

Let's Eat, Grandma presents

A Guide to Your Post High School Job Search

A collaborative effort by Elyse Villanueva and Stephanie Bonilla



**Learn how to get the
future job you deserve!**

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Why Start Now?



[Photos from Veeroes](#)

I know what you're thinking: "Isn't it a little too early to start thinking about careers?"

Well yes, but actually no.

Small things you do now can help you tremendously in the future. For instance, just thinking of options or contemplating your goals can help you figure out what types of jobs draw on your strengths and make you happy. Then you can start exploring through classes, clubs, and internships. It takes time to figure out what is right for you, but if you start now, you can come across some unique experiences and opportunities!

Exploration never has a start date, so why not now? Use this guide to help you get started with your journey! **Feel free to skip ahead to the sections that are more applicable to where you are in life now – you can always come back to the other sections later.**

Want more relevant and specific advice? Take our survey so we can learn a little more about what kind of advice you need and deliver that advice!



Starting Your Job Search

“How Do I Start Preparing When I Don’t Even Know What I Want to Do?”



Photo by Jason Sung

You don’t have to have everything figured out now, but your future self will love you if you at least start thinking about it. Having a rough idea of the direction you want to go in will give you a roadmap for what you can do to be successful in your future field! **Here are some things you can do to get the motors running:**

- **Do a quick internet search.** Start by thinking about what activities or subjects excite you, as well as your strengths. Write them down if that helps. Then search to see how you can make a living out of it and how accessible it is to get a job in this field. You may be surprised at what you find; **there are jobs out there for everything.**
 - **Search jobs by subjects you admire** (e.g., art, sports, food, writing), and then look at the lists provided and search further into each job that sounds interesting to you. Maybe even look at the available jobs near you to make it more relevant for the future.
 - Look at things like average salary, certifications, education, how competitive the job field is, and even employee testimonials.
- **If you have no idea where or how to start, try taking a career test!** It’s important to note that these tests aren’t “all-knowing,” nor are they conclusive, but they can serve as a starting point. **Here is a resource for different free career tests that you can try out:**
 - <https://thescholarshipssystem.com/blog-for-students-families/career-assessment-for-high-school-students-9-tools-to-help-choose-your-major/>



Photo from Know Your Meme



[Photo from Giphy](#)

Working Efficiently

Job searches and exploration take time and effort, so sometimes you need to put away any distractions and get down to work! Moreover, *working efficiently is applicable to success in multiple parts of your life*. People work well in different ways, but there are some practices you can try to help you work smarter, not harder. **See if these tips work for you:**

- **Break tasks down into smaller pieces.** Big tasks can be intimidating – try tackling them in manageable chunks. Creating a to-do list and checking them off as you go can also be very helpful.
 - For instance, in your job search, start by researching the company you want to apply to first, and determine what skills they want and what skills you have to decide if you should apply. If you don't have the skills yet, that's a good place to start!
 - If you decide to move forward in the application, write down a list of your experiences and skills that are applicable to the job (the skills are often laid out in the posting) as an outline to start your resume, then expand on your experiences and edit your resume section by section (*how to write a resume is on page 6 of the guide*).
- **Limit your phone access.** Sometimes you just have to set aside time and force yourself to work, or you won't get important tasks done. If you have an iPhone, use "Screen Time" in your settings (underneath "Do Not Disturb") to schedule time away from your screen and limit distractions.
 - It's extra effective if your friend has the password and doesn't tell you!
 - There is also a similar setting for androids under "Digital Wellbeing and parental controls."

Writing an Awesome Resume



Photo by Joao Ferrao

Content

Think of your resume as a sales pitch for ‘you,’ rather than a full book report. You want to keep it concise and relevant. If your resume is too wordy and long, it most likely won’t be fully read. So, if you have less than five years of experience, it should be around *one page*.

Here are the typical sections to include in your resume:

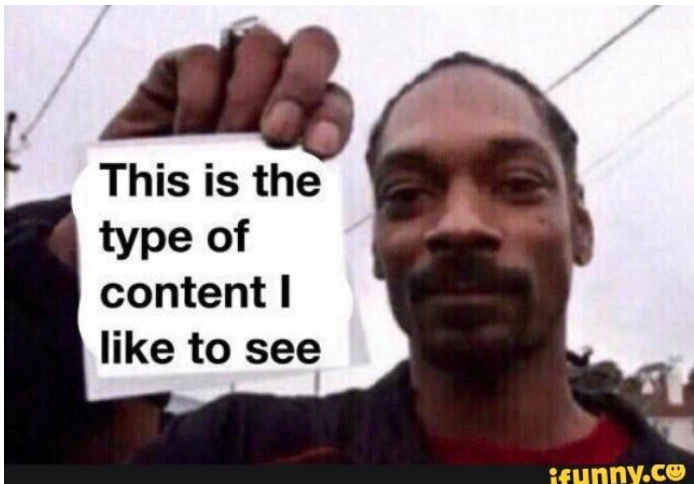


Photo from Pinterest

- **Header:** Include your full name in large font, your contact information (make sure your email address is professional, I don’t think TiGeRKiNg2000@gmail.com would get many responses), and your city and state (NOT your full address).
- **Summary of Qualifications:** A Summary of Qualifications is an important paragraph right below your header and works to hook in your reader! The Summary briefly answers the questions, “What experiences do you have?”, “What skills do you have?”, and “What proof do you have that you can deliver?”. Here is an example:

Multi-talented marketing manager with three years of relevant experience creating content and developing marketing strategies. Leverages strong writing and editing skills to produce engaging blogs, graphics, and social media content. Skilled at establishing brand standards across various media and channels. Communicates effectively with senior leadership to affect organizational change.

- **So, here’s how to write a Summary:** Start by picking the 3-6 strongest parts of your resume and reword them into a couple of sentences.



- Now it's time to write that show-stopping opening line! **A good rule of thumb is to use this formula:**

Descriptive word (your strongest soft skill, like 'adaptable,' 'self-motivated,' 'innovative') + **job title or field** (e.g., marketing professional, psychology graduate/student, customer service associate) + **level of experience** (either the number of years you've been in a similar position as the one you are applying to or "recent graduate in [your field]") + **key feature of your experience** (what skills you are most proud of).
Make sure to use words and skills that relate to the job posting!

- **Education:** Since you're a recent graduate, this section should be right below your Summary section.
 - **Only list college education.** Employers don't really want to hear about middle or high school. List the name and place of the institution, the date or expected date of graduation, and the degree and major/focus (if relevant).
 - **Add relevant college coursework, clubs, and awards!** Here are some things you can also include: related courses, clubs, volunteer organizations, teams, leadership positions, or anything that could show off your skills and experiences that are related to the position. You can sometimes even include sports and other extracurriculars to show your dedication. This is important if you don't have much professional experience.
- **Professional experience:** This is one of the most important sections and is the main focus. You can list internships along with paid jobs but make sure each relates to the job posting.
 - **You should focus on specific accomplishments by referencing the skills you used and the results you produced.** Summarize *your roles, responsibilities, and accomplishments in concise, scannable bullet points.*
 - **When you can, use numbers to prove your impact.** This can be how many people you managed, the money you made from sales, clients you worked with, documents handled, etc. For example, you can say you "itemized and totaled over 100 customer merchandise selections daily." This shows that you have handled high pressure situations at work and can do it again at this job. Remember to only include relevant numbers and if you don't have an exact number, make an estimate!

Rule of thumb formula: action verb (i.e. facilitated, collaborated- More examples are in the appendix) + **what you did** (roles and responsibilities) + **how you did it** (the skills you used like "leveraging customer service skills") + **so what** (how it improved the organization)?



- **“I literally have no experience”** Every professional started off like this, so don’t worry! *Relabel the section “relevant experience” and elaborate on related academic projects, volunteer work, and freelance work.* You can even include self-employed jobs like child-care worker if you were a babysitter or lawn care servicer if you mowed lawns.
- **Don’t overload your resume – keep it simple and easy to read.** Remember you can’t fit in everything, and that’s OK! A good cover letter can fill in some of the gaps. (*See cover letter advice on page 10*)
- **Examples of bullets for professional experience:**
 - Managed monetary interactions with customers and itemized merchandise
 - Collaborated with management on a weekly basis to report social media metrics
- **Skills:** List any hard skills (like computer skills or any skill specific to a field like Microsoft Excel or PowerPoint), soft skills (like collaboration, leadership, multitasking, etc.), and any languages you are fluent in. Remember: Focus on the skills you have that are mentioned in the job description.
- **Supplemental content (optional):** This is the section to include any volunteer experience, certifications, and related extracurricular activities.



[Picture from Giphy](#)

Phrasing

Even if you have all the experience in the world, poor grammar and phrasing will leave the hiring managers unimpressed. **Here are some key things to remember:**

- **Remember to get straight to the point and cut out fluff words like “very” and “currently.”** If your resume is too wordy, it is less likely to be read.
- **Don’t be repetitive!** It won’t look great if you use the term ‘collaborated’ five times in a row.
- **Use active and powerful verbs** to relay your experience. Here are some ideas for action verbs:
 - <https://www.themuse.com/advice/185-powerful-verbs-that-will-make-your-resume-awesome>
- **Remember to edit before you send!** Make sure your writing is consistent, concise, grammatically correct, and doesn’t sound awkward. Try reading it aloud to catch any mistakes.



- **Don't recycle the same resume for multiple jobs!** Tailor the language of your experiences to fit the job position and company culture. For example, you wouldn't highlight all your fantastic customer service experience for a job where you won't see any customers.

Design

Now that you have the content, it's time to make the design look professional! *Let's make resume art together!* **Keep in mind these tips when designing your resume:**

- **Font:** Use 10-12 pt. font and black letters, and don't go too crazy with bolding, underlining, and italicizing. We recommend using fonts like Calibri, Arial, Verdana, or Cambria.
- **Format:** It is important to remember that formatting may change depending on the file format. We suggest you use Microsoft Word to write your resume. You can send it to the employer as either a Word file or a PDF but pay attention to the posting because they may specifically request Word.
- **Here is a resume design example (also found in Appendix A):**



Photo from Giphy

MARTHA WALTON	
Washington, VA 20036 (571) 451-8346 MarthaJWalton@yahoo.com LinkedIn Profile	
BUSINESS SCHOOL GRADUATE SPECIALIZING IN FINANCE	
Recent business school graduate combining an educational background in finance and working experience with financial and accounting analytics . Diverse analytical experience includes working for <i>University Network</i> (nation's largest developer of student housing communities) – and <i>TSI Insurance</i> (100M+ customers, operating at \$3.5B in income). Professional strengths include financial analysis, communication, and reporting. Experienced Microsoft Office user (Excel, Word, and PowerPoint). 5+ years of solid client relationship experience.	
EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS:	
University of Nebraska Collins College of Business	
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration	Graduated: May 2017
Major in Finance	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relevant Courses: Principles of Finance, Accounting, Money Banking, Financial Marketing, Corporate Finance, Statistics, Economics, Computer Based Systems	
PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:	
TSI INSURANCE, Washington, VA	Nov. 2017 – Present
Sourcing Consultant	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spend Analysis: Led a project to analyze TSI's customer locations in comparison with auto body repair spending (with 30,000 line items and 5 years of data) to identify cost savings solutions.• Purchasing: Negotiated best possible prices for company. Contacted suppliers across the globe for bidding; created and sent RFX reports.• Data Entry: Recorded data from supplier presentations and contract negotiations into system.• Financial Analysis: Researched list of potential suppliers for company needs; analyzed and selected short list of suppliers to meet company needs, while keeping costs to a minimum.	
UNIVERSITY NETWORK, Washington, VA	May 2016 – Aug. 2016
Bookkeeping Intern	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accounting: Reconciled all accounts receivable and completed month-end accounting procedures.• Finance: Ensured appropriate revenue and expenses were maintained; monitored accounts while performing collection tasks in order to lower delinquent payments.	
OTHER RELEVANT EXPERIENCE	
COMMUNITY INSURANCE, Washington, VA	Jan. 2017 – May 2017
Underwriting Intern	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Integrated over 50K underwriting documents with a new department website, ultimately creating a centralized location for underwriting documents and company updates.• Relayed new website features to underwriting personnel to ensure a smooth transition from previous process.	
UNIVERSITY NETWORK, Washington, VA	Sept. 2015 – Nov. 2016
Community Assistant	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implemented marketing techniques (personal selling, email marketing, social media) while closely tracking efficacy (financial return on investment).• Built relationships with residents while handling complaints; oversaw \$453K in lease sales during employment.	
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	
Delta Sigma Pi Professional Business Fraternity: Acquired networking and communication skills, while participating in volunteer activities such as a biannual highway cleanup.	



Cover Letters: Sticking Out Among 100 Resumes



[Picture by Glenn Carstens-Peters](#)

Depending on the position, you may or may not need a cover letter. Pay attention to the job posting to see if it is required. Even if it's not required, write a cover letter anyway unless they specifically say *not* to send one – it can only help you. **Learn below what a cover letter does for your job search and how to write a great one!**

“So, what is a cover letter?”

- A cover letter is an opportunity to explain more about yourself and how you are a good fit for the position and match the company's values. It's also a good chance to explain any concerns you think employers may have about your experiences. **A cover letter is typically 3-5 paragraphs long and allows you a better opportunity to personalize your application than with a resume alone.**

Key Components

- **A strong opener:** Right beneath your greeting, start by introducing yourself and hooking in the reader. You can do this by repurposing the Summary of Qualifications from your resume or using a similar formula.
- **Any important context:** Briefly address any context that is not apparent in your resume. Mention things like relocating, taking time off from school or work, or anything else they may be curious about.
- **Two or three skills from the job description and proof to back them up:** The next couple of paragraphs will highlight your skills and prove that you can deliver



those skills. Pick the most important skills from the job description and explain how you utilized those skills. Make sure you aren't restating your resume, but rather using unique and compelling stories. **Here's an example:**

You're seeking someone who is client-oriented and willing to take leadership; I consider those two of my strongest suits. During my internship last summer with the PR agency Homebound Communications, I not only designed marketing materials for two of the company's clients but also took responsibility for all direct communications with them. I took time to research both clients' needs, created customized collateral for them, and was quickly responsive to their feedback. By rising to this challenge, I helped each client increase their quarterly web traffic by 20 – 30%.

- **How you fit the company culture and mission:** Do some research on their website or social media and integrate how you are a good fit with their values into your cover letter. **You can write something like this:**

I strongly identify with the Community First Foundation's mission of increasing generosity and powering community for positive change. Throughout my life, I have always been inspired by mentors within my community and have strived to give that same inspiration to others. Whether as the Service Chair for my sorority, the Social Work intern for Solidarity San Angelo, or even as a positive role model for younger students in my department, strengthening community bonds motivates everything I do.

- **Close with a brief call to action:** End the letter with a brief and direct call to action. This may seem like a small detail to leave out, but the bold and direct communication can make all the difference. **Try out something like:**
 - I look forward to discussing the position further with you. You can reach me at [phone number and/or email] listed above at [your available times].
- **Here's an article with additional tips for cover letters:**
 - <https://www.letseatgrandma.com/blog/what-makes-a-good-cover-letter/>
- **Here is a cover letter example (You can also find a cover letter template in appendix B):**

MARTHA WALTON
Washington, VA 20036 | (571) 451-8346 | MarthaWalton@yahoo.com | [LinkedIn Profile](#)

June 21, 2019

Contact Name
[Company Name]
[Company Address]
City, State ZIP Code

RE: [Position Title]

Dear Contact Name,

As a financial analyst with a background in helping management make strategic decisions, I am writing to express my interest in the [Position Title] position at [Company Name]. I graduated with a degree in business; many of the courses I took were directly related to finance and prepared me well for the working experiences below. Please allow me to illustrate a couple milestones in my career path that are relevant for this role.

- In 2016, I got involved with accounting and monitoring revenues and expenses for a large housing corporation. This supplemented what I learned in my degree and was my first real experience working with finance.
- In 2017, I conducted a spend analysis to help TSI decide where to put more locations based on financial and spending data. This was a self-driven project, and after completing it, I decided to pursue a role in financial analysis.

On your website, [Company Name] speaks of its [company mission] which stems from the [Company Name] company culture. My commitment to you is to use my skillset to support your company mission and even add to your culture. [Martha I'd put an example of what you specialize in or what you do that relates to the company mission. This is a great space to be targeted and put the true meaning back into cover letters.]

I first applied to a role in financial analysis and planning because I truly enjoy the opportunity to use my problem-solving skills and build financial models that help make decisions for businesses. I love taking complex information—performance metrics, financial forecasts, and other reports—and finding an effective way to communicate that information with senior leadership.

In my last few roles, I've built the foundation of skills as a financial analyst, and I look forward to seeing what I can do for your company in 2020 and beyond. Please let me know if you have time in the next week to speak further about this job opportunity. Thank you for your time and consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Martha Walton



Interviews



Tips for Success

Picture by Christina@womenintechchat

- **Be prepared for the hard-hitting questions.** Interviewers typically ask similar questions like ‘*What are your strengths and weaknesses?*’, ‘*Why do you want to work here?*’, ‘*What is one conflict you have handled in the workplace?*’. Contemplate how to answer this question honestly, but tactfully. Also, be prepared to answer questions about your resume and any potential red flags.
 - If it helps, write down how you think you will answer these questions before.
 - **Article about how to answer “What’s your greatest weakness?”**
 - <https://www.letseatgrandma.com/blog/interview-weaknesses/>
 - **Article about how to answer “What’s your greatest strength?”**
 - <https://www.letseatgrandma.com/blog/interview-strengths/>
 - **Article about how to answer various tough interview questions**
 - <https://www.letseatgrandma.com/blog/tough-interview-questions-and-answers/>
- **Ask thoughtful questions at the end!** This is your opportunity to close the deal and secure the position. While this is also an opportunity to ask questions you are genuinely curious about, the questions you ask can also say a lot about you and your initiatives. **Here is an example of a good question to ask:**
 - ‘What’s the number one thing you are looking for in the person you hire for this position?’
- **Confidence is key!** I know this is easier said than done, but there are a few things you can do to “fake it until you make it.” For instance, remember to make eye contact (but not too much or you will creep out the interviewer) and keep your shoulders back and chest up.



- **Know how to navigate the wage question.** Sometimes the employer will ask you immediately in the interview or application your desired wage. It is better to be prepared for this question than to be stumped (and potentially stuck with a low wage).
 - **Start by looking or asking around what the typical starting wage is at this job.** Keep in mind what your local minimum wage is. If any company offers you lower than that, it's a huge red flag!
 - **Then consider your own experience and credentials.** If you have worked quite a bit in a similar role as the job you are applying to, and even in management positions, then you shouldn't be getting minimum wage. Know your worth and stick your ground!



Photo from Pinterest

Attire

Appropriate attire often depends on the company culture and type of position, but **here are some general tips to help guide what to wear in an interview:**

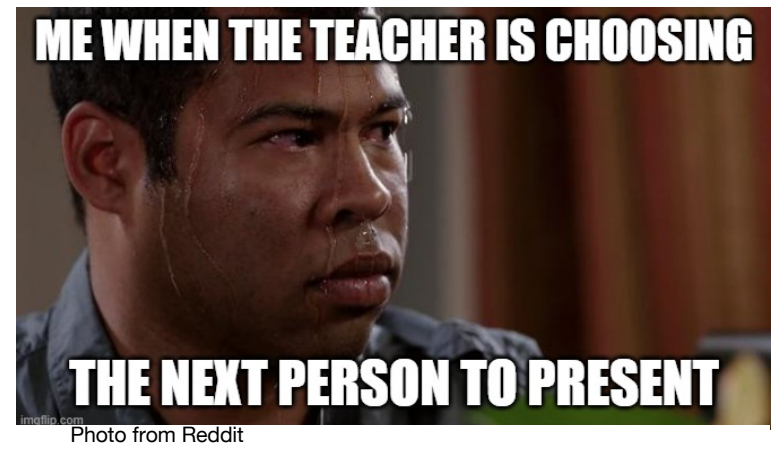
- **Stay away from bright colors and patterns.** Bright colors and patterns can be distracting and are generally not seen as professional. Wear more neutral colors like beige, black, white, gray, or navy blue.
- **Read the company room.** What we mean by this, is investigate the company culture to figure out the level of formality. For instance, if the company is pretty laid back, then dress more business casual. On the other hand, if the company culture is very formal, business formal is the way to go.
 - If you still have no idea, it is safer to go with business formal. It's better to be overdressed than underdressed.
- **More interview attire tips:**
 - <https://www.letseatgrandma.com/blog/on-interview-attire-what-to-wear-to-make-an-impression/>

Public Speaking Exercises for Interviews and More

Public speaking can be nerve-wracking, whether it's a school presentation, a one-person interview, or a group interview. With a few simple tricks and practices, presentations and interviews will become much easier (*then you can even add presentations to your list of skills*)! **Try out these practices to improve your skills:**



- **Pretend you are telling a story.** In an interview, you're selling yourself, your purpose, and your intentions for the position.
 - **Exercise:** First, choose an object near you or a photo. Now, tell a story about what it is, how it came to be, and its purpose! This will help you learn how to engage with your audience and remember certain details to make the story move along. Tell a simple and easy-to-follow story with attention-grabbing details. Use this same concept in an interview; sell yourself, and your purpose, and your intentions for the position!
- **Be excited!** When someone is excited about something, it is often a contagious and positive feeling! Practice this viewpoint to help capture the audience's attention and help your presentation or interview be more impactful!
 - **Exercise:** Take any item, let's say a spoon, and pretend to be excited about it showing it off. Describe what parts are the best, how it is practical, and how exciting it is.
- **Commercial time.** Examining commercials can help point out how someone presents their product in the best light.
 - **Exercise:** Pretend you are making a commercial! Record yourself for a short time to see how you sell yourself in an interview or presentation.
- **Body language says it all.** Good posture with breathing methods can help circulate more oxygen and lower your heart rate.
 - **Exercise:** Try the "Superman" pose before a presentation or interview. Stand up straight, shoulder back, legs apart, arms to your sides (but not in your pockets), chest out! Take a deep breath in, count to 8, and breathe out. Repeat until you are feeling a bit more relaxed!



Red Flags in Jobs



[Photo from Giphy](#)

Applying and committing to a job is an investment of time, effort, and trust, and like any investment, there are risks. We know you have responsibilities and need an internship/job with a decent income and valuable experience to gain. However, some companies mistreat their employees, make decisions that are unethical, or are actual scams. There are some red flags to look out for. **Avoid situations like these:**

- **Grammar and spelling errors** in the job posting.
- **The company asks for a payment** to access more tools and/or for a membership.
- **The contact email is not linked to the company's name**, or the domain is @live.com.
- **The posting does not mention the responsibilities of the position**, but instead focuses on a high potential salary.
- **The position indicates a "first-year compensation" that is too high for the average** compensation/salary for that position.
- **The business name is not easy to find**, and no clear business website is found. If there is a website, take a closer look at the page to see if it looks fake (i.e., spelling mistakes, links that don't work, etc.).
- **The employer contacts you by phone, but the number is blocked or not available** and there is no way to return the call.
- **The employer contacts you by email offering you a job you did not apply for** or inviting you to apply for a job.
- **Reviews** on Glassdoor or Indeed from former employees are **overwhelmingly negative**. One or two negative reviews are normal, especially for larger companies, but if there are more negative experiences than positive, then something is up.



- **The communication or interview is unprofessional, overly pushy, or strange.** This can indicate that the company is a scam. (And even if it *is* exactly what they portray, do you want to work at a company like that?)

How to Double-Check the Job

- **Google the employer's phone number, fax number, and email address.** If it does not appear connected to an actual business organization, this is a red flag.
 - You can use the Better Business Bureau and AT&T's AnyWho to verify organizations.
 - You can also check Whois.net to see when the domain name was created.
Proceed with caution if the domain name was created within the last few days.
- **Google the company name and the word "scam" or "legitimacy."** This way you can see if the results show scam reports concerning this company.

Preparing for and Dealing with Rejection

Everyone has heard "no" at least once, if not multiple times, in their lives. Job rejections are the same way: everyone gets them from time to time, but this doesn't reflect your capabilities. **Remember these things next time you face a rejection:**

- **It's not personal.** There are many factors hiring managers must consider when selecting someone for a position, and some factors you may or may not have control over in that process. Contemplate how to improve for next time but remember to not be hard on yourself. Rejection can happen for any reason.
 - Overall, it is an experience to grow and learn from.
- **Attitude is everything.** Rejection does feel disheartening but try not to soak deep in those thoughts. Perhaps it was not a good fit for you, but there are always better opportunities!
 - **Maybe you just need more experience to complete the challenge, like a boss level in a video game.** Take this as an opportunity to *self-reflect* and *grow*. What could you have changed if you had the chance? Was there room for improvement? Questions like these allow for a deeper analysis of your profile.
 - **Chin up, it's not over yet!** Rejections come and go, but you will move on and level up to someone who has experience and is a better version of themselves! Self-love and staying motivated are key to building on your resilience. You already have great qualities, do not forget that, build on them and keep moving forward!



Frequently Asked Job Search Questions

Everyone's life is different, which means job search experiences also vary person to person. *Here are some frequently asked job search questions regarding certain personal situations.* **Note:** We do not claim to be experts in any of these fields but are just providing basic information about your rights and resources to connect you with professionals.

“What if I’m undocumented?”

Working is possible through Deferred Action, also called DACA, but you still need to stay within the legal bounds of your immigration status and pay taxes on your income.

- **Under DACA, you can find employment through a U.S. employer, a paid internship, or as an independent contractor.** However, you are not eligible for work-study arranged with the federal government (**federal work-study opportunities**).
- Please note USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services) will limit renewal grants of deferred action and employment authorization under DACA to one year but will not rescind any currently valid two-year grants of DACA. So be sure to check your status so you can continue working in the U.S. The [USCIS website](#) recommends renewing your DACA request 150 days before the expiration date.
- If you are not a U.S. citizen, you need two items to work. One is an employment authorization document (EAD), and the other is a social security number.

Resources

- **Information about qualifying for DACA:**
 - <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/consideration-of-deferred-action-for-childhood-arrivals-daca>
- **A directory of free or low-cost nonprofit immigration legal services providers:**
 - <https://www.immigrationlawhelp.org>



“What If I Have a Criminal Record?”

Criminal records include details of all arrests, convictions, sentences, parole violations, as well as dismissals and verdicts; but how this will affect your employment varies case by case. Overall employers do have the right to do a background check on whomever they are recruiting, and many states make criminal background information available. The Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER) system provides online access to federal court records, which employers can use to see if you've been involved in civil or criminal court cases.

- **However, "Ban the Box" laws in various areas restrict employment applications from asking if you have a criminal record.** Some places don't allow employers to ask about arrests that did not lead to a conviction. Check to see if your county is one of these places, and if it covers both private and public employers.
- **What if you were arrested but not convicted?** Well, the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) is the federal law that allows employers to use arrest records from the past seven years when making hiring decisions. However, as noted above, “Ban the Box” prevents that, so depending on where your arrest occurred, an employer may or may not be able to use that against you.
- **They can also check your DMV record to see if you have a DUI** (*which is considered a misdemeanor and appears on your record indefinitely*), speeding tickets, or moving violations. **Not all employers do both driver's history checks and criminal record checks, but if your potential job involves driving, then you can bet they will check your DMV records.**
 - In this case, it is best to take a forward approach and do a background check on yourself. For a fee, you can order a background check using a third party like Allison & Taylor, GoodHire, or CriminalWatchDog. Check for errors on your report, since background check companies routinely mismatch people with similar names, report an arrest without reporting that no charges were filed, reveal sealed or expunged information, list single charges multiple times, or misclassify misdemeanors as felonies.



- If you spot an error, you can dispute it with that particular company. You can also file a complaint with the FTC at [FTC.gov](https://www.ftc.gov) or 1-877-382-4357.
- **If you have offenses on your criminal record, be prepared to discuss them in job interviews.** Think about ways to talk about how you have grown and changed since you committed those offenses.
- **You can also look into getting certain offenses expunged from your record.** Expungement is the process of having a previous guilty or no contest plea be set aside or replaced with a non-guilty plea. However, this is a process that needs to include a professional and is only relevant in certain cases.

Resources

- **The U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL)** created the Federal Bonding Program. This hiring tool offers fidelity bonds (a business insurance that provides employer protection against losses caused by its employees' actions) for the first six months of employment to companies that hire people with convictions.
 - **To learn more about seeking bonds or finding a job through the Federal Bonding Program call 1-877-872-5627.**
 - <https://bonds4jobs.com/>
- **The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)** is a federal government program offering a tax credit to incentivize employers to hire ex-felons and applicants from other groups with work entry barriers, such as veterans and recipients of temporary assistance (TANF) and food stamps (SNAP).
 - <https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/work-opportunity-tax-credit>

“What if I Have a Disability?”

If you have a disability, don't fret. **The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)** makes it unlawful to discriminate in employment against a qualified individual with a disability.

- **Under the ADA, you have a disability if you have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity.** The ADA also protects you if you have a history of such a disability, or if an employer believes that you have such a disability, even if you don't.



- **To be protected under the ADA, you must have a certain impairment level.** A substantial impairment is one that significantly limits a major life activity such as hearing, seeing, speaking, walking, breathing, performing physical labor/work, caring for oneself, learning or working.
- **If you have a disability, you must also be qualified to perform the essential functions or duties of a job, with or without reasonable accommodation, to be protected from job discrimination by the ADA.** This means two things. First, you must satisfy the employer's requirements for the job, such as education, employment experience, skills, or licenses. Second, you must be able to perform the essential functions of the job with or without reasonable accommodation. Essential functions are the fundamental job duties you must be able to perform on your own or with the help of a reasonable accommodation. **An employer cannot refuse to hire you because your disability prevents you from performing duties that are not essential to the job.**
- **Information on your employment rights as an individual with a disability:**
 - <https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/your-employment-rights-individual-disability>

Resources

- **The Ticket to Work Program and Work Incentives Improvement Act assists recipients of Social Security Disability Insurance or Supplemental Security Income to prepare for and enter into employment.** The program provides Social Security disability beneficiaries the choices, opportunities, and support needed to become and stay employed, increase their earnings, and leave and remain off benefits by being fully self-supportive.
 - <https://www.ssa.gov/work/overview.html>

More Resources



Photo by Sincerely Media

General Resources and Tools for Students

- **This link leads you to many apps, tools, and other helpful assistance you can use either in high school or in college.** Some of the apps can help you complete your assignments and stay concentrated, while others can help you learn new skills.
 - <https://collegeinfo geek.com/resources/>

Scholarship Resources

Sometimes we don't have money of our own and are expected to work while we're in college. Scholarships can ease financial pressure during these times.

- **Use the link below to see an easy-to-follow flow chart that explains the do's and don'ts when it comes to looking for a scholarship.**
- <https://www.slugbooks.com/ultimate-guide-to-earning-a-scholarship-infographic.html>
- **These two websites can also help you match up with other scholarships.** All you have to do is create an account and fill out the relevant information about you. This gives you a better chance of finding scholarships that are personalized to your needs and situation.
 - <https://www.fastweb.com/>
 - <https://www.chegg.com/scholarships>



- **Here is another website that assists in finding scholarships.** Like the other two links above, making an account and filling in the required information can help match you with scholarships!
 - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/grants-scholarships>

Networking Resources

Networking is building connections within the professional world for the purpose of sharing opportunities and information. **Here are ways to get you started:**

- **Find out what organizations in your area are focused on your target industry and join them.** There will be things the organization does that require the support of volunteers, so volunteering is a good way to get your foot in the door. Start by searching organizations you have heard about and go from there.
- **LinkedIn also allows you to connect with other possible companies and people you may know in a professional manner.** You can learn more about certain topics and connect with likeminded professionals.
 - <https://www.linkedin.com/>
- **Attend a job fair!** Job fairs are an opportunity to get career guidance and develop skills, all while meeting people and building your network. **Here are some resources for job fairs in California:**
 - https://edd.ca.gov/jobs_and_training/job_fairs_and_workshops.htm
- **Check to see if you have any connections already.** Think of parent's friends, teachers, or mentors that may be helpful, and foster those relationships.
- **Here are some articles that go into more detail about networking strategies:**
 - <https://www.letseatgrandma.com/blog/hate-the-word-networking/>
 - <https://www.letseatgrandma.com/blog/network-for-a-job-from-home/>

Internship Resources

When it comes to internships, it can be hard to find and make connections, especially if you're still in high school. **Here are various resources to find internships or just explore your options:**

- **Chegg allows you to create an account and pick certain keywords of the job area you're looking for to match you up with possible internships.** Like other websites, make sure to read all the details of the recommendations. This includes if the internship is paid or not!
 - <https://www.chegg.com/internships/>



This website not only helps you find possible internships, but also permanent job placements. Create an account, then add in your location and areas of interests that you would like to work in, such as engineering or landscaping. The website will then connect you with local nearby opportunities. Again, make sure to check all the details and location sites that way it is best fitted for your needs.

- <https://www.usajobs.gov/Help/working-in-government/unique-hiring-paths/students/>

- **This website is also another job search engine that can be used to find internships as well.** This website includes other company information as well, such as salary information, company reviews, and possible interview questions. Almost like Amazon reviews, but for companies.

Use the search bar to type in internships in your field of interest.

- <https://www.glassdoor.com/>

- **This website allows you to find jobs or internships easily just by typing in certain keywords and your location.** Like any other

job internship website, you sign up and customize it to match your needs. Use keywords to get a more accurate match. However please double-check and review the information to make sure it's a job placement or internship and what level of recommendation they are offering for applicants.

- <https://www.simplyhired.com/>

- **This website also helps you find possible jobs and internships by creating an account and helping you build a resume.** It can also compare salaries and give you notifications like the other websites above. This website also allows you to explore possible career options and advice.

- <https://www.careerbuilder.com/>

- **This is a nonprofit organization based in New York that helps people connect with other possible volunteer internship work.** By creating a profile adding in your email address and other prevalent information you can connect to organizations more related to the topics and area you are in. They also have a list of organization groups, Mutual Aid groups, and grad programs that they can connect you with.

- <https://www.idealists.org/en/>

- **LinkedIn can also be used to find internships!** You start by making your account and filling it in your information. To search for internships, just type in the job search bar internships, alongside with certain keywords. You can also narrow down the search according to the type of experience level the area, as well as if it's remote or not.

- <https://www.linkedin.com/>



Photo from Giphy



Skill Development Classes

- **Free online classes on Office software from Goodwill:**
 - <https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/subjects/office/>
- **Free online classes for various skills:**
 - https://www.coursera.org/for-university-and-college-students/?utm_campaign=header-for-students&utm_content=corp-to-landing-for-students&utm_medium=coursera&utm_source=header-for-students-link
- **Free workshops on google products (google marketing, analytics, etc.):**
 - <https://skillshop.withgoogle.com/>
- **Skill-share classes where you can learn more about many subjects (design, photography, web development, etc.):**
 - <https://www.skillshare.com/browse/free-classes>



[Picture from Giphy](#)



Appendix

Appendix A- Resume Template

MARTHA WALTON

Washington, VA 20036 | (571) 451-8346 | MarthaJWalton@yahoo.com | [LinkedIn Profile](#)

BUSINESS SCHOOL GRADUATE | SPECIALIZING IN FINANCE

Recent business school graduate combining an **educational background in finance** and **working experience with financial and accounting analytics**. Diverse analytical experience includes working for *University Network* (nation’s largest developer of student housing communities) – and *TSI Insurance* (100M + customers, operating at \$3.5B in income). Professional strengths include financial analysis, communication, and reporting. Experienced Microsoft Office user (Excel, Word, and PowerPoint). 5+ years of solid client relationship experience.

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS:

University of Nebraska | Collins College of Business

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration

Major in **Finance**

Graduated: May 2017

- Relevant Courses:** *Principles of Finance, Accounting, Money Banking, Financial Marketing, Corporate Finance, Statistics, Economics, Computer Based Systems*

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

TSI INSURANCE, Washington, VA

Sourcing Consultant

Nov. 2017 – Present

- Spend Analysis:** Led a project to analyze TSI’s customer locations in comparison with auto body repair spending (with 30,000 line items and 5 years of data) to identify cost savings solutions.
- Purchasing:** Negotiated best possible prices for company. Contacted suppliers across the globe for bidding; created and sent RFX reports.
- Data Entry:** Recorded data from supplier presentations and contract negotiations into system.
- Financial Analysis:** Researched list of potential suppliers for company needs; analyzed and selected short list of suppliers to meet company needs, while keeping costs to a minimum.

UNIVERSITY NETWORK, Washington, VA

Bookkeeping Intern

May 2016 – Aug. 2016

- Accounting:** Reconciled all accounts receivable and completed month-end accounting procedures.
- Finance:** Ensured appropriate revenue and expenses were maintained; monitored accounts while performing collection tasks in order to lower delinquent payments.

OTHER RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

COMMUNITY INSURANCE, Washington, VA

Underwriting Intern

Jan. 2017 – May 2017

- Integrated over 50K underwriting documents with a new department website, ultimately creating a centralized location for underwriting documents and company updates.
- Relayed new website features to underwriting personnel to ensure a smooth transition from previous process.

UNIVERSITY NETWORK, Washington, VA

Community Assistant

Sept. 2015 – Nov. 2016

- Implemented marketing techniques (personal selling, email marketing, social media) while closely tracking efficacy (financial return on investment).
- Built relationships with residents while handling complaints; oversaw \$453K in lease sales during employment.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Delta Sigma Pi | Professional Business Fraternity:

Acquired networking and communication skills, while participating in volunteer activities such as a biannual highway cleanup.

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Appendix B- Cover Letter Template

MARTHA WALTON

Washington, VA 20036 | (571) 451-8346 | MarthaJWalton@yahoo.com | [LinkedIn Profile](#)

June 21, 2019

Contact Name
[Company Name]
[Company Address]
City, State ZIP Code

RE: [Position Title]

Dear Contact Name,

As a financial analyst with a background in helping management make strategic decisions, I am writing to express my interest in the [Position Title] position at [Company Name]. I graduated with a degree in business; many of the courses I took were directly related to finance and prepared me well for the working experiences below. Please allow me to illustrate a couple milestones in my career path that are relevant for this role.

- In 2016, I got involved with accounting and monitoring revenues and expenses for a large housing corporation. This supplemented what I learned in my degree and was my first real experience working with finance.
- In 2017, I conducted a spend analysis to help TSI decide where to put more locations based on financial and spending data. This was a self-driven project, and after completing it, I decided to pursue a role in financial analysis.

On your website, [Company Name] speaks of its [company mission] which stems from the [Company Name] company culture. My commitment to you is to use my skillset to support your company mission and even add to your culture. [Martha I'd put an example of what you specialize in or what you do that relates to the company mission. This is a great space to be targeted and put the true meaning back into cover letters.]

I first applied to a role in financial analysis and planning because I truly enjoy the opportunity to use my problem-solving skills and build financial models that help make decisions for businesses. I love taking complex information—performance metrics, financial forecasts, and other reports—and finding an effective way to communicate that information with senior leadership.

In my last few roles, I've built the foundation of skills as a financial analyst, and I look forward to seeing what I can do for your company in 2020 and beyond. Please let me know if you have time in the next week to speak further about this job opportunity. Thank you for your time and consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Martha Walton

