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How to Fill Out Your First Job Application

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The job application is your opportunity to make a good first impression on potential employers. The job application displays your skills, education and references and also demonstrates your attention to detail, your ability to answer questions and your concern for quality. If you have never completed a job application, it might seem like a daunting task, but these steps will tell you what to expect--and if you follow them correctly, you just might get the job you want.

Difficulty: Moderately Easy

Instructions

Things You'll Need

- Work permit (per state requirements)
 - Pen with blue or black ink
1. Prepare a list of work references that you may have. For minors, this can include baby-sitting jobs, volunteer work or any odd job that you may have done that has given you genuine work experience. You will also want to have a list of names, addresses and phone numbers of those who have employed you.
 2. Review the application to determine what information is needed. Standard applications will ask for personal information, work experience, education and personal references. Create a list of all of these items that you can refer to each time you need to complete an application.
 3. Complete the application with a pen. Because some applications use both sides of the page, use a blue or black ink pen, rather than a gel pen, so that the ink doesn't bleed through to the back side.
 4. Follow the directions on the application. Complete the section for personal information, providing your full name, phone number, street address and emergency contact information. For minors, the emergency contact person should be a parent or guardian.
 5. Complete the Education section. Include all high school, vocational school and college information. You'll be asked to include dates of graduation and courses of study.
 6. Fill out the Work Experience section, using information from any odd jobs or other paid jobs that you have performed. Be ready to provide specific, summarized details about your job duties to demonstrate the type of experience you received.
 7. Include days and times that you will be available for work. Working hours for minors are regulated by their state of residence; regardless of how many days and times you say you will be available. Be sure, however, to consider your extracurricular activities (such as sports, clubs, volunteering) when deciding how often you will be available for work.
 8. Add personal references. You will need to include people who can attest to your personality, character and work ethic. For minors, references can include teachers, previous employers, pastors or priests from your churches, and directors of programs for which you volunteer. Avoid using family or friends who may be biased or don't have firsthand knowledge of your abilities and work experience.

Tips & Warnings

- **Print legibly.** The only time you will need to write in cursive is to sign your name at the end of the application. **If your printing is sloppy and includes lots of misspellings, it shows potential employers that you don't care.** Store your application in a folder to keep it clean and wrinkle-free before you go back to turn it in to the prospective employer.
- Never lie on a job application. Even if a lie is not discovered immediately, it will be grounds for termination when it is discovered. **Dress for success.** Showing up in shabby street clothes when you pick up or return an application can diminish your chances of getting hired.