

2

Selection

STARTER

Work with a partner. Decide whether you agree or disagree with these statements about job applications and interviews.

	Agree	Disagree
1 A curriculum vitae should be no longer than two A4 pages.	☐	☐
2 It is good practice to include a photograph on a curriculum vitae.	☐	☐
3 It is not necessary for applicants to put their date of birth on their application.	☐	☐
4 References which candidates supply with their applications could be false so you shouldn't always believe them.	☐	☐
5 You should enclose copies of certificates and exam results with a job application.	☐	☐
6 It is a good idea to supply applicants with a job description and person specification <i>before</i> the interview.	☐	☐
7 Applicants should never wear jeans to an interview.	☐	☐
8 At an interview it is appropriate to ask female applicants about their plans for starting a family.	☐	☐

Did You Know?

A *curriculum vitae* or CV in the U.K. is called a *résumé* in the U.S..

A *reference* is a letter written by someone who knows the applicant (usually the current or a former employer) and can give information about the applicant's abilities. The person who supplies a reference is called a *referee* (U.K.).

- Look at the online job advertisement for Virgin Atlantic on page 15. Is it similar to a job advert from your company? If so, how? What do you think would attract applicants to apply for this job?**
- Match these phrases from the Virgin Atlantic advert (1–8) to the definitions on the right (a–h).**

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 to create rapport | a to have the right to extra advantages on top of salary |
| 2 to understand their needs | b to get extra money for working 'unsociable' hours |
| 3 to provide advice | c to suggest the best way to do something |
| 4 to promote a range of services | d to visit a company to discuss a job |
| 5 to attend an interview | e to develop a good relationship |
| 6 to be notified of the outcome | f to be told the results of a decision |
| 7 to receive a shift allowance | g to attract people's attention to what you offer |
| 8 to be entitled to a benefits package | h to know what they want |

Travel Adviser – The Office, Crawley



The Image

At Virgin Atlantic we're renowned for our high standards of customer service and know that first impressions count.

Our Reservations Team creates a rapport with our callers, understanding their needs, and providing advice and assistance on all their travel requirements. The responsibilities are varied and include promoting Virgin's ever expanding range of services, whilst maintaining our high levels of customer service.

The Demands

Speaking to around 100 callers each day, you need to be self-motivated whilst maintaining high levels of accuracy in this busy environment. On your shift pattern there will be a variety of start and finish times, including some early mornings and late nights. Don't forget, shift work means you might have to work weekends and bank holidays.

arrivals



recruitment services

The Interview

The interview process consists of a group interview, which will last approximately one and a half hours. You will then take part in a series of exercises. Our experienced recruitment assessors will monitor your performance and look for specific competencies such as customer relationships, service orientation, and attention to detail. If you are successful through the group stage, you will be asked to attend an individual interview with two recruitment assessors. You will be notified of the outcome of this final stage in writing.

The Rewards

The starting salary is generous and, as a shift worker, you will also receive a shift allowance. There is an increase to the basic salary on successful completion of your six-month probationary period.

On completion of the probationary period, you will be entitled to a generous holiday allowance and a discretionary benefits package which includes a pension, life assurance, Virgin Group discount scheme, and concessionary travel (one of the best in the business!).

3 Some applicants had questions about the job. Supply the answers.

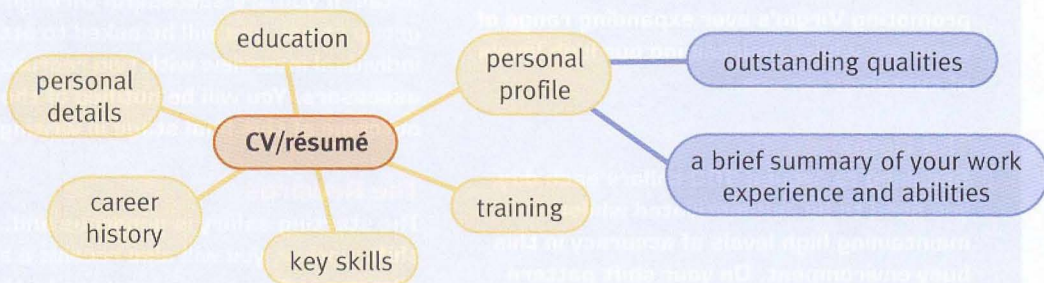
- 1 'What are the hours of work exactly?'
- 2 'What are the main responsibilities of the job?'
- 3 'How many calls will I have to handle a day?'
- 4 'Where is the job located?'
- 5 'What will the interview consist of and how will we learn the results?'
- 6 'Are there any other payments in addition to the basic salary?'
- 7 'What other benefits do you offer?'
- 8 'Does everyone receive the same benefits package?'

Did You Know?

Job advertisements can also be shortened to *job ads* or *job adverts*. They're also known as *recruitment advertising* or in newspapers and trade magazines as *appointments* (U.K.) and sometimes *job opportunities*.

4 What details would you expect to find in a curriculum vitae? Complete the mind map with items from the box. Can you add any more items to the mind map?

a brief summary of your work experience and abilities • dates of previous employment • duties in previous jobs • relevant courses attended • full contact details • language skills • main exams or degree • marital status • name and address • achievements/skills in career • ~~outstanding qualities~~ • previous employers • nationality • professional qualification or title • school and university details • qualifications or certificates from on-the-job training • specializations/publications



Now put these main headings into a logical order in which they might appear on a CV.

☐ education

☐ personal profile

☐ career history

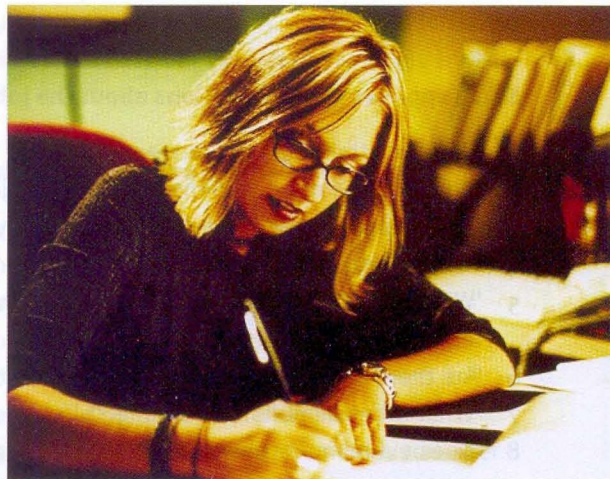
☐ key skills

☐ training

☐ personal details

5 Read the letter on page 17 and label it with the following items (a–j).

- a invitation to an interview
- b acknowledgement of the applicant's letter
- c polite ending
- d subject of the letter
- e contact details for arranging an interview
- f salutation
- g letterhead
- h note that something has been sent with the letter
- i complimentary close
- j procedure if invited to a second interview



☐ 1 **Mobile plus SA**

Pº de la Castellana 28, 28046

Ms Melanie Smith
Flat 4
21 Lymington Road
Epsom, Surrey
EP5 3RE
U.K.

25 August 2007

Dear Ms Smith ☐ 2

☐ 3 **Application for Call Centre Team Leader** ☐ 4

Thank you for your letter of 15 August and your curriculum vitae, applying for a Team Leader position in our call centre in London. ☐ 5

We currently have two vacancies for Team Leaders in our U.K. call centre and we would like to invite you for an initial interview at our London office in the next two weeks. If successful, you will then be asked to attend a full day assessment centre with seven other applicants next month, after which a final decision will be made.

☐ 6 We will pay your travelling expenses to the interview and to the assessment centre, if selected. During the assessment centre, which will last from 9 a.m.–5 p.m., lunch with the other applicants and assessors is provided as part of the day. If you need overnight accommodation, then you will be booked into a local hotel near our office. Full details of the assessment centre procedure will be sent to you in advance if you are selected.

☐ 7 We would be grateful if you could telephone Jenny Mills, Personnel Assistant, in London on (0044) 020 845 9554 ext 2317 to arrange a convenient time for the interview. Please find enclosed an application form which we would like you to complete and take along to the interview with you.

We wish you success at the interview and look forward to welcoming you to our London office.

Yours sincerely ☐ 8 ☐ 9

Sonsoles Rodriguez
Recruitment Officer

enc ☐ 10

6 True or false? Correct the false statements.

- 1 Melanie has applied for a position as Call Centre Assistant.
- 2 She sent a CV with her letter of application.
- 3 The whole recruitment process will be completed within two weeks.
- 4 The company will pay for Melanie's journey to the interview.
- 5 Applicants will be told what the assessment centre procedure involves when they get to the company.
- 6 They want Melanie to complete an application form.
- 7 Melanie has to call Madrid to arrange the interview.

7 Put the following parts of a letter into the correct order. Then check your answer with the model letter on page 74.

- a We would like to invite you to attend an interview at this office and would be grateful if you could telephone the undersigned as soon as possible to arrange a suitable date and time.
- b We look forward to welcoming you to our offices.
- c Thank you for your letter of 2 September, applying for the position of ... with this company.
- d If you have any questions, please raise them when you call to arrange the interview.
- e Alternatively, you can go to our website for these documents and other information about the company. A map showing the location of our office is also enclosed.
- f Enclosed is a copy of the person specification and job description for this job, which we would like you to familiarize yourself with before the interview.

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐

DID YOU KNOW?

Remember: when you write business letters the general 'rule' is ...

- when you don't know the person's name:
Dear Sir or Madam
Yours faithfully
- when you know the person's name:
Dear Ms/Mrs/Mr Brownley
Yours sincerely
- when you know the person well:
Dear James
Best regards/Best wishes/Yours/Kind regards/Sincerely

8 First study the Useful Language below for arranging an appointment. Then look at your profile in the Partner Files and, as a follow-up to the letter on page 17, make a telephone call to arrange an interview.

PARTNER FILES

Partner A File 02, p. 60
Partner B File 02, p. 62



USEFUL LANGUAGE

Arranging an appointment by telephone

What date would be convenient for you?
What time would suit you?
Would Monday at 10.30 suit you?
Is the 5th of March at 6 p.m. convenient?
How about 10 a.m.?
Tuesday the 8th of July would be good for me.
Monday's bad for me, I'm afraid.
That sounds fine.
Yes, that would be good for me.
I think that should be possible.

DID YOU KNOW?

When a company employs new staff, they are *taken on* (U.K.) or *hired* (U.S.). When these employees then decide to leave, they *resign* or *hand in their notice/resignation*.

When employees have to leave because they did something wrong, they are *dismissed* or their contracts are *terminated*. More informally, they are *sacked* (U.K.) or *fired* (U.S.). If they have to leave because a company can no longer employ them (e.g. due to bankruptcy or downsizing), the employee is *made redundant* (U.K.), *let go* (U.S.), or even *offered early retirement*.

When an employee is *laid off* (to *lay off*), it is usually only temporary (for a season or because of a drop in production) but sometimes it can be permanent.

9 Complete the sentences with some of the expressions above.

- 1 My best marketing assistant _____. She's got herself another job with more money!
- 2 Will we be able to _____ a replacement when John hands in his _____?
- 3 We can't continue working in these freezing temperatures, so we'll have to _____ six workers until the end of February.
- 4 Those staff who can't relocate to the new factory in the north when we close down will be _____.
- 5 Fill me in on the details; I believe one of our shop assistants has been _____ for stealing, is that right?
- 6 A new directive from head office has been introduced that all employees over 63 will be _____.

10 Sort the following interview strategies into a logical order.

- ☐ a Establish rapport and relax the candidate.
- ☐ b Read the candidate's application and have it with you at the interview.
- ☐ c Use open questions as much as possible to ensure the candidate gives detailed answers.
- ☐ d Allow the candidate to do most of the talking but keep the interview focussed.
- ☐ e Before finishing the interview, explain what will happen next and by when.
- ☐ f Use a quiet office away from noise and interruptions.
- ☐ g Welcome the applicant warmly, introduce yourself, and explain the structure of the interview clearly.
- ☐ h Allow the candidate time for his or her own questions.

Can you add any other tips? What cultural differences do you think would influence such a list?

AUDIO



3

11 You will hear extracts from Jenny's interview with Melanie Smith. Listen to the first extract and match the numbers to what they represent.

- | | |
|-------|----------------------------|
| five | days a week |
| eight | years in previous company |
| seven | team leaders |
| ten | years with present company |
| six | call centre operators |

AUDIO



3

Listen to the second extract and tick ☒ the call centre problems they discuss.

- 1 Difficulties with customer complaints ☐
- 2 Staff shortages ☐
- 3 High absenteeism ☐
- 4 Staff relationships ☐
- 5 Stress ☐



AUDIO



3

Listen to the third extract and complete the sentences.

- 1 I particularly _____ dealing with customers.
- 2 I have an _____ to build a good rapport with people on the telephone.
- 3 I believe I am _____ at it.
- 4 My _____ has a good job in this area.
- 5 My company did ask me if I would _____.

12 What do these words and expressions from the dialogue mean? Tick ☒ the correct definition.

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1 to fill someone in | ☐ a to complete a form |
| | ☐ b to give more information so they have all the details |
| 2 to be promoted | ☐ a to move to a higher position in a company |
| | ☐ b to take a lower position in a company |
| 3 to outline something | ☐ a to summarize |
| | ☐ b to give a detailed explanation |
| 4 liaison within the team | ☐ a exchange of information between team members |
| | ☐ b a romantic relationship |
| 5 to complain | ☐ a to say everything is fine |
| | ☐ b to say that you are unhappy about something |
| 6 directive | ☐ a a rule |
| | ☐ b a special person who deals with something |
| 7 to relocate | ☐ a to move to a new area (with your job) |
| | ☐ b to be asked to leave your job |

13 Use the following form to make notes about the interview. Listen again or refer to the transcript if you need to. Do you think Melanie should be short-listed for the assessment centre? Complete gap 10 below with your own ideas.

Interview notes

Name of applicant: (1) Melanie Smith

Job applied for: (2) _____

Date of interview: 04 September

Experience

a 5 years' experience in a similar position.

b (3) _____

c (4) _____

Level of responsibility

a reports directly to call centre supervisor

b (5) _____

c (6) _____

Specific abilities

Staff relationships: (7) _____

Customer service: good communication skills,
(8) _____

Reason for leaving

(9) _____

Suitability for the position

Melanie appears to have the right qualifications and experience to undertake this position. Her communication skills and relationship with staff (10) _____

Recommendation for shortlist to assessment centre: Yes ☐ No ☐

USEFUL LANGUAGE

The language of interview questioning

Look at the type of questions the interviewer asks in the dialogue on page 20. These are known as *open questions* and usually avoid *yes* and *no* answers. Below are some examples of the way you can word your interview questions to get people talking about themselves and their experience.

What ...?

What aspect of your job do you like best?

What do you know about ...?

What experience have you had of ...?

How ...?

How do you go about dealing with ...?

How would you handle ...?

Why ...?

Why do you want to leave your present job?

Why did you deal with the situation in that way?

OR

I'd like you to tell me ...

Could you give me an example of ...?

Interesting. What else do you ...?

14 Change these **closed** questions, which could be answered with **yes** or **no**, to **open** questions.

- 1 Do you get on well with your present supervisor?
- 2 Have you had many staff problems to deal with in your current job?
- 3 Do you consider yourself good at customer service?
- 4 Are you used to working shifts?
- 5 Are you able to work on your own initiative?
- 6 Do you work well under pressure?

15 First make a list of questions you would ask at an interview for your own job. Then exchange your list with a partner and practise asking and answering the questions in an interview situation. Try to use the Useful Language in the box below for establishing rapport and asking follow-up questions.

USEFUL LANGUAGE

Establishing rapport and relaxing the candidate

It's nice to welcome you here and I hope you'll enjoy the interview.

Please feel free to ask any questions you may have.

I'm going to start by ... and then we'll talk about ... Finally, we can deal with any points you would like to raise.

Asking follow-up questions

Could you tell me some more about ...?

What exactly do you mean by ...?

Could you enlarge on that?

16 Word families: Complete the following sentences with words related to the key words. (You might need to add prefixes or suffixes and change the form.)

- apply**
- 1 There were two _____ who were far better than the others in terms of previous experience.
 - 2 All candidates must complete an _____ form to bring to the interview.
 - 3 The employment legislation is not _____ to people working less than 25 hours per week.

- select** 4 As we had a lot of candidates for the advertised position, we were able to be very _____.
- 5 We offer a _____ of benefits to our personnel in addition to salary.

- assess** 6 In some types of recruitment, _____ centres are used regularly.
- 7 It was difficult to _____ the final two shortlisted applicants as they had such mixed skills.

OUTPUT



How important is age in the selection of candidates? Listen to the five speakers and complete the phrases.

- 1 It is not relevant to ask someone's age. You can work it out roughly from their _____¹ and, anyway, the important thing is whether or not they have the _____² to do the job, not how old they are.
- 2 Yes, I totally agree and older people have a lot of experience and _____³ to offer. Plus they are often better _____⁴ than their younger colleagues – they're more reliable and take less time off work.
- 3 I'm afraid I can't agree with you on that. Older people are not as _____⁵, they expect higher _____⁶ and they get sick a lot. And they have trouble fitting into a young team. Companies want younger employees who can bring in fresh ideas and are not so expensive!
- 4 You can't run a company efficiently with young, _____⁷ people. You need to retain older managers to train the younger ones and you have to organize effective succession planning in a company. There should be capacity for a broad age _____⁸ and diverse experience in all areas of the business.
- 5 I think laws on age _____⁹ are wrong. Why should the government be able to tell us who to hire? Only the companies know which people are right – or wrong – for the _____¹⁰. The government shouldn't tell us how to run our business.



Which opinions do you agree with?

OVER TO YOU

How would you feel if, after 20 years in your profession, you were considered too old for the job?
 Do you think legislation on age discrimination will help the situation?
 What kind of policies does your company have on age discrimination?