcan). As an exercise, write a draft of the worst

cover letter imaginable. Not only should your letter be poorly proofed, it should also sound pompous, wordy and unprofessional. Try, however, to make the letter just good enough – so that a person reading it won't be certain that the letter is a joke.

2. Trade horrible cover letters with one of your classmates. Make a list of all the inappropriate aspects of your partner's letter. Then, imagine that you are a human-resources manager and have just received this letter in the mail. Obviously, you have never met the person who sent it. Describe in writing what the characteristics of the letter tell you about its writer.

In other words, if the letter is sloppy-looking, what might that say about its author?

3. Share your partner's letter and your assessment of the writer's characteristics with classmates. Nominate one of the letters read aloud for "Worst Cover Letter of All Time."

4. Have a good laugh and then remember: Don't imitate the style or techniques used in any of the letters you just heard. Ever! (Unless of course, your ambition in life is to amuse and exasperate hiring professionals across the globe.)

Interview Take-Along Checklist

It is very important to appear confident and cool for the interview. One way to do that is to be prepared to the best of your ability. There is no way to predict exactly what an interviewer holds, but by following these important rules you will feel less anxious and will be ready to positively present yourself.

You're interviewing for a job tomorrow, and you think you're prepared. You've got your answers to a multitude of common interview questions down and have a few of your own for the interviewer. Your suit is pressed and ready. But what do you bring to the interview?
This handy checklist will help you not forget a thing.

What to Put in Your Briefcase

Your Resume and References: But do not just throw these crucial documents in your bag. Linguists and psychologists have found that 93 percent of all communication is nonverbal. How you present this information says a lot about you.

To that end, it is recommended you purchase an inexpensive two-pocket folder in blue, since this color appeals to both men and women and conveys a business feel. On the left side, place several copies of your resume, and on the right, several copies of your letters of recommendation and reference list. When you arrive at the interview, say, "I wanted to bring an extra copy of my resume -- here it is," and open the folder, turning it around for the interviewer to read. This is a sign you are open and honest as well as organized. The more you show you are prepared, the more you are showing respect.

Pad and Paper: Taking a few notes during your interview (while being very careful not to stare at your notepad the whole time) is another sign of respect. It makes them feel you are listening.

Business Card: (If you possess) People either take in information visually, audibly or through touch. The more you give them to touch, the more real it seems to them.

Directions: These lower your anxiety; it's preferable to drive to your interview location in advance and park so you can see how long it all takes.

Cell Phone: You should leave this bit of modern life in your car, but if you must take it in the building with you, make sure it stays turned off (not on silent or vibrate -- OFF!) and in your briefcase; it is a HUGE sign of disrespect to be interrupted during an interview or give the appearance you'll be interrupted. Do not even wear it on your belt. Keep it hidden.

The Intangibles

A Smile: It may sound sappy, but this nonverbal clue is an immediate rapport-builder. Interviewers are often nervous, too. In one-sixteenth of a second, we assess whether someone will harm, help or hurt us. A smile immediately tells someone that you're not going to hurt them.

Company Research: In almost every interview, you'll be asked what you know about the company. To prepare for this question, Hoovers.com is recommended. You can also check out companies on Monster.com.

100 Potential Interview Questions

While there are as many different possible interview questions as there are interviewers, it always helps to be ready for anything. So below is a list of 100 potential interview questions. Will you face them all? Hopefully no interviewer would be that cruel. Will you face a few? Probably. Will you be well-served by being ready even if you're not asked these exact questions? Absolutely.

- ☛ Tell me about yourself.
- ☛ What are your strengths?
- ☛ What are your weaknesses?
- ☛ Who was your favorite manager and why?
- ☛ What kind of personality do you work best with and why?
- ☛ Why do you want this job?
- ☛ Where would you like to be in your career five years from now?
- ☛ Tell me about your proudest achievement.
- ☛ If you were at a business lunch and you ordered a rare steak and they brought it to you well done, what would you do?

- ☛ If I were to give you this salary you requested but let you write your job description for the next year, what would it say?
- ☛ Why is there fuzz on a tennis ball?
- ☛ How would you go about establishing your credibility quickly with the team?
- ☛ There's no right or wrong answer, but if you could be anywhere in the world right now, where would you be?
- ☛ How would you feel about working for someone who knows less than you?
- ☛ Was there a person in your career who really made a difference?
- ☛ What's your ideal company?
- ☛ What attracted you to this company?
- ☛ What are you most proud of?
- ☛ What do you look for in terms of career development?
- ☛ What do you look for in terms of culture -- structured or entrepreneurial?
- ☛ What do you like to do?
- ☛ Give examples of ideas you've had or implemented.
- ☛ What are your lifelong dreams?
- ☛ What do you ultimately want to become?
- ☛ How would you describe your work style?
- ☛ What kind of car do you drive?
- ☛ Tell me about a time where you had to deal with conflict on the job.
- ☛ What's the last book you read?
- ☛ What magazines do you subscribe to?
- ☛ What would be your ideal working situation?
- ☛ Why should we hire you?
- ☛ What did you like least about your last job?
- ☛ What do you think of your previous boss?
- ☛ How do you think I rate as an interviewer?
- ☛ Do you have any questions for me?
- ☛ When were you most satisfied in your job?
- ☛ What can you do for us that other candidates can't?
- ☛ What are three positive things your last boss would say about you?
- ☛ What negative thing would your last boss say about you?
- ☛ If you were an animal, which one would you want to be?
- ☛ What salary are you seeking?
- ☛ What's your salary history?
- ☛ How do you want to improve yourself in the next year?
- ☛ What were the responsibilities of your last position?
- ☛ What do you know about this industry?
- ☛ What do you know about our company?
- ☛ How long will it take for you to make a significant contribution?
- ☛ Are you willing to relocate?
- ☛ What was the last project you headed up, and what was its outcome?
- ☛ What kind of goals would you have in mind if you got this job?
- ☛ Give me an example of a time that you fell you went above and beyond the call of duty at work.
- ☛ What would you do if you won the lottery?
- ☛ Can you describe a time when your work was criticized?
- ☛ Have you ever been on a team where someone was not pulling their own weight? How did you handle it?
- ☛ Tell me about a time when you had to give someone difficult feedback. How did you handle it?
- ☛ What is your personal mission statement?
- ☛ What is your greatest failure, and what did you learn from it?
- ☛ What irritates you about other people, and how do you deal with it?
- ☛ What is your greatest fear?
- ☛ Who has impacted you most in your career, and how?
- ☛ What do you see yourself doing within the first 30 days of this job?
- ☛ What's the most important thing you've learned in school?
- ☛ What three character traits would your friends use to describe you?
- ☛ What will you miss about your present/last job?
- ☛ If you were interviewing someone for this position, what traits would you look for?
- ☛ List five words that describe your character.
- ☛ What is your greatest achievement outside of work?
- ☛ Sell me this pencil.
- ☛ If I were your supervisor and asked you to do something that you disagreed with, what would you do?
- ☛ Do you think a leader should be feared or liked?
- ☛ What's the most difficult decision you've made in the last two years?

- ☛ What do you like to do for fun?
- ☛ Why are you leaving your present job?
- ☛ What do you do in your spare time?
- ☛ How do you feel about taking no for an answer?
- ☛ What was the most difficult period in your life, and how did you deal with it?
- ☛ What is your favorite memory from childhood?
- ☛ Give me an example of a time you did something wrong. How did you handle it?
- ☛ Tell me one thing about yourself you wouldn't want me to know.
- ☛ Tell me the difference between good and exceptional.
- ☛ Why did you choose your major?
- ☛ What are the qualities of a good leader?
- ☛ What is your biggest regret, and why?
- ☛ What are three positive character traits you don't have?
- ☛ What irritates you about other people, and how do you deal with it?
- ☛ If you found out your company was doing something against the law, like fraud, what would you do?
- ☛ How many times do a clock's hands overlap in a day?
- ☛ How would you weigh a plane without scales?
- ☛ What assignment was too difficult for you, and how did you resolve the issue?
- ☛ If I were to ask your last supervisor to provide you additional training or exposure, what would she suggest?
- ☛ If you could choose one superpower, what would it be and why?
- ☛ What's the best movie you've seen in the last year?
- ☛ Describe how you would handle a situation if you were required to finish multiple tasks by the end of the day, and there was no conceivable way that you could finish them.
- ☛ What techniques and tools do you use to keep yourself organized?
- ☛ If you could get rid of any one of the US states, which one would you get rid of, and why?
- ☛ With your eyes closed, tell me step-by-step how to tie my shoes.
- ☛ If you had to choose one, would you consider yourself a big-picture person or a detail-oriented person?
- ☛ If selected for this position, can you describe your strategy for the first 90 days?
- ☛ Who are your heroes?
- ☛ Tell me 10 ways to use a pencil other than writing.

The Listener Wins

By Michael Purdy, Monster.com Contributing Writer

A crazy thing about communication in American society is the strange power of the listener. A song isn't good unless the listener says it is good; audiences determine music's success. However, it is equally true that we aren't serious listeners until we have educated our ears. If we don't critically train our listening tastes, we could be a mindless consumer of whatever the music industry pushes our way with big ad budgets and slick promotions.

As in music, good listening counts in business. Donald Carstensen, vice president for educational services at ACT, surveyed a group of business leaders about the skills businesses are looking for in new hires. Seventy-three percent rated listening an "extremely important" skill. When Carstensen asked business leaders the percentage of high school grads with good listening skills, the result was only 19 percent.

Other studies over the past few decades indicate that business leaders consistently rank listening among the top five skills they expect employees to have. Naturally, listening is critical in the business environment where a product better and increase the bottom line.

Good and Poor Listeners

What are the characteristics of good and poor listeners? A study I conducted of 900 college and military students ages 17 to 70 showed the following traits of good and poor listeners (in order of importance).

A good listener:

- ☛ Uses eye contact appropriately.
- ☛ Is attentive and alert to a speaker's verbal and nonverbal behavior.
- ☛ Is patient and doesn't interrupt (waits for the speaker to finish).
- ☛ Is responsive, using verbal and nonverbal expressions.
- ☛ Asks questions in a nonthreatening tone.
- ☛ Paraphrases, restates or summarizes what the speaker says.
- ☛ Provides constructive (verbal or nonverbal) feedback.
- ☛ Is empathic (works to understand the speaker).
- ☛ Shows interest in the speaker as a person.
- ☛ Demonstrates a caring attitude and is willing to listen.
- ☛ Doesn't criticize, is nonjudgmental.
- ☛ Is open-minded.

A poor listener:

- ☛ Interrupts the speaker (is impatient).
- ☛ Doesn't give eye contact (eyes wander).
- ☛ Is distracted (fidgeting and does not pay attention to the speaker).
- ☛ Is not interested in the speaker (doesn't care, daydreaming).
- ☛ Gives the speaker little or no (verbal or nonverbal) feedback.
- ☛ Changes the subject.
- ☛ Is judgmental.
- ☛ Is closed-minded.
- ☛ Talks too much.
- ☛ Is self-preoccupied.
- ☛ Gives unwanted advice.
- ☛ Too busy to listen.

Similar studies done over the last two decades by Fortune 500 trainers and business consultants have found similar results.

Be Active

On the way up the career ladder, your listening skills should improve. Hourly employees may spend 30 percent of their time listening, while managers often spend 60 percent, and executives 75 percent or more. Does effective listening lead to promotion, or do higher-ups learn to listen better because they must? It is probably a combination. Essentially, to be more successful, you must be a better listener. Better listening is also active listening.

To be an active listener, you must begin with awareness. When do others get angry with you for poor communication? When do you have problems communicating? How were you listening at these times? It takes guts, but ask others what you could do to become a better listener. Others see our faults much better than we do. Learn about effective listening: Read books, visit the International Listening Association's Web site for tips, or take a workshop or class on effective listening. Then be sure to practice what you learn.

Power Listening

To be a successful listener, you must also believe that listening is power. Because our society places so much emphasis on speaking as the way to win friends and influence people, good listeners can quietly have a powerful and subversive impact. You should also remember that speakers have little power without listeners. Speakers share their wisdom and try to persuade, but listeners make meaning of what is heard -- they make the ultimate decision to act on what they hear.

Michael Purdy is the coauthor of *Listening in Everyday Life*.

Do You Have Any Questions?

By Carole Martin, Monster.com Contributing Writer

Surprisingly, the most common answer to this question is "no." Not only is this the wrong answer, but it's also a missed opportunity to find out information about the company. It is important for you to ask questions -- not just any questions, but those relating to the job, the company and the industry.

Consider this: Two candidates are interviewing for an inside sales position.

Henry asks, "I was wondering about benefits, and when they would become effective? Also, what is the yearly vacation allowance? And, does the company match on the 401k plan?"

Assuming this is the first interview, it is premature to ask about benefits. "What's in it for me?" questions can be interpreted as self-centered and a sign of your lack of interest in the job.

The next candidate, Chris, says, "No, I think you just about covered everything I wanted to know. I'm sure I'll have more questions if I get the job."

This is a very passive response that doesn't demonstrate interest or imagination. Once you get the job -- if you get it -- may be too late to ask questions.

It is important to ask questions to learn about the company and the job's challenges. In some cases, the interviewer will be listening for the types of questions you ask. The best questions will come as a result of your listening to what is asked during the interview.

A good response to the interviewer asking, "Do you have any questions?" would be: "Yes, I do. From what you've been asking during the interview, it sounds like you have a problem with customer retention. Can you tell me a little more about the current situation and what the first challenges would be for the new person?"

This answer shows interest in what the problem is and how you could be the possible solution. It is also an opportunity to get a sense of what will be expected.

Be Prepared

What information do you need to decide whether to work at this company? Make a list of at least 10 questions to take with you to the interview. Depending on who is interviewing you, your questions should vary.

Your Name: _____ Class Hour: _____

Degrees that get you hired

These occupations will experience more growth through 2016 than any others.

Information on the following eight careers is based on current projections by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), whose data indicates that these occupations will experience more growth than any others through 2016. Spend the next four years preparing for one of the following professions, and your job search could be a breeze.

Computer Software Engineer

Interested in math and computers? Learn to design, develop, test, and evaluate computer software and systems.
Get the Degree: A program in software engineering or computer science can help you learn the networking and programming basics to hold your own in this high-tech career.
Happy Ever After: BLS expects a whopping 325,000 new jobs for computer software engineers through 2016. Better still, the 2006 median wages for these IT guns ranged between \$79,780 and \$85,370, depending on field of specialization.

Accountant

Tax season may be over, but the demand for number-crunching geniuses in this field should last for years.
Get the Degree: Study accounting or business to prepare for a career as an accountant.
Happy Ever After: Employment of accountants and auditors is expected to grow to the tune of 226,000 new jobs, and median annual earnings in this field were \$54,630 in 2006.

Elementary Teacher

Consider the potential perks of a career in teaching: a pet gerbil in your office, mandatory recess every day, and at least twenty children who think you're cool.
Get the Degree: Get your bachelor's degree from an accredited teacher education program, in which you learn how to plan a curriculum and manage a classroom.
Happy Ever After: Between 2006 and 2016, the need for elementary teachers will increase by 209,000. You probably won't get rich as a teacher but the summer vacations may be worth more than a six-figure salary.

Personal Financial Advisor

Learn the ins and outs of tax laws, insurance, and investments to help your clients plan for retirement and finance their children's educations.
Get the Degree: Because this profession requires skills in a range of subject matters, choose from degree programs in accounting, finance, economics, business, mathematics, or law to help prepare you for a job.
Happy Ever After: The BLS expects a need for 72,000 new personal financial advisors through 2016; median earnings were \$66,120 in 2006.

Market Research Analyst

Get inside the brains of consumers to help companies market their products using tools such as Internet and telephone surveys.
Get the Degree: Whether you get your degree in business, marketing, or psychology, make sure to follow a well-rounded course of study that includes mathematics, statistics, and economics.
Happy Ever After: Nearly 50,000 new market research analyst positions should become available between 2006 and 2016, with 2006 median annual wages of \$58,820.

Computer Systems Analyst

Keeping current with the ever-changing world of information technology, computer systems analysts help businesses and organizations find the right technologies to meet their needs.
Get the Degree: Analysts aspiring to work in the business world should get a degree in management information systems.
Happy Ever After: A growing dependence on eCommerce and Internet technologies is expected to lead to almost 150,000 new jobs for computer systems analysts. Starting offers for graduates in this field were close to \$50,000 in 2006.

- If you are interviewing with the hiring manager, ask questions about the job, the desired qualities and the challenges.
- If you are interviewing with the human resources manager, ask about the company and the department.
- If you are interviewing with management, ask about the industry and future projections. This is your chance to demonstrate your industry knowledge.

Timing Is Important

You will have to use your judgment about the number of questions you ask and when to ask them. Think of this as a conversation. There will be an appropriate time to ask certain types of questions, like those about benefits and vacation. To be on the safe side, it is best to concentrate on questions about the job's responsibilities and how you fit the position until you get the actual offer.

When you begin to think of the interview as a two-way process, you will see it is important for you to find out as much as possible about the company. Questions will give you the opportunity to find out if this is a good place for you to work before you say "Yes."

Securities, Commodities, Financial Services Sales Agents

Watch out Wall Street! A career as a stock broker or investment banker can offer a fast-paced, intense work environment with the potential for financial rewards. *Get the Degree:* A degree in *finance, economics, business, or accounting* provides the best preparation for a job in this field. *Happy Ever After:* Nearly 80,000 new jobs are expected through 2016. Play your cards right and you could be earning six figures within a few years of graduation.

Financial Analyst

Put your math skills to the test in this profession, working for banks, insurance companies, or securities firms to improve their bottom line. *Get the Degree:* Choose from a bachelor's degree in *finance, business administration, accounting, statistics, or economics* to prepare for the rigors of this career. *Happy Ever After:* According to BLS data, 75,000 new financial analysts will be hired between 2006 and 2016, and the median salary in 2006 was \$66,590.

Cover Letter Writing Tips

Cover Letters are Necessary!

Cover letters are simply a letter of introduction. In these letters you are explaining who you are and why you are writing to the resume reader. Cover letters are not, therefore, resumes. You already have one of those. Cover letters should contain information not already apparent in your resume. It is a matter of courtesy that you introduce yourself when you are requesting something of them, in this case an interview.

What Instances Require a Cover Letter?

If you are not shaking hands with the hiring decision maker and introducing yourself, then you need a cover letter to introduce you. If you are shaking hands with the hiring manager, you are introducing yourself verbally and requesting an interview. In this case, hand them your resume without a cover letter.

On the other hand, if you are sending a resume by mail, if you give your resume to a friend to hand in, or if you leave your resume with the hiring manager's secretary then you are not shaking the hiring manager's hand and you need to have a cover letter enclosed with your resume.

Cover Letters Should Be Brief and Simple

Hiring managers only glance at cover letters. They have 50+ resumes to read, out of which they will select a few candidates for interviews. Letters should be three to four paragraphs.

Many people provide lengthy autobiographies in the cover letter. They regurgitate their resume and then some. This is a waste of the writer's and reader's time.

Cover Letter Content

Address these four topics in a succinct manner and the hiring manager will be grateful:

- 1) For what position are you applying?
 - 2) How did you learn of the position or company?
 - 3) Why are you perfect for the position?
 - 4) Who will contact who?
- You should cover numbers one and two in the first paragraph and a paragraph each for three and four.

100 Most Often Mispronounced Words and Phrases

In English has provided a one-stop cure for the plague of misspelling, here are the 100 words most often mispronounced English words ("mispronunciation" among them). There are spelling rules in English even if they are difficult to understand, so pronouncing a word correctly usually does help you spell it correctly. Several common errors are the result of rapid speech, so take your time speaking, correctly enunciating each word. Careful speech and avid reading are the best guides to correct spelling.

Don't say Do Say Comment

A

acrossed	across	It is easy to confuse "across" with "crossed" but better to keep them separate.
affidavid	affidavit	Even if your lawyer's name is "David," he issues affidavits.
Old-timer's Alzheimer's disease	Alzheimer's disease	While it is a disease of old-timers, it is named for the German neurologist, Dr. Alois Alzheimer.
Antarctic	Antarctic	Just think of an arc of ants (an ant arc) and that should help you keep the [c] in the pronunciation of this word.
Arctic	Arctic	Another hard-to-see [c]! It is there. This mispronunciation has been around for so long (over 1,000 years) that linguist Mark Aronoff thinks we should cherish it as a part of our linguistic heritage. Most of us would give the axe to "arks."
athlete, athletic	athlete, athletic	Two syllables are enough for "athlete."

B

barbiturate	barbiturate	Don't forget this word contains three others: bar-bit-u-rate
bob wire	barbed wire	No, this word wasn't named for anyone named "Bob;" it should be "barbed wire," although the suffix <i>bed</i> , meaning "having," is fading away in the U.S.
bidness	business	The change of [s] to [d] before [n] is spreading throughout the US and when the unaccented [i] drops from this word the [s] finds itself in the same environment as in "isn't" and "wasn't."
a blessing in the skies	a blessing in disguise	This phrase is no blessing if it comes from the skies. (Pronounce it correctly and help maintain the disguise.)

C

Cavalry	cavalry	It isn't clear why we say, "Mind your Ps and Qs" when we talk about the cavalry.
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We have more difficulty keeping up with unit 13 and 15. Had there been a cavalry in Jesus' time, perhaps Calvary would not have been so tragic.

candidate **candidate**
You aren't being canny to drop the [d] in this word. Remember, it is the same as "candy date." (This should help guys remember how to prepare for dates, too.)
card shark **cardsharp**
Cardsharps probably won't eat you alive, though they are adept at cutting your purse strings.

Carroll tunnel syndrome **Carroll tunnel syndrome**
This one is mispronounced (and misspelled) several different ways; we just picked the funniest. Carroll means "pertaining to the wrist."
cacophony **cacophony**
There is no greater cacophony [kæ'kəfəni] to the ears than to hear the vowels switched in the pronunciation of this word.

The Caucasus **The Caucasus**
Although there are more than one mountain in this chain, their name is not a plural noun.
Chester drawers **chest of drawers**
The drawers of Chester is a typical way of looking at these chests down South but it misses the point.
clomp at the bit **champ at the bit**
"Clomp" has probably replaced "champ" in the U.S. but we thought you might like to be reminded that the vowel should be [æ] not [ɒ].

close **clothes**
The [th] is a very soft sound likely to be overlooked. Show your linguistic sensitivity and always pronounce it.
coronet **cornet**
Playing a crown (coronet) will make you about as popular as wearing a trumpet (cornet) on your head. Reason enough to keep these two words straight.

D
dilate **dilate**
The [i] in this word is so long there is time for another vowel but don't succumb to the temptation.
diphtheria **diphtheria**
The "pt" in this word is pronounced [f], not [p].
doggy dog world **dog-eat-dog world**
The world is even worse than you think if you think it merely a "doggy-dog world." Sorry to be the bearer of such bad news.
drown **drown**
You add the [d] only to the past tense and past participle.

E
electoral **electoral**
The accent is on the second, not the third, syllable and there is no [i] in it. ~~not~~ "electorial." (By the way, the same applies to "mayoral" and "pastoral.")
escape **escape**
The good news is, if you say "escape," you've mastered the prefix ex- because its meaning does fit this word.
espresso **espresso**
The bad news is, you don't use this prefix on "escape." While I can't express my love for espresso enough, this word was borrowed from Italian well after the Latin prefix ex- had developed into es-.

et cetera **et cetera**
Latin for "and" (et) "the rest" (cetera) are actually two words that probably should be written separately.
especially **especially**
Things especial are usually not expected, so don't confuse these words.

F

February **February**
We don't like two syllables in succession with an [r] so some of us dump the first one in this word. Most dictionaries now accept the single [r] pronunciation but, if you have an agile tongue, you may want to shoot for the original.
federal **federal**
Syncope of an unaccented vowel is fairly common in rapid speech but in careful speech it should be avoided. See also "pique" and read more about the problem here.
film **film**
We also do not like the combination [f] + [m]. One solution is to pronounce the [f] as [w] ("film" [fɪwm]). "palm" [pawm]) but some prefer adding a vowel in this word.

fiscal **fiscal**
In fact, we don't seem to like any consonants together. Here is another word, like athletic and film that is often forced to swallow an unwanted vowel.
founder **founder**
Since it is unlikely that a boat would founder on a founder, we should distinguish the verb from the fish as spelling suggests.
foilage **foliage**
Here is another case of metathesis, place-switching of sounds. Remember, the [j] comes after the [f], as in related "follo."

forte **forte**
The younger generation is mispronouncing this phrase so insistively that it has become popular both as a mispronunciation and misspelling.
forte **fort**
The word is spelled "forte" but the [e] is pronounced only when speaking of music, as a "forte passage." The words for a strong point and a stronghold are pronounced the same: [fort].

H
Heiniken remover **Heinrich maneuver (or manoeuvre, Br.)**
This term is mispronounced many different ways. This is just the funniest one we have heard. This maneuver (manoeuvre) was named for US surgeon Henry Jay Heinrich (1920-).
height **height**
The analogy with "width" misleads many of us in the pronunciation of this word.
herb **herb**
Does, "My friend Herb grows herbs," sound right to you? This is a US oddity generated by the melting pot (mixed dialects). Initial [h] is always pronounced outside America and should be in all dialects of English.
hierarchy **hierarchy**
Remember, hierarchies go higher than you might think. This one is pronounced "higher archy" and not "high archly."

I
in parentheses **in parentheses**
No one can enclose an expression in one parenthesis; at least two parentheses are required.
interpret **interpret**
This error results from the back-formation of "interpret" from "interpretation." But back formation isn't needed; we already have "interpret." (See also

Irregardless	regardless	"Less" already says "without" so there is no need to repeat the same sentiment with "ir."
Isn't	isn't	Again, the struggle of [s] before [n]. (See also "hidness" and "wadn't")
Jewelry	jewelry	The root of this word is "jewel" and that doesn't change for either "jeweler" or "jewelry." The British add a syllable: "jewellery." (See also its spelling.)
Just nor dis	just	As opposed to the adjective "just," this word is always unaccented, which encourages vowel reduction. However, it sounds better to reduce the [e] rather than replace it with [i].

K

Klu Klux Klan	Ku Klux Klan	Well, there is an [i] in the other two, why not the first? Well, that is just the way it is; don't expect rationality from this organization.
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L

lambast	lambaste	Better to lambaste the lamb than to baste him/remember, the words rhyme. "Bast" has nothing to do with it.
larynx	larynx	More metathesis. Here the [n] and [y] switch places. Mind your [n]s and [y]s as you mind your [p]s and [q]s.
Laura Norder	law and order	The sound [aw] picks up an [r] in some dialects (also "sawr" and "gnawr"). Avoid it and keep Laura Norder in her place.
leash	lease	Southern Americans are particularly liable to confuse these two distinct words but the confusion occurs elsewhere. Look out for it.
libel	liable	You are liable for the damages if you are successfully sued for libel. But don't confuse these discrete words.
library	library	As mentioned before, English speakers dislike two [r]s in the same word. However, we have to buck up and pronounce them all.
long-lived	long-lived	This compound is not derived from "to live longly" (you can't say that) but from "having a long life" and should be pronounced accordingly. The plural stem, live(s), is always used: "short-lived," "many-lived," "triple-lived."

M

masonry	masonry	We have been told that masons are most likely to insert a spare vowel into this word describing their occupation but we know others do, too. Don't you.
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manasse	mayonnaise	THIS WORD HAS NOT PROVED TO BE ENOUGH GOOD FROM ENOUGH TO ASSUME AN ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION, [mawv], AND SHOULD STILL BE PRONOUNCED [mawvi].
manure	manure	Ever wonder why the short form of a word pronounced "manasse" is "mayo"? Well, it is because the original should be pronounced "mayo-naise." Just remember: what would mayonnaise be without "mayo"?
manure	manure	Here is another word frequently syncopated. Don't leave out the third syllable, [ai].
manure	manure	The definition of "moot" is moot (open to debate) but not the pronunciation: [moot] and not [moot].
manure	manure	It would be mischievous of me not to point out the frequent misplacement of the accent on this word.
manure	manure	Remember, it is accented the same as mischief. Look out for the order of the [i] and [e] in the spelling, too! And don't add another [i] in the ending (not mischiev(i)ous).

N

nother	other	Misanalysis is a common type of speech error based on the misperception of where to draw the line between components of a word or phrase. "A whole nother" comes from misanalyzing "an other" as "a nother." Not good. Not good.
nuclear	nuclear	The British and Australians find the American repetition of the [u] between the [k] and [j] quaintly amusing. Good reason to get it right.
nuptial	nuptial	Many speakers in the US add a spurious [u] to this word, too. It should be pronounced [nɛpʃ(ɪ)əl], not or [nɛpʃ(ɪ)əl].

O

often	often	We have mastered the spelling of this word so well, its spelling influences the pronunciation: DON'T pronounce the [t]! This is an exception to the rule that spelling helps pronunciation.
ordnance	ordnance	You may have to use ordnance to enforce an ordinance but you should not pronounce the words the same.
orientate	orient	Another pointless back-formation. We don't need this mispronunciation from "orientation" when we already have "orient." (See also "interpret.")
ostensivly	ostensibly	Be sure to keep your suffixes straight on this one.
Ostraya	Australia	This pronunciation particularly bothers Australians themselves, most of whom can manage the [i] quite easily, thank you.

P

parliament	parliament	Although some dictionaries have given up on it, there should be a [j] after [t]: [pɑrli- <u>je</u> -ment]
percolate	percolate	Pronouncing this word as "percolate" is quite peculiar. (Also, remember that it means "drip down" not "up.")

portable **portable**

The adjective meaning "drinkable" rhymes with "floatable" and is not to be confused with the one that means "capable of being ported."

perogative **perogative**

Even in dialects where [ɹ] does not always trade places with the preceding vowel (as the Texan pronunciations "diffrence," "yeterri," etc.), the [ɹ] in this prefix often gets switched.

prescription **prescription**

Same as above. It is possible that we simply confuse "pre-" and "per-" since both are legitimate prefixes.

pernickety **pernickety**

You may think us too pernickety to even mention this one. It is a Scottish nonce word to which U.S. speakers have added a spurious [s].

preemptory **peremptory**

The old pre-/per- problem. Do not confuse this word with "preemptive," the prefix here is per-.

prespire **peraspire**

"Per-" has become such a regular mispronunciation of "pre-," many people now correct themselves where they don't need to.

plute **pollute**

This one, like "pllice" [pollice], spouse [suppose], and others, commonly result from rapid speech syncope, the loss of unaccented vowels. Just be sure you pronounce the vowel when you are speaking slowly. Read here for more on the problem.

(probly, proily) **probably**

Haploty is the drooping of one of two identical syllables such as the [ɒb] and [ɒb] in this word, usually the result of fast speech. Slow down and pronounce the whole word for maximum clarity and to reduce your chances of misspelling the word.

pronunciation **pronunciation**

Just as "misspelling" is among the most commonly misspelled words, "pronunciation" is among the most commonly mispronounced words. Fitting, no?

prostrate **prostate**

Though a pain in the prostate may leave a man prostrate, the gland contains no [ɹ].

R

realator **realtor**

As you avoid the extra vowel in "masonry," remember to do the same for "realtor," the guy who sells what the mason creates.

revelant **relevant**

Here is another word that seems to invite metathesis. You don't have to invent a new word from "occur." We already have a verb "recur" that does the trick.

respire **respite**

Despite the spelling similarity, this word does not rhyme with despite; it is pronounced [ri-spi:t]. Give yourself a permanent respire from mispronouncing it.

S

sherbert **sherbet**

Some of the same people who do not like two [ɹ]s in their words can't help repeating the one in this word.

silicone **silicon**

Silicon is the material they make computer chips from but implants are made of silicone.

snuck **sneaked**

I doubt we will get "snuck" out of the language any time soon but here is a reminder that it really isn't a word.

sose **so**

The phrase "so so" has been reduced to a single word hence "avon" when it is not called for "Coca Cola" not

spade **spay**

spay: you might think it is not being fair... well I can't go should be simply "so I can go." By the way, the same applies to sils, as in "Ails I want is to never hear 'alls' again."

spitting image **spit and image**

You can have your dog spayed but so long as she is a good dog, please don't spade her.

stob **stub**

The very spit of someone is an exact likeness. "The spit and image" or "spit image" emphasizes the exactness.

stomp **stamp**

In some areas the vowel in this word has slid a bit too far back in the mouth. Don't choke on it.

sult **suite**

Stamps are so called because they were originally stamped (not stomped) on a letter. You stamp your feet, too.

supposably **supposedly**

If you don't wear it (a suit [su:t]), then it is a suite [swi:t], as in a living room suite or a suite of rooms.

supremist **supremacist**

Adding -ly to participles is rarely possible, so some people try to avoid it altogether. You can't avoid it here. This word is derived from "supremacy," not "supreme." A supremacist would be someone who considers himself supreme. You know there is no one like that.

T

tack **task**

If things are not going your way, do not lose your tact that would be tactless but take a different tack.

take for granite **take for granted**

We do tend to take granite for granted. It is so ubiquitous. But that, of course, is not the point.

tenant **tenet**

A tenant is a renter who may not hold a tenet (a doctrine or dogma).

tenderhooks **tentehooks**

Tenters are frames for stretching cloth while it dries. Hanging on tenderhooks might leave you tender but that doesn't change the pronunciation of the word.

Tijuanita **Tijuana**

Why make Spanish words more difficult than they already are? Just three syllables here, thank you.

trathalon **trathlon**

We don't like [θ] and [l] together, so some of us insert a spare vowel. Pronounce it right, spell it right.

U

upmost **utmost**

Tenters are frames for stretching cloth while it dries. Hanging on tenderhooks might leave you tender but that doesn't change the pronunciation of the word.

V

verpage **verbiage**

While this word does indicate that efforts are up, the word is "utmost," al(l) historical variation of "outmost."

volumpbuous **volupbuous**

Here is another word that loses its [l] in speech. Pronouncing it correctly will help you spell it correctly. Some volupbuous women may be lumpy, but please avoid this Freudian slip that appresses them of it.

W

wadn't **wasn't**

That pesky [s] before [n] again. See "bidness" and

		"idn't."
ways	<u>way</u>	"I have a ways to go" should be "I have a way to go." The article "a" does not fit well with a plural.
wet	<u>whet</u>	In the Northeastern US the sound [hw], spelled "wh," is vanishing and these two words are pronounced the same. Elsewhere they should be distinguished.

Y

yoke	<u>yolk</u>	Another dialectal change we probably should not call an error: [ɪ] becomes [w] or [u] when not followed by a vowel. Some people just confuse these two words, though. That should be avoided.
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Z

zuology	<u>zoology</u>	Actually, we should say [zo], not [zu], when we go to the zoo but we'll let that pass. The discipline, however, must be pronounced [zo-'ah-luh-gee].
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