

Useful Vocabulary for the Resume and Interview

Below is a list of great verbs to help you express just exactly what you did with impressive vocabulary. These verbs are used to express responsibilities and tasks performed:

acted	edited	identified	raised
accomplished	dealt	implemented	recommended
adapted	decided	improved	recorded
administered	decreased	increased	recruited
advanced	defined	indexed	rectified
advised	delegated	initiated	redesigned
allocated	derived	inspected	repaired
analyzed	designated	installed	replaced
applied	detected	instituted	restored
approved	developed	interpreted	reversed
arbitrated	devised	introduced	reviewed
arranged	directed	invented	revised
assisted	discovered	investigated	saved
attained	distributed	justified	screened
blended	documented	led	selected
brought	doubled	localized	serviced
built	encouraged	located	set up
carried out	engineered	made	solved
catalogued	enlarged	managed	sorted
changed	escalated	maintained	sparked
classified	established	mechanized	specified
collaborated	estimated	merged	started
compared	evaluated	moderated	stimulated
completed	examined	motivated	strengthened
computed	expanded	negotiated	summarized
conceived	experienced	opened	supervised
conducted	explored	operated	supported
constructed	facilitated	organized	systematized
consulted	finalized	originated	tested
contracted	formulated	overcame	trained
controlled	founded	perceived	transacted
cooperated	functioned	performed	transcribed
coordinated	governed	pioneered	transformed
corrected	grouped	planned	tripled
counseled	guided	prepared	upgraded
created	handled	presented	validated
	harmonized	presided	varied
	harnessed	processed	verified
	headed	programmed	vitalized
		promoted	won
		provided	wrote
		purchased	

To describe your skills the following adjectives are useful

accurate	honest
active	innovative
adaptable	logical
adept	loyal
broad-minded	mature
competent	methodical
conscientious	motivated
creative	objective
dependable	outgoing
determined	personable
diplomatic	pleasant
discreet	positive
efficient	practical
energetic	productive
enterprising	reliable
enthusiastic	resourceful
experienced	self disciplined
fair	sense of humor
firm	sensitive
genuine	sincere
	successful
	tactful
	trustworthy

Use these verbs and adjectives and really sell yourself. You only have a few minutes to show how good you really are. By using this precise vocabulary and being confident can help you make the best impression possible.

Finding a [Job](#) for ESL Learners - Part 3: Interview Basics

The Interview

Congratulations! Your [cover](#) letter and [resume](#) have made a good impression and the employer has called you in for an interview. Now it's [time](#) to make sure that you also have the right type of English for that [job](#) interview.

There are some very important game rules to consider when taking a [job](#) interview. The [job](#) interview in English requires a very specific kind of vocabulary. It also requires good tense usage as you need to make a clear distinction between past and present responsibilities. Here is a quick overview of the appropriate tenses to use:

Tense	Example Sentence	Explanation
Present Simple	I collect data from all of our branches and analyze the information on a weekly basis.	Use the present simple to describe your daily responsibilities. This is the most common tense to use when speaking about your current position.
Past Simple	I developed an in-house database for the	Use the past simple to describe your daily responsibilities in a former position. This is the most common tense to use

personnel department. when speaking about past [jobs](#).

Present Continuous	Currently, we are expanding our sales division to include South America.	Use the past continuous to speak about current projects that are happening at that moment in time . These projects are limited in time and should not be confused with daily responsibilities. Example: <i>Currently, I am designing a new layout for our local branch. I am usually responsible for staff organization, but they asked me to help out with design this time.</i>
Present Perfect	I've researched over 300 cases until now.	Use the present perfect to generally describe projects or accomplishments that you have made up to the present moment in time . Remember not to include specific past time references which should be used with the past simple. Example: <i>I've developed a number of databases using Microsoft Access. Just last week I finished a database for our warehouse.</i>
Future Simple	I will be the manager of a medium sized retail outlet.	Use the future simple to discuss your plans for the future. This tense is only used when the interviewer asks you what you plan to do in the future.

There are a number of other tenses that you can use to speak about experience that you have had. However, if you do not feel comfortable using more advanced tenses, these tenses should serve you well in the interview.

What is Most Important?: General Guidelines

Work Experience

Work experience is by far the most important part of any [job](#) interview in an English speaking country. It is true that [education](#) is also important, however, most employers are more impressed by extensive work experience than by [university](#) degrees. Employers want to know exactly what you did and how well you accomplished your tasks. This is the part of the interview during which you can make the best impression. It's important to give full, detailed answers. Be confident, and emphasize your accomplishments in past positions.

Qualifications

Qualifications include any [education](#) from high [school](#) through [university](#), as well as any special [training](#) you may have had (such as [computer](#) courses). Make sure to mention your English studies. This is very important as English is not your first language and the employer may be concerned about this fact. Assure the employer that you are continuing to improve your English skills by any courses you may be taking, or by saying that you study a certain number of hours a week to improve your skills.

Talking about Responsibilities

Most importantly, you will need to demonstrate your qualifications and skills which are directly applicable to the [job](#) you are applying for. If past [job](#) skills were not exactly the same as what you will need on the new [job](#), make sure to detail how they are **similar** to [job](#) skills you will need for the new position.

Finding a [Job](#) for ESL Learners - Part 4: Example Interview Questions

Common Interview Questions

First Impressions

The first impression you make on the interviewer can decide the rest of the interview. It is important that you introduce yourself, shake hands, and be friendly and polite. The first question is often a "breaking the ice" (establish a rapport) type of question. Don't be surprised if the interviewer asks you something like:

- How are you today?
- Did you have any trouble finding us?
- Isn't this great [weather](#) we're having?

This type of question is common because the interviewer wants to put you at ease (help you relax). The best way to respond is in a short, friendly manner without going into too much detail. Here is some examples correct responses:

Interviewer: How are you today?

You: I'm fine, thank you. And you?

OR

Interviewer: Did you have any trouble finding us?

You: No, the [office](#) isn't too difficult to find.

OR **Interviewer:** Isn't this great [weather](#) we're having?

You: Yes, it's wonderful. I [love](#) this [time](#) of year.

Interviewer: Did you have any trouble finding us?

You: No, the [office](#) isn't too difficult to find.

Here are some examples of incorrect responses:

How are you today?

So, so. I'm rather nervous actually.

OR

Interviewer: Did you have any trouble finding us?

You: As a matter of fact it was very difficult. I missed the exit and had to return via the highway. I was afraid I was going to be late for the interview.

OR **Interviewer:** Isn't this great [weather](#) we're having?

You: Yes, it's wonderful. I can remember this [time](#) last year. Wasn't it awful! I thought it would never stop raining!

Interviewer: Did you have any trouble finding us?

You: No, the [office](#) isn't too difficult to find.

Getting Down to [Business](#)

Once the pleasant beginnings have finished, it's [time](#) to begin the real interview. Here are a number of the most common questions that are asked during the interview. There are two examples of excellent replies given for each question. Following the examples, you will find a comment describing the type of question and important things to remember when answering that type of question.

Interviewer: Tell me about yourself.

Candidate: I was born and raised in Milan, Italy. I attended the [University](#) of Milan and received my master's degree in Economics. I have worked for 12 years as a financial [consultant](#) in Milan for various companies including Rossi [Consultants](#), Quasar [Insurance](#) and Sardi and Sons. I enjoy playing [tennis](#) in my [free time](#) and [learning](#) languages.

Candidate: I've just graduated from the [University](#) of Singapore with a degree in [Computers](#). During the summers, I worked as a systems administrator for a small company to help pay for my [education](#).

Comment: *This question is meant as an introduction. Do not focus too specifically on any one area. The above question will often be used to help the interviewer choose what h/she would like to ask next. While it is important to give an overall impression of who you are, make sure to*

concentrate on work related experience. Work related experience should **always** be the central focus of any interview (work experience is more important than [education](#) in most English speaking countries).

Interviewer: What type of position are you looking for?

Candidate: I'm interested in an entry level (beginning) position.

Candidate: I'm looking for a position in which I can utilize my experience.

Candidate: I would like any position for which I qualify.

Comment: You should be willing to take an entry level position in an English speaking company as most of these companies expect non-nationals to begin with such a position. In the United States, most companies provide many opportunities for growth, so don't be afraid to start from the beginning!

Interviewer: Are you interested in a full-time or part-time position?

Candidate: I am more interested in a full-time position. However, I would also consider a part-time position.

Comment: Make sure to leave open as many possibilities as possible. Say you are willing to take any [job](#), once the [job](#) has been offered you can always refuse if the [job](#) does not appeal (not interest) to you.

Interviewer: Can you tell me about your responsibilities at your last job?

Candidate: I advised customers on financial matters. After I consulted the customer, I completed a customer inquiry form and catalogued the information in our database. I then collaborated with colleagues to prepare the best possible package for the client. The clients were then presented with a summarized report on their financial activities that I formulated on a quarterly basis.

Comment: Notice the amount of detail necessary when you are talking about your experience. One of the most common mistakes made by foreigners when discussing their former [employment](#) is to speak too generally. The employer wants to know exactly what you did and how you did it; the more detail you can give the more the interviewer knows that you understand the type of work. Remember to vary your vocabulary when talking about your responsibilities. Also, do not begin every sentence with "I". Use the passive voice, or an introductory clause to help you add variety to your presentation

Interviewer: What is your greatest strength?

Candidate: I work well under pressure. When there is a deadline (a [time](#) by which the work must be finished), I can focus on the task at hand (current project) and structure my work schedule well. I remember one week when I had to get 6 new customer reports out by Friday at 5. I finished all the reports ahead of [time](#) without having to work overtime.

Candidate: I am an excellent communicator. [People trust](#) me and come to me for advice. One afternoon, my colleague was involved with a troublesome (difficult) customer who felt he was not being served well. I made the customer a cup of [coffee](#) and invited both my colleague and the client to my desk where we solved the problem together.

Candidate: I am a trouble shooter. When there was a problem at my last [job](#), the manager would always ask me to solve it. Last summer, the LAN [server](#) at work crashed. The manager was desperate and called me in (requested my help) to get the LAN back [online](#). After taking a look at the daily backup, I detected the problem and the LAN was up and running (working) within the hour.

Comment: This is not the [time](#) to be modest! Be confident and **always** give examples. Examples show that you are not only repeating words you have learned, but actually do possess that strength.

Interviewer: What is your greatest weakness?

Candidate: I am overzealous (work too hard) and become nervous when my co-workers are not pulling their weight (doing their job). However, I am aware of this problem, and before I say anything to anyone, I ask myself why the colleague is having difficulties.

Candidate: I tend to spend too much [time](#) making sure the customer is satisfied. However, I began setting time-limits for myself If I noticed this happening.

Comment: This is a difficult question. You need to mention a weakness that is actually a strength. Make sure that you always mention how you try to improve the weakness.

Interviewer: Why do you want to work for Smith and Sons?

Candidate: After following your firm's progress for the last 3 years, I am convinced that Smith and Sons are becoming one of the market leaders and I would like to be part of the team.

Candidate: I am impressed by the quality of your products. I am sure that I would be a convincing salesman because I truly believe that the Atomizer is the best product on the market today.

Comment: Prepare yourself for this question by becoming informed about the company. The more detail you can give, the better you show the interviewer that you understand the company.

Interviewer: When can you begin?

Candidate: Immediately.

Candidate: As soon as you would like me to begin.

Comment: *Show your willingness to work!*

The above questions represent some of the most basic questions asked on any [job](#) interview in English. Probably the most important aspect of interviewing in English is giving detail. As a speaker of English as a second language, you might be shy about saying complicated things. However, this is absolutely necessary as the employer is looking for an employee who knows his or her [job](#). If you provide detail, the interviewer will know that you feel comfortable in that [job](#). Don't worry about making mistakes in English. It is much better to make simple grammar mistakes and provide detailed information about your experience than to say grammatically perfect sentences without any real content.

English as 2nd Language

Finding a [Job](#) for ESL Learners - Part 1: Finding the Right [Job](#)

Understanding your potential employer can help you get the [job](#) you are looking for. This section focuses on developing interviewing skills that will help you prepare for a [job](#) interview in an English speaking country.

The Personnel Department

The personnel department is responsible for hiring the best possible candidate for an open position. Often hundreds of applicants apply for an open position. In order to save [time](#), the personnel department often uses a number of methods to select applicants who they would like to interview. Your [cover](#) letter and [resume](#) must be perfect in order to ensure that you will not be looked over because of a minor mistake. This unit focuses on the various documents required for a successful [job](#) application, as well as interviewing techniques and appropriate vocabulary to use in your [resume](#), [cover](#) letter and during the [job](#) interview itself.

Finding a [Job](#)

There are many ways to find a [job](#). One of the most common is looking through the positions offered section of your local newspaper. Here is an example of a typical [job](#) posting:

[Job](#) Opening

Due to the enormous success of [Jeans](#) and Co., we have a number of [job](#) openings for [shop](#) assistants and local [management](#) positions.

[Shop](#) Assistant:

Successful candidates will have a high [school](#) degree with at least 3 years working experience and two current references. Desired qualifications include basic [computer](#) skills. Key responsibilities will include operating cash-registers and providing customers with any help they may need.

[Management](#) Positions:

Successful candidates will have a [college](#) degree in [business](#) administration and [management](#) experience. Desired qualifications include [management](#) experience in retail and thorough knowledge of Microsoft's [Office](#) Suite. Responsibilities will include [management](#) of local branches with up to 10 employees. Willingness to move frequently also a plus.

If you wish to apply for one of the above vacancies, please send a [resume](#) and [cover](#) letter to our personnel manager at:

[Jeans](#) and Co.
254 Main Street
Seattle, WA 98502

The [Cover](#) Letter

The [cover](#) letter introduces your [resume](#) or CV when applying for a [job](#) interview. There are a few important things that need to be included in the [cover](#) letter. Most importantly, the [cover](#) letter should point out why you are particularly suited to the position. The best way to do this is to take the [job](#) posting and point out the highlights in your [resume](#) that **exactly** match the desired qualifications. Here is an outline to [writing](#) a successful [cover](#) letter. To the right of the letter, look for important notes concerning the layout of the letter signaled by a small number in red.

Peter Townsled
35 Green Road ¹
Spokane, WA 87954
April 19, 200_

Mr Frank Peterson, Personnel Manager ²
[Jeans](#) and Co.
254 Main Street
Seattle, WA 98502
Dear Mr. Trimm: ³

⁴ I am [writing](#) to you in response to your advertisement for a local branch manager, which appeared in the Seattle Times on Sunday, June 15. As you can see from my enclosed [resume](#), my experience and qualifications match this position's requirements.

⁵ My current position managing the local branch of a national shoe retailers has provided the opportunity to work in a high-pressure, team environment, where it is essential to be able to work closely with my colleagues in order to meet [sales](#) deadlines.

In addition to my responsibilities as manager, I also developed [time management tools](#) for staff using Access and [Excel](#) from Microsoft's [Office Suite](#).

⁶ Thank you for your [time](#) and consideration. I look forward to the opportunity to personally discuss why I am particularly suited to this position. Please [telephone](#) me at (360) 352-0259 after 4.00 p.m. to suggest a [time](#) that we may meet. I can also be reached by [email](#) at petert@net.com

Sincerely,
Peter Townsled
Peter Townsled ⁷
Enclosure

Next: [Writing Your Resume](#)

¹ Begin your [cover](#) letter by placing your address first, followed by the address of the company you are [writing](#) to.
² Use complete title and address; don't abbreviate.
³ Always make an effort to write directly to the person in charge of hiring.
⁴ Opening paragraph - Use this paragraph to specify which [job](#) you are applying for, or, if you are [writing](#) to inquire whether a [job](#) position is open question the availability of an opening.
⁵ Middle paragraph(s) - This section should be used to highlight your work experience which most closely matches the desired [job](#) requirements presented in the [job](#) opening advertisement. Do **not** simply restate what is contained in your [resume](#). Notice how the example makes a special effort to show why the writer is especially suited to the [job](#) position opening posted above.
⁶ Closing paragraph - Use the closing paragraph to ensure action on the part of the reader. One possibility is to ask for an interview appointment [time](#). Make it easy for the personnel department to [contact](#) you by providing your [telephone](#) number and [email](#) address.
⁷ Always sign letters. "enclosure" indicates that you are enclosing your [resume](#).

The [Resume](#)

[Writing](#) a successful [resume](#) depends on many factors. Here is a simple guide to the basics of [writing](#) a good resume:

1. Take detailed notes on your work experience. Include both paid and unpaid, full [time](#) and part [time](#) positions. Include your main responsibilities, any other activities that were part of the [job](#), the [job](#) title and company information including the address and dates of [employment](#). Include everything!

2. Take detailed notes on your [education](#). Include degree or certificates, major or course emphasis, [school](#) names and courses relevant to [career](#) objectives. Remember to include any important continuing [education](#) courses you may have completed.
3. Include a list of other non-work related accomplishments. These may include competitions won, membership in special organizations, etc.
4. Based on your detailed notes, decide which skills are **transferable** (skills that will be especially useful) to the position for which you are applying.
5. Write your full name, address, [telephone](#) number, [fax](#) and [email](#) at the top of the [resume](#).
6. Include an objective for the [resume](#). The objective is a short sentence describing what type of work you hope to obtain.
7. Summarize your [education](#), including important facts that directly relate to the [job](#) for which you are applying. You can also choose to include the [education](#) section after you have listed your [job employment](#) history.
8. List your work experience beginning with your most recent [job](#). Include dates of [employment](#), company specifics. List your principal responsibilities making sure to focus on transferable skills.
9. Continue to list all of your work experience in reverse order. Always focus on skills that are transferable.
10. Finally list information skills such as languages spoken, [computer](#) programming knowledge etc. under the heading: Additional Skills
11. Finish your [resume](#) with the following phrase: REFERENCES Available upon request

Tips

1. Be concise and short! Your finished [resume](#) should not be more than page.
2. Use dynamic action verbs such as: *accomplished, collaborated, encouraged, established, facilitated, founded, managed, etc.*
3. Do NOT use the subject "I", use tenses in the past. Except for your present [job](#). Example: *Conducted routine inspections of on site equipment.*

Here is an example of a basic resume:

Peter Townsled

35 Green Road
 Spokane, WA 87954
[Phone](#) (503) 456 - 6781
[Fax](#) (503) 456 - 6782
[E-mail](#) petert@net.com

Personal Information

Marital status: Married

Nationality: US

Objective

[Employment](#) as manager in important [clothing](#) retailer. Special interest in developing [computer](#) time-management [tools](#) for in-house use.

Work experience

1998 - Present Jackson [Shoes](#) Inc. Spokane, WA
 Manager

Responsibilities

- Manage staff of 10
- Provide helpful service to customers concerning shoe choices
- [Design](#) and implement [computer](#) based [tools](#) using Microsoft Access and [Excel](#) for staff
- Monthly bookkeeping
- Suggest changes in product offerings on a quarterly basis based on detailed analysis of [sales](#) patterns
- Provide in-house [training](#) for new employees as needed

1995 - 1998 Smith [Office](#) Supplies Yakima, WA
Assistant Manager

Responsibilities

- Managed warehouse operations
- Programmed [Excel](#) spreadsheet implemented to control [sales](#) strengths and weaknesses on quarterly basis
- Interviewed new applicants for open positions
- Travelled locally offering on-site visits to regular customers
- Supervised bookkeeping staff

Education

1991 - 1995 Seattle [University](#) Seattle, WA
Bachelor of [Business](#) Administration

- Four year [business](#) administration course focusing and retail work environments

Professional memberships

- Rotary Club Member, Spokane WA
- Young [Business](#) Administration Club President 1993-1995, Seattle, WA

Additional Skills

Advanced level skills in Microsoft [Office](#) Suite, basic HTML programming, spoken and written proficiency in French

REFERENCES Available upon request