

How to Get a Job As a Teen

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- Pick work that lines up with what you like to do. ■ Get a work permit if necessary.
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- Look into the company to prepare for the interview. ■ Show up for the interview 15 minutes early.
- Listen and respond to the interviewer's questions. ■ Send a "thank you" note after the interview.
- Call after the interview if you don't hear back. ■ Offer your services to people directly.
- Help with Interviews, Resumes, and Letters of Recommendation ■ Questions & Answers
- Tips and Warnings ■ References

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Ah, your first job. With it comes some responsibility, sure, but that paycheck gives you money to buy things you want or go out with your friends. If you're ready to join the workforce, we've gathered some tips on how to look for and land the job you want—no experience required. Not ready to work for someone else? You can also start your own business and make money doing something that you love.

Method 1 of 14: Search online for job openings.

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1 Use online job postings to find out what's available in your area. Websites, such as Indeed, pull a lot of job listings for different companies and post them in one place. This allows you to run a search based on your interests and get multiple results. Many sites also allow you to create profiles and upload your résumé, which makes the application process quicker and easier.^[1]

- For example, if you want to work in a movie theater, you could search for movie theater jobs within a certain distance of your address and the website would bring up the listings for all the movie theaters in that area that were hiring.
- Some employers also post job openings on social media. LinkedIn, in particular, is helpful for job searches. Create a free profile and start looking for jobs that match your skills and interests. You can also connect your profile with adults you know who also have accounts.
- Your school also might have job listings available. If they do, look through those first—those are employers that are actively looking for teens who go to your school.

Method 2 of 14: Pick work that lines up with what you like to do.



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1 **Knowing what activities you enjoy helps you focus your job search.** Even though you might be thinking you'd take any job, you don't want to do something that you're going to hate. Making a list of your skills and things you enjoy can help you decide where you want to apply. Here are some examples to get you started:^[2]

- **Like spending time outdoors?** Look for work with landscaping or lawn care companies, plant nurseries, animal shelters, or construction companies.
- **Want to be active?** Focus on jobs at car washes, child care companies, moving companies, or residential/commercial cleaning companies.
- **Enjoy helping people?** Try working at a restaurant or café, retail store, movie theater, or amusement park. Don't forget you often get an employee discount at retail stores! For example, if you enjoy playing video games, you might try to get a job at a video game store.

Method 3 of 14: Get a work permit if necessary.



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1 **Some cities and states require work permits for minors.** You're more likely to need a permit if you're under the age of 16, but some places require them for anyone under 18. The permit is typically issued by your local labor department, but your school can tell you what you need to do. Sometimes, you need to find a job before you can get your permit.^[3]

- Some labor departments need a letter from your school before they'll issue a work permit. The letter just certifies that you're enrolled at the school and not failing any of your classes.
- If you're supposed to get a permit after you get a job, that permit is typically only valid for that employer. That means you'll need a new permit if you switch to a different job before you turn 18.

Method 4 of 14: Ask adults for references.



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1 **Talk to people who have knowledge of your work ethic.** Teachers, coaches, and other group leaders all make excellent references. When you ask if they're willing to let you list them as a reference, be prepared to talk about the types of jobs you're looking for and the work you want to do.^[4]

- Adults you've worked for (even for no pay!) are often the best references. For example, if you babysat or mowed your neighbor's lawn, ask them for a reference.

Method 5 of 14:
Network with adults to find job possibilities.

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1 Tell everyone you're looking for a job and ask if they know of anything. Did you know that a lot of places never even post when they have job openings? These employers don't care to sift through hundreds of cold applications—they'd rather wait until one of their employees or friends recommends someone. Even at places that do advertise openings, being referred by someone who knows you can give you an advantage over other applicants.^[5]

- If someone does have a possibility for you, make sure you mention their name when you ask about a job. For example, you might introduce yourself to the employer, then say, "John Schmidt goes to my family's church. When I mentioned I was looking for work, he said you might be looking for someone like me. Can I fill out an application?"

**Method 6 of 14:
Create a basic résumé.**2
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1 **Include information about your education and work experience.** The word processing app on your computer has basic templates you can use to get your **résumé** formatting right. From there, just enter information about your school, your GPA, and any jobs you've had (whether paid or volunteer work).^[6]

- Since, as a teen, you likely don't have a lot of work experience, include information about extra-curricular activities as well. For example, if you play on your school's soccer team, list that on your résumé. It shows employers you have discipline and work well with a team.
- Many entry-level jobs won't ask for a résumé. Instead, they'll have a pre-printed application for you to fill out. Regardless, having a basic résumé means you have all the information in one place so you don't have to hunt around for it every time you fill out an application.

Method 7 of 14: Fill out applications for jobs you're interested in.

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1 Apply for at least 3-4 different jobs to improve your chances. If you only submit one application at a time, it'll likely take you a while to find a job. Submit applications to several different places, understanding that some places won't even respond or schedule an interview.^[7]

- Don't be afraid to apply to multiple locations of the same employer—each location has its own manager and staffing needs. For example, if you want to work at McDonald's, you might apply at 2 different McDonald's restaurants within 10 miles of your home.
- If you submit your application online, call the location and ask to speak to the hiring manager. Introduce yourself and let them know that you've submitted an application online. Then, say you just wanted to find out what their process is for reviewing applications.

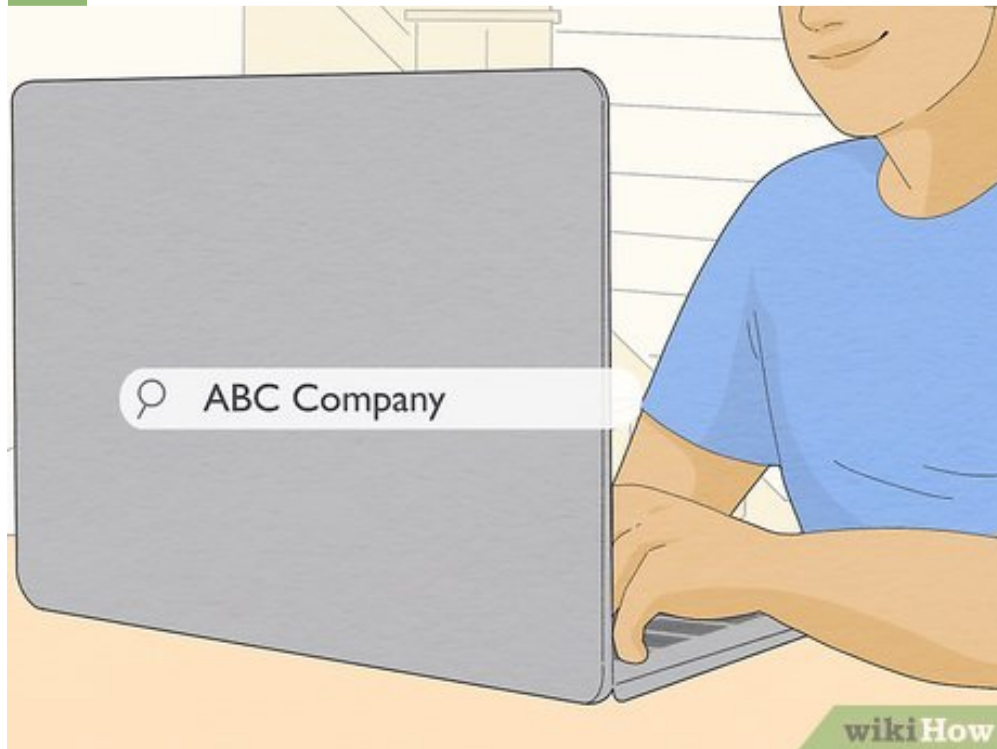
Method 8 of 14: Check up on your application.

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1 **Call the business 5-7 days after you submit your application.** If you haven't heard back from the business after you submit your application, wait a few days—hiring managers are busy people! Then, give a quick call just to check in and find out the status of your application.^[8]

- When you call, ask to speak to the hiring manager. Introduce yourself, then say something like: "I submitted an application last week, and I was just wondering if you've had a chance to look at it yet." If they haven't, tell them you'll follow up in a few days.
- Keep a spreadsheet with a column for the name and phone number of each place you apply. In a second column, put the date you submitted your application. Add the date to follow up in a third column. Then, you can set yourself reminders so you don't forget to follow up.

Method 9 of 14: Look into the company to prepare for the interview.

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1 Research the company ahead of time and jot down some questions. It's always a good idea to know a little bit about the company before you go to your interview. The interviewer will likely ask why you want to work there, so your research gives you some ideas for how to answer that question. You also want to have a few questions in mind to ask. Here are some to get you started:^[9]

- What kind of person are you looking for?
- Why do you enjoy working for this company?
- What would I do on a typical shift?
- What kind of people would I be working with?
- Do a lot of teenagers work here?

Method 10 of 14:
Show up for the interview 15 minutes early.



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1 Dress to impress and bring a copy of your résumé with you. Make sure the clothes you're wearing are neat, clean, and fit you well. You don't necessarily have to wear a business suit, but it's a good idea to dress as you would for a religious event or school ceremony.^[10]

- If you know how the employees dress, you could also try to dress like that to show that you're ready for the position. For example, if the employees all wear khaki pants and a blue polo shirt, you might wear khaki pants and a blue polo shirt to the interview. You'll look like you already work there!
- If you're interviewing at a clothing store, it's always a good idea to wear clothes that you bought at that store. If you don't have anything suitable from that store, you can't go wrong with classic style—just avoid wearing clothes that obviously came from a competing store.

Method 11 of 14:
Listen and respond to the interviewer's questions.



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1 Make eye contact and pause before answering. The pause gives you a second to collect your thoughts. Answer each question as completely and honestly as you can. For many questions the interviewer asks, there aren't really any "wrong" answers—the interviewer just wants to learn a little bit more about you.^[11]

Method 12 of 14:
Send a "thank you" note after the interview.



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1 **Shoot the interviewer a quick email the same day as the interview.** You can also handwrite a card and stick it in the mail—but only if your handwriting is neat and legible. Write something like: "Thank you so much for taking time out of your day to sit and talk to me. I really appreciated learning more about your business. I'm excited to hear back from you and take the next step!"^[12]

- Your "thank you" note shows the interviewer that you appreciate their time and puts your name back in front of them again. They'll be more likely to remember you when they make a decision on who to hire to fill the position.

Method 13 of 14:

Call after the interview if you don't hear back.



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1 Give the hiring manager about a week unless they told you differently. Follow the timeline they gave you in the interview. If your interview is on Monday and they say they'll let you know by the end of the week, give them a call on Friday afternoon. When you call, mention your name and the date of your interview, then ask if they've made a decision.^[13]

- Ask to speak directly to the person who interviewed you. When you talk to them, say hello and tell them your name. Then you might say, "we spoke on Monday about me working for you as a cashier. Just calling to see if you've made a decision on that position yet."
- If the interviewer doesn't give you any kind of timeline, wait about 3 days before you call back.

Method 14 of 14: Offer your services to people directly.

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1 Use your skills to make money on your own. Some areas just don't have a lot of job opportunities for teens, but it's also possible you'd rather "be your own boss." Traditionally, teens have earned money doing things like babysitting or mowing lawns, but you don't have to limit yourself to that. Anything you can do well you can probably get paid to do for others.^[14]

- Do you know your way around social media? You might start a business to set up and manage social media accounts for individuals and small businesses. Good at organizing? You might start a business cleaning out garages and closets. The possibilities are virtually endless.
- Keep in mind that there's a lot of work that goes into this. You'll need to figure out what you want to charge people and make plans for marketing your services (social media works well).



Expert Q&A

Question

What is a cover letter for?



Amber Rosenberg,
PCC
Career Coach
Expert Answer

The cover letter should be addressed to the hiring manager or owner. It's where you make your case for why you would be a good fit for the company. The goal is to help you land an interview, and you should use the cover letter to explain anything that may not be obvious just from looking at your resume. For example, as a teenager your resume may be kind of short. You could use the cover letter to explain that you don't have a lot of work experience because you're young.

Helpful 2 Not Helpful 1

Question

I am 16 and still don't have a job. I've applied many times but haven't heard back. What do I do?



wikiHow Staff Editor
Staff Answer

Keep trying! If you apply and don't hear back, call the company and let them know you submitted an application. You could also stop by in person to follow up. Simply submitting an application usually isn't enough to get the job—you usually have to contact the company, sometimes several times, to show that you're interested.

Helpful ☒ 1 Not Helpful ☐ 0

Question

How do you get a job with a disability?



wikiHow Staff Editor
Staff Answer

At least in the US, there are laws that prohibit employers from discriminating against people on the basis of disability and require them to provide reasonable accommodations for you. Submit applications at places you want to work and follow up on them. At your interview, be upfront about your disability and tell the interviewer what accommodations you would need.

Helpful ☐ 0 Not Helpful ☐ 0

Question

Is 12 years old too young to volunteer at the SFSPCA?



wikiHow Staff Editor
Staff Answer

Yes, according to the SFSPCA website, you have to be at least 18 years old to volunteer with the organization. However, you can always call someone and find out what you can do to help at your age.

Helpful ☐ 0 Not Helpful ☐ 0

Question

How can I get a job at a pet store as a 13-year-old without any experience?



wikiHow Staff Editor
Staff Answer

Most pet stores require employees to be over 18 because they work with animals. A smaller pet store might hire you as a cashier or stocker. However, at least in the US, you usually have to be 15 or 16 before you can have a part-time job.

Helpful ☐ 0 Not Helpful ☐ 0

Question

Can you work at 14 years old in Lithuania?



wikiHow Staff Editor
Staff Answer

Yes, you can start working at 14 as long as you have your parents' permission. Once you reach 16, you don't need your parents' permission to work.

Helpful ☐ 0 Not Helpful ☐ 0

Question

I am a 15-year-old with no job or volunteer experience, what do I put on my resume?



wikiHow Staff Editor
Staff Answer

Any activities you've done work well on your résumé, especially if you had some kind of leadership role. If you have nothing, don't worry too much about it, though—everybody starts somewhere! Include your education on your résumé and be upfront with any potential employers about the fact that you don't have any work or volunteer experience but that you're excited to get started.

Helpful 0 Not Helpful 0

Question

What job can a 17 year old in Portugal get?



Community Answer

In Portugal you can legally start working as early as 16 years old. Cafés or stores are good places to start, and asking around to see if any family members or friends know of any job openings can help too.

Helpful 19 Not Helpful 1

Question

There are no jobs in my neighborhood. What else can I do?



Community Answer

Take the initiative to contact local businesses with your resume (even if you don't have any job experience, it will have your contact information; you can use it to highlight your skills and talents, as well as any extracurricular or civic activities or clubs). Stop into local businesses and ask to speak with the manager, introduce yourself, ask if there are any positions open cleaning or doing other sorts of tasks (depending on the type of business). Even if there are no positions available, your determination will make an impression, and could lead to a job from one of the manager's contacts.

Helpful 21 Not Helpful 2

Question

In my country, teens don't get jobs in babysitting or dog walking. What should I do?



Community Answer

Call different stores in your city/town and ask if they're hiring and if they would hire someone your age. You could also offer to do chores for neighbors for cash: water plants, rake lawns, whatever they need.

Helpful 47 Not Helpful 8

[See more answers](#)



Tips

- Many areas have restrictions on the number of hours minors can work per week and per day and require periodic breaks. Check these laws *before* you start working so

that you know them—you can't always count on your employer to know and follow them.^[15]

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★★★★★
2 votes - 100%

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