





OWRA Work Readiness Resource Level One

For Participants

Updated March 2020

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You Are Here

♂ Level One

In *Level One*, you will:

- Learn how to write a résumé.
- Learn about writing cover letters.
- Explore all the things you need to do to prepare for an interview.
- Create a career portfolio.
- Address barriers to employment with resources on crisis management, domestic violence support, and help for returning to work after incarceration.
- Learn how to budget and manage money.
- Learn about what employers are looking for in their employees.

Level Two

In Level Two, you will:

- Identify your previous education and training experiences.
- Learn about your skills.
- Explore and identify your interests.
- Identify your abilities as they relate to the world of work.
- Look at why you should explore your interests, abilities, and skills.
- Set career goals and objectives.
- Explore work-related resources.

Level Three

In Level Three, you will:

- Further explore your abilities, and what you value in a work environment (work values).
- Understand and explore labor market information.
- Explore information about jobs and occupations.
- Learn about career pathways and the knowledge and skills that are similar across multiple occupations.
- Get information about jobs, training, and opportunities in your local area or state.
- Build a personal plan of education, training, and work experience opportunities.

Solution Level One Homepage

Hello! The Work Readiness Resource **For Participants Level One** has been created as a tool for you to explore the world of work.

In this level, you will:

- Learn about how to write an effective **résumé**.
- learn about writing cover letters.
- Prepare for interviews.
- Oreate a career portfolio.
- Address **barriers to employment** with resources on family support, health, domestic violence support, and help for returning to work after incarceration.
- O Learn how to budget and manage money.
- Start to learn about what employers are looking for in their employees!

Let's get started!



Writing a Résumé

A well written résumé is a great tool for you to show potential employers who you are and what skills and experience you have. A résumé is often the only information employers have to make decisions about who to interview or hire.

What information should I put on my résumé? What should it look like?

Format

There are many different résumé formats you can choose from. Some examples of various formats are on the next few pages.

Personal Data

Start with the basics: include your name, complete mailing address, telephone number(s), and email.

Employment Profile

This section should state your career objective along with a summary of your knowledge, skills, and abilities to do what is stated. (Example- A fast learner with the ability to contribute to any team within a hospitality organization.)

Education and Work Experience

The middle sections of your résumé should include all of your education and training. It should also list all of your jobs and work history (any type of work or volunteer experience) beginning with your current or most recent job!



Affiliations/Associations

List any military, professional, or personal organizations you commit your time to. Example: You belong to an association such as the American Nurses Association.

References

Some employers may ask for references - people that have worked with you in the past. It is best to list references on a sheet of paper separate from your résumé. Before you list someone as a reference, be sure to contact them to let them know.

Remember:

If you have military service experience, be sure to include that in the Work History or Other Activities section!



Dos and Don'ts of Writing a Résumé

A well written résumé is a great tool for you to let potential employers know:

- 1. Who you are, and
- 2. What skills and experience you have.

A résumé is often the only information employers have to make decisions about who to interview.

Below are some tips to remember when thinking about writing your résumé!

Résumé Tips

Do...

- ...Include an employment profile if you have a specific job or career goal in mind, or you know the title of the job for which you are applying.
- ...List your key strengths and skills early in your résumé to improve your chances for consideration.
- ...Use black ink.
- ...Use 8.5 inch by 11 inch white or off-white paper.

Don't...

- ...List activities that do not relate to your specific job or career goals, such as your involvement in religious or political organizations.
- ...Let your key strengths and skills get lost in your resume.
- ...Use graphics or exotic colors.
- ...Use more than 1-2 pages.
- ...Use colored paper.

Highlight your experiences with strong, action-oriented words that will catch the eyes of hiring managers. The words you choose should align with the job descriptions to which you apply. Some examples of power verbs you might include are:

Accomplish	Consult	Establish	Interpret	Obtain	Program	Support
Achieve	Contribute	Explain	Join .	Organize	Provide	Teach
Analyze	Coordinate	Form	Launch	Participate	Recommend	Train
Apply	Create	Help	Lead	Perform	Recruit	Tutor
Arrange	Demonstrate	Identify	Listen	Practice	Research	Volunteer
Assist	Design	Improve	Maintain	Prepare	Review	Write
Coach	Determine	Increase	Mentor	Present	Secure	
Collaborate	Develop	Interact	Motivate	Produce	Select	

Are you ready to see some examples of résumés?

The next three pages will give you examples of some résumés!



Takeaway #1: Résumé: Putting Your Jobs in Order by Year (Chronological)

Jamie Applicant

101 Applicant Way Warren, OH 44481 (555) 555-5555 japplicant@gmail.com

EXPERIENCE:

Receptionist 2018-2020

Good Industries, Warren, OH

- · Greeted visitors professionally
- Managed busy front desk
- Took notes for executive meetings

File Clerk 2016-2018

Community Service Consultants, Columbus, OH

- Implemented new filing system
- Maintained accurate client files
- Provided occasional phone coverage

Waitress 2013-2016

Main Street Diner, Cincinnati, OH

- Took customer orders and delivered food
- Assisted with restocking supplies
- Voted employee of the month by peers and customers

EDUCATION:

Cincinnati Community College 2016

Course Work: Practical Word Processing

Accounting 101 Business 101

High School Diploma 2014

Cincinnati High School, Cincinnati, OH

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Takeaway #2: Résumé: Putting Your Jobs in Order by Type of Work Experience (Functional)

Jamie Applicant

101 Applicant Way Warren, OH 44481 (555) 555-5555 japplicant@gmail.com

EXPERIENCE

Clerical

- Maintained accurate, confidential client files.
- Developed and kept current a 5,000 member database of contacts.
- Handled over 120 phone calls a day and ensured all messages were delivered.

Organizational

- Implemented a new filing system which created greater efficiency in office paperwork.
- Managed busy front desk and interacted with executive professionals on a daily basis.

Planning

- Managed twice monthly mailings to over 5,000 customers.
- Coordinated mailings with post office.

EMPLOYMENT

- 2018-2020- Good Industries, Receptionist
- 2016-2018 Helpful Products, Mailing Specialist
- 2014-2016 Community Service Consultants, File Clerk

SKILLS

Microsoft Word 2007. Use Windows PC, Macintosh, Lotus, and other specialized programs. Learn quickly. Solve problems efficiently.

EDUCATION

Cincinnati Community College, Business Coursework, 2016. Cincinnati High School, Diploma, 2014.

Takeaway #3: Résumé: Combining Chronological and Functional

Jamie Applicant

101 Applicant Way Warren, OH 44481 (555) 555-5555 japplicant@gmail.com

Employment Profile

To obtain an administrative support position in a growing company; to use and develop my clerical, organizational, and planning experience.

EDUCATION

Cincinnati Community College, Business Coursework, 2016. Cincinnati High School, Diploma, 2014.

ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS

- Implemented a new filing system which created greater efficiency in office paperwork.
- Managed busy front desk and interacted with executive professionals on a daily basis.
- Maintained accurate, confidential client files.

PLANNING SKILLS

- Managed twice monthly mailings to over 5,000 customers and coordinated with post office.
- Developed and kept current a 5,000 member database of contacts.
- Handled over 120 phone calls a day and ensured all messages were delivered.

OTHER SKILLS

 Proficient with Microsoft Office applications. Type 100 words per minute. Learn quickly. Solve problems efficiently.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Good Industries, Warren, OH2018-2020Receptionist2016-2018Helpful Products, Columbus, OH2016-2018Mailing Specialist2013-2016

File Clerk



Writing a Cover Letter

If you are sending a résumé to an employer, you ALSO need to write a cover letter! A cover letter is your opportunity to explain why you are a good fit for a specific job.

The typical structure of a standard cover letter is laid out below.

Greeting

Address the cover letter to a specific person by name and title. If you do not know the name of the person, you can address it to the supervisor of the department. For example: Dear Maintenance Supervisor.

Always use: **Dear Mr. Jones** or Dear Maintenance Supervisor

Never use the phrase: To Whom it May Concern

First Paragraph

Name the specific position or type of work for which you are applying. Be sure to mention how you learned of the job and the company.

Second Paragraph

Explain why you are interested in this position and employer. Do not repeat the information on your résumé. Include something special or unique about yourself that will benefit the employer.

Remember:

A Cover Letter is a Great Example of Your Writing Skills!



Third Paragraph

- · State that your résumé is enclosed and indicate your desire to meet with the employer.
- Include your day and evening contact information and email.
- Include a statement or question that will encourage the employer to respond.
- Be sure to communicate your plan to follow-up with the employer. Thank the employer for his/ her time.

Closing

Close the letter with a simple "sincerely" followed by your full name.

You can find an example of a cover letter on the next page.

Go to Next Step



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Takeaway #4: Cover Letter Example

Jamie Applicant

101 Applicant Way Warren, OH 44481 (555) 555-5555 japplicant@gmail.com

May 1, 2020

Jennifer Jones Office Manager XYZ Company 105 Main Street Warren, OH 44481

Dear Ms. Jones:

I am writing to apply for the position of administrative assistant at ABC Company. I learned of this opening on your company's website.

I believe my skills would be a perfect fit for your company's needs. I have four years of office work experience and am proficient in all Microsoft Office applications. I am very task oriented and have trained other administrative staff at my current job. I am particularly interested in this position as I know XYZ Company is looking for someone who has strong communication and verbal skills to work with clients.

My resume is enclosed and I look forward to an opportunity to meet with you at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jamie Applicant

Jamie Applicant

Enclosure

O Interviews

Now that you have explored writing a résumé and cover letter, what is next?

The Interview!

The Interview section of the Work Readiness Resource will provide you with valuable information on:

- What is an Interview?
- Appearance (Clothing and Personal Hygiene)
- Preparing for the Interview
- The Interview
- Follow-Up after an Interview

Go to the Next Step to start learning about interviews!



What is an Interview?

An interview is a meeting between you and a potential employer to discuss your qualifications and see if there is a "fit" for the job.

The employer wants to:

- · Verify what they know about you;
- Learn more about you;
- · Talk about your skills and work experience; and
- Discuss the job.

If you have been called for an interview, you can assume that the employer is interested in you. An interview generally lasts from 30 to 60 minutes, but may be shorter or longer. Some interviews may include meetings with multiple people.



Appearance

Your appearance is a statement of who you are. Your clothing and personal hygiene should create the image that will help you get the job!

Clothing

Your clothing choices will vary based on the job, location, and your personal preference. For example: A business suit for a construction job or overalls for an office job are examples of dress that are probably not appropriate.

When interviewing for professional or managerial jobs, it is best to wear a suit or other professional attire. For men, this might include a jacket, dress shirt, and tie, and for women, a dress, pants, or skirt, and a jacket. Avoid loud colors and flashy patterns. You want the employer to focus on your skills, not your clothes.

Use common sense as a guide in selecting clothing for the interview. A basic rule is to dress one step above what you would wear on the job. The clothes you wear affect all your attitude and confidence levels. When people take the time to dress for success, they tend to feel good about themselves.

Personal Hygiene

Personal grooming is just as important as what you wear. It is important to have your hair and nails trimmed and clean, and men should have their facial hair freshly shaven or neatly trimmed or groomed.



Your Goal:

To dress and look like you would if you had the job!

Fashion and Hygiene Don'ts!

- Trendy clothes
- Loud colors
- Tight clothing
- Perfumes or cologne that are too strong
- Too much jewelry
- · Dirty or untrimmed hair and nails



Preparation

A key to success is preparing for your interview! A few things you need to do include:

- **Gather** all the information and documents you may need for the interview.
- Do not forget to **research** the company location and address for your interview.
- Practice explaining how your education, training, or work experience fit the job description.
- Think through common interview questions and how you might respond.
- Think about how you may answer questions that focus on your lack of skills or experience, or how you can explain any gaps in your résumé.
- Print extra copies of your résumé to bring with you to the interview!
- Get a good night's sleep before your interview!





The Interview

You should plan on arriving early for your interview.

Some things to remember during the interview:

- Listen carefully to each question asked in the interview.
- Take your time in responding and make sure your answers are positive.
- Express a good attitude and show that you are willing to work, eager to learn, and are flexible.
- Ask interviewers to clarify what they are asking if you do not understand a question.

- Provide specific examples from your work related experiences.
- Avoid saying only "yes" or "no" to questions.
 Explain and expand on your answers.
- Prepare and ask specific questions that show your knowledge and interest in the job!

Ending the Interview

Make sure you end the interview with a friendly, positive manner. If you want the job—say so! When the interview is over, leave promptly.

Interview Tips

Do...

- ...Dress one step above what you would wear on the job for which you are interviewing.
- ...Prepare in advance for each and every interview and research each company.
- ...Maintain eye contact and do not forget to smile.
- ...Be aware of nonverbal body language.
- ...Focus on your strengths, skills, and interests, and look for opportunities to personalize the interview.

Don't...

- ...Dress in faddish styles or loud colors.
- ...Forget to make and bring extra copies of your résumé to each and every interview.
- ...Watch the clock.
- ...Discuss "hot" topics such as race, religion, or politics.
- ...Engage in too much personal discussion that has nothing to do with the job!

Complete the takeaway on the next page to help you prepare for future interviews.



Takeaway #5: 30 Second Commercial

When you go into an interview, you should be prepared to talk about yourself in a way that highlights your strengths, interests, and experiences. This is often called an "elevator speech" or "30-second commercial" because it is the short time you have to explain who you are and make a good impression.

- Your commercial could include: your professional or volunteer experience; your education; some of your notable accomplishments; your passion/what you love to do; some words that describe you; and an overview of what you would like to do or why you are interested in a specific job.
- You should try to memorize and practice your 30-Second Commercial to help you prepare for interviews. Time yourself and practice with at least two people.
- Make plans to come back to and refine your commercial after you complete Levels 2 and 3 of the Work Readiness Resource!

Check out the example below and write your own commercial in the space provided.

Example:

Hello, my name is Jamie Applicant. I love working with people and being a part of collaborative teams. I have a high school diploma and am currently enrolled in community college and recently completed coursework in business. Currently, I work as a receptionist at Good Industries. In the past year, I have improved my organizational and planning skills by implementing a new filing system, managing monthly mailings to over 5,000 customers, developed a database of over 5,000 members, and handled regular phone calls and emails. I have received positive feedback from my employer. My strengths include organization and planning, and I am interested in gaining more experience in managing others.

ry Commercial:						

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Follow-Up After the Interview

Following your interview, you need to send a thank you letter, note, or email to the person(s) who interviewed you.

The basics of a **thank you letter or note** are outlined below:

- Say "Thank You" for the interview.
- Express your interest in the job.
- Restate (briefly) your skills and experience.
- Say "Thank You" one more time.
- State the date and time you plan to follow up with the employer.
- Mail or email the letter or note within one to two days of the interview.



You can find an example of a follow-up thank you letter on the next page.

Takeaway #6: Follow-Up Thank You Letter Example

Jamie Applicant

101 Applicant Way Warren, OH 44481 (555) 555-5555 japplicant@gmail.com

May 15, 2020

Jennifer Jones Office Manager XYZ Company 105 Main Street Warren, OH 44481

Dear Ms. Jones:

Thank you for meeting with me this morning to discuss the administrative assistant position. The interview provided me with a better understanding of XYZ Company and what skills are necessary for the job.

My strong computer and communication skills will definitely make a contribution to your company. I have the experience working with all the computer software packages you use, and I feel that my customer service experience will meet your needs.

I enjoyed learning more about XYZ's emphasis on teamwork and customer satisfaction. I would be delighted to join your team and will contact you next week to inquire about the hiring decision.

Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jamie Applicant

Jamie Applicant



Congratulations! You now know how to:

- Write a Résumé
- Write a Cover Letter
- Prepare for an Interview
- Follow-Up After an Interview

Now it is time for you to put together a Career Portfolio. A Career Portfolio is a place to store information about yourself that could come in handy when preparing for or exploring careers.

Where do I store my Career Portfolio?

You can print out copies of items in your Career Portfolio and put them physically in a file folder. You can also store everything online in electronic format if you want to be able to modify items (example: your résumé or cover letters). If you want to store your Career Portfolio online, there are many free websites available. Check with your caseworker or local American Job Center to find out if they can help you!

Career Portfolio Items

- Résumé
- Professional licenses
- Training and certificates of completion
- Military training and citations
- Awards
- References
- Work experience
- Volunteer activities
- Performance reports and appraisals
- Letters of recommendation
- Accomplishments
- Publications, reports, and published articles
- Work samples
- Transcripts
- Diplomas, certificates, CEUs, and licenses

- Test results and grade reports
- Awards and honors
- Internships, apprenticeships, and special projects
- Writing samples
- Workshops, seminars, and conferences attended
- Certificates of specialized training (military, private institute, business)
- Summary of qualifications
- Work interests
- Goals
- Career plan
- Leadership positions held
- Organizations joined
- Other awards





Addressing Barriers to Employment

Now that you know how to write your résumé and cover letter, prepare for an interview, follow-up after an interview, and create a career portfolio, it is important to consider barriers that could prohibit you from gaining and keeping stable employment.

For example, if you are experiencing problems at home, it may be difficult to get to work on time every day. Some resources to help you address the barriers in your life are listed below.

Family Support and Health

Head Start Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC)

The Office of Head Start (OHS) helps young children and their families prepare for success through local programs. Head Start and Early Head Start programs promote children's development through services that support early learning, health, and family well-being. This website offers resources for families related to health, child development, and early childhood education.

Web Address: https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/

2-1-1 Information and Referral Search

Summary: 2-1-1 provides free and confidential information and referrals. You can dial 211 for help with food, housing, employment, health care, counseling, and other crisis situations.

Web Address: www.211.org/

Office of Child Care: Resources for Parents

Summary: This website offers links to child care resources for parents and quardians. Links provide support on finding the right child care for your children (including Head Start), paying for child care, and reporting child abuse and neglect.

Web Address: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/ parents

National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse: Mental Health Support

Summary: As a service of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance, the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse (NRFC) serves as a national repository and distribution center for timely and relevant information and research related to promoting Responsible Fatherhood programs. This page of the Clearinghouse provides resources for fathers or individuals that may need immediate assistant for mental health issues, as well as other relevant resources to help manage mental health crisis situations. If you are suffering from an emergency mental health crisis, please dial 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 or 1-800-799-4889 (TTY).

Web Address: https://www.fatherhood.gov/ content/mental-health



Harvard University: Center on the Developing Child

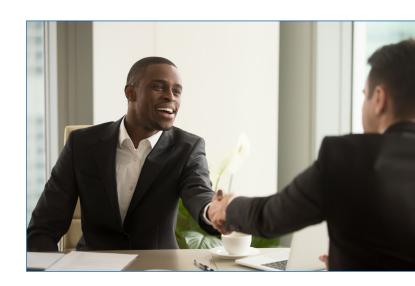
Summary: This website offers an activities guide to enhance and practice executive function skills with children of all ages. You can use the activities to help strengthen your child's learning and development.

Web Address: https://developingchild.harvard.edu/ resources/activities-guide-enhancing-and-practicing-executive-function-skills-with-children-from-infancy-to-adolescence/

National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families

Summary: As a service of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance, the Resource Center supports healthy marriage and relationship education as part of a comprehensive strategy to strengthen families and promote family self-sufficiency. Resources focus on children and families, health, mental health, family safety, economic self-sufficiency, and more.

Web Address: https://www. healthymarriageandfamilies.org/



Domestic Violence Support

The National Domestic Violence Hotline

Summary: Operating around the clock, seven days a week, confidential and free of cost, the National Domestic Violence Hotline provides lifesaving tools and immediate support to enable victims to find safety and live lives free of abuse. Callers to the Hotline can expect highly trained experienced advocates to offer compassionate support, crisis intervention information and referral services in over 170 languages. If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call 911. To find a shelter, counseling or other domestic violence services, please call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE.

Website: www.thehotline.org/

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV)

Summary: The NCADV's work includes coalition building at the local, state, regional and national levels and support for the provision of community-based, non-violent alternatives – such as safe home and shelter programs – for women and their children. For anonymous and confidential help call: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY).

Website: www.ncadv.org/

National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse: Domestic Violence Assistance for Fathers

Summary: This page of the NRFC provides resources for fathers or individuals that may require immediate assistance for domestic violence issues, as well as other relevant resources to help manage crisis situations.

Web Address: https://www.fatherhood.gov/ content/domestic-violence

Menstuff: Domestic Violence – Another Perspective

Summary: Menstuff® has compiled information, books and resources on the issue of domestic violence. Unlike many resources on Domestic Violence, Menstuff® does not exclude information pertaining to women as perpetrators and men as victims. This website specifically provides information written for men who are in an abusive relationship.

Web Address: www.menstuff.org/issues/byissue/domesticviolence.html

National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families: Family Safety

Summary: As a service of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance, the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families (Resource Center) helps agencies develop the capacity to promote healthy relationship skills in a way that meets both their needs and those of the families they serve. This page on the Resource Center website provides links to a range of prevention and intervention protocols into safety-net services to equip individuals with the tools and skills to build and strengthen healthy relationships.

Web Address: <u>www.healthymarriageandfamilies.</u> org/family-safety

Support for Returning to Work after Incarceration

The Federal Bonding Program

Summary: The U.S. Department of Labor established the Federal Bonding Program to provide Fidelity Bonds for "at-risk" hard-to-place job seekers. The bond covers the first six months of employment at no cost to the job applicant or employer. In most states, the bonds are made available through the state agency responsible for workforce matters. This website helps individuals interested in the program navigate through the process, which provides resource information for each of the 50 states.

Web Address: www.bonds4jobs.com



Summary: This website from the Federal Bureau of Prisons provides links to resources for returning citizens, including employment assistance, the Federal Bonding Program Toolkit, and other resources related to education, disability services, and employment information.

Web Address: www.bop.gov/resources/ex_offender_resources.jsp





Financial and Budget Management

In addition to addressing personal barriers to employment, it is also important to learn the basics of financial management. Budgeting skills will help you save the money you earn and achieve or maintain self-sufficiency.

Budget Making

You Can Deal with It

Summary: Budgets are a practical way to get a hold of spending and to make sure that funds are being used in the way that they are intended to be used. Creating a budget requires: 1) identifying how money is spent; 2) evaluating current spending and setting goals that take into account long-term financial objectives; and 3) tracking spending to make sure it stays within those guidelines. Below are some tools for creating budgets, tracking spending, and repaying loans and other debt.

Web Addresses:

- Budget Calculator: www.youcandealwithit.com/ borrowers/calculators-and-resources/calculators/ budget-calculator.shtml
- Debt Repayment Calculator: www.youcandealwithit.com/borrowers/ calculators-and-resources/calculators/debtrepayment-calculator.shtml
- Loan Repayment Calculator: www.youcandealwithit.com/borrowers/ calculators-and-resources/calculators/loanrepayment-calculator.shtml

Financial Education

Money Smart

Summary: Money Smart is a free curriculum from the FDIC designed to help individuals enhance their financial skills and create positive banking relationships. Financial education fosters financial stability for individuals, families, and entire communities. The more people know about credit and banking services, the more likely they are to increase savings, buy homes, and improve their financial health and well-being. You can use the Money Smart Computer-Based Instruction (CBI) to learn more about basic personal financial management.

Web Address: https://www.fdic.gov/consumers/ consumer/moneysmart/

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Understanding What Employers Want

So far in this level, you have looked at your interests, abilities, and wants and needs. You have also addressed potential barriers to employment. Now, let's think about your current or future employer. Do you know what they want?

Do you know what skills employers want?

Do you have the critical skills employers want in their employees?

What are employers looking for?

Employers want employees with:

- Reading, writing, and math skills;
- Professional skills (see box to right);
- Oral and written communication skills: Good grammar, listening, etc.;
- Teamwork and collaboration skills:
- **Critical thinking or problem-solving skills:** Using knowledge, facts, and data to effectively solve workplace problems; and
- Soft skills: Networking with colleagues, and enthusiasm.

Professional Skills include:

- Timeliness
- Honesty
- Politeness
- Appropriate dress for work
- Staying on task
- Not talking or texting on cell phone
- Using computers only for work-related tasks
- Speaking in a respectful manner with supervisors, coworkers, and clients

You have now finished Level 1! Go to the separate Level 2 PDF document!



