



FIRST LEANINGS

Career Development
Workbook for
Transition Year Students

STUDENT BOOK



UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

HEA

HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY
AN tÚDARÁS um ARD-OIDEACHAS

FIRST LEARNINGS

Career Development
Workbook for
Transition Year Students

University of Limerick



UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

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Introduction

Dear Student,

The *First Leanings Career Development Workbook* gives you the opportunity to:

- ❖ Develop an accurate understanding of your individual traits, interests, personality preferences, skills, personal values and motivations
- ❖ Learn about third-level education in a range of study areas, relevant to many different sectors of the employment market
- ❖ Align your career preferences with your subject choices for the Leaving Certificate and potential third-level courses
- ❖ Gain a deeper understanding of your course and career options
- ❖ Make informed choices that match your profile and preferences
- ❖ Prepare for relevant work experience and the realities of the world of work.

The workbook has been structured in four sections:

- ❖ Section 1: Self-assessment
- ❖ Section 2: Researching the options
- ❖ Section 3: Subject choices
- ❖ Section 4: Work experience.

Each section has been built around a variety of different worksheets. The worksheets are engaging and interactive and will provide you with hands-on learning as well as opportunities for reflection, self-awareness and personal development. Many different topics are covered in the worksheets, e.g. Personal Values, Career Investigation, Subject Choices and Interview Skills.

The *First Leanings Career Development Workbook* is about you and your future. We encourage you to participate with enthusiasm, keep an open mind, be creative and think big!

Enjoy the journey.

Worksheet 1.1 · Career Interest Summary

What are your highest scoring categories?

List three occupations that match your interest.

Would you consider pursuing these occupations? Why/why not?

Worksheet 1.2 · Personality Test Summary

What are your strongest personality types?

When are you most happy?

Do you agree or disagree with the test results?

Worksheet 1.4 • Personal Values: Part 1

Read the values and the descriptions below. Match each value to the correct description.

When you have matched the values to their correct descriptions, list the five values that matter the most to you for the future.

Value	Description
1 Prestige	A The work you do may improve society.
2 Variety	B You work without close supervision and make your own decisions on the job.
3 Job security	C Your job involves brainstorming and testing out new ideas and innovations.
4 Social conscience	D You enjoy the company of your colleagues and you work well on team projects.
5 Leadership	E Changes in the economy do not threaten your job: there will always be career opportunities in your area.
6 Independence	F Your employer places a value on your suggestions and you receive credit for doing good work.
7 Flexibility	G Your job allows you to plan and direct activities and to oversee the work of other people.
8 Recognition	H Your work environment is safe, clean, comfortable and attractive.
9 High income	I As soon as you leave work, you are able to forget about the stresses of the job.
10 Creativity	J You provide direct care to others and help them on a one-to-one basis.
11 Learning	K You set up your own work schedule.
12 Good working relationships	L You are exposed to new things every day on the job. You have the opportunity to do further study outside of work.
13 Leisure	M Your work involves many different activities, people and places.
14 Aesthetics	N You do not have to commute far for your job. There is no chance that you will have to relocate to another region or country for your job.

Value	Description
15 Challenge	O You have the opportunity to really test your knowledge and abilities.
16 Geographical location	P You get plenty of time off and you are able to spend holidays with friends and family.
17 Peace of mind	Q Your job has high status in the community and you are respected for your work.
18 Advancement	R You have a good chance to earn a lot of money through your salary or through bonuses.
19 Helping others	S Your employer promotes from within.
20 Mastery	T You can become an expert in your field. You will feel personal satisfaction from a high level of competency in your job.

1 =	2 =	3 =	4 =	5 =	6 =	7 =	8 =	9 =	10 =
11 =	12 =	13 =	14 =	15 =	16 =	17 =	18 =	19 =	20 =

The values that matter the most to me for the future	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Worksheet 1.4 • Personal Values: Part 2

Read the fictional scenarios below. Each story features an individual who faces a conflict of personal values in relation to his or her career.

Work in groups to discuss the scenarios. Think about the person in each story and:

- ❖ Identify the values that are at odds for this person
- ❖ Suggest how this person might resolve the conflict.

Remember!

There are no right or wrong answers for this worksheet. Read the stories carefully, discuss with your group and offer your opinions.

Scenario 1

Mary is 38 years old and has worked for a prestigious law firm since she was 25 years old. Over the past thirteen years, Mary has regularly worked 60–70 hours per week. She has won major cases and has felt the recognition of her peers and the partners in the firm. Two years ago, Mary got married. She and her husband decided to start a family. Mary recently had her first baby and she is now wondering whether she wants to return to work at the firm. Mary is very attached to her little boy and she wants to watch him grow up. But she has worked so hard on her career and she is proud of her achievements. She is very accomplished and she is reluctant to opt out completely from her career path. She is coming towards the end of her maternity leave and she has to make a decision about what she wants to do. She has the full support of her husband but she is at a personal crossroads.

Scenario 2

At 29, John has been a Garda for five years. He studied Forensic Science and received an honours degree. John's work involves tracking and investigating gang activity in Dublin in order to prevent criminal activity. John knows that he is helping to make the Dublin community a safer place. He feels that he is improving society and that this is what makes his job worthwhile. However, John was recently attacked while on duty and he has been warned that he is a target for gang retaliation. John has become distressed: he has disturbing dreams and recurring health problems. He is trying to decide whether he should apply for a desk job, which would be less dangerous.

Scenario 3

George works as a manager for a top IT company. He has been with the company for over twenty years, and he worked in various other IT companies in the ten years before that. George has received several promotions throughout his career. Now, at 52 years old, he earns a high salary that allows him to live comfortably. However, George's view is that his job in recent years has become more managerial in nature. George manages projects and in-house staff but he does not have the opportunity to try out new technologies or to develop new strategies that might help the company's customers. George misses the creativity and brainstorming that used to be part of his job. George is passionate about his hobbies: acting and videography. He often wonders if he could make a decent wage in one of these career areas. George is thinking about changing careers now, but he wonders if he should wait until he is old enough to take early retirement before trying out any new career paths.

Scenario 4

Anne is 22 years old and has recently finished college. After graduation, Anne returned home to live with her parents and she took up the office job that she has held every summer during her college course. Anne really likes her employer and colleagues. They have all worked closely together in the past three years. They get along and work well as a team. Recently, Anne's employer told her that they would be looking for an office manager and suggested that Anne could apply for this permanent job now that she has finished college. Anne's degree is in Early Childhood Education. She has always wanted to work with children with intellectual disabilities. She feels that she could really help to make a difference in children's lives. In the past few months, Anne has seen several job opportunities in her area of study. However, Anne has not applied for any of these jobs. While these jobs certainly sound interesting, Anne also likes her current work in the office. She is unsure what to do.

Worksheet 1.5 · Self-assessment Summary

What did I learn from the Interest-Profiler test?

What is my personality type?

What are my top five skills?

What are my top five personal values?

Worksheet 2.1 • Qualifax

- 1 Go to www.qualifax.ie.
- 2 Select **Students**.
- 3 Select **Course Finder**.
- 4 Select **Higher Education CAO**.
- 5 In **Course Title/Keywords**, type in *Business Studies*.
- 6 In the **Award Name** drop-down list, select **Degree – Honours Bachelor (Level 8 NFC)**.
- 7 In the **Province** drop-down list, select **Leinster**.
- 8 Click the **Search** button.
- 9 Choose three courses and list the course name and course provider.

	Course name	Course provider
(a)		
(b)		
(c)		

- 10 For one of the courses above, find the following:

(a)	Length of course	
(b)	Points requirement for last year	
(c)	Minimum entry requirements	
(d)	Possible careers on qualification	
(e)	Contact details	

- 11 Conduct a new search, beginning again at **Higher Education CAO**.
- 12 In **Course Title/Keywords**, type in *Medicine*.
- 13 Click the **Search** button.
- 14 Choose three courses and list the course name and course provider.

	Course name	Course provider
(a)		
(b)		
(c)		

15 For one of the courses above, find the following:

(a)	Length of course	
(b)	Points requirement for last year	
(c)	Minimum entry requirements	
(d)	Possible careers on qualification	
(e)	Contact details	

16 Conduct a new search, beginning again at **Higher Education CAO**.

17 In **Course Title/Keywords**, type in any subject area in which you have an interest.

18 Click the **Search** button.

19 Choose three courses and list the course name and course provider.

	Course name	Course provider
(a)		
(b)		
(c)		

20 For one of the courses above, find the following:

(a)	Length of course	
(b)	Points requirement for last year	
(c)	Minimum entry requirements	
(d)	Possible careers on qualification	
(e)	Contact details	

Worksheet 2.2 · Careers Portal/CAO Wizard

- 1 Go to www.careersportal.ie.
- 2 In the **What to Study** drop-down list, click on **CAO Wizard Search**.
- 3 In **Select Study Areas/Science & Engineering**, select **Medicinal Devices**.
- 4 In **Choose a Level**, select **Level 8 (Honours Degree, Higher Diploma)**.
- 5 In **Estimate Your CAO Points**, type in *400*.
- 6 In **Course Requirements/Maths Level**, select **Higher**. In **Lab Science**, select **Yes**. In **Modern Language**, select **No**.
- 7 In **What Region or College**, select **Munster**.
- 8 Click the **Search Now** button at the bottom of the page.
- 9 Choose three courses and list the course name and course provider.

	Course name	Course provider
(a)		
(b)		
(c)		

- 10 For one of the courses above, find the following:

(a)	Length of course	
(b)	Points requirement for last year	
(c)	Minimum entry requirements	
(d)	Possible careers on qualification	
(e)	Contact details	

Worksheet 2.3 · CAO Course Search

- 1 Go to www.cao.ie.
- 2 Select **Menu** and **Courses**.
- 3 In **Search by Institution** type in, for example, *Galway–Mayo Institute of Technology*.
- 4 Click the **Go** button.
- 5 Choose two courses from **Honours Bachelor Degrees – Level 8** and two courses from **Ordinary Bachelor Degrees/Higher Certificates – Level 7/Level 6** and list them below.

(a)	
(b)	
(c)	
(d)	

- 6 For one of the courses above, find the following:

(a)	Length of course	
(b)	Points requirement for last year	
(c)	Minimum entry requirements	
(d)	Possible careers on qualification	
(e)	Contact details	

- 7 Select **Return to Course Search**.
- 8 In **Search by title/keyword**, type in *Spanish*.
- 9 Click the **Go** button.
- 10 Choose three courses and list the course name and course provider.

	Course name	Course provider
(a)		
(b)		
(c)		

11 For one of the courses above, find the following:

(a)	Length of course	
(b)	Points requirement for last year	
(c)	Minimum entry requirements	
(d)	Possible careers on qualification	
(e)	Contact details	

Worksheet 2.4 · Taking a Detailed Look

Choose one course that you have researched and answer the questions below.

In your opinion, does the course title reflect the course content?

Does the course content interest you?

What do you think of the modules?

Does the course match your strengths?

What kind of study is involved? For example, will the course involve independent project or research work, laboratory work or group work? Will it involve a lot of reading or maths?

Worksheet 2.5 · Career Investigation

This worksheet will help you to investigate a career and to create a 10-minute presentation on your findings. You may use PowerPoint or other methods to display your presentation. Ideally, you should investigate a career that you intend to pursue in the future. Regardless of which career you focus on for this investigation, try to include the following pointers in your final presentation.

Job Title or Career Area

- Clearly identify the job title or career area that is the focus of your investigation.

Description

- Describe the job title or career area. Give details about the type of work, the usual tasks and the main responsibilities to be expected.

Education Pathways

- Identify two pathways that can lead to this career: one pathway that includes Level 8 and one pathway that includes Levels 6, 7 or apprenticeship. Use the following headings to provide the information for each pathway:
 - Course name (and code, if available)
 - College or organisation name (e.g. Cork IT)
 - Course entry requirements (e.g. Irish OL B3, English OL D3, Maths HL C3)
 - Where to apply and what to expect (e.g. through CAO: 360 points last year)
 - Length of course (e.g. 3 years full-time)
 - Level of qualification on the National Framework (e.g. Level 7 Ordinary Bachelor Degree, Level 8 Honours Bachelor Degree).

Career Skills and Personal Qualities

- Career skills can be defined as a person's ability to do a particular job.
- Personal qualities (traits or characteristics) also play an important role in career choices.
- Examine the list of career skills and personal qualities at the end of this worksheet. Choose two skills and two qualities that are linked to your career investigation and explain why each one is important for a successful career in this area.

Future Opportunities

- Investigate the job prospects, career progression and salary potential for this career. For example: What might a biomedical engineer earn? Does this career bring the opportunity to travel?

Career Interview

- While online research can provide plenty of information for your career investigation, you may still have unanswered questions. If possible, conduct an interview with a person who is currently working in the career area that you are investigating. Use the following questions as a base for your interview:
 - ∞ Why did you decide to go into this career?
 - ∞ What are the typical education requirements for this career?
 - ∞ What skills are needed for this career?
 - ∞ What personal qualities are needed in order to be successful in this career area?
 - ∞ How would you describe a typical working day?
 - ∞ Do you work standard business hours (i.e. Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.) or is shift work, weekend work or overtime required?
 - ∞ What do you like the most about your career?
 - ∞ What do you dislike the most about your career?
 - ∞ What effect does your career have on your lifestyle?
 - ∞ What other jobs or volunteer positions did you have before you reached your present position?
 - ∞ What opportunities for advancement or lateral movement exist in this career?
 - ∞ How do you foresee your career area changing in the future?
 - ∞ What is the employment outlook for this area over the next ten years?
 - ∞ What is the average starting salary? What benefits can be expected in a career in this area?

Reflection and Future Decisions

- After you have gathered lots of information as part of your career investigation, take some time to reflect on the questions below.
 - ∞ Do you feel that this career is suited to your personal skills and interests?
 - ∞ Are you still interested in this career? Explain why/why not.
 - ∞ What Leaving Certificate subjects must you choose in order to gain entry into this career?
 - ∞ Do you need to gain voluntary work experience as part of this career path?
 - ∞ Are there any hobbies you can take up that might be relevant to this career?
 - ∞ In pursuing this career, are there any areas (e.g. academic, work experience, personal qualities) in which you need to develop? →

❖ In undertaking this career investigation, what skills did you develop and what insights did you gain?

Career Skills	Personal Qualities
Writing	Drive
Presenting	Determination
Listening	Enthusiasm
Public speaking	Energy
Time management	Hard-working
Showing initiative	Honesty
Analysing	Leadership
Problem solving	Flexibility/adaptability
Evaluating	Motivation
Project management	Confidence
Entrepreneurial skills	Innovation and creativity
IT	Team-player
Numerical	Ability to influence
Teamwork	Self-confidence
Planning and organising	Persuasiveness

Worksheet 3.1 · Subject Choices: What I Need to Consider

My interests and abilities

What I would like to do after the Leaving Certificate

--

The subjects I enjoyed at Junior Certificate

What I hope to achieve in the Leaving Certificate (grades/points)

The subjects I can potentially do well in at Leaving Certificate

I have a particular college course in mind and the entry requirements are

I have a particular college course in mind and it requires these Leaving Certificate subjects

I am undecided on what to do after my Leaving Certificate and these subjects will keep my options open

Worksheet 3.2 · Subject Evaluation

Remember!

Since Irish, English and Maths (the core subjects) are compulsory, you do not need to evaluate these subjects here.

You do not need to evaluate every subject on this worksheet: evaluate *only the subjects that are offered by your school.*

Applied Sciences

Agricultural Economics	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Agricultural Science	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Architectural Technology/ Construction	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Design and Communication Graphics	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Engineering	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Business

Accounting	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Business	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Economics	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Languages

Arabic	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Classical Studies	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

French	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

German	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Greek	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Italian	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Japanese	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Latin	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Latvian	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Lithuanian	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Polish	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Russian	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Spanish	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Sciences

Applied Mathematics	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Biology	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Chemistry	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Physics	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Physics and Chemistry	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Social/Arts

Art	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Geography	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

History	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Home Economics	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Music	Very much	A lot	A little	Not at all
Am I interested in it?	4	3	2	1
Do I love it?	4	3	2	1
Am I prepared to work at it?	4	3	2	1
Will it bring me satisfaction?	4	3	2	1

Worksheet 3.3 · My Possible Subject Choices

	Subject	Why?
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

Worksheet 4.1 · CV

Tips for Preparing Your CV

The following questions and answers will help you to write a good CV.

How long should my CV be?

- Your CV should be 1–2 pages of A4 size.

How should I present my CV?

- Your CV should be clear, concise and easy to read.
- Use a legible font, e.g. Times New Roman, Calibri or Arial.
- Use headings for smaller sections and put these headings in bold so that they stand out.
- Leave some white space on the page so that the headings are clearly separated and your CV can be scanned and read with ease.
- If you are providing your CV as a printout, use good-quality white A4 writing paper.

What style of language should I use?

- Use business-like language.
- Use an active voice. For example: use action verbs such as *organised*, *planned* and *created*.
- Look at the language used in the job advertisement and try to mirror this language in your CV.
- Connect the descriptions in the job advertisement to your work experience, skills and abilities.
- Use concise phrases to convey your key skills or knowledge, e.g. *Proficient in Excel* or *Fluent in Spanish*.
- Avoid using the personal pronoun 'I', if possible.
- Be positive and focus on your accomplishments.

What personal details should I include?

- Your contact details are most important: name, address, telephone number, email address.
- Pay attention to your email address: ensure that it sounds suitable in a business environment.

What educational information should I include?

- List your education in reverse chronological order, i.e. put the most recent events at the top.
- List your post-primary details: name the school you attended and give the date span of your time there.
- Provide your Junior Certificate results.
- List your primary school details: name the school you attended and give the date span of your time there.

What work experience details should I include?

- List your work experience in reverse chronological order, i.e. put the most recent events at the top.
- For each work experience, give the following details:
 - Name of employer
 - Dates of work experience
 - Job title
 - Responsibilities involved.

What other qualifications should I include?

- Give details of any other qualifications that might relate to the job description, e.g. First Aid or HACCP certificate.
- Provide the date of each qualification earned.

What about my interests and achievements?

- Give some details about your interests.
- Focus on any positions of responsibility that you hold in committees or clubs in or outside school, e.g. youth club.
- Highlight any activities that involve community work, charity work or sports.
- Give some indication of the level of commitment involved.
- List any major achievements.
- Link your interests and achievements to the skills and personal qualities highlighted in the job application, e.g. leadership, teamwork or commitment.

What references do I need?

- ❖ Two references are usually required: one from a teacher and one from a work environment.
- ❖ Check in advance that your referees are willing to support your application.
- ❖ Provide the name, job title and contact details for each referee.
- ❖ It is an option for you not to provide referees immediately. If you wish to do this, write *References available on request*.

Remember!

Proofread your CV carefully, paying special attention to spelling and grammar. Then ask your teacher or guardian to double check your CV before you send it anywhere.

Tips for Emailing CVs and Making Online Applications

Most employers accept CVs by email. Also, in order to deal with a high volume of applications, it is common nowadays for large employers to accept online applications only. Online applications provide employers with an efficient means of pre-interview screening. Online applications are not an easy option, however. You need to spend just as much time thinking, researching and planning as you would for traditional application forms or CVs. The tips below will help you to become familiar with emailing CVs and making online applications.

Emailing CVs

- Before sending your CV as an attachment, ensure that you have given the file an appropriate name. It is useful to include your own name as part of the file name. For example: *John O'Connor CV* will be easier to identify than *CV1*.
- Convert your file into a PDF before you send it as an attachment.
- Include a suitable subject line in your email, e.g. *Transition Year Work Experience Application*.
- In the body of the email, write a cover letter. Specify the job application that you are answering and summarise your skills, education, etc.
- Ensure that you are sending the CV to the right person. If you have any doubts, phone the company to ask who exactly should receive applications.
- Email the CV to yourself as a 'test email' before you send the final email to the employer.

Making Online Applications

- Download the form and practise your answers on the hard copy first.
- If you want to insert a larger piece of text, you can write it in a Word document first. When you are certain that the text is free of errors, you can cut and paste it into the application form.
- If the application form asks you to demonstrate a particular skill (e.g. leadership) use the STAR Technique – see *Worksheet 4.4 Interview Skills*.
- As you work through the application, save the file at regular intervals.
- If the spell-check facility does not work with your application form, make an extra effort to ensure that all spellings are correct before you send the application.
- Check and save the final version of your application form before you submit it.
- Print a hard copy of the final version that you sent.
- Keep a record of all online applications that you send.

Sample CV

John O'Connor

45 Wolfe Tone Avenue, Dublin Road, Limerick City

Telephone: 061 123 456 Mobile: 086 123 4567 Email: joconnor@email.com

Education

- 2014–Present: Castletroy Comprehensive, Limerick City
- *Junior Certificate 2017*
HL results: Maths B, English A, Science C, Metalwork C, History B, Geography C, Business A
OL results: Irish B, French C, Technical Graphics A
- 2007–2014 St Michael's Primary School, Castletroy, Limerick City

Work experience

2017–Present: Tesco, Castletroy, Limerick City

Floor Assistant duties include:

- Assisting shoppers to find goods and products
- Stocking shelves with merchandise
- Reporting discrepancies and problems to the supervisor
- Keeping the store tidy and clean, e.g. sweeping and mopping
- Attaching price tags to merchandise on the shop floor
- Receiving and storing the delivery of large amounts of stock

Other qualifications

- 2017 Basic First Aid
- 2016 HACCP Certificate
- 2016 Manual Handling

Interests and achievements

- Keen sportsperson: plays on the school's Gaelic football and rugby teams
- Passionate about music: plays the piano; currently preparing for Grade V exams
- Active member of the local youth club
- Junior Sportsperson of the Year award-winner in 2016

References

Anne Lynch
Principal
Castletroy Comprehensive
Limerick City
061 123 123

Mark Shanahan
Store Manager
Tesco
Castletroy, Limerick City
061 456 456

CV: Putting it into Practice

Put into practice all of the information you have learned about CVs. Read the job advertisement below and create your own CV for this job.

Customer Assistant in Fresco Ireland

Main responsibilities

- Put the customer first and consider them in everything you do.
- Get to know your customers and serve them with pride.
- Ensure that products and services are available for customers at all times.
- Handle all products with care in order to maintain quality and ensure that all products reach the customer in the best possible condition.
- Keep the shop floor and back areas clean and tidy at all times.
- Follow all company policies and adhere to health and safety routines.
- Fulfil your core role and also support colleagues by helping in other departments occasionally.

Ideal candidate

- You have a proven ability to provide quality customer service.
- You can greet, acknowledge and help customers with natural enthusiasm.
- You work hard for your customers, your team and your department.
- You have the ability to prioritise and ensure that anything you do is right for the customer.
- You are adaptable and resilient: you can meet the ever-changing demands of the business.
- You can follow instructions: verbal and written.
- You are reliable and a good timekeeper.
- You look neat and tidy at all times.

Worksheet 4.2 · Cover Letter

The cover letter provides you with an opportunity to:

- Introduce yourself to the employer
- Personalise your CV
- Highlight the information that addresses the needs and interests of the employer.

Tips for Preparing Your Cover Letter

The following questions and answers will help you to write a good cover letter.

How long should my cover letter be?

- Your cover letter should be no longer than one A4 page.

How should I present my cover letter?

- Your cover letter should be clear, concise and easy to read.
- Use a legible font, e.g. Times New Roman, Calibri or Arial.
- Space your cover letter evenly on the page.
- If you are providing your cover letter as a printout, use good-quality white A4 writing paper.

What style of language should I use?

- Use business-like language.
- Address your cover letter to a named person, e.g. *Dear Ms Murray*. Use a generic phrase, e.g. *Dear Head of Human Resources*, only as a last resort.
- If your letter is to a named person, start the letter with, for example, *Dear Ms Murray* and end the letter with *Yours sincerely*.
- If your letter is to an unnamed person, start the letter with *Dear Sir/Madam* and end the letter with *Yours faithfully*.

What should I include in the opening of my cover letter?

- Use your opening paragraph to say why you are writing, e.g. *I am writing in response to your recent advertisement*.
- Your opening paragraph should also state what you are currently doing, e.g. *I am a Transition Year student in St Mary's College, Bishopstown*.

What should I include in the middle of my cover letter?

- The main part of your cover letter can include a few paragraphs. Aim to answer these questions:
 - ∞ Why do you want to work for this particular company, government department or organisation? If possible, refer to something interesting that you read in the job advertisement or on the website of the organisation.
 - ∞ Why should this organisation employ you? What do you have to offer? What is the relevance of your education, work experience or interests? How can you apply these to the goals of the organisation?
 - ∞ Why do you want this particular job? What appeals to you? Why are you applying?

What should I include towards the end of my cover letter?

- Use your closing paragraph to say that you would like to discuss employment opportunities and that you are available for interview.
- Express your willingness to provide additional information.
- Thank the person for taking the time to read your cover letter.
- Sign the letter and print your name below your signature.

Remember!

Proofread your cover letter carefully, paying special attention to spelling and grammar. Then ask your teacher or guardian to double check your cover letter before you send it anywhere.

Sample Cover Letter

43 Parkwood Avenue
Glasnevin
Dublin 9

8 October 2017

Mr John Nolan
Principal
St Mary's National School
Glasnevin
Dublin 9

Dear Mr Nolan,

I am writing to enquire if you have any opportunities in your school for Transition Year students to complete work experience. I am currently a Transition Year student at St Michael's Secondary School, Glasnevin. As part of our Transition Year programme we will complete two weeks of work experience from 1 March to 14 March 2018.

I would be very grateful for the opportunity to complete my work placement in your school because I want to pursue a career as a primary school teacher. I love teaching young children in particular. I have had the opportunity to teach hip-hop dancing to children in the age range of 6–10 years old. I enjoy putting all of my energy into each class. I am an enthusiastic person who thrives on being busy. I am patient and I like the challenge of finding fun ways to teach children how to dance. I believe that teaching is a very challenging job but it is also one of the most rewarding ones.

I have developed many other skills in school: I am a member of the school debating team and have competed in several competitions. This has allowed me to become a confident presenter. I am also a committee member on the school year book. I really enjoy this role, as it allows me to work as part of a team and to develop creative content for the school year book.

Please find attached my CV. Thank you in advance for taking the time to view my application. I hope that you will consider offering me the opportunity of an interview.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Maria Murphy

Maria Murphy

Cover Letter: Putting it into Practice

Put into practice all of the information you have learned about cover letters. Read the job advertisement below and create your own cover letter for this job.

Customer Assistant in Fresco Ireland

Main responsibilities

- Put the customer first and consider them in everything you do.
- Get to know your customers and serve them with pride.
- Ensure that products and services are available for customers at all times.
- Handle all products with care in order to maintain quality and ensure that all products reach the customer in the best possible condition.
- Keep the shop floor and back areas clean and tidy at all times.
- Follow all company policies and adhere to health and safety routines.
- Fulfil your core role and also support colleagues by helping in other departments occasionally.

Ideal candidate

- You have a proven ability to provide quality customer service.
- You can greet, acknowledge and help customers with natural enthusiasm.
- You work hard for your customers, your team and your department.
- You have the ability to prioritise and ensure that anything you do is right for the customer.
- You are adaptable and resilient: you can meet the ever-changing demands of the business.
- You can follow instructions: verbal and written.
- You are reliable and a good timekeeper.
- You look neat and tidy at all times.

Worksheet 4.3 · Elevator Pitch

An elevator pitch is a short summary of your education, interests and career aspirations. The name *elevator pitch* reflects the idea that you can deliver this summary in the time span of an elevator ride – in other words, the time spent in a lift with someone as you travel together to a certain floor.

Imagine that you are in a lift and you meet a person who is highly respected and influential in the career field of your choice. You would love the opportunity to talk to this person in more detail and to gain some work experience in their career area. However, this person hits the button for the 5th floor. You have between 30 seconds and 2 minutes to introduce yourself, to make a connection and to persuade this person to speak with you another time.

Fill in the Blanks

Hello. My name is _____ **[your first and last name]**. I am a student at _____ **[your school]**. I am in _____ **[your year]**.

I am really interested in _____ **[your chosen career area]**. I am also involved in _____ **[your extra-curricular activities]**. Can I tell you a bit more about myself?

I've worked with _____ **[an employer]** and have experience in _____ **[a task linked to your chosen career]**. I would really love the opportunity to gain some work experience in _____ **[your chosen career area]**. Does your company offer any opportunities to Transition Year students?

Handling the Response

Positive Response

If the person responds positively, follow up with:

- ❖ Do you have a business card with contact information on it?
- ❖ When would be the best time to call or email you?
- ❖ Thank you! I will contact you _____ **[a suitable time]** to discuss this further.

Negative Response

If the person responds negatively, follow up with:

••• No problem – thanks for your time. Take care.

Remember!

You can adapt your elevator pitch to be used on the phone or in an email, if you decide to make your initial contact through one of these methods instead.

Worksheet 4.4 · Interview Skills

Tips for Interviews

- An interview is a meeting with a purpose. The employer wants to find the best person for the job. They want to know:
 - ∞ Can you do the job? What are your skills, abilities and qualifications?
 - ∞ Will you do the job? What are your interests, attitudes and motivations?
 - ∞ How will you fit into the organisation? What is your personality?
- In an interview, it is up to you to prove that you are the most suitable person for the job.

Preparation

Preparation is the key to success! Before you go to the interview:

- Review your CV.
- Anticipate the questions you might be asked. Prepare your answers and include relevant examples.
- Research the company. Review their website and any company literature. Use your personal contacts to speak with people who already work in the company.
- Research the job and career area.
 - ∞ Read the job description very carefully.
 - ∞ Research current issues, trends or challenges in the industry.
- Practise answering interview questions out loud.

First Impressions

First impressions really do count. Ensure that you:

- Dress appropriately
- Have a firm handshake
- Smile and make eye contact
- Remain aware of your body language, e.g. do not fold your arms or slouch.

Typical Questions

Certain questions can come up frequently in interviews. Become very comfortable in answering these questions:

- Can you tell me about yourself?
- What is your favourite subject? Why?
- Can you tell me about your work experience or voluntary work?
- What are your interests and hobbies?
- What subjects will you take for your Leaving Certificate? Why?
- What would you like to do when you leave school? Why?
- What would you consider your greatest achievement to date?
- What do you know about this company?
- Why would you like to work here?
- Have you any questions for us?

Tips for Competency-based Interviews

In competency-based interviews, the interviewer is looking for particular skills and abilities. The interviewer hopes to find examples of how you have used these skills and abilities in the past. After all, past behaviour can be a predictor of future success. Do not be daunted by competency-based interviews. The likelihood is that you have plenty of examples you can share – you just need to reflect on your skills and abilities so that you can easily identify them in an interview situation. Typical competency-based questions are listed below.

Teamwork

- Can you describe a team project you worked on?
- What problems arose during this project?
- How did you deal with these problems?

Communication Skills

- Have you ever had to make a presentation to a group of people? Can you describe how that went?
- Can you give an example of any reports you have written, which would illustrate your writing skills?

Interpersonal Skills

- Are there any kinds of people that you find challenging to work with?
- How do you handle situations such as this?

Taking Responsibility

- Can you describe a time when you took responsibility in order to achieve a challenging goal?
- What are your regular responsibilities and how do you handle them?

Problem-solving

- Have you ever had to manage several different tasks with conflicting deadlines?
- How did you deal with this?

STAR Technique

The STAR Technique can be very helpful in answering competency-based interviews. The STAR Technique works as follows:

- **S:** Describe the *situation*.
- **T:** Explain the *task* or problem that arose.
- **A:** What *action* did you take?
- **R:** What was the result or outcome? What did you learn from this experience?

Putting it into Practice

Put into practice all of the information you have learned about the STAR Technique.

Choose one example of a problem you encountered. Think about how you approached it. Reflect on the outcome of the situation. Use the STAR Technique below.

S: Describe the *situation*.

T: Explain the *task* or problem that arose.

A: What *action* did you take?

R: What was the *result* or outcome? What did you learn from this experience?

Worksheet 4.5 · Mock Interview

Guidelines for the Mock Interview

- ❖ Work in groups to conduct mock interviews.
- ❖ Each group must have three people:
 - ∞ The candidate
 - ∞ The interviewer
 - ∞ The observer.
- ❖ Use the job advertisement from *Worksheet 4.1 CV* as a basis for the mock interview. Alternatively, work with your group to write a new job advertisement.
- ❖ Interviews will last for 10 minutes.
- ❖ Interviews will be followed by 5–10 minutes of feedback to the candidate.
- ❖ Before you begin the interview, use the tips below to prepare for your role.

The Candidate

- ❖ Think about the job you are applying for.
- ❖ Consider the competencies that the organisation is looking for in a candidate.
- ❖ Anticipate the questions you might be asked.
- ❖ Prepare evidence-based answers.
- ❖ Use the STAR Technique to help you prepare your answers.

Remember!

Keep your answers relevant. Expand on answers but do not talk too much. Choose good examples (stories) that will be memorable for the interviewer.

The Interviewer

- ❖ Your role is to take on the persona of the employer: you want the best person for the job.
- ❖ Get into character! Be engaging and friendly, but somewhat formal.
- ❖ Simulate the beginning of a real interview:
 - ∞ The person playing the candidate should leave the room so that they can re-enter and behave as they would in a real interview situation.
 - ∞ Greet the candidate and shake their hand.
- ❖ Begin with a broad question, such as *Can you tell me about yourself?*

- Ask four other questions based on the examples you have learned in recent class work.
- Make notes on the candidate's responses. These notes will help you to provide feedback to the candidate. The following questions will help you to take relevant feedback notes:
 - ∞ Is the candidate demonstrating enthusiasm and interest in the job?
 - ∞ Does the candidate relate past achievements and skills through use of the STAR Technique?
 - ∞ Does the candidate include relevant examples to support his or her statements?
 - ∞ Does the candidate successfully avoid flat 'yes or no' answers?
 - ∞ Does the candidate answer questions clearly and concisely?
 - ∞ Does the candidate appear confident?
- Try to keep the interview flowing as natural conversation.
- Ask follow-up questions about some of the responses given by the candidate.
- At the end of the interview, ask the candidate if they have any questions for you. Do your best to answer any of the candidate's questions.
- Finally, thank the candidate for his or her time. Let them know that you will contact them in relation to the next steps of the interview process.

The Observer

- Your role is to give the candidate feedback after the interview.
- You should give feedback on the content of the interview (the interviewer can assist you with this), along with any first impressions or body language you noticed in the candidate.
- Make specific notes on the following first impressions:
 - ∞ Appearance: Is the candidate dressed neatly and appropriately?
 - ∞ Handshake: Does the candidate appear to have a comfortably firm handshake?
 - ∞ Greeting: Is the candidate friendly, energetic and smiling when they first meet the interviewer?
- Make specific notes on the following body language and non-verbal communication:
 - ∞ Posture: Is the candidate sitting properly? Does the candidate appear relatively relaxed and poised? Does the candidate maintain an open posture?

- ∞ Eye contact: Does the candidate establish good eye contact throughout the interview?
- ∞ Voice: Does the candidate maintain appropriate volume and speed when speaking? Does the candidate vary their tone appropriately?
- ∞ Hand movements: Does the candidate successfully avoid distracting mannerisms, e.g. twirling a pen, bouncing their knee or making dramatic hand gestures?

Remember!

Look for strengths as well as areas for improvement. Ask the candidate how he or she thinks it went before you begin to give your feedback. Read the guidelines on Giving Feedback below.

Feedback

Some people find the mock interview to be stressful. However, it is a worthwhile exercise in terms of providing us with feedback. The guidelines below will help you to give feedback and receive feedback in a constructive way.

Giving Feedback

- ❖ Describe the behaviour you see but do not evaluate it. If we simply describe what we see and hear, there is less chance that the recipient of the feedback will act defensively.
- ❖ Be positive: find some complimentary things to say.
- ❖ Be constructive in any criticism you make. Point to specific areas for development: focus on solutions.
- ❖ Do not make harsh statements. Instead, talk about how you feel and what you observed, e.g. *I feel confused about your approach to the question on...*
- ❖ You must give feedback only on those behaviours that the other person can change and/or control.
- ❖ Take into account the other person's feelings.
- ❖ Since feedback is given in a group, ask the other members of the group for their opinions on the accuracy of your feedback.

Receiving Feedback

- ❖ Acknowledge the positive aspects of the feedback. Receive any compliments that are given!
- ❖ Give the feedback serious consideration and make your own evaluations. Weigh up the consequences of changing or not changing an answer or certain behaviour. Express your thoughts and feelings about alternatives.
- ❖ Communicate your decisions and reasoning to the person giving you the feedback.

Worksheet 4.6 · Employability

What is employability?

Employability skills are defined as skills required not only to gain employment, but also to progress through a lifelong career.

What skills do employers seek?

❖ Communication

- ∞ Verbal communication is the ability to express your ideas clearly and confidently in speech to individuals and groups.
- ∞ Written communication is the ability to write in a clear and concise manner, using appropriate grammar, style and language for the reader.

❖ **Teamwork** is the ability to interact and cooperate with a group of people in order to achieve a common goal.

❖ **Leadership** is the ability to motivate and direct others.

❖ **Initiative/self-motivation** is the ability to act on your own initiative. It involves identifying opportunities and being proactive in putting forward ideas and solutions.

❖ **Problem-solving** is the ability to define or identify a problem. It involves generating alternative or potential solutions. Problem-solvers know how to choose and implement the best solutions.

❖ **Flexibility** involves being able to adapt successfully to changing situations and environments.

❖ **Planning and organising** are the skills that enable us to plan activities and to carry them through effectively.

❖ **Persuasiveness** is the ability to influence and convince others.

❖ **Time management** is the ability to manage time effectively. It involves prioritising tasks and being able to work to deadlines.

How can I develop my employability skills?

There are many different activities that can foster your employability skills. These include:

- ❖ Sports (individual or team)
- ❖ Hobbies
- ❖ Clubs or social groups
- ❖ Community projects
- ❖ School projects
- ❖ Work experience

Putting it into Practice

Employability Skills

Examine the list of skills shown on the right. Have you demonstrated any of these skills in the past? Reflect upon situations where you used these skills, then fill in the table below.

- Communication
 - Written and verbal
- Teamwork
- Leadership
- Initiative
- Problem-solving
- Flexibility
- Planning and organising
- Persuasiveness
- Time management

Employability skills	
My skill	Activity where I developed this skill
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Work Placement Skills

Reflect upon your upcoming work placement. Think about the skills you already have that will be of use to you in a work placement. Then consider the skills that you hope to gain from your work placement. Fill in the table below.

Work placement skills	
The skills I hope to improve on	The new skills I hope to develop
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

Worksheet 4.7 · Work Experience Diary

Transition Year Work Experience Diary

Student name: _____

Class: _____

TY coordinator: _____

Class teacher: _____

Name and address of employer: _____

Dates of work experience: _____

Job title: _____

Job description:

(List the tasks undertaken.)

Why I selected this work placement:

(This should be consistent with your career aspirations.)

Diary of Work Experience

Day: One

Start time:

Date:

Finish time:

Training and instructions:

Work undertaken:

Interactions with others (staff, customers, etc.):

Problems/challenges encountered and how I overcame them:

Skills that I improved:

New skills that I developed:

How others viewed my performance:

My personal evaluation of today:

Worksheet 4.8 · Work Experience Review

Work experience is an opportunity to sample first-hand some of the day-to-day experiences to be expected in a particular career area. Review your work experience by writing a short report. Answer the following questions in your report.

- ❖ What is your name and class group?
- ❖ What is the name of the employer?
- ❖ What were the dates of the work placement?
- ❖ What duties did you perform?
- ❖ What tasks did you undertake during your work experience?
- ❖ Did you receive any formal or informal training?
- ❖ Did you have any interactions with staff or customers in relation to the job?
- ❖ Did you experience any difficulties or challenges? How did you respond to them?
- ❖ Did anything unusual or unexpected occur? Were things different from what you expected?
- ❖ Can you make any observations in relation to your work experience? Did you learn anything new about yourself?
- ❖ How has your work experience influenced you in terms of your personal career direction?
- ❖ What employability skills have you enhanced or developed as a result of your work experience?

Notes

Notes

Notes

Notes

Notes

Notes