

Name _____

Choosing Your Reference

What is a Reference?

Who could potentially be a good reference?

What are the 3 types of References?

Which of the 3 types of references do you think would be most difficult for YOU to find? Why?

Of the list of questions under '**What kind of questions will employers ask a reference?**' What 2 questions do you think would be the most important?

Why is it important to choose good references?

What is different from information you give for a work reference and a personal reference?

Choosing Your References

The résumé and cover letter are your chance to tell the employer how wonderful you are. And if they impress the employer, you'll get a chance to say even more about all your great qualities at a job interview.

But at some point the employer is going to want to find out how other people feel about your abilities and personal qualities. They'll ask you to supply them with a list of **references** to whom they can talk about such things as your past work experience, your education, and your personal traits that would make you the right person for their job.

What is a reference?

A reference is someone who can provide an interviewer or prospective employer with information regarding your strengths and weaknesses. Obviously, you want to give them names of people who will concentrate more on your strengths and less on your weaknesses!

Who can you use as a reference?

There are three types of references you can use:

1. **Work Reference** - This is usually a person who has been your supervisor. This could be through paid employment or through volunteer work. The more recent your involvement with the employer, the better. An interviewer will question why you are not using previous employers as a reference.
2. **Academic Reference** - This should be a teacher or instructor who has known you for some time. This type of reference is able to provide information about you which could reflect how well you would do on a job.
3. **Personal or Character Reference** - This should be an adult who is able to vouch for your good character and discuss your desirable personality traits.

Employers prefer to see work or academic references if possible. These are people who have seen you work or who have taught you and who know what skills you have, your work or study habits, and how well you can adapt to new situations.

Personal references should be used only if you are applying for your first job or have very limited work experience.

Who should you choose as a reference?

Now that you know what types of people you can use as reference, how do you choose three or four?

You will want to choose those who you feel are best qualified to comment on your abilities, skills, work habits, etc. and who will comment on all these qualities *in a favourable way*.

Once you have chosen the people you want to act as references, *make sure you ask them* if they are willing to do so. Also, ask them if they will provide a **positive** reference!

It's a good idea to keep your references informed about your job search. Give each reference a copy of your résumé so they will be better prepared to receive inquiries from employers.

What kind of questions will employers ask a reference?

Knowing what type of questions employers are likely to ask can help you decide who you want to use as a reference. Here are some of the more common questions references are asked.

1. How long did he/she work for you?
2. What was the quality of his/her work?
3. How much responsibility did he/she have?
4. How did he/she get along with people?
5. Did he/she require close supervision?
6. Was he/she prompt?
7. Why did he/she leave your company?
8. Do you know of anything that would disqualify him/her for the job we're considering hiring him/her for?
9. Can you think of anything I should know about him/her that I haven't asked about?

What information should you provide about your references?

It depends on the type of reference. Appropriate information to provide is as follows:

Work or Academic References:

Name
Position or Title
Company
City, Province
Work Telephone (Home number if appropriate)

Personal References:

Name
Position or Title
Company (optional)
City, Province
Home Telephone