



Job Applications: Fill In the Blanks

Tips on completing written employment application forms.

Apply yourself

Often a first step, employment applications provide organizations with information essential to assessing your candidacy. They include basic requests for your name and contact information, as well as more detailed questions regarding your education and work experience. For an employer, application forms simplify and standardize the screening process. For a job seeker, they test your ability to follow directions and to present yourself as interview-worthy.

Get the 411

The hardest part about completing a written employment application is compiling all the information requested. Forms can vary in length and details required. To save time, minimize stress, and facilitate the process, organize all your information *before* you begin the application.

Start by gathering your employment and education history. For each job you've held, have company name, address, phone number, supervisor/email, pay, and years worked. For your academic history, collect school address, school phone, and dates that you attended each institution. Make sure your contact information, such as address, phone number, and email are up-to-date and working so that the employer can reach you. Have your driver's license ready to refer to, if required.

Professional references

Job applications may ask for up to three references. These can be former managers, teachers, school officials, colleagues, and other non-family members who can attest to your character and skills. Have each reference's contact information: name; phone number; and email, as well as their permission to be contacted, *before* you list their name.

Résumés

In most cases, an application does not replace a résumé. Be prepared to submit your résumé along with your completed application. Even if the company doesn't require a résumé, offering one can make you appear more professional.

Do looks matter?

Yes, presentation counts! Your handwriting should be neat and legible. Use one ink color: black pen is best; don't use pencil. If you can, take two or three copies of the printed application; you'll have backups in case you make an error. Read the *entire* application *before* you begin. Pay attention to any specific instructions; they can be a test to see how well you follow directions. Proofread your entire application. If possible, ask someone else to review it for spelling errors. Submit only a neat, clean, unwrinkled, 100% completed form. Also, dress professionally when you turn in your application; the company will be judging your candidacy based upon everything you say and do.

Fill in the blanks

Complete every field. Keep responses clear and precise. Details should match those on your résumé. If you don't know the answer to a question, do your best to find one. Don't write "see résumé," even if it's attached. If something doesn't apply, enter "N/A" or "Not Applicable." For desired salary, consider writing "Open" instead of giving an actual figure. It's also best to enter only relevant work experience. Plus, answer honestly! Companies will check the details of your application and may not consider you, let alone offer you the position, if details are inaccurate. To reduce exposure to identity theft, ask if you can provide your Social Security Number at a later stage. Including SSNs is open to debate. Depending on the company, leaving the SSN field blank *may* result in your job application not being considered.

Ultimately, the purpose of a written application is to get you an interview. So don't cut corners or give negative responses. Instead, be diligent about completing your application professionally and accurately. And make sure to follow up appropriately.



i n a nutshell:

Filling out an application correctly can be the first step to getting a job:

- **Gather all employment, education, and reference information beforehand**
- **Read the entire application carefully before you begin**
- **Make sure your application details match up with those on your résumé**
- **Fill all fields; be honest, clear, and accurate; use black ink**
- **Submit a neat, unsoiled, fully completed form**
- **Follow up appropriately**

Your application is key to getting an interview. So make it as attractive and compelling as possible.