

JOB READINESS ACTIVITY · THE JOB APPLICATION PROCESS

The Job Application Process

Contextualized ESOL Support Activity

ACTIVITY

Oral Communication,
Critical Thinking**30-45**
minutes

THE JOB APPLICATION PROCESS

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Objective	Students will understand the typical hiring timeline and process and identify primary ways to find a job.
Durable Skill	Oral Communication, Critical Thinking
When to Use	When students are moving on to the process of identifying and applying for jobs with a goal of securing an interview and then a job offer. Typically, this is when students are nearing the end of training and preparing to job search.
Activity Type	Pairs work, Large group discussion
Time Needed	30-45 minutes

STUDENT MATERIALS

- Handout 1: Typical Timeline: Application to Job

Instructor Preparation**Activity Location**

- Classroom

Material Preparation

- Review the student handouts. Make one copy per student of Handouts 1 and 2.

- This activity helps manage student expectations by level setting around the changes of making it through the application process to an interview and a job offer.
- For background and preparation, the instructor may review the following articles:
 - [The Typical Interview Timeline and What You Can Expect](#)
 - [The Hiring Process: What to Expect at Every Stage](#)
 - [Job Search: 6 Ways to Find Your Next Job](#)
- For background and preparation on the reference to background checks (see step 7 below), see the 'Understanding Background Checks' activity and Understanding Background Checks Handout 2 - Vocabulary Definitions.
 - **Note:** If you intend to include 'Understanding Background Checks' as a separate class activity, in this activity, you can keep reference to background checks much more high-level and note that you will be going over background checks in more detail later, including related vocabulary definitions.

ACTIVITY DIRECTIONS

1. Tell students that as they are nearing the end of the training, the next step is to prepare for the job search.
2. Ask students to brainstorm the stages in the job search process. Record their answers on a whiteboard. Then write the seven stages on the board in order and note the ones identified by the students:
 1. Prepare your resume/cover letter
 2. Create a list of at least three references
 3. Start your search
 4. Submit applications
 5. Interview
 6. Reference and background checks
 7. Negotiate the job offer
3. Ask students who have applied for jobs previously to share their experience using these guiding questions:
 - How did you apply? (Walked-in, (e)mailed resume, applied online, etc.)
 - When did you (or did you) hear back from the employer after submitting an application?
 - How did they contact you?
 - What was the next step in the process?
 - If you secured an interview, how long after applying did it occur?
 - When did you hear back about the interview?
 - Note any variation/similarities in their experiences and the timelines.
4. Distribute and review Handout 1: Typical Timeline: Application to Job.
5. Explain the timeline using these talking points:

- While the interview process varies for each employer, there are some standard steps that most follow with potential employees.
 - These steps during this period are known as the interview timeline.
 - If you are new to the hiring process, knowing what to expect can make things much easier when you apply for jobs.
 - What is a typical interview timeline?
 - A typical interview timeline is the average time it takes from submitting an application to getting hired for a job.
 - Whenever you apply for a job, you usually need to go through several steps before you are hired and each of these takes time.
 - However, it is important to remember that every job is different. Some companies may spend a few weeks on one phase, while others spend only a few days.
 - At the same time, some employers may skip certain steps entirely.
 - Ask students if they have any questions.
6. Next tell students that some things may impact the speed of the interview timeline. Ask them to brainstorm what they think might impact this. Record on the whiteboard. Then circle anything that is listed below:
- A background check (Instructor Note: There is a separate activity on background checks that can be used as needed.)
 - Number of applications
 - Number of hiring managers involved
 - Your current employment situation
 - Add any of the bullet points not brainstormed by the students.
7. Explain that a background check is:
- The collection and inspection of public and private records by individuals or organizations.
 - Background checks are a standard part of the hiring process for many employers.
 - An employment background check can include review of:
 - Criminal records (state, county, and city)
 - Credit history
 - Employment history
 - Work authorization
 - Education history (high school, university, training programs, etc.)
 - Social media profiles
 - Driving record
 - Medical records (restrictions apply)
8. Complete the conversation on background checks by noting that there are many types of background checks available, and states and cities may have different laws regarding background checks. Employers may select different reports depending on their needs, the nature of the job you are applying for and where it is located.
9. Divide students into pairs telling them they will participate in a pairs' reflection activity. Record these questions on a whiteboard for students to discuss:
- What was new or most surprising to you?
 - What step in this process might be easiest/challenging for you?
 - What might best help you stay motivated during this nine-week timeline from application to job?

Note: Consider adding sentence starters on the board next to the questions to help students with this activity. For example:

“The most surprising thing was...”

“The easiest step for me would be...”

“I may need help with...”

10. As a final discussion prompt, ask student pairs to briefly share a successful job search experience, whether their own or someone else's, and identify the actions or behaviors that contributed to that success.
11. Next, ask pairs to share the highlights from their discussion.
12. Explain that in addition to understanding the job search timeline, it is also important to know the best ways to find a job so they can use their time wisely.
13. Quickly brainstorm and record on the whiteboard ways to find a job. Ask students to share about their experiences:
 - What worked? What did not?
 - What would they do differently the next time?
 - How easy/challenging was it to use any of the methods?
14. On the whiteboard, record a list of the best ways to find a job:
 1. Ask your network for job referrals
 2. Contact companies directly
 3. Use job search platforms
 4. Go to job fairs
 5. Leverage social media, and join sites such as LinkedIn
15. Explain that while there are many ways to find a job, these ways are the most likely to lead to success. If needed, explain that networking is about building relationships and connecting with others: people you know, people you do not really know, and new people you have never met before.
16. Wrap-up by saying that it often takes applying for many jobs to find one that is a good match. In professional baseball, a player with three hits for every ten times at bat is considered an excellent batter. Strikes do not mean they are out of the game, but they are actively in the game pursuing their goal.

POST-ACTIVITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Have students watch one of the videos in the link below with a partner. Ask them to record their questions about the video and bring them to class for a discussion with the instructor.

- [The Hiring Process: What to Expect at Every Stage](#)
 - This link includes several videos.

Adapted from Chicago Jobs Council, Career Readiness Curriculum, 2023

ESOL Strategy Note

Before brainstorming the seven stages of the job search process in step 2, write key terms like “references,” “background check,” “referral,” “networking” and “negotiate” on the board with brief definitions — this gives multilingual learners a shared vocabulary to draw on before they are asked to recall or discuss the stages aloud.

During the pairs' reflection activity, encourage students to jot down a few words in response to each guided question before discussing with their partner, so they have language ready to go and can focus on the conversation rather than searching for words in the moment.