

SchoolFinder.com

How to Find Your First Job

Consider Your **Goals**

Before you start scouring help wanted ads, take some time to **consider your goals**. Here are a few questions to mull over — you'll think of others.

- What do you want to accomplish **right now**?
- Where are you heading **in the future**?
- What sort of job or internship would help you **reach your goals**?



Depending on your goals, you may consider pursuing an **internship**: a temporary position where your goal is to learn the ropes. You may have to reach out to companies directly if they don't have a formal program in place. Ask to **shadow** someone whose work might appeal to you.

Try your best to apply for jobs that fit your **aspirations and interests**.

Choose Your **Tools**

Consider the tools you'll use. Will you check out **job boards** directly? Intermediaries like **Indeed.ca**? Speak with your **guidance counsellor**? There are more and more **Company Profiles** on [SchoolFinder.com](https://www.schoolfinder.com), too — these are organizations looking to hire students.

Letting people in your life know you're job hunting can be helpful, too. Many jobs are never publicly advertised at all: roles are filled by **networking**. Make it known you're searching, and someone you know may have just the right opportunity.

Prepare Your Documents

Research

First, you need to **learn as much as possible** about the companies you're interested in. Recruiters and **hiring managers want candidates to be informed**. The more you know about the organization — its **goals, values and culture** — as well as the role itself, including expectations and responsibilities, the better off you'll be.

Check out official **Twitter pages**, news **websites**, and sites like **Glassdoor** to learn more about the company you want to work for. When the time comes for your interview, you'll be well equipped to **ask good, relevant questions**.

Your Resumé

We often think of having "a" resumé, but this idea is outdated. Today, successful job seekers need a resumé for each job they apply for! That is, you need a **"base" resumé that you customize for each position** you're after.

When tailoring, start first with the **job description** itself. It's chock-full of valuable keywords you're gonna want to steal. Remember, **most resumé aren't read by a human**, they're read by a computer as part of an **"applicant tracking system."** This means a robot scans your resumé for **relevant keywords** that match the job description. If a human does read your resumé, you have, on average, **six seconds of their attention**, so you'd best hit the mark.



Your Cover Letter

Your cover letter is like your resumé: it should be **clear, concise, and tailored to the particular position** you're seeking. It should be consistent with your resumé in tone and content, but you should also **share your personality**. Tell your story, and **connect it to the role** you want to win.

Generally, companies hire based on two broad principles:

- **Experience** and competence in the job itself
- **“Fit”** with the company's culture and values

Without experience, you may have to rely a little more on "fit," so make it count. Share who you are in your cover letter, but more importantly, **make clear what you bring to the table**. You've done a bunch of research, so prove it: show why you're a great fit for this particular job, and **back it up with evidence**.



Get Organized

Scheduling

You've already got your **school agenda** — unless it's buried in your locker — so put it to use. Finding a job means you have to **put in the time**, consistently and regularly. Give yourself a **couple hours each week** to search for jobs, tailor your resumé and cover letter, and follow up with employers. These tasks can be exhausting, but **stick to it!**

Tracking

If you're really serious, you can create a **job tracker**, which is a simple spreadsheet to help you stay on top of each application. **Consider these data points** to keep an eye on:

- Company name
- Contact details of recruiter or hiring manager
- Date you applied
- Deadlines and interviews
- Date you followed up
- The job's current status, and notes about how things went



Get Interviewed

Typically, interviewers already know about your skills, experiences, and qualifications — they've read your resumé, after all. The interview is more about that most ephemeral quality: "fit." So **let your personality shine through!**



You can demonstrate "fit" through your **bearing, presentation, and preparation**. Be ready not only for the classics (like "what's your greatest weakness?") but **curveball questions** as well. Interviewers want to see you **think on your feet**, but preparation is the key to success.

You should **have some questions of your own**, too. Inevitably, at the end of your interview, you'll be asked if you have any. Don't be caught flat-footed! Have around three solid, substantive questions about **the role, the company, even your interviewer's experiences**. You should have plenty of material to draw upon thanks to your research. Being tuned in like this **shows you're serious**.

Remember to send a **respectful follow-up email** about a week after your interview, thanking the interviewers for their time. You can end with something like, "I look forward to discussing this opportunity further," to show you're still interested.

Still not sure of next steps? Check out the [SchoolFinder.com Career Quiz](https://www.schoolfinder.com/career-quiz) for a fun way to get **matched directly with a field that fits you** — and **find the schools and programs** you need to get there.

Good luck!

