

# How to Get a Job when You're Only 16

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Many teenagers want to get jobs, whether it is to help their family out or simply have their own spending money, but knowing how to get a job isn't always easy. Plus there is the added difficulty of having no higher education and likely no prior experience which seems to make it impossible to get a job. However, 16 years old still have some good options and can find creative ways to get first jobs, even without experience. You can do this by knowing about age restrictions, having a resume, using connections you have, making a job for yourself, pursuing online opportunities, and preparing to do well in an interview.

## Method 1

### Method 1 of 2: Looking At Your Options



**1 Pay attention to age regulations.** Before you start looking for work, you need to make sure you are eligible to work. There are some federal and state regulations that say you must be a certain age to work, and others that restrict teens from certain types of jobs. Find out any rules in your state that would keep you from working. You may need to talk to your school to see if you need paperwork from them, as well.<sup>[1]</sup>

- Individual companies may also have restrictions about age, so you want to pay attention to those requirements as you are searching and looking at applications. You don't want to spend the time it takes to file an application if they only hire people who are 18 years or older.



**2 Use your connections.** <sup>[2]</sup> One of the most important, and often hardest, aspects of getting a job is learning to ask for it. Talk to everyone you know and tell them you are job searching. Ask them if they know of any good opportunities at the moment. It is great to ask adults like your parents, aunts and uncles, teachers, guidance counselors, and church leaders. These connections can be especially helpful in getting informal jobs like babysitting and lawn care.<sup>[3]</sup>

- There is also always the possibility that you know people who work in places that would hire teenagers for assistant type work, filing, or cleaning positions.
- Once you have made the initial ask, and especially if the person tells you they will check into something, make sure to follow up with them later on to see if they found out anything.



**3 Make a job for yourself.** A great option for teens is to go the more entrepreneurial route, rather than seeking jobs within a company structure. Going the self-employment route gives you greater flexibility in regards to how often and how many hours you work. When you are using your connections, pointing out your interest in self-employment is always a good plan.<sup>[4]</sup>

- The types of jobs you have available in this area include babysitting (which people always need), lawn care (such as mowing, gardening, or even simple landscaping), dog walking, or car washing. You could even offer pickup and delivery services (if you can legally drive) for things like groceries, dry cleaning, or other goods.
- People have all kinds of things that they need done, and as a teen, you may be able to offer them lower prices than if they hired an adult. Don't limit your thinking about what opportunities might be available.



**4 Don't be afraid to volunteer.** Volunteering for a while can be a great way to start building relevant work skills that make you more marketable. If you have the time to put into volunteering somewhere on a consistent and long-term basis, you may be able to build enough rapport with them that you can move into a paid position.<sup>[5]</sup>

- If the business or organization you are volunteering with starts looking to hire, you will be a better candidate than many others because you already know their environment and goals well.





**5 Pursue online opportunities.** In today's marketplace, online and telecommute jobs are plentiful, and many are viable options for teens. If you have a skill for writing, there are many online platforms that allow you to do freelance work. As long as you can perform the writing well, your age would not restrict you. If you have any website design or other graphic design experience, this can be another good option.<sup>[6]</sup>

- In many cases, you will still need to meet specific qualification standards. Some freelance jobs will require you to have a degree, some experience, or be of adult age. When looking at potential opportunities, be careful to look for these requirements.
- Consider learning to buy and sell things online, such as comics, antiques, or other merchandise. You may need your parents to help set up an account for something like eBay if there is a restriction, but then you would be able to do the work of selling.
- Online working options could be great when you are still in school, because they rarely require you to work specific scheduled hours. You would have the freedom to work around your schedule, and do extra work anytime you have days off from school.



**6 Be open to what is available.** Although jobs may be limited by your age, many great opportunities still exist. Many restaurants, retail stores, or agricultural and labor jobs allow younger employees. Don't say no to these types of jobs, even if they would not be your favorite choice. At 16, this probably won't be your lifelong job, so be willing to do something that you may not love for a while to earn a little money and gain work experience.

## Method 2 of 2: Making Yourself Look Good



**1 Prepare your paperwork.** To get hired by most businesses or organizations, you will need a few pieces of paperwork and identification. The first thing you may need is a driver's license, but you may be able to substitute another form of photo ID like a passport if you don't yet have a driver's license. Know your social security number, and possibly have the social security card itself for when you fill out applications and tax documents. Lastly, it is possible you'll need a specific work permit of some kind, possibly signed by your parents, to show that you are legally allowed to work.<sup>[7]</sup>

- It is in your best interest to gather all of these before officially filling out applications or tax papers so you'll have them ready if you do need them.



**2 Write up a resume.** It may not be entirely necessary to have a resume for many of the jobs you'll be looking for, but there is still a benefit to doing it. You may not even have any work experience to speak of, but you can craft a resume that highlights what you do have to offer. It can be worthwhile to list academic accomplishments which show that you are a hard worker. But a resume can help you highlight some soft skills like how energetic you are, show you are reliable, and let you talk yourself up, in general.<sup>[8]</sup>

- If you have volunteer experience, you can list that and explain what ways it has helped you become a better worker. Maybe you were a top seller in a recent fundraiser, which shows you have sales capability. Maybe you won top prize in a science fair, which shows you know how to work with complex mechanisms.
- A resume is all about making you look like the best candidate, so craft it to fit the jobs you are looking at.<sup>[9]</sup> Find ways to prove that you have the skills the hiring personnel are looking for.
- The other benefit of a resume when you're only 16 is that many other people your age will not have written a resume, so it gives you a bit of an edge over them.





**3 Prepare for your interview.** Even many adults struggle with the interviewing process, so it is always good to think about it and practice ahead of time.<sup>[10]</sup> Ask your parents or other adults what types of questions they were asked. If you know other teenagers who work at places you are applying, ask them what type of interview they went through. Compile a list of some basic questions that you are likely to be asked and have some good answers ready for those questions.

- Sample questions might be: What can you offer this company? What makes you qualified for this job? What experience do you have that makes you a good candidate for the job?
- It is also helpful to just keep a positive attitude going into an interview. Tell yourself that you are ready and that you are a great choice for the job. It's hard to convince someone else if you aren't convinced yet.



**4 Take a training course.** Something that will make you a better job candidate is having something extra to offer, outside of job specific skills. Going through a training course for CPR, getting certification for basic first aid, or attending a customer service seminar will give you an edge over other young applicants.

- For babysitting, CPR and first aid would be a great help. Parents will likely feel more at ease knowing you have some training for emergency situations. These would also both be great for jobs like being a lifeguard at the community pool.



## Expert Q&A

### Question

**Should I use my school email or personal email to contact employers?**



**Melody Godfred,**  
**JD**  
Career Coach  
Expert Answer

I recommend using your personal email address. In most cases, that's the primary email address that you're checking and using all the time. Also, over time you will maintain control of it, unlike a school email address. You should also make sure that your email handle is something professional.

Helpful 3 Not Helpful 0

### Question

**Is it possible to get a job at 16 years old, even if I have no previous work experience?**



Community Answer

Yes. Everybody starts with no job experience, and places willing to hire teens understand that this will likely be their first job. You'll have to manage your expectations, however; entry-level jobs aren't glamorous.

Helpful 57 Not Helpful 0

Question

**Do some restaurants hire 16-year-olds?**



Community Answer

Some do, yes. Call them them up and ask if they are hiring any positions for minors (dishwasher, busboy, etc.).

Helpful 56 Not Helpful 5

Question

**Do I need a cellphone to get a job at age 16 in Florida?**



Community Answer

No, you do not need to have a cellphone to get a job.

Helpful 34 Not Helpful 6

Question

**What is a good job search website for teens to use?**



Community Answer

Snagajob.com is a very good website to find jobs for young people.

Helpful 63 Not Helpful 18

Question

**Where can a 15 year old find employment?**



Community Answer

Many states require workers to be at least 16. Younger people who want to work can often babysit, house-sit or walk dogs for extra cash.

Helpful 32 Not Helpful 15

Question

**Could I use a learner's permit as identification?**



Community Answer

No. Most learner's permits are not valid ID for this use.

Helpful 19 Not Helpful 2

Question

**Can an international high school teenager apply for a job?**



Community Answer

Most international students are on an F1 visa, and there is some allowance for work. Your best option to talk to someone at your school who is in charge of international students, or talk with someone at the place where your visa was issued to ask about work regulations.

Helpful 17 Not Helpful 5

### Question

#### Do you need a resume when starting out to apply for jobs?



Community Answer

Yes, presenting a resume is always a good idea. It shows the employer that you are serious about the job and that you can present yourself in an organized, professional manner.

Helpful 26 Not Helpful 13

### Question

#### Do you need a state-issued ID to work?



Community Answer

Yes, and you can get one at your local Department of Motor Vehicles.

Helpful 25 Not Helpful 14



### Tips

- Don't limit yourself to the types of jobs you think teenagers can get. If you are really interest in finance or business and you would enjoy working at a bank, go to some banks and find out if there are any options available for you. The only bad thing that can happen is someone tells you they can't hire you, but you may be able to get something you wouldn't expect.



### Warnings

- If you are looking for summer employment, with the plan of quitting when school starts back up, you may not want to mention this to the employer. If they advertise the job as summer employment, then you don't have to worry about it. Otherwise, best to just take the job if it is offered and then let them know at the end of summer that you are starting school again.

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## About This Article



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Career Coach

This article was co-authored by **Melody Godfred, JD**. Melody Godfred is a Career Coach, Entrepreneur, and Founder of Write In Color, a full-service resume and career development company that specializes in developing compelling personal narratives and brands. With over ten years of experience, Melody has worked with clients at entertainment and media companies including Apple, Disney, Fox, Netflix, Riot Games, Viacom, and Warner Bros, among others. The Muse invited Melody and Write In Color to serve as one of its 30 trusted career counselors (out of 3,000) to provide one-on-one coaching and resume services to the platform's more than four million active users. Melody earned a JD from Loyola Marymount University and BS from the University of Southern California. This article has been viewed 332,170 times.

★★★★☆  
12 votes - 85%

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